

Coventry career ctr. ready for mid-week close up

Coventry school looking to attract new students

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COVENTRY — It may be difficult to picture now, but a new school year will be starting eventually and the Regional Career and Technical Center at Coventry High School is hosting its annual open house Wednesday night, January 8 in preparation for that.

From 6 to 8 p.m. students and educators from the center will be on hand to answer questions and offer tours and information about the state-of-the art facilities.

Lori Ferguson, director of the regional Career and Technical Center, said interested parents and students in grades eight through 10 from Coventry, East Greenwich, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster-Glocester, Scituate, Warwick and West Warwick school districts are encouraged to attend and learn more about the various programs offered at the Center.

The Career and Technical Center actually began three decades ago as the West Bay Collaborative and was housed in the middle school.

Of the 404 current enrollees, about 10 percent of them are out of district.

“What some may not realize is that these kids take their required course for the program they selected in addition to the regular core courses,” Ferguson said. “Some come in on Saturdays at 6 a.m. to take their gym requirement because that’s the only time they can fit it in.”

The programs offered include automotive/marine/diesel, technology, carpentry/construction, computer information technology/video game design, cosmetology/barber/nail technician, culinary arts/food service/baking, early childhood education, graphics communication/printing and health careers/CAN.

Ferguson said some students don’t like to be in a classroom all day and being enrolled in a specialized program allows them to get hands-on training.

“With this, they can get under the

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hood of a car or make lunch for a crowd; plus, they do get college credits so it can be a big savings," she said. "In addition to a diploma, graduates of the Center leave high school with certifications, licenses, and training that would normally require additional and often costly schooling, as well as local networking and possible job opportunities."

According to Ferguson, the dropout rate is less than one percent.

"Students sometimes learn that the program they began in isn't one they enjoy after all, therefore they switch programs," she said. "The skills they use in these programs might also be used to help them get jobs to pay for school — for example, maybe a student enjoys working on hair and nails but might not

want it for a career but it helps pay for her to go to school for what she does want."

She enjoys holding the open house because it's her way of keeping students and parents informed.

"I've noticed a big change in the caliber of programs over the years," she said. "It's more regimented."

Through her years of seeing students come into the programs and after talking to so many parents, she said sometimes at first parents don't think their child can get a solid education unless they obtain a traditional education.

"These programs are even more rigorous than a traditional high school program but I see it really helping students mature," she said.

In addition to the open house, on February 12, interested students can take a tour of the facility and have the opportunity to sit in on classes.