

Partnership NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF WALSALL EDUCATION BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

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EDUCATION BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

www.walsallebp.co.uk

Walsall Education Business Partnership works to encourage improved links between education and business.

Through a range of programmes Walsall EBP provides insights and understanding for industry and school staff, works to raise the motivation and achievement levels of students and helps to prepare them for life after school and for the world of work.



NOW THAT'S...

PARTNERSHIP WORKING!!

With increased Government emphasis on the importance of links between schools and business the demand for services provided by Walsall EBP has grown even more rapidly in the last 12 months. In that time we have involved over 11,500 Walsall young people in education business link activities to enable them to gain a better understanding of the world of work.

This level of activity is only possible because of the commitment and help of well over 3,250 local employers who have supported Walsall EBP in that time. This support has included providing practice interviews, acting as mentors, supporting curriculum activities, offering work placements, hosting teacher placements and acting as facilitators at enterprise challenge events.

The developing 14-19 agenda, particularly the new Specialised Diploma qualification (*further information in News Update section*), will require a further significant increase in employer engagement and support for education. The recently published Department of Children, Schools and Families 14 – 19 report '*Building on the Best*' focuses on Employer Engagement and highlights the challenge that this presents and the central position of EBPs in this agenda. Locally Walsall EBP is committed to involving more and more employers in supporting education business link activities.

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WALSALL EBP ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO SERCO FOR THEIR SPONSORSHIP OF THE 2008 ANNUAL EMPLOYER CONFERENCE AND THIS EDITION OF PARTNERSHIP NEWS.

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EMPLOYER MENTORING

Walsall EBP's employer mentoring programme, which is targeted at students who are capable of achieving 5 A* - C grade GCSEs but who are currently under-performing, continues to go from strength to strength, after eleven years, with demand from schools still increasing.

The mentors are recruited from local organisations and, following a background check and training, agree to meet with a year 11 student every two to three weeks to discuss progress. Walsall EBP supports the mentors throughout the process and regular meetings are held with the school to discuss student progress.

At the end of the academic year all of the mentors are invited to attend a centrally organised review meeting so that their experiences and successes can be shared. At the most recent review meeting the opportunity was taken to present commendations to a number of employer mentors who have been involved with the Walsall EBP mentoring programme for over 4 years.



The commendation recipients pictured with their certificates, the other mentors and Lorenzo Cosco from Walsall EBP.

YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR

For a number of years Walsall EBP has supported the Rotary Club of Walsall with its Annual Young Chef of the Year competition. A record number of schools took part in this year's event with almost 250 students taking part in school heats to decide who would go forward. The Walsall finals, for the school heat winners, were held in the catering department at Walsall College. The judges had a really difficult task in separating the contestants because the standard just gets better and better each year. The winners of the two age categories, who will represent Walsall in the Black Country final at the Molineux Stadium, were:

Junior (11 – 14) winner:

Charlotte Hall,
Hydesville Tower School

Senior (15 – 16) winner:

Balraj Mavi,
Queen Mary's Grammar School



Young Chef 2008 Winners Balraj Mavi and Charlotte Hall with Rod Hannam, Rotary Club of Walsall and Pauline Millward, Walsall EBP

ENTERPRISE



The Government is committed to ensuring that enterprise education is firmly established in the secondary school curriculum and then wishes to see this extend to primary schools and colleges. The Enterprise Entitlement for 14 – 16 year old students focuses on:

- enterprise capability – to enable young people to handle uncertainty and risk, respond to change and manage new ideas;
- financial capability – understand concepts of money, credit, investment, budgets, planning and personal risk management;
- economic and business understanding –

understand concepts of market competition, price, efficiency, growth, resources and responsibility.

Over the last three years, Walsall EBP has developed a range of enterprise activities and challenge events that it delivers to students in Walsall schools to help address various aspects of the Enterprise Entitlement. Some of the most recent are featured below.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE

The fact that social enterprise is an important element within the government's enterprise strategy is often overlooked and earlier this year, for the first time, Walsall EBP organised and delivered a large-scale social enterprise event.



