



8/11/08

Those who can do, teach

Eleven Connecticut high school and community college teachers are spending the summer working at high-tech companies throughout the state.

"Giving teachers exposure to current manufacturing practices is a highly relevant way for them to upgrade their knowledge and provide their students with the skills they need to meet the expectations of today's manufacturing industry," said Lauren Weisberg Kaufman, Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA) vice president and executive director of its education foundation.

The teachers receive a \$4,000 stipend, which pays for their time spent in the workplace and implementing the curriculum project into the school day.

The program is 160-hours. It began in June and runs through September.

The program is sponsored by CBIA and the Regional Center for Next Generation Manufacturing.

"Participating teachers are able to motivate and engage their students with

real-world learning, preparing them for post-secondary education and employment," said Karen Wosczyzna-Birch, director, Regional Center for Next Generation Manufacturing College of Technology.

According to Kaufman, the program immerses teachers in a high-tech workplace with a mission to see how math and science solve real-world problems.

"What makes this externship unique is the follow-up," said Kaufman. "After the externship with the company is completed, high school teachers will develop a work-based learning project for their students, providing a more realistic understanding of how classroom learning is applied on the job. And community college teachers are better equipped to teach the practical applications of lean manufacturing and supply chain management."

According to Kaufman, participating teachers were selected on the basis of their ability to bring relevant technological advances into the classroom.

—Ryan Doran