

## **Business Advisory Board Will Build Bridge between Business and Education**

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Several community leaders met at Chesapeake High School on November 4th to begin planning a committee which would oversee student involvement with local businesses. Chesapeake and Northeast are the only remaining Anne Arundel County public high schools that do not offer a Business Advisory Board, which is made up of business, community, political and educational leaders who work together for the betterment of students within a specific school.

The Business Advisory Board at Chesapeake High would cover a cluster of near-by schools including Chesapeake Bay Middle, Bodkin Elementary, Lake Shore Elementary, Jacobsville Elementary, Fort Smallwood Elementary and Pasadena Elementary. "I think this could be a powerful source for our students; it's always a great idea for the community to share its resources," said Michele Devine, Chesapeake High School's Signature Program Facilitator who coordinated the initial meeting.

Raymond Streib, President of Development Facilitators, Inc. and former President of Glen Burnie High School's Business Advisory Board spoke at the meeting and explained how both students and local businesses can benefit from the program. "It's very different with today's world in how we motivate students to get involved," he said. Participating business and community leaders are asked to invest time each month by providing students with an understanding of how their business operates and what local professional groups are looking for in the areas of workforce readiness and preparation. Providing a company tour, acting as a guest speaker, conducting mock interviews, participating in local career fairs, becoming a mentor and donating materials are some of the ways that businesses may participate. The ultimate goal, explained Streib, is to give young people a clear vision of how a business operates so that they may act as a powerful source within the future community.

In return, participating businesses are able to gain insight on the future workforce and create an impact on the next generation of community leaders. "I average two new employees a year who are products of the Anne Arundel County Public school system," said Streib. "If we can provide a little assistance to our students, the sky is the limit with this."

The Business Advisory Board functions as a committee or board of directors, meeting once a month to communicate and brainstorm about business-related educational needs. In the past, other business boards in the county have assisted with providing scholarships, improving specific areas of school-buildings and crafting advisory committees to mentor students. "We have tremendous things going on at Chesapeake involving the business community," commented Chesapeake High School Principal Patricia Plitt. "This Business Advisory Board will actually make things happen."