



MEDIA RELEASE

April 30, 2024

919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

Students take away insight, business cards at HCSD Career Fair

Spring Hill – Hernando School District's College & Career Dept. hosted its fourth annual Career & Internship Fair Friday, April 26 at Pasco-Hernando State College. Juniors and seniors from the district's high schools flooded the grounds to meet and speak with area employers about careers, internships and educational opportunities. Following, students gathered in the conference center for lunch, reflection and a Q&A session.

"It is an opportunity for students to be exposed to employers in the area," said Danyl Williams, a College and Career Specialist with Hernando Schools. "Many even get job offers. ...It's a great networking event."

Among some of the representatives, Chelena Betz, Director of Food & Nutrition for HCA Oak Hill Hospital, said students are often surprised to learn of the many employment opportunities offered at the hospital. "It does not have to be medical-related," she said. For instance, the hospital has a facilities department that needs to fill positions such as welders. Someone could get a job with Food and Nutrition, yet go to college for a business degree. No matter what type of degree an employee works toward, HCA will pay for it. "HCA likes to promote from within," Betz said. "So the job you first take can just be a stepping stone."

Dennis Cockrell, student internship recruiter for the Southwest Florida Water Management District, typically asks students if they are needing a job, going to college – or both. "What we offer is two-fold," he said. "We have both a robust internship program and and entry level jobs."

"I tell them to explore everything," said DeMore Patrick public information officer and health information program manager for the Florida Department of Health Hernando County. "You don't have to be pigeonholed with the department you start with," he said.

As they took notes and asked questions, student attendees were appreciative of the refreshments and goodie bags provided by the employers. For college bound WWHS junior Nevaeh Daniels, she was not yet sure if she would stay local or look out of state for a college. After seeing the campus and speaking to the PHSC representative, her mind was made. "I definitely want to go here," she said. Her classmate, Brianna Fraccica-Liota, also in 11th grade, felt the fair was quite informative. "I want to go into the medical field, so I learned a lot," she said, after having a chance to discuss her options with representatives from HCA Oak Hill Hospital and Florida Department of Health. "If I work for them, they will pay for school."



"The feedback has been great," said Williams. "Employers were impressed with the student's appearance and preparedness and students were initiating great conversations with the representatives. Many students expressed gratitude for the opportunity, and left with business cards and guidance on what next steps would be to gain employment. That was our objective."

Thank you to all organizations and companies who participated: Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD), Hernando Correctional Institution, Hernando County Supervisor of Elections, Suncoast Credit Union, Publix, Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative, U.S. Army Brooksville, HCA Florida Oak Hill Hospital, Hernando County Fire Rescue, Hernando County Sheriff's Office, Hernando County School District, Pasco-Hernando State College, Florida Department of Health - Hernando County, and Spherion Staffing and Recruiting.

