

Overview of the Houston County School System Supplemental Guide for Georgia BEST (Business Ethics Student Training)

PONDER these QUESTIONS:

1. There are **SOME** entry level workers that have the necessary soft skills that employers need. Why is it that some students are not quite as savvy, refined, or polished as others?
2. What is it that gives **SOME** students a competitive edge over other students when it comes to being prepared for success in the workplace?

What the Research Shows:

- The LACK of soft skills is a problem among entry level workers across America.
- Employers' need for workers with strong soft skills is greater than the available pool of workers.
- The top 3 factors in HIRING for companies are all soft skills including: (1) attitude, (2) interpersonal skills, and (3) communication skills.
- The top 3 factors in RETAINING a job are also soft skills related. They include (1) attitude, (2) willingness & ability to accomplish tasks, and (3) attendance & punctuality.
- The majority of people who lose their jobs or fail to be promoted do so because of poor soft skills and not lack of technical skills.
- Employers have greater success in finding workers with technical skills than they do in finding workers who exhibit good soft skills.
- Employers expect workers to enter the workplace with soft skills intact.

Research Finding:

Being prepared for success in the workplace is related to experiences that one has or does not have.

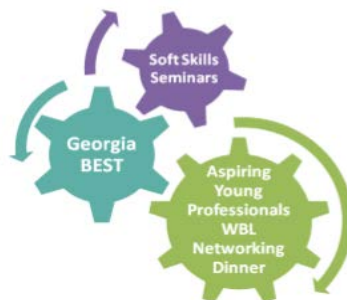
How can CTAE help prepare students with the necessary soft skills?

- The main purpose of CTAE is to prepare students for success in the workplace.
- Without soft skills, students are not going to be successful.
- The best way to prepare students for success is to provide experiences for them.

Experiences provided to students enrolled in the Houston County Schools to assist in preparing students for success in the workplace include:

- Georgia BEST Soft Skills Certificate that serve as validation to employers that a student has successfully displayed strong work habits
- Soft Skills Seminars sponsored by business & industry representatives in Houston County
- Aspiring Young Professionals WBL Networking Dinner

Soft Skills @ Work



As an effort to improve soft skills among high school students in the Houston County School system, each high school began implementing Georgia BEST (Business Ethics Student Training) modules during the 2013-14 school year. Georgia BEST modules were developed for high school students by the Georgia Department of Labor and include the following modules:

- Discipline and Character
- Attendance
- Productivity and Academic Performance
- Responsibility and Organization
- Attitude and Respect
- Teamwork and Work Habits
- Self-management and Time management
- Oral and Written Business Communication Skills
- Appearance and Professional Image
- Social media Ethics: Pros & Cons of Social media for Job Search & Networking

Students who successfully display strong work habits from the above modules earn a Georgia BEST Soft Skills Certificate from the Georgia Department of Labor. Students are given opportunities to create a portfolio that contains evidence for each of the Georgia BEST modules.

The first Soft Skills Seminars (SSS) offered by business partners in Houston County were provided to Houston County students during the 2013-14 school year. The topics coincide with the Georgia BEST modules. The SSS take place after the school day from 4:30 until 5:30 on 5 different days. Special thanks is expressed to the following business partners for making presentations at the first series of SSS:

- Dr. Joe Richardson, Senior Scientist & Program Manager, MERC
- Chrissy Miner, Chief Operating Officer, 21st Century Partnership
- Dwight Hines, Financial Analyst, RAFB
- Ruby Hamb-Holmes, Program Director, City of Warner Robins
- David Peppers, Plant HR Manager, Perdue Farms, Inc.
- Tabitha Pugh, Public Information Officer, Warner Robins Police Department
- Marian McLeamore, Manager of Public Relations, Flint Energies
- Pat Braski, Operator, Chick-fil-A
- Sonya Jenkins, CEO/business Solutions Consultant, Vision Inscribed
- Shaw Blackmon, Owner, National Bank Products

A new experience in 2014-15 targeted to improve soft skills for CTAE students in Houston County Schools includes the *Aspiring Young Professionals Networking Dinner*. Seniors in the Work-Based Learning (WBL) programs will be given the opportunity to be critiqued on soft skills by local business partners during a networking dinner. Junior WBL students will assist in setting up and serving at the dinner.

Soft Skills @ Work



The *Houston County School System Supplemental Guide for Georgia BEST* was developed by the Work-Based Learning teachers from the Houston County Schools. It may be used by any teacher working with students to improve their soft skills through the Georgia BEST modules. This supplemental guide contains the following items for each of the Georgia BEST modules:

- Lesson
- Minimum of 3 activities
- Estimated timeframe of each activity
- Suggested Evidence to use for Georgia BEST documentation

Appreciation is expressed to the following individuals who contributed to the development of *The Houston County School System Supplemental Guide for Georgia BEST*, June 2014:

- Dr. Barbara Wall, Director of CTAE for Houston County School System
- Sandi Couillard, WBL Teacher, Northside High School
- Kathryn Hankinson, WBL Teacher, Warner Robins High School
- Karma Hayes, WBL Teacher, Houston County High School
- Cindi Holly, WBL Teacher, Houston County Career Academy
- Dr. Monica Kearse, WBL Teacher, Veterans High School
- Jean Provitt, WBL Teacher, Perry High School
- Kristine Thornburg, Youth Apprenticeship Facilitator, Houston County Schools

Soft Skills @ Work

