Tess Atkins

JOR 320

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School Committee Meeting

SOUTH KINGSTOWN – At the school committee meeting on Tuesday, high School employees presented a career and technical program for students that will start up this year.

Robert Mezzanotte, the principal of SKHS, introduced the SKHS Career and Technical Program (CTE) to the council. CTE is a program for students to jump start their career in whichever profession they choose.

The program offers a hybrid of vocational and traditional education, Chip McGair, the K12 STEM Director for SK Schools, said. McGair said that the goal of CTE is to be able to get both kinds of education for college and careers. The program was created so that students could get “a taste of the work force as well as whatever else they want to do with their lives,” McGair stated.

Mezzanotte explained that the program will be launching this year and four programs have been approved so far. Mezzanotte is hoping for an additional two programs to be added for next year so that the students can have more options to choose from.

The programs that are available for this school year are EMT or CAN, carpentry, computer science and studio art. Students can start taking classes for the CTE program sophomore year of high school and senior year, students will complete a mandatory one semester internship in whichever field they have chosen.

Shivali Finkelstein, the assistant principal of SKHS, said that the internships will allow the students to experience real work in the field and prepare them for jobs after college. However, students will be responsible for their own transportation to their internships. SKHS will help students carpool and will be there for help in finding other possible ways for students to get to their internships.

SKHS has partnerships with several local businesses that are available to students for their internships. Finkelstein said that SKHS is working hard to continue to build relationships with other businesses for internship opportunities for the students.

Finkelstein said that students had until Oct. 1, 2018 to apply for the program. Fifty out of the 55 applicants were selected and Finkelstein hopes to do more marketing for CTE and get more applicants for the following year. If students would still like to apply, CTE is now doing a rolling admission process for anyone who may still be interested.

Students who apply to the program must be able to show that they have attended 95 percent of the school days in the last two years and the students cannot fail more than two classes in their current semester at the time they apply for CTE.

The SKHS employees are working hard to reach out to other communities so that CTE can become more known to high school students in the surrounding towns. The goal is to get as many applicants as possible as there are no limits as of now to the number of applicants that will be accepted to the program.

Students from other districts also have a possibility to be accepted into the CTE program and then will transfer to SKHS in order to complete all of the classes and internship since SKHS is the only school that is offering this program. There is no extra cost for any student who applies to the program and gets accepted. Guidance counselors from other schools will look at every student’s transcript and make sure that all CTE students will be scheduled together in the same classes for each pathway.

Finkelstein said that there will be multiple courses running for each program within CTE. Teachers who are running the CTE courses are under the same teacher contract as all other teachers in the district and they have to fulfill the same state teaching qualification requirements as all other teachers.

Students that are accepted into CTE will be in the same classes. The classes that each CTE student will take will be their pathway through each program offered. Students will be grouped together and students who are not in the program will not be taking unnecessary classes.

Through teacher enthusiasm, working with guidance and encouraging middle school students, the SKHS employees will be able to get a better idea of what the younger students are interested in and create programs catered to their interests in the future.

There will be a lot of marketing in the up coming year including an open house on Saturday October 27, which will be open for students and families to go to get more information about CTE. The surrounding communities can also expect advertisements in local newspapers, emails to surrounding areas and signs and brochures around town.

In other business:

* Olivia Santucci, a student at SKHS was awarded the “You Inspire Me” award by the principal.
* The council recognized Teresa Eagan as Special Education Director of the Year.