

High School Program Helps Students Get Jobs

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Reported by: [Kellie Bartoli](#)



While the national unemployment rate is still nine percent, there are some companies looking to hire, and many of these jobs pay around \$40,000 a year.

In this high school class, students aren't writing essays and taking pop quizzes. They're getting hands-on experience that can help them land a job quickly.

"It just gives them a leg up. Employers love that kind of thing because they don't have to spend a lot of time training new employees, they have those skills going in," said Jeff Clutter, College and Career Preparation Manager

at the Vigo County School Corporation.

Vigo County High Schools are taking part in a program called [Dream It. Do It.](#)

At McLean High School in Terre Haute, 12 students are in the elective class, learning advanced manufacturing, laser routing and industry standards.

"A student could go from their high school right into a manufacturing facility here in town and work on the exact same machine," said Clutter

For these students, it's not "homework" - it's research and development: creating a computer drawing, sending the image for laser cutting, and putting together the finished product.

"The students catch on to it fairly quickly. And it lends itself well to the artistic issues as well as the mechanical structure," said Gene Pettit, the advanced manufacturing teacher at McLean High School.

Students also push themselves to go back and change a product until it's perfect.

"That's what we encourage. Because then that gets them to maneuver the software, making changes," said Pettit.

The class puts many skills to to test, like measuring angles and converting fractions, and it teaches the students a valuable life lesson.

"It takes more than one mind. We try to develop team skills and of course it becomes team leadership skills," said Pettit

And the program isn't just benefiting their futures, it's changing their outlook. "We get them over the "I can't," said Pettit.

McLean High School's program is sponsored by Conexus Indiana, a group that has partnered with schools across the state to develop advanced manufacturing classes.

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