



Career Readiness and 21st Century Skills for “Advanced Manufacturing Careers”

The public believes manufacturing is critical to reviving our economy, but they would not recommend manufacturing jobs to their sons and daughters. At the height of the recession, 32% of manufacturers reported that they had jobs going unfilled because they could not find workers with the right skills. And 84% of manufacturers stating the K-12 school system were doing an inadequate job of preparing students for the workplace.

Business owners are facing the challenge of finding and recruiting the talent from the 38% of 12th graders who are grade level proficient at reading reported by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Along with the critical thinking and problem solving skills needed for good paying careers in advanced manufacturing and shipbuilding. The Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation (LEARN) Act can address the need for schools to produce literate career ready citizens.

The LEARN Act will benefit students who are at risk of literacy failure: struggling readers, English language learners, economically disadvantaged youth, dyslexia students and students with specific learning disabilities (SEEDS) students. The LEARN Act can address reading proficiency by ensuring students have the skills demanded in the 21st century: the ability to read for knowledge, to write for understanding, and to think critically about what is read. Reading is the foundational skill without which math, science and all education attainment becomes unattainable.

The Roadmap to Education Reform for Manufacturing released by the Manufacturing Institute is a comprehensive blueprint for education reform designed to develop and help recruit the 21st century talent critical for manufacturers to sustain and grow global competitiveness. The report lays out six principles for innovative reform, including moving to competency-based education; establishing and expanding industry-education partnerships; infusing technology in education; creating excitement for manufacturing careers; applying manufacturing principles like “lean” to reduce education costs; and, expanding successful youth development programs.

As part of an effort to attract and groom job candidates businesses must be engaged in the supply side of human capital value stream. They need to develop close ties with the public schools, community colleges and trade schools. Through a program called “Career Pathways,” they are reaching out to elementary, middle and secondary schools, to encourage students to seek careers in manufacturing and take STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills courses.

The Association for Manufacturing Excellence (AME) has a goal to support its members in helping our schools, colleges with businesses to promote *Manufacturing As A Desirable Career Path*. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, a career in manufacturing pays very well. In 2010, the average manufacturing worker earned \$77,186 in pay and benefits, significantly more than the average non-manufacturing worker, who earned \$56,436. The U.S. Department of Commerce report “The Benefits of Manufacturing Jobs,” states that manufacturing workers have 17% total higher compensation than non-manufacturing workers.

AME advocates a renewed emphasis on making businesses more competitive by developing the educational and training infrastructure to produce qualified individuals to fill the new jobs being created by advanced manufacturers. Having a highly skilled workforce is the lifeblood of any successful company, industry, community and the economy. Our challenge as a community is to define best practices to produce literate career ready citizens with the proper skills who are excited about leading the designing and competitively building of things at home, again!

Glenn Marshall, Regional Director, Association for Manufacturing Excellence (AME), is leading the national initiative to make ... Manufacturing As A Desirable Career Path. Contact jmarsh8279@aol.com or www.ame.org.