

Connect 2 Business bridging schools and industry

By Chad Dorsett WSNW/Special to Anderson Independent-Mail
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A tool in South Carolina is providing educational and career planning resources as it brings together students, parents, educators, adult job seekers and employers.

Oconee Business-Education Partnership officials heard a presentation Tuesday about Connect 2 Business, a component of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success program.

“This is the final leg for the Education and Economic Development Act South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success initiative,” said Bill Barlow, senior sales associate for Kuder, the firm powering the Connect 2 Business program. “We’ve had students involved with educators for the past two and a half years. This is where you bring business into the loop and actually finish out that circle. The goal of the program is to make sure that our students are being able to become contributing, trained and satisfied members of our work force into the future.”

Gov. Mark Sanford signed the Education and Economic Development Act in May 2005. The legislation was designed to provide South Carolina students educational tools. Connect 2 Business is the latest component of that plan. It integrates into the South Carolina College and Career Planning System to support the state’s Personal Pathways to Success initiative and the goal of turning students’ and adults’ career plans into reality.

“The benefit of this plan is that students get an opportunity to participate through extended learning opportunities and actually learn about the career choices they have, and what it means to go to work in those environments,” Barlow said. “It saves that student from six years later saying, ‘I don’t want to do this.’ It gives them an opportunity to learn about it.”

The new part of the program, he said, is that now adults in transition in terms of employment can go into the system at no charge and take a skills assessment as well as find out where their skills are transferable to other occupations and programs. Adults also can find out more about what types of jobs they enjoy doing.

To register with the Connect 2 Business program, businesses, adults and students can log on to www.scpayways.org, locate the businesses heading in the center of the page and click on the Connect 2 Business log in. Then the person wishing to register answers some questions and submits a profile. Once a profile is approved, the subject will receive an e-mail notification allowing that person or business to enter extended learning opportunities and jobs that can be viewed by students and adults. It’s about a 10-minute process, according to officials.

“I think the Connect 2 Business program is excellent,” said School District of Oconee County Superintendent Mike Lucas. “I think Oconee County has already done a lot of the things that are

required. This ... (is) on a statewide basis. It gives a tool that we can put all that online.

“The other thing that is nice is there will be features from businesses, so that people who lose their jobs or that are afraid of losing their jobs can go do some skill assessments to figure (out in what) kinds of areas their interests and talents lie, so they can find other opportunities for employment.”

There is no cost associated with the program, which advertises that it puts participants’ information in front of thousands of students and adults to generate awareness about local opportunities and connect individuals and organizations with a pipeline of skilled and educated South Carolinians.



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