

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • Feb. 13, 2015

After a postponement two weeks ago because of a snow day, Ed Ryan's Criminal Justice students will go on a field trip today to the Columbus Police Regional Training Academy and the Columbus Police Department firing range.



Just as Pickaway-Ross has a different format as a career center, we also are able to offer our students some opportunities that traditional high schools cannot.

Field trips scheduled by academic and lab teachers are all designed as additional learning opportunities.

"I try to choose sites that I know have energetic presenters who can make the link between the students' training and them choosing to go into that career," Ed said.

For juniors in Kirk Hewitt's Electrical program, a twice-yearly field trip to the IBEW Electrical Trades Center in Columbus helps students learn about the apprenticeship program available.

And Darren Plessinger, who – with fellow Social Studies teachers Bill Anderson, Elizabeth Kolb and Katie Sears – takes classes to the State House, said the same intent is found in academics.

"When they get to see the branches of government, sit in the chambers and actually see what goes on, it makes the concepts more concrete," Darren said.

While it's not unlikely that some students view field trips as a free day, those who are serious about pursuing careers in their field of study take it seriously, Kirk said.

In addition, Kirk said, "there is pre- and post-field trip talk to stress the importance of the field trip as it relates to being placed in the (apprenticeship) program."

After the field trip, Ed said he asks his students to



During a spring field trip to the Electrical Trades Center, students learned to operate the bucket truck.

volunteer information that they learned and appreciates getting student feedback about the benefits of the trip.

He said the value of this type of field trip outweighs the cost of planning it, which can take some time.

In addition to serving as a marketing tool for his program, Ed said that learning off-site benefits teachers and students.

Plus, he said, "Students need to know that they are going to have the opportunity to visit and talk with true professionals who are working in the law enforcement field every day. They have the opportunity to visit with them on a personal and professional level and the opportunity to ask questions about their careers."

The field trips aren't without their drawbacks, such as the challenges it creates for instructors who are now teaching to only a partial class.

But I believe the benefits of what the students gain on the field trips outweigh what they lose. Many traditional high schools are unable to offer field trips anymore and I think our doing so is another advantage that students can consider when deciding whether to attend Pickaway-Ross.

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