

Riccardi, Gail

**Page: Basic Information**

**Nominator Information**

Please provide your information as the nominator of this partnership.

**Your Name**

Riccardi, Gail

**Email Address**

griccardi@essextech.org

**Title**

Web Design Instructor

**Employer**

Essex County Vocational Technical Schools

**Phone Number**

973-412-2203

**Your Relationship to the Partnership?**

Panasonic and ECVTS established a Mentoring/Internship Program during the school year 2013-14, starting with one intern, three mentees. Today the program includes both web design and business students, with 8-10 students being involved each year.

**The Partners: Business & Industry**

Please provide basic information on the business and industry organizations involved in the partnership.

**Business/Industry Partner 1**

**Business/Organization Name**

Panasonic

**Address**

2 Riverfront Plaza  
Newark New Jersey 07102 US

**Website**

<http://shop.panasonic.com/>

**Main Career Clusters within Industry**

Arts, A/V Technology & Communications, Education & Training, Information Technology, Marketing, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

**Point of Contact**

Joe.Calcaterra

**Title**

Group Manager, Workforce Technology

**Email**

Joe.Calcaterra@us.panasonic.com

**Business/Industry Partner 2 (if applicable)****Business/Organization Name****Address**

07102

**Website****Main Career Clusters within Industry****Point of Contact****Title**

**Email**

**Business/Industry Partner 3 (if applicable)**

**Business/Organization Name**

**Address**

**Website**

**Main Career Clusters within Industry**

**Point of Contact**

**Title**

**Email**

**Provide information on any other additional business & industry partners not listed above. Also, please use this opportunity to briefly explain the unique roles of these businesses in the partnership (if there are more than one involved.)**

**The Partners: Educational Institutions & Programs**

Please provide basic information on the educational institutions and/or programs involved in the partnership.

**Education Partner 1**

**Educational Institution/Program Name**

Essex County Vocational Technical Schools / N13th Street Tech

**Address**

300 North 13th Street  
Newark New Jersey 07107 US

**Website**

<http://www.essextech.org/index.php>

**What type of institution is it? (If a program, where is it offered?)**

High School

**Point of Contact**

Gail Riccardi

**Title**

Web Design Instructor

**Email**

griccardi@essextech.org

**Education Partner 2 (if applicable)****Educational Institution/Program Name****Address****Website****What type of institution is it? (If a program, where is it offered?)****Point of Contact****Title****Email****Education Partner 3 (if applicable)**

**Educational Institution/Program Name**

**Address**

**Website**

**What type of institution is it? (If a program, where is it offered?)**

**Point of Contact**

**Title**

**Email**

**Provide information on any other education partners not listed above. Also, please use this opportunity to briefly explain the unique roles of these educational institutions/programs in the partnership (if there are more than one involved.)**

**Page: Support Information**

**1. What problem was this partnership developed to solve?**

The partnership was developed initially to give the web design students an opportunity to exercise their skills in a real-world environment and be able to expand on those skills beyond what they would learn in their classrooms. The mentoring piece of the partnership was developed as a result of interviewing three students ... one was hired, all three were accepted into the mentoring program. Each year the program has grown, now it also includes business students.

This program allows Panasonic to fill business needs with students working part time. The partnership allows ECVTS to stay on top of technologies and industry standards. Students gain work experience, soft skills and invaluable networking resources that help with college and career references. What this brings to inner city students is beyond just a part time job, it is a life-changing experience. High school students evolve into confident and experienced young adults entering the workforce.

**2. What steps were taken to get the partnership started?**

Initial contact was made by instructor to Panasonic and a meeting was set up with school and company personnel. Documents were created to outline program, legal approved the program. All this happened as a result of a previous relationship the instructor had with Panasonic, so that initial contact was the most important piece needed in the development of such a successful and beneficial program.

### **3. Describe how the partnership was designed to support high-quality CTE.**

Text books cannot provide real-world experience for students. Internships are how high-quality CTE experiences are created. Learning to code web pages or file documents does not compare to the experience a student gains working in a corporation, meeting deadlines, taking on new projects, multi-tasking and gaining the confidence to take this experience and apply it to college and career.

Some of these same students represent our school each year at SkillsUSA. The experience they gain at Panasonic gives them the edge as they have created real web sites, a far higher level of code development than they may have experienced in the classroom. They have expanded creativity, they have confidence in their ability, increased maturity also helps propel them to success.

What the instructors that are involved in this partnership gain is a constant learning environment. Through regular meetings with Panasonic stakeholders, we gather information on what new technology must be taught in the classroom. We learn what soft skills are students need guidance with. Our curriculum is written around this program, every year is better than the last, the bar gets raised higher and higher.

A CTE program needs to be held accountable to get students job ready day one. Panasonic helps us balance technical and soft skills to meet the demands of the competitive work force.

### **4. What were the results of the partnership? What was innovative about the partnership or its output? How did it benefit students and the community?**

At the completion of each year, Panasonic hosts a "graduation" for the seniors and an interview session for the rising seniors that will be involved in the program for the next school year. Panasonic designs this session to include workshops and information sharing sessions ... a handing off the baton so to speak. The seniors give the juniors some tips on how to maximize the experience while they also share how the program changed them.

Panasonic offers the students opportunities to be involved in their community outreach programs. As the students engage with Panasonic personnel, they gain skills they may not have exposure to in the classroom such as dealing with different personalities, meeting tight deadlines, being part of postmortem project sessions, brainstorming, just to name a few.

Panasonic gladly writes letters of recommendation for the students. This certainly is an asset as the students apply to colleges and/or employment opportunities.

The ultimate goal of the program is to have the high school intern advance to a college intern and then be hired as a full time employee.

### **5. What were the lessons learned during the process of building the partnership? What would you have done differently?**

Building the partnership opened my eyes to the many facets of getting students ready for SLE opportunities. It's not as easy as finding the opportunity, it's getting the students ready, creating portfolios, teaching them interviewing techniques.

If I were to do this again, I think I would get more information regarding the process of getting the paperwork in place for the student to be eligible for work.

We were very lucky, Panasonic really took a very lead role in helping us to build this partnership, we continue to learn from the program as we work with Panasonic to expand and fine-tune the Mentoring and Internship Program.

**6. Is this partnership sustainable? How do you anticipate it will change in the coming year(s)?**

The partnership is absolutely sustainable because of the commitment of dedicated instructors, administration and Panasonic personnel. I see this program expanding to include more students, more areas within Panasonic that may be able to benefit from an intern, as well as more opportunities for students to participate in mentoring workshops. I also see our curriculum constantly changing to include new technologies that are a must to be competitive in the workforce. Our students will always have the edge!

**7. How long did it take to create this partnership?**

Less than 6 months

**8. How large of an investment did the businesses and other partner(s) involved make in this partnership (time and money)?**

Time is money in the corporate world, so Panasonic has a very large investment in this program. Multiple managers and employees are involved in the mentoring and management of the students involved in the program.

The instructors involved spend countless hours during their off time to refine curriculum and lessons to meet the needs of Panasonic. Detailed paperwork is completed to insure that the students are available for the field trips to the mentoring sessions.

**9. Would you or an associate be willing to present a session at an ACTE event about this partnership?**

Yes