

Posted on 07/20/13 in [The Ann Arbor.com](http://www.mlive.com/ann-arbor/) archives. For the latest breaking news and updates in Ann Arbor and the surrounding area, see [MLive.com/ann-arbor](http://www.mlive.com/ann-arbor/) (<http://www.mlive.com/ann-arbor/>)

Ypsilanti Community School district to add new vocational programs next year

By Erica Hobbs

With the merging of (<http://annarbor.com/tag/Ypsilanti-Willow%20Run%20merger/>) the **Ypsilanti Public Schools** and **Willow Run Community Schools** districts, students attending the new **Ypsilanti Community School** (<http://www.ycschools.us/>) district will have more opportunities for vocational training next year.

Superintendent **Scott Menzel** said, in addition to the three courses offered through the Ypsilanti Regional Career Technical Center (<http://www.ypsd.org/rctc/>), the district also is likely to offer two additional courses through Washtenaw Community College (<http://www.wccnet.edu/>).

“We had to revisit how we were structured,” he said. “That’s the process we’ve been undergoing.”

The district is planning on offering a course on construction trades in the fall and adding a certified nurse assistant program in the winter, both through a partnership with WCC. The RCTC now offers auto technician, auto collision and culinary arts and hospitality courses.

The decision comes after uncertainty regarding whether the RCTC would be reopened at all next year. **Bill Burnette**, director of the RCTC, said he and the center’s other four staff members received letters in May saying the district was not sure it would be offering the programs through the RCTC and would decide based on student interest.

But Menzel said the district has received preliminary student interest assessments and said there is enough student interest to offer at least one section of each of the current RCTC programs plus the additional construction trades course through WCC in the fall, though he noted staffing decisions still need to be finalized.



New vocational programs are on the horizon for the newly formed Ypsilanti Community School district.

Holly Heaviland, director of community and school partnerships for the **Washtenaw Intermediate School District**, said final numbers won't be known until guidance counselors meet to schedule students in July.

"We need to give the new staff time to come in and have those conversations with the kids to make those commitments," she said.

Burnette, however, said interest in the RCTC programs is steady. He said last year, the center had about 60 students enrolled in its culinary arts and hospitality course, and about 30 each in the auto technician and auto collision courses. He said he's received 124 applications for students interested in registering for RCTC programs next year.

Burnette said the RCTC also has had increasing support from outside the district. **Dusty's Collision** founder **Dusty Whitney** pledged (<http://annarbor.com/news/dustys-collision-owner-pledges-75000-to-support-regional-career-technical-center/>)\$75,000 over the course of three years to boost the RCTC auto center. Burnette said the auto center also has received another \$5,000 donation that could be renewed for the next two or three years. He said the RCTC has received more than \$16,000 in grants from the Collision Repair Education Foundation (<http://collisioneducationfoundation.org/>) and is in the running for a \$50,000 grant to renovate the auto shop.

"There is not another program in the state with this kind of support," he said in an email.

The district's partnership with WCC is part of its pledge that every YCS student should graduate with a career credential, college credit or both. Menzel said the district will be looking at establishing more electives through additional partnerships in the future.

Erica Hobbs is a freelancer for AnnArbor.com.

Comments

TryingToBeObjective

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 7:23 p.m.

I think it's a great idea! Not every kid is college oriented, and these courses offer some options to encourage them to go the vocational route.

sc8

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 6:46 p.m.

I still say the bear in the logo looks like it is sneezing the rest of the logo.

Gemii

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 3:41 p.m.

That's awesome news! Erica can you get clarity in what Menzel means by this "there is enough student interest to offer at least one section of each of the current RCTC programs plus the additional construction trades course through WCC in the fall, though he noted staffing decisions still need to be finalized." What is meant by one section? Does that mean it the classes will only be offered part-time? Not the full-time program they had before?

Gemii

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 4:33 p.m.

Thanks Erica! Can you keep us updated and let us know if they have enough students for multiple classes of the courses. Thanks again.

Erica Hobbs

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 4:11 p.m.

Hi Gemii. This past year, there were enough students enrolled in the RCTC courses to offer multiple classes of the same course. Menzel was saying that preliminary interest shows there is at least enough interest to offer one class for each course, but they won't know the numbers for sure until guidance counselors meet this month to officially register students. I hope this helps!

Steve

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 1:56 p.m.

I taught automotive technology at Schoolcraft College for 15 years before they sadly cancelled our excellent program. Our students DID find good employment and job satisfaction. I'm glad that voc ed is staying alive elsewhere. Food for thought---Is studying to become an MD voc ed???

willowrunistillcare

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 1:25 p.m.

This is a wonderful direction because not all kids fit the one size fits all curriculum of college prep courses that has been designed for them. I think more kids would stay in school and be motivated towards success if they have more options as described. Ypsilanti Community Schools sounds like it is off to a great beginning. Best wishes.....

ThinkingOne

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 12:35 p.m.

I thought that Ypsilanti HS had joined the SWWC (South and West Washtenaw Coalition) last year, and students were taking some of the offerings through that group, mostly at Saline HS. Has the new district decided to continue with that also, or not?

ThinkingOne

Thu, Jul 4, 2013 : 1:16 a.m.

'..the district also is likely to offer two additional courses through Washtenaw Community College.' 'The district is planning on offering a course on construction trades in the fall and adding a certified nurse assistant program in the winter, both through a partnership with WCC.' These two were offered through the SWWC and apparently not by Ypsi last year. Perhaps it is just these two programs that Ypsi was participating in. It seems that they were already partnering with RCTC for some of the other SWWC offerings. 'The RCTC now offers auto technician, auto collision and culinary arts and hospitality courses.'

ThinkingOne

Thu, Jul 4, 2013 : 1:10 a.m.

Hello Emma. I am aware that they hadn't been, hence my statement that I thought they had joined 'last year'. There was an Ypsi bus that I saw many times sitting in the bus loop at SHS just before the Saline buses arrived. Maybe I am confused and it was Willow Run, but I thought it was Ypsi. If you know why the Ypsi/Willow Run bus was doing that, other than the SWWC, please let me know.

Emma Jackson

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 5:41 p.m.

Hello ThinkingOne, YPS has never been a part of the SWWC.

Carole

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 12:15 p.m.

I am very happy to see that they will be offering job related educational courses. Not everyone wishes to go to college, and there are many, many jobs that need job training -- i.e. plumbing, electricians, tradesmen, etc. Hope it all works out well.

BobbyTarsus

Tue, Jul 2, 2013 : 10:36 a.m.

When i attended RCTC, they offered welding/fabrication, medical studies, even child care. I wish they would bring back some of those programs.

Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our **User Agreement (<http://www.mlive.com/useragreement/>)** and **Privacy Policy (<http://www.mlive.com/useragreement/>)**

© 2013 MLive Media Group All rights reserved (**About Us (<http://www.mlive.com/aboutus/>)**). The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of MLive Media Group