

Educators, businesses join to create a 'tech incubator'

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Students at Beloit Memorial High School (BMHS) will have the opportunity to get real-world experience in information technology and computer science at a technology incubator space hoped to be created at the Ironworks Complex, according to Ryan Rewey, the district's career and technical education director.

With computer science and information technology jobs expected to account for 62 percent of all job growth between 2010 and 2020, Rewey said the district is working to get interested students the necessary resources to pursue careers in high-demand fields.

"The goal is to get students back to our area, working in information technology and computer science fields," he said.

Rewey said the district will be partnering with AccuLynx, a cloud-based construction management software company, and Premier Technologies, a computer networking services company, to work with students on joint projects at the incubator.

Freshmen and sophomore students would begin the program at BMHS. This would eventually lead to the Technology Incubator space.

Representatives from several area employers make up the Advisory Committee. They include AccuLynx, Premier Technologies, Hendricks Holding Company along with Beloit College, UW-Whitewater, Rockford University and IT Roundtable in Rockford. Eigerlabs will also assisting in crafting and implementing the program.

The goal is for some of the students to eventually work on actual projects at Acculynx or Premier Technologies. Some of the students could potentially work and receive pay for their services from the two companies as well as college credit through the Youth Apprenticeship Program.

The opportunities would not only be available for BMHS students, but students at Beloit College and Blackhawk Technical College as well.

District officials are moving forward on planning the incubator with local businesses. As the project is still in the planning stages, there is no date for completion at this time.

BMHS's newly remodeled Technical Education Department offers students a variety of career and technical paths, computer repair and information technology as well as machining, building construction, manufacturing, automotive technologies, business and hospitality and tourism.

The new Advisory Committee with AccuLynx and Premier Technologies will be helping to determine which topics will be covered in computer science as well as information technology courses.

Rewey said BMHS currently has a CISCO program, but next year will have Project Lead the Way computer science courses as well.

“With the shortages of individuals going into Information Technology and Computer Science fields we want to be proactive in our community to provide a productive learning resource for students and the community,” Rewey said.