

## Summit aims to prepare students for world of work

By Bethany Dykes Herald Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, February 1, 2016 9:36 pm

CLINTON — Clinton County hosted its first educational summit for business leaders and educators from throughout Clinton County on Monday night.

The summit at the DeWitt Community Center Monday night had 15 tables where business leaders and educators were spread out so they could have a conversation about graduates entering the workforce.

State Sen. Rita Hart, D-Wheatland, was present and made an introduction encouraging participants to really talk about what the workforce wants from graduates.

"This is an important thing to talk about. We all have an interest," Hart said.

Each table had a set of questions to help guide the workforce conversation. Participants at each table talked for 20 minutes about what area businesses want from the employees they hire.

A common theme many tables were discussing was technology. Dennis Lauver, of Howes and Jefferies, said the younger generation can absorb information faster.

"The generation that is coming is fully immersed in technology," Lauver said.

Camanche School District Superintendent Tom Parker said Camanche works to incorporate technology into that district's curriculum.

"I don't see enough job-shadowing programs in the county," said Lauver, who added that kids aren't able to go into a workplace and understand what each business has to offer after high school. He also said many factories have more than just labor jobs.

Aimee Dohse, Clinton High School associate principal, also said students aren't fully aware of their options after graduation.

"Some kids are lost about what they want to do and need help," Dohse said.



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Business leaders and educators from across the county came together to talk about graduates in the workforce Monday night in DeWitt. Bethany Dykes/Clinton Herald

Dohse talked with her tablemates and decided that having a career fair for Clinton High School would be a good way for students to learn about local jobs after graduation.

Deb Olsen, Clinton School District superintendant, also spoke about the students who don't attend college.

"We send 60 to 70 percent of students to a 2- or 4-year school but what about the other 30 to 40 percent?" Olsen questioned.

Olsen said this is why she wanted to hold the summit - so area business leaders and educators could get together to help those students succeed.

"We need to get them the skills for the work world," Olsen said.

Many business leaders told educators they are looking for their future employees to be accountable. They were also hoping schools would find a way to teach their students skills for the "real world", such as managing money.

This summit was the first of its kind in Clinton County. Dohse said she felt it was very beneficial and hopes there will be more education summits for the county.

"I'm excited to see where this grows from," Dohse said.

Each participant made bullet points about what they learned or felt was most important and turned them in before leaving the summit. Olsen explained that they would compile the bullet points and send them to the school districts in Clinton County in hopes of helping schools prepare graduates for the workforce.

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