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BUSINESS AND EDUCATION:

BRIDGING THE GAP

KOSCIUSKO LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

"WHITE PAPER"

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Kosciusko County community, business, and education leaders are joining together in a partnership which will encourage direct communication between the business and education communities to assure that the students of today are learning the necessary skills to become productive employees of tomorrow. A county-wide Partners In Education program has evolved and will be administered under Kosciusko Development Incorporated.

THE NEED FOR A PARTNERS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

The following state-wide statistics indicate the need for partnership programs:

1. Thirty-eight percent of the workers in the Indiana work force have not completed high school and fourteen percent have not gone beyond the eighth grade.
2. Twenty-one percent of the young people who begin secondary school do not graduate.
3. Twelve and one-half percent of Hoosiers over the age of 25 have four years of education beyond the secondary level compared to a national average of 16.2 percent.
4. Thirty percent of Indiana's 18-24 year olds are continuing their education compared with 32.6 percent nationally; and
5. Thirty to thirty-five percent of Indiana's resident college freshmen are found to require remedial instruction.

Occupations demonstrating the greatest percentage of growth in the next decade will generally be skill and education intensive. While Indiana will have no difficulty supplying workers for lower skilled jobs, the state must become more aggressive in supplying workers for higher skilled jobs. Through educational goals which encourage life-long learning, Kosciusko county will expand rather than narrow options.

KOSCIUSKO COUNTY BEGINS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Kosciusko county is fortunate to possess a strong working relationship between the business and education communities. Various programs have been and currently are in force which bring these two groups together, however until just recently, these have been organized mainly through individual school corporations. The communities needs and resources can be better served through a county wide partnership program. With this in mind, Dick Wysong, Vocational Director of Wawasee Community Schools approached the Chamber of Commerce about beginning such a program. Deb Wiggins, President of the Greater Warsaw Chamber of Commerce referred him to the Kosciusko Development Incorporated (KDI) since this Partners In Education program would serve the entire county. The KDI supported the idea and the Education Committee was formed. This initial committee consists of seven school superintendents, Orville Bose, Fairfield Schools; Baxter Paige, Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation; Dan Bates, Triton Community Schools; Jerry Lelle, Wa-Nee School Corporation; Larry Crabb, Warsaw Community Schools; Roger Thornton, Wawasee

Community Schools; and Ken Blad, Whitko Community Schools; two school vocational directors, Dick Wysong, Wawasee Community Schools and Robert Schrader, Warsaw Community Schools; one school guidance counselor, Sandra Carmichael, Tippecanoe Valley School Corporation; one representative from Grace College, Gerald Twombly; one school information services co-ordinator, Gina Smith, Warsaw Community Schools; the director of Warsaw Ivy Tech, Joe Beeson; North Central Area Vocational Corporation representative, Jerry Hollenbaugh; and one member of Indiana Partners in Education, Barbara Poor. The following business representatives are members of this committee: Jim Evans, Augsburg's Super Value and Syracuse Chamber of Commerce; Neal Carlson, First National Bank of Warsaw; Dave Tranter, Publishing and Printing Company; Bill Newcomb, R.R. Donnelley and Sons; and Nanette Frantz, United Telephone Company. The function of this committee is to serve as the Board of Directors for the Partners In Education program. The program has met with such success and enthusiasm that a separate staff person will be hired to implement this program. Our local program is directly tied to the Indiana Partners In Education program headed by Margaret Dwyer, under the Indiana Economic Development Council which is chaired by Brian Bosworth.

The first meeting of the KDI Partners In Education was held on January 27, 1987. At this meeting the feasibility of this type of partnership was discussed. It was decided that a program of this nature would be of great benefit to the Kosciusko county community.

Letters of support were received from members of the committee by the second meeting. Deb Wiggins and Sandra Carmichael developed a mission statement, goals, and objectives from information gathered at the first meeting. A sub-committee was formed to hire the Director of

this program. Sub-committee members include: Deb Wiggins, Ken Blad, Bill Newcomb and Sandra Carmichael. The position was advertised in the Warsaw Times-Union newspaper and over 50 applications were received. Preliminary screening took place and candidates were interviewed in early April. The target date for the director to begin is May 1, 1987.

The partnership will be funded by education, business, and the community. A grant will be written and submitted to the Indiana Partners In Education to obtain further funding.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the partnership is to build a working relationship between community, business, and education. Five basic target areas exist with this program. They are: 1.) Learning Skill Development for Adult Workers, 2.) Increasing Post-Secondary Enrollment, 3.) Preventing Drop-outs and Promoting Re-entry, 4.) Career Advising, and 5.) Targeting High Achievers.

Specific objectives will be used to deliver outcomes which will increase student awareness of career choices, develop an understanding of the skills necessary to enter the world of work, and review curriculum offerings as they relate to actual job opportunities; therefore, increasing the economic vitality of the community.

Many and varied activities will be used to meet the objectives of the program. Through these activities, Kosciusko county students will become more aware of the expectations of business and the community in order to enter the world of work and current labor market trends

within Kosciusko county. Emphasis will be on life-long learning and training necessary to enter the labor market. A greater appreciation will develop between business, education, and the community and a sense of cohesiveness will be evident.

Schools will work with employers to increase the learning skills of adults already in the work force. Education will have business assistance in meeting the needs of "at risk" students and decreasing the number of drop-outs. Business will be assisted by education in providing the instruction necessary for drop-outs already in the workplace to graduate and continue their education.

The business and education partnership will develop methods of identifying and supporting achievers with high potential. These students will be encouraged to stay in Indiana once advanced training has been completed.

The business and community will benefit by gaining more productive, innovative, and well educated employees. With collective efforts to produce the highest quality worker, the future of Kosciusko county looks bright.

THE FUTURE OF PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

This program is in its infancy. The potential for this program in a county such as Kosciusko with its strong economic base and fine educational institutions is unlimited. It is exciting to dream about the implications of the Partners In Education program. It is a program that virtually every citizen of Kosciusko county can become involved with. Partnership programs exist in other parts of Indiana and Kosciusko

Development Incorporated Partners in Education has the potential to have an exemplary program. Great goals can be achieved and a better understanding of others in our community occur when members of our community work in harmony. A well educated workforce is the most valuable economic resource our community can offer to current and future business and industry. Capitalizing on this resource requires the efforts of all community entities working together... in partnership.