The event was held at the Banks's Stadium and was supported through the European Social Fund. The event involved sixty year 12 students from nine Walsall schools who were challenged to produce a business proposition for an imaginary three hectares of woodland.



The Challenge was set by Rebecca Roberts from the Forest of Mercia who were one of the organisations providing the students with essential background information throughout the day.

The winning team, from Brownhills Community Technology College, came up with the idea of turning their woodland into a health and activity retreat, providing courses and a place to get fit for teenagers and children who are obese.



The winning Brownhills Community Technology College team pictured with their trophy immediately after the Social Enterprise Challenge.

The evaluation returns from all of the partners were extremely positive and the intention is to make this an annual event.

REGENERATION CHALLENGE



This is second year that this event has been held at the Banks's Stadium and Walsall EBP were particularly grateful to Walsall Housing Group for sponsoring the activity and to West Midlands police for the level of their support. The eleven teams were challenged to look at the regeneration needs of the St Matthew's area of Walsall and to make a presentation about their ideas to a panel of judges. A particular feature of the challenge was the need to 'design out crime' as part of the proposals, hence the involvement of West Midlands police.

Following a really close competition the eventual winners were the team from Palfrey Girls School, who everyone agreed had come up with the best ideas on the day.

The winning Palfrey Girls School with their trophy pictured with Jo Podmore from event sponsors Walsall Housing Group and PC Alan Wiley from West Midlands police.



As usual the judges had the most difficult job in deciding who were the best team...

WALSALL YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS 2008

Sponsored by Walsall College, the second annual final of the Walsall Young Entrepreneurs competition was held recently at the Forest Arts Centre.

The twelve teams of Year 10 students taking part had all won enterprise events in their own schools and so this was very much the best against the best with the level of competition understandably very intense and extremely high quality.

Throughout the day the teams, with their business supporters, were involved in a series of enterprise activities and challenged to come up with an imaginative and sustainable business idea to help the people of Africa. Each team had to make a presentation of their idea to a panel of local business leaders in a business-style pitch with the best two then competing 'head to head' in the grand final.

With their innovative idea of creating a series of special internet cafes which would double up as training centres and community bases across Africa a team from Barr Beacon Language College again proved victorious on the day and were deservedly crowned as the Walsall Young Entrepreneurs for 2008.



David Wheeler, Acting Principal, Walsall College pictured with the winning Barr Beacon team and their trophy.

Leon Jessel MEMORIAL TECHNOLOGY TROPHY

Following the death of local businessman Leon Jessel, who had been a staunch Chamber supporter for many years, the Walsall Chamber Trustees decided that a Trophy awarded to young people for excellence in technology would be a fitting tribute to his memory. The Trustees approached Walsall EBP requesting ideas for a memorial trophy event which were duly presented, discussed and accepted.



Jane Antill, Chair, Walsall EBP Board pictured presenting the Leon Jessel Memorial trophy to the winning team from Pool Hayes School

All Walsall schools were invited to submit teams of year 9 students into a day-long Challenge competition at Walsall College. The Challenge, which was led by Walsall College staff, was to produce a vehicle from a pack of components that was provided on the day. Following a closely fought competition the eventual winners were the team from Pool Hayes Arts and Community School. The evaluations from the event were outstanding and all of the partners involved are committed to making this an annual event.

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DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

The 'Smart Choices Plus' programme, which is funded by Walsall New Deal for Communities and delivered by Walsall EBP, supports young people as they prepare to make the transition from school into work or training. The project officers meet with the young people regularly, support them in various ways and take them through a programme that focuses on:

- developing self-confidence
- developing self esteem
- identifying strengths and interest areas
- practicing and improving employability skills
- increasing work-readiness
- work placements
- job searches
- applying for jobs

Part of the 'Smart Choices' process includes acquiring work-relevant qualifications that will increase the young person's chances of getting a job. One of the qualifications included in the programme is a First Aid course organised by St John's Ambulance and leading to the Young Persons First Aid award. The 'Smart Choices' students recently took part in this course and 24 of those involved achieved the required pass standard. They will now have their certificates to show to future employers and will be taking these important skills into the workplace.



