

2018

Excellence in Action Award

Dauphin County Technical School

Building Construction Technology

Architecture & Construction Career Cluster

OVERVIEW

The Building Construction Technology program of study at the Dauphin County Technical School in Lower Paxton Township, PA, began as a one-course offering in 1970 that was transformed in 2011 into a robust program of study. Aligned with a high-priority sector in Pennsylvania, this program of study blends academic and technical knowledge and skills with a service-oriented mindset through local and out-of-state community service projects. Eligible students may earn up to nine college credits per semester. Students attend classes at the college campus in the morning and are required to attend their career and technical program at the school in the afternoon.

The curriculum is taught using projects that provide hands-on learning experience. Learners have built handicap ramps, installed and finished drywall, and built musical sets. Construction projects give learners a first-hand understanding of what is necessary to bring an idea into reality.

Student Demographics (48)	Percentage
Male	83%
Female	17%
Low Income	58%
Minority	52%

PUTTING SKILLS INTO PRACTICE

Building construction is designated a high-priority occupation (HPO) by Pennsylvania. HPO designation is used to align workforce training and education investments with occupations that are in high demand by employers, have higher skill needs, and are most likely to provide living wages.

To ensure that the program of study is meeting industry demand, Building Construction Technology has integrated meaningful work-based learning projects into every aspect of the program.

These hands-on projects take place on and off campus. For example, learners have worked with fellow students to build sets for music and theater performances. Outside the classroom, learners have worked in the community, building handicap ramps among other projects.

Project-based learning allows learners to be exposed to various areas within a career in construction such as zoning, permits, customer service, quality control and contracts.

Each learner is encouraged to participate in a capstone project with a local business to further hone his or her skills. One business that has offered tremendous support, including serving as a capstone site and participating in curriculum development, is Dauphin Enterprises, LLC, a company owned by a former Building Construction Technology student.

Learners are also involved in the career technical student organization, SkillsUSA. Through the SkillsUSA Building Construction Competition, learners gain confidence, develop leadership skills and work as a team — experiences that will serve them well in the workplace.



PROGRAM PROFILE: BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CARES

Since its establishment in 2008, the Building Construction Cares organization has brought 121 learners on a total of 13 trips to help 32 families recover from natural disasters. Each trip includes three faculty members and up to 16 learners, selected through an application process.

This noble endeavor began when the Building Construction Technology program of study instructor wanted to help with recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina. In 2008, a group embarked on the first trip to Biloxi, MS. While there, learners gained hands-on experience with wall framing, roofing, window installations and more.

To date, learners have traveled to Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina and West Virginia. During these trips, learners have completed demolition; installed flooring, roofing and windows; and built decks, railings, ramps, sheds and playgrounds to help communities get back on their feet.

Trips are planned yearly, and learners help raise the funding through pancake breakfast events and dodgeball tournaments.

CAREER AND COLLEGE ADVISING

Each learner receives career advising to discuss his or her career goals and receive guidance on course selection. Beginning in 9th grade, learners create a career portfolio, take career inventories and attend career workshops to help them determine what they want — and do not want — to do with their future.

Juniors take part in mock interviews and receive mentorship from local employers. The program of study also offers opportunities for juniors and seniors to tour with postsecondary schools, job shadow and meet with postsecondary representatives. The vocational transitional counselor coordinates the visits and tours with postsecondary partners and local industry representatives.

The Harrisburg Area Community College also provides a counselor to meet onsite weekly with learners to assist with the transition to postsecondary and careers.

“Learning is most notable when it is used to benefit others.” — Robert Brightbill, Building Construction Technology Instructor, Dauphin County Technical School

Success by the Numbers



100%

Participated in Work-Based Learning



100%

Graduated High School



100%

Earned an Industry-Recognized Credential



83%

Earned Postsecondary Credit