

FRANCIS TUTTLE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS HISTORY

By Jeff Knapp

WITH NEW AND YOUNGER EMPLOYEES JOINING THE RANKS AT FRANCIS TUTTLE TECHNOLOGY

Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, leaders pondered how to keep the history of their district and that of the Oklahoma career tech system alive. The yearlong new employee orientation series includes a brief history of the district, but organizers felt it was necessary for employees to gain deeper insight to enable passing on

that knowledge, much like tribal storytelling of centuries past.

Leadership Francis Tuttle (Leadership FT) was created with a mission to challenge, develop and educate new employees by providing professional development and personal growth opportunities. Embedding the history of early leaders and their legacies—with emphasis on the impact of career and technical education

(CTE) throughout Oklahoma, across the country and around the world—brings an understanding of the economic development aspects CTE training creates.

Though the program is updated each school year, a sample monthly schedule includes the following components.

September: Getting to Know Each Other

Applications are distributed to supervisors prior to the start of the school year to iden-

48 Techniques September 2016 acteonline.org

tify potential class members and submit their names for consideration. After class members are selected, the program begins in September. Members get acquainted with an icebreaker as they learn the details about their year ahead. Building strong bonds and trust are the keys to the first session, and it traditionally endears members to one another for the year, but more importantly, throughout their careers.

Leadership FT Chair Judie Harris explains, "The first meeting can be emotional, but [it] always brings the class closer together in a nurturing environment. We emphasize that we will always be in a safe zone together, and members often talk about family and values as they describe personal goals. Building camaraderie is part of the process."

October: Learning Who They Are

The October meeting is a lesson in becoming an effective leader, instilling the practice of honest and ethical behavior, and learning the importance of leaders holding themselves to higher standards. Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTT*)¹ assessment, members truly discover who they are, what drives them, their aspirations and expectations, and best practices for interacting with other personality types.

Myers-Briggs types are then incorporated throughout the year in various ways.

Denton Blevins, instructional director at Francis Tuttle and a Myers-Briggs certified trainer, has observed how learning about the respective types helps leaders discern how individuals interact with others, particularly when they serve in teams. "Myers-Briggs helps people to better understand themselves—their strengths and weaknesses regarding their communication style. This helps them to consider aspects of diversity in personality types as it applies to the classroom and among co-workers," he said.

November: Discovering the OK CareerTech System

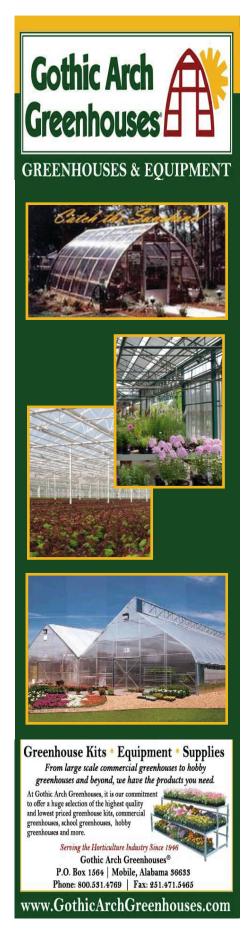
In November, members gain awareness of our district and the broader Oklahoma career tech system by visiting one of the other 28 consolidated technology center districts across the state, each of which has both similarities and differences from our own. The most visited over the years is Central Technology Center in Drumright, Oklahoma. Central Tech has 17 feeder school districts in comparison to Francis Tuttle's six. The importance of the visit is for class members to see different leadership styles applied in similar settings. A highlight at



 Class members Elbert Green and Cedric Swift judge the Special Olympics Bocce Ball Tournament alongside Superintendent's Leadership Academy member Tammy Phillips.



acteonline.org September 2016 Techniques



50



▲ Members of Class XII received an autographed 8 X 10 with Gov. Mary Fallin.

Central Tech is its truck driver training program. After a quick briefing, members have the choice of whether to actually drive or simply to observe during a ride-along: very few remain as observers!

December: Teamwork

Another popular session is the December team-building project, which takes place in one of the skills kitchens of the district's School of Culinary Arts. Based somewhat on an Iron Chef or Hell's Kitchen^{2,3} concept, teams are paired in groups by Myers-Briggs type—some teams with opposites and some with complementary types. Students serve as judges and the chef/instructors are the teachers for this program day, leading members through many switch-ups, including missing recipes, ingredients and/or utensils, causing them to have to think out of the box and work as a team to reach a successful conclusion.

Established deadlines for teams to have their plated meals prepared demonstrates the importance of time manage-

ment and working under pressure, with additional objectives designed to instill confidence, commitment, a positive attitude and creativity. This session is a great experience for teaching how to put out fires (sometimes literally!) and maintain team morale, all directed toward the objective of meal preparation.

Cosmetology instructor Cedric Swift, an outspoken Leadership FT participant, stated, "Some might say that I'm an extreme extrovert, but I was teamed with three introverts. The camaraderie we had established, coupled with the knowledge of our Myers-Briggs types, was beneficial when we encountered obstacles, so we were able to work through the pressure to accomplish our task. It was a really helpful learning experience that I have carried into my classroom."

