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April 30, 2020

Contact: Michelle Ready
Director of Communications
and Marketing
(616) 738-8940 Ext. 4093
mready@oaisd.org

INSTRUCTORS ADAPT TO MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS DURING REMOTE LEARNING

Holland, MI - With schools closed statewide for the remainder of the school year, Careerline Tech Center (CTC) instructors are using innovative ways to help students continue mastering skills outside the program classrooms and prepare for certification exams in an effort to earn industry-recognized credentials. The opportunity to earn certifications are one of many benefits of career and technical education.

An important part of helping students succeed is understanding their needs so instructors have been encouraged to reach out to each student individually to learn about schedules and the types of resources they may need.

Diesel/Heavy Equipment Mechanics Program Instructor Kevin Wiersma learned through initial calls with his students that many were now working during typical school hours, and in a variety of jobs including repair shops or family farms.

"After hearing from my students, we decided to use Google classroom to share information, lessons, and worksheets," Wiersma said. "I now offer Zoom in the mornings at 9:00 am and in the evenings at 6:30 pm allowing my students to select the best time for them."

The Zoom meetings allow students to prepare for the State of Michigan Heavy Duty Diesel Engine Repair test. Wiersma will also use Zoom to teach air braking systems, tubing/fittings, and to finish the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-hour certification training by the end of the trimester.

Careerline Tech's dedicated instructors are thinking creatively while working with their students to ensure all are able to accomplish their academic goals during the pandemic.

Many CTC instructors are using video or live platforms for students to demonstrate skills to students including cooking techniques in the Pastry Arts and Baking program, creating compost piles in the Agriculture and Animal Science program, and making short films for media in the Media Communications program.

Curriculum Specialist for CTC, Mindy Plank, said few things are "business as normal" during the COVID-19 pandemic, and learning is one of them.

“Our instructors’ continued dedication to providing a quality learning experience for their students goes beyond the walls of the Tech Center,” Plank said. “I am proud of our instructors and how they have embraced remote learning and are working together to develop and share methods to reach the instructional goals for students.”

Several program instructors, such as those teaching Pasty Arts, Software and Game Development, IT: Networking and Security, EMS, and Graphic Design, are allowing students to select different “tracks” to finish the school year, depending on each student’s personal interests and certification goals.

Director of Career and Technical Education for OAISD, Dave Searles, said that career exploration and training gives students the ability to see what opportunities exist, and learn what they may or may not want to pursue depending on their interests and aspirations.

“There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach for every student so our team is working with each of them individually to meet them where they are and help them be successful,” Searles added.

“Our students know we are there for them, and that is so important during this time away from the building,” said Wiersma. “We are all a team working toward one goal of making the best of the current situation.”

To view a [“Tool of the Day” instructional video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BKUI77Omjc&feature=youtu.be) from the CTC Construction program, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BKUI77Omjc&feature=youtu.be>

Operated by Ottawa Area ISD, Careerline Tech Center prepares high school juniors and seniors for tomorrow's workforce by providing career and technical education in more than 25 career areas. CTC serves students from public and private high schools, as well as those who are homeschooled, within the following local school districts: Allendale, Coopersville, Grand Haven, Hamilton, Holland, Hudsonville, Jenison, Saugatuck, Spring Lake, West Ottawa, and Zeeland. www.CareerlineTech.org