

City of Reidsville Press Release – Release Date January 9, 2019



City, Schools collaborate on Educator Externship

The City of Reidsville, in partnership with the Rockingham County Schools and local industries, will be launching the Reidsville Educator Externship program in area high schools in 2019.

City and school officials highlighted the benefits of the program at the Reidsville City Council meeting Tuesday night.

The one-day program is designed to place high school teachers and career counselors in local industries to learn more about their companies, their manufacturing process and the types of individuals they are seeking to grow and sustain their workforce, according to Reidsville Economic Development Director Jeff Garstka.

The program will be implemented in Reidsville and Rockingham County high schools.

“It is so important to give our students all the tools they need to succeed in the workplace, which includes our teachers understanding what skills are needed by our local industries,” said Reidsville Mayor Jay Donecker. “We believe this Externship program, along with other

initiatives already under way, will not only help our students but also assist the City in its economic development efforts.”

This program has been found to be helpful in other cities and counties.

“This has been a successful endeavor in many other communities,” Garstka said. “We need to keep the school system engaged with our local industries and to understand their workforce challenges and needs. Collectively we need to identify the students who are well suited to pursue training and prepare for good careers in industry.”

Rockingham County School officials agree.

“The new Externship Program will be a great opportunity for teachers to learn about the needs of the business community,” said Dr. Rodney



The City of Reidsville and Rockingham County Schools will launch the Educator Externship program later this year. Showing off the logo for the new program at Tuesday night’s Reidsville City Council meeting are, from left: John Kolessar, Vice President of BB&T; Dr. Charles Perkins, the schools’ Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Jeff Garstka, Reidsville Economic Development Director; Mayor Jay Donecker; and (back row) City Council members William Hairston, Donald Gorham, Terresia Scoble, Sherri Walker, Mayor Pro Tem Harry Brown and James Festerman.



Shotwell, Rockingham County Schools' Superintendent. "Our teachers will get to see the types of jobs that are available for future graduates and help connect student interests to particular job opportunities. I am excited that the City of Reidsville, Rockingham County Schools and area business leaders are partnering to create such opportunities for our students."

The Externship will take place during scheduled teacher workdays. Five educators from Reidsville High School and five from Rockingham County High School will be chosen to participate.

Each educator will receive a \$50 stipend for the day, which will include two industry visits in the morning, a break for lunch at Reidsville City Hall, and two industry visits in the afternoon. A diverse group of industries will be chosen for the visits, Garstka explained.

"We appreciate the City of Reidsville reaching out to our school system and inviting us to be a partner in this unique opportunity that will introduce teachers to various business and industry professions," said Dr. Charles Perkins, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for the school system. "The Externship will allow teachers to see the skills that future graduates need in specific jobs and assist students in obtaining those skills as they work towards graduation."

Funding for the program is already in place with \$250 already committed from a private business owner, which will be matched by the City. Helping to secure funding for the project was John Kolessar, Vice President of BB&T, who was recognized during Tuesday night's meeting.

While the majority of Reidsville and Rockingham County High Schools' students go on to four-year colleges and universities, this cutting edge program is designed for educators to target the percentage of the high school population that are most likely to pursue training at Rockingham Community College and enter the local industry workforce.

"Our local industries continue to experience difficulty in finding the skilled labor necessary to allow our companies to grow. As a community, we are responding to these needs as rapidly as we can in a very intentional and collaborative manner," said Steve Scott, President of Tri-State Steel and Chair of the Reidsville Industrial Alliance. "I respect the community college system and the role it plays in this process, but I strongly believe the first step in the solution lies within our school system. Together we have worked hard to create the Rock-A-Top apprenticeship program and have had great success and engagement in the Junior Achievement program. There is extreme excitement that we are on the cusp of a manual machining academy program at Reidsville High School as a part of our RCS Career Technical Education. These are all terrific collaborative efforts that are absolute victories for our community. The Educator Externship fits in nicely with these other endeavors and is yet another victory worthy of celebrating."

