

Fannin Youth Initiative



Georgia Employability Skills Task Force Recommendation No. 1 School Goal 3

- ▶ Formalize relationships and partnerships with postsecondary institutions, advisory boards, and local businesses to coordinate employability skills initiatives and support systems.
- ▶ Engage current and former students in validating important employability skills as they transition from secondary education to postsecondary education and the workforce.

Overview

The Fannin Youth Initiative (FYI) was created at Fannin County High School to provide an integrated, collaborative, and innovative program offering sophomores and juniors the opportunity to synthesize soft skills and technical skills with employment opportunities in Fannin County. Ideal candidates are interested in expanding their knowledge of local businesses, government, public resources, social services, and career opportunities while enhancing leadership, interpersonal, and employability skills.

A number of stakeholders from the education, business, medical, social services, government, and economic development areas are involved in FYI. One goal of the initiative is to showcase the wide variety of opportunities for careers with a broad spectrum of educational requirements. School leaders found that starting a new program was challenging, and initial recruitment resulted in few applications from students. After requesting Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) advisors to recommend student leaders for the program, the one-on-one approach resulted in recruitment of 10 students for the inaugural class.

A critical member of the development of FYI was the Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority, an alumnus of Fannin County High School and a role model of professionalism and career success for students. Her advocacy for the project in the community led to an abundance of volunteers willing to become mentors to participating students. Many volunteers were disappointed when their services were not needed and are on a waiting list to be included next year. Various business owners, community members, Fannin County employees, medical professionals, and education leaders were actively involved in student activities.

Timeline for FYI Process

- ▶ November/December: Recruitment and Application Process
- ▶ January 14: Students Welcomed to Program
- ▶ January 25: Orientation (with lunch), Strengths Finder Administration, Overview of Economic Development, and Activity with Mentors
- ▶ January 31: Communication
- ▶ February 7 and 12: Resume Overview
- ▶ February 22: Small Business and Entrepreneurship (full day; breakfast and lunch)
- ▶ February 27: Visit to State Capitol (full day), Lunch with Speaker of the House, Tour of Capital Building, and Information Session with Lobbyist
- ▶ March 5: Interview Skills and Practice
- ▶ March 8: Healthcare and Social Services (half-day, breakfast)
- ▶ March 10: Project Discussion

- ▶ March 21: Interview Skills
- ▶ March 26: Table Manners and Dinner Etiquette
- ▶ March 29: Local Government Session at Fannin County Courthouse (half-day, lunch); Project Work
- ▶ April 4: Presentation Skills
- ▶ April 23: Presentation Practice
- ▶ April 24: Presentation to Fannin County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors on Personal Highlights of Program and Skills Developed

Audience & Initiative Impact

Ten students completed the initiative by successfully attending work sessions, developing a business presentation, participating in all field trips, and engaging in meaningful conversations with peers and adults. The enthusiasm of student participants and success of FYI have had a ripple effect among the student body, leading to increased interest in participating in the initiative in the next school year. Feedback from all stakeholders was extremely positive. The synergy between professional adults and highly motivated students resulted in positive changes for all, including development of essential employability skills.

School/District: Fannin County High School

Contact: Lynn A. Burch, Work-Based Learning/Youth Apprenticeship Program Coordinator

Email: lburch@fannin.k12.ga.us

Georgia Employability Skills Task Force Recommendations

1. Integrate employability skills into curriculum and learning experiences from prekindergarten through postsecondary education.
2. Support educators and other stakeholders in developing employability skills instruction.
3. Develop deeper and stronger relationships between industry and education to enhance teacher and mentor roles in quality work-based learning and career development opportunities.

To learn more about college- and career-readiness work in the southeast states, please contact Beth Howard-Brown (bhoward-brown@air.org), Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) director, or visit the SECC website (southeast-cc.org).

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