

Shop and School Symbiosis

PMPA member Clippard Instrument Laboratory has been working with Butler Tech for over 45 years and the benefits keep growing.



What happens when a local precision machining shop supports a local trade school? The shop recruits some of the best students and the school is able to maintain its program. Win-win. Clippard in Cincinnati, Ohio has been working with Butler Tech in Colerain Township, Ohio for over 45 years. Clippard supplies Butler Tech with material, helps with mock interviews, mentors and hires students, and Clippard's maintenance employees help install machines and fix equipment. Every year, Butler Tech holds a skills contest and Clippard is always on hand.

SkillsUSA Contest

According to Dave Fox, Butler Tech's machine shop teacher, "Butler Tech is affiliated with many of the high schools in the Cincinnati area and have different programs to offer. We have always had state machining competitions for our students, but we thought it would be a good idea to invite the business community to watch."

The local contest was held at Butler Tech on January 23, 2024. The contest is limited to 25 students. During the competition, high school junior and senior students are given a print that they must make on a manual mill or lathe and on a CNC mill and lathe.

There are four winners who move onto the Southwest Regional Championship. But everyone is a winner because of the 25 contestants, all 25 received job offers, which, according to Dave, is normal. How is this possible? Because Butler Tech invited local businesses to the contest and 50 attended. Also in attendance were parents, school administration, politicians, high school freshman and sophomore students and news media.

Dave is proud to share that "Every year we have more employers asking how they can be part of the program and what they need to do to be able to hire some of the 25 students that are in the program."

Clippard

Robin Rutschilling, director of operations for Clippard, cannot overstate the positive effects of their relationship with Butler Tech. It's not just about access to talent — which is a big benefit — but it's about their community. The Colerain Township community



Skills contest at Butler Tech. Source: Robin Rutschilling.

is important to the Clippard family, and their participation with Butler Tech is a glowing example of how businesses and schools can work together. Bill Clippard Sr. started serving on Butler Tech's advisory committee 45 years ago and, since then, Clippard has been able to help the program grow.

Butler Tech's machining program started with manual machines and with the help of an enthusiastic teacher, a supportive administration, engaged politicians, Clippard and additional local businesses, the program now has CNC machines, simulators and an upgraded workspace. All working together and all benefiting.

When Robin talks about programs, open houses or anything related to Butler Tech, he uses the word "we" instead of "they" without realizing it. That tells the whole story. **P**

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