

Butler Eagle

BC3 to offer Entrepreneurship Academy

High school seniors can take program

Article published January 24, 2015

By Paula Grubbs

GROVE CITY — Seniors in seven school districts in Butler County next school year will have the opportunity to learn about business through the new Entrepreneurship Academy at **Butler County Community College**.

The program, which is in Mercer County, will expand into Butler County next year thanks to a \$100,000 state grant to the Midwestern Intermediate Unit 4.

Cathleen Cubelic, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment at the MIU4 in Grove City, said students interested in entrepreneurship can seek a spot in the academy by completing an application and a two-to three-minute video about themselves and their aspirations, Cubelic said.

She said a team of work force development professionals, chambers of commerce members and higher education representatives will judge the applications and select two students from each school district.

Cubelic said so far the Mars, Seneca Valley, Slippery Rock, South Butler, Moniteau and Karns City school districts have agreed to participate. She still is waiting for a decision from the Butler district.

Under this program, the students will attend their regular classes at their district in the morning and will participate in the academy at BC3 from 12:15 to 2:45 p.m., Monday through Thursday. They will earn both high school and college credits for the classes.

Cubelic said the students will study business concepts such as funding, research and development, production, human resources, taxes and government, public speaking, record keeping, goal development, purchasing and inventory, ethics and more.

The budding entrepreneurs also will go on group trips to businesses and industries, where they will gain hands-on experiences.

“All of this is to be fuel for the development of their own business plan,” Cubelic said.

She said each student will complete a business plan around a product of their own creation using science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM). They must structure a fiscal plan for

the product's conception, then create plans for marketing, production, human resources, advertising and other necessary facets of producing the item.

The finished business plans will be judged by the same panel that selected the candidates. The winning plan will receive cash for potential startup.

"It's an opportunity to see how their ideas come to fruition," Cubelic said.

Cubelic said students can earn additional dual enrollment credits by taking three other courses at BC3 on Fridays, which is an independent study day for academy students.

She said the academy is going well in Mercer County, and she expects success in Butler County as well.

"We are looking forward to extending the academy into an additional county, and to provide that opportunity for the students in Butler," Cubelic said.

The Mars School Board voted Jan. 13 to participate in the academy after it was described by high school principal Todd Kolson.

He said Mars students will be charged \$1,000 to participate.

Acting Superintendent William Pettigrew explained that unlike some other county districts, Mars will not pay the students' fees to enroll in the academy because Mars has other programs in which students are paying to take college classes while in high school.

"We thought it would be unfair to pay those expenses," Pettigrew said.

Bill O'Brien, BC3's vice president of continuing education and off-campus centers, said the academy will allow students to earn a certificate in entrepreneurship while in high school.

He said the classes of introduction to business, marketing and public speaking, plus the credits earned in the academy, will add up to the 15-credit certificate.

"I'm excited about it," O'Brien said. "It's taking our college-within-a-high-school program to another level."

He said academy students who are not planning to go to college will graduate from high school with additional skills, and those who do move on to a college, university or trade school will have a 15-credit jump start on their education.

The Mercer County high schools that are participating are Commodore Perry, Farrell, Greenville, Hermitage, Sharon, Sharpsville, and West Middlesex, but not Grove City.