January: Creative Presentations

January's program reinforces that great leaders are memorable and have presence. Communication and presentation skills are taught in a fun and participative

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format. This day is purposely scheduled to prepare the class for their April program of judged presentations. The session takes them through steps to identify and incorporate unique skill sets, i.e., how to work a room, how to connect with an audience and how to develop effective presentations.

At the end of the day, class members draw for their teams and the subject matter they are to present, each an integral component of Oklahoma career tech. Topics include:

- An overall history of the Oklahoma CTE system.
- J.B. Perky, former state director and the person most responsible for creating a vision for what CTE could be in Oklahoma.
- Roy Peters, another former state director and national leader who spearheaded the more than doubling of Oklahoma's student enrollment during his tenure.
- Francis Tuttle, the visionary leader who established the consolidated school model, along with a stable funding mechanism.
- Bruce Gray, long-time superintendent, instrumental in establishing the Francis Tuttle culture.

Each of these past leaders has a rich history in Oklahoma career tech, and though one team is designated per topic, everyone learns of their idiosyncrasies and respective leadership styles through creative presentations.

February: Field Trips

February's program is an excursion to the Oklahoma state capitol with pre-session homework instructions of knowing their legislators and researching bills relevant to CTE. Aspects of this session include visits with legislators; observing floor discussions in one or both legislative bodies; some behind-the-scenes visits; and added this past year, a scavenger hunt to help members learn their way around the state capitol.

March: Francis Tuttle Tours

In March, the class visits some of the locations where Francis Tuttle serves students and business clients, which the

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majority of employees usually have not visited before. With four campuses and 12 additional locations where employees are working to accomplish the district's mission, this tour helps the class become familiar with their own district and learn more about programs they may not be fully aware of.

April: Presentation Day

April is presentation day. This is one of the most exciting days of the program when teams take the knowledge they have acquired about our system and creatively present the daily impact it has on economic development for the state. Three judges are brought in to deliberate each team's content, organization, style, conclusion and overall effectiveness. To heighten the competitive nature of the day, the team with the highest point total wins a small prize, in addition to bragging rights. This meeting is where history comes alive; everyone leaves knowing how the Oklahoma career tech system came to thrive and how the rich Francis Tuttle culture was born.

May: Time to Have Fun

May brings the rewarding opportunity to participate in Special Olympics Oklahoma⁴ alongside Francis Tuttle's student leadership program, the Superintendent's Leadership Academy. Both groups represent Francis Tuttle by assisting athletes and judging the bocce ball tournament. The day is filled with delight and exuberance as they participate in the athletes' joy of competition, bringing leadership into perspective.

Celebrating the Culture

The final session is celebrated near the end of the school year in May. Instructors and participants alike take the time to relfect on the success of the yearlong program. Class members have built new, and have reinvigorated long-term, bonds. Supervisors join the class in a graduation luncheon at a favorite local restaurant and observe the camaraderie built throughout the year.

Nearly 50 percent of employees have participated in Leadership FT since it launched in 2002. The tribal stories

learned and passed down help maintain the organization's culture and place in CTE history, and have been helpful in long-term succession planning. Tech

Jeff Knapp serves as the communications coordinator at Francis Tuttle Technology Center. He is a graduate of Leadership FT Class III, and manages the February program at the Oklahoma state capitol. E-mail him at jknapp@francistuttle.edu.

ENDNOTES

- 1. The MBTI personality inventory helps individuals identify basic differences in the ways they interpret and behave in various situations, based on the theories of psychological types described by Carl Jung, and researched and developed by Katherine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers.
- 2. Iron Chef is a cooking television series broadcast by the Food Network. Chefs compete in a challenging kitchen environment.
- 3. Hell's Kitchen is a cooking television series. Chefs are challenged and eliminated each episode until one remains.
- 4. Special Olympics Oklahoma is a sports training and competition program for athletes with intellectual disabilities.

EXPLORE MORE

Francis Tuttle Technology Center serves more than 30,000 high school and adult students, as well as employees from over 400 businesses annually. It is one of 29 consolidated career tech districts in Oklahoma, serving more than 500,000 students and approximately 6,500 businesses on an annual basis. To find out more, visit francistuttle.edu.

ACTE STATE LEADERSHIP

STATE Leadership TRAINING PROGRAM

State Leadership Training is a one-year program to develop state and regional association leaders, as well as your up-and-coming leaders, through specialized training in the Quality Association Standards and leadership development. The sessions will be scheduled as a preconference as follows:

SESSION 1: ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2016

Nov. 30, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Las Vegas, NV)

REGISTRATIONS FOR SESSION 1 DUE NOV.4

SESSION 2: ACTE 2017 National Policy Seminar March 12, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Washington, D.C.)

REGISTRATIONS FOR SESSION 2 DUE FEB. 1

More information is available at www.acteonline.org/leadership_training.



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