'Smart Choices' students practicing their bandaging techniques under the watchful eye of a St John's Ambulance tutor



Students practicing the important first aid skill of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation

The framework to which schools, colleges and other learning providers work is called 'Every Child Matters'. It is divided into five sections:

'EVERY CHILD MATTERS'

- 1) **being healthy** - enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- 2) **staying safe** - being protected from harm and neglect
- 3) **enjoying and achieving** - curriculum enhancement through the involvement of local business / industry
- 4) **making a positive contribution** - developing enterprising behaviour

5) **economic well-being** - linking classroom activities with opportunities and skills in the 'world of work'

Sections 3, 4 & 5 all contain important elements to prepare young people for working life and many primary schools are finding these particularly difficult to address through their own resources. The result is that a growing number of primary schools are now approaching Walsall EBP for assistance and a number of specific activities for these younger age groups are being developed and delivered as the photographs illustrate:



The winners pictured with their trophy and business supporter at a recent Walsall EBP Regeneration Challenge event for primary pupils.



Marcianne Unwimba from Walsall Housing Group working with primary pupils at a recent Primary Enterprise Challenge

Details about the Walsall EBP Primary School Support Programme can be found on the Walsall EBP website – www.walsallebp.co.uk.

NEWS UPDATE

NEW SPECIALISED DIPLOMAS

NEWS UPDATE:

In 2006 the Government announced the introduction of a range of new Specialised Diplomas, which are new employer-led academic qualifications with much of the learning set in the context of a work-related subject area. The Diplomas, which will be phased-in over a number of years, are designed to increase choice for young people, allowing them to learn in an exciting new way, combining theoretical study with applied, practical learning and providing them with skills that employers and HE will value. It is recognised that the Diplomas will require a much greater involvement and input from employers and it is the introduction of this qualification that has brought the issues around 'employer engagement' into sharp focus.

From September 2008 five different Diplomas (Creative and Media, Engineering, Construction, IT and Society, Health and Development) will be available for first teaching and locally Walsall College working with Blue Coat and Pool Hayes Creative Arts Colleges will be offering the Creative and Media Diploma course. Walsall EBP are working with this consortium to broker employer involvement and support for this new qualification.

A further five Diplomas (Land Based and Environmental Studies, Hair and Beauty, Business Admin, Hospitality and Catering) will be available for first teaching from September 2009 and in Walsall both Hair and Beauty and Engineering will be offered from this date.

2008 EMPLOYER CONFERENCE



The following Walsall EBP Awards, which were sponsored by the Walsall Training Provider Network and Midcounties Co-op, were presented at the recent Employer Conference:

School Awards: introduced in 2002 to recognise those schools who it is considered have given outstanding support over a sustained period:

- Shire Oak Science College
- Queen Mary's Grammar School

Voluntary and Community Award: introduced in 2005 to recognise those Community and Voluntary organisations who support schools and students through their involvement with Walsall EBP:

The Vine Trust

Employer Awards: introduced to recognise those organisations that are considered have given outstanding support to education business link activities over a sustained period. There are three categories, based on the number of employees, to take account of the amount of resource which is available for this type of work:

- Less than 49 employees – Platinum Training and Development
- 50 – 199 employees – Accord Housing
- Over 200 employees – Walsall Housing Group

Walsall EBP 2008 Annual Employer Conference sponsored by



Achieving Success Together

Walsall Education Business Partnership
4th Floor, Townend House, Townend Square, Walsall WS1 1NS
Tel: 01922 424200 Fax: 01922 424243
E-mail: info@walsallebp.co.uk Web: www.walsallebp.co.uk

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