

# SCHOOL DISTRICT, BLACKHAWK TECH CONTINUE TO BUILD PARTNERSHIP

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Austin Montgomery/Beloit Daily News Blackhawk Technical College President Tracy Pierner presents future goals for BTC at Thursday's Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation's Board of Directors meeting at the Kolak Education Center, 1500 Fourth St., in Beloit.

BELOIT - Leaders from the School District of Beloit and Blackhawk Technical College are moving ahead with plans to prepare area students for an ever-changing job market.

School District of Beloit Superintendent Stanley Munro and Blackhawk Technical College President Tracy Pierner shared their plans at Thursday's Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors meeting.

Munro said the district would continue to grow its career academies, while building partnerships with Beloit College and Blackhawk Technical College.

Goals for the district, Munro said, include having Beloit Memorial High School students ready to graduate with degrees in nursing, early childhood education, automotive technician and business education at the time of leaving the high school.

Citing data shared by futurist Thomas Frey who claims 2 billion jobs will disappear in the next decade, Munro said the district needed to "prepare our students for jobs that don't exist yet."

"We have to make sure our students have those skills from now so they are ready to enter this competitive field," Munro added. "Education needs to change."

The district is also looking at developing a magnet school of performing and visual arts. A business advisory council is also in the works that would see industry leaders meet three times yearly with school district staff to give feedback on strategic planning and give insight on employment trends.

Up the road at Blackhawk Technical College, Pierner said the school was in the middle of repositioning itself to allow "more on ramps and training" for students. He told board members BTC would continue to support Beloit's dual credit academies and would continue to work with Brodhead, Clinton, Edgerton and Juda high schools, citing partnerships with businesses including CCI, Scot Forge, Monroe Truck Equipment and United Alloy.

A portion of Pierner's presentation Thursday focused on capital investments that could come for the school, including a state-of-the-art public safety and transportation complex; renovations to two wings of the college and the potential for student housing at BTC.

Pierner stressed the student housing plan was an exploratory option, with the Blackhawk Technical College Foundation recently approving a plan to possibly purchase land near the campus. Pierner said he has two investor meeting coming up, and noted any student housing addition would be owned and operated by a third party management firm, and not the college.