

Eighth Grade Career Exploration

The goal of the Eighth Grade Career Exploration is to present relevant career information to eighth graders in all Blair County schools that will help them make informed education choices. Initially a project of the 1998 Leadership Blair County Class, the Career Exploration seeks to address the problem that students at this grade level face decisions about what direction to take in their future education, yet they often have limited knowledge of the careers and opportunities available to them in Blair County. The leadership class developed a two-part solution:

- Set aside a day to have business people from across the county go into the schools, meet with students and describe their careers, the training required and even the typical salary and benefits.
- Conduct an essay contest in which students would write about the particular careers that sparked their interest.

Participating schools hold the Career Exploration on a day and in a manner that they feel best suit their capability, calendar and need. They have designated people to oversee their particular career fair. Some schools have business people move throughout the school, visiting many classrooms and interacting with smaller groups of students. Other schools have a panel format that brings the students into a larger room to hear from a panel of business people.

The essay contest gives students the opportunity to reflect on the careers they have learned about and express how the Career Exploration experience has influenced their choices for the future. After the Career Exploration day, students are required to write an essay about a particular career that caught their attention. Guidance counselors at each school rate the essays on content and overall interest and then submit the best three to the Chamber. Members of the BASICS Subcommittee select the best overall essay from each school, and the student who wrote the winning essay is invited to the Chamber Breakfast Club in May (along with their parents and their guidance counselors) to receive a certificate and a \$50 gift card.



The BASICS Subcommittee continues working with schools to identify new and creative program options to achieve the goal of helping eighth grade students in all Blair County schools make informed education choices.