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**POLYTECH
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

JEFFREY L. FORD
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Board of Education

DR. DEBORAH H. ZYCH
Superintendent

DR. MARK DUFENDACH
Assistant Superintendent

ELIZABETH JONES
Director

JEREMY McENTIRE
Community Education
Coordinator

January 14, 2016

The growing nationwide skills gap in the manufacturing field is being clearly seen and felt in Delaware. The demand for competent technicians, able to work with increasingly complex machinery, is now at the highest level in decades. Over the past five years, there has been a 45 percent increase in the total number of industrial mechanic positions statewide (Delaware Wages, 2009, 2014). We are definitely experiencing our share of this growth in Kent County, where Polytech Adult Education is located. One local employer alone has added dozens of new technician positions over the past year and is scheduled to add over a hundred more in the next several months.

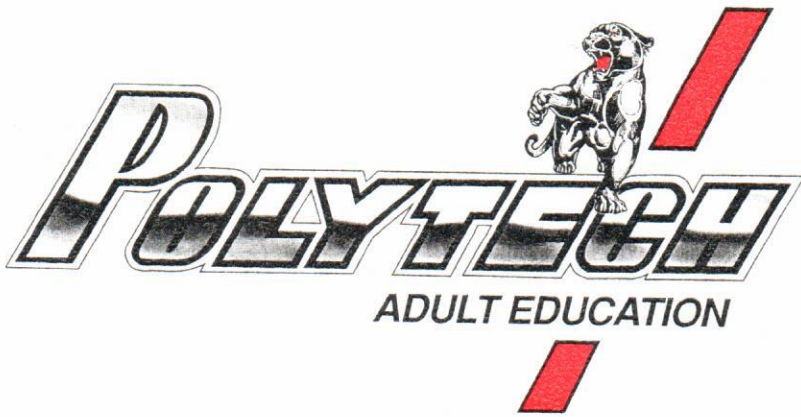
Polytech Adult Education, has been able to help meet this need through the creation of the Delaware Manufacturing Development Center (DMDC). The focus of the Center is twofold – identifying specific skills gaps through precision assessment and closing those gaps through the implementation of customized training modules. This would not have been possible without the partnership with Scientific Management Techniques (SMT).

SMT assessment devices are recognized by Delaware employers as the industry standard. There is nothing else available like them for identifying industrial skills and aptitude in a number of critical areas. Having these devices has allowed us to assist local employers identify the capabilities of their existing and incumbent workforces. After getting an accurate picture of where the gaps are, the SMT Mechatronics training program has given us the tools we need to begin to address them in a targeted way. The hands-on, modular format allows us to deliver training in a flexible and responsive manner.

Since its inception approximately 14 months ago, the DMDC has assessed and/or trained over 150 individuals and has worked with a total of six local industry partner organizations. Discussions and plans are currently underway to expand the number of customers being served and there are approximately 100 additional students already scheduled to be trained over the next 12 months.

In addition to the obvious benefits to the employers, this training has been important to the employees/students who have participated as well. Some of our partner organizations have been able to create a professional advancement structure, allowing for progression and promotion, where none had existed previously. Other individuals, who were not initially selected for advancement, have been able to receive targeted training, opening up the possibility for career development opportunities in the future.

The POLYTECH School District does not discriminate in employment or educational programs, services, or activities based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.



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The ability of students who participate in the SMT program to earn college credits would offer them an even greater benefit than they have already received. This would open up the potential of a higher education pathway that they may never even have considered a possibility before. Polytech Adult Education is fully supportive of this effort and is greatly looking forward to the chance to participate and be of assistance as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

Jeremy D. McEntire
Delaware Manufacturing Development Center
Program Coordinator

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