

G-C at forefront of advanced program

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By DEREK R. SMITH dsmith@greenfieldreporter.com / Tuesday, November 18, 2008

GREENFIELD – Greenfield-Central is one of 14 schools nationwide to be highlighted for excellence in implementing Project Lead the Way – the latest in a series of accolades for G-C's advanced-learning program.

G-C is profiled as a school with an exemplary program in Project Lead the Way's 2008 Yearbook, along with schools from 11 other states.

"It's a huge honor," said Mark Holzhausen, a technology education teacher at G-CHS. "It's a real testament to the caliber of kids that we've got here in the program at Greenfield."

Project Lead the Way is a program that challenges students with hands-on projects in science and engineering. Launched in 1996 to promote advanced technology education, PLTW is now taught in about 3,000 schools nationwide, according to www.pltw.org. More than 230 Indiana schools are involved in PLTW, according to Purdue University's PLTW Web site.

The mission for PLTW involves getting students excited about science and engineering in order to meet the dramatic shortfall in the number of American workers who will be needed in science and engineering fields in the coming years, said Niel Tebbano, PLTW's vice president for operations.

"The idea of the (PLTW yearbook) is just to give some examples of excellent implementations of our program for other schools to model," Tebbano said. "Greenfield-Central High School came to our attention because of the way that they've been able to grow the program. They've really taken to what we're trying to accomplish in terms of preparing students for studying in science and engineering fields."

"The kids are very active in the recruiting part of it," Holzhausen said. "It's word of mouth. We've been around long enough that the kids and parents know what's going on."

G-C's enrollment on the engineering side of PLTW has grown from about 20 students in 2003 to about 140 students this year, according to Holzhausen. Students in the G-C program each choose five of seven offered courses. Specialization courses include aerospace engineering, biotechnical engineering and civil engineering and architecture.

An eighth PLTW course, computer integrated manufacturing, will be added after the G-C building project is complete, Holzhausen said.

Engineering projects at G-C include computer programming, robotics and structural analysis/testing.

In addition, G-C is one of 15 Indiana schools that has piloted PLTW's biomedical sciences program; about 90 G-C students are studying on the biomedical side, Holzhausen said.

Biomedical science is a field that encompasses various medical and health-care disciplines. Careers in the field include doctor, dentist, medical technologist, biomedical engineer, nurse, veterinarian and radiologist.

Much like engineering, biomedical sciences is an area where it's crucial to meet a projected shortfall in American workers, Tebbano said.

Tebbano has been with PLTW since 2001. He oversees all operational functions of the program such as school relations, marketing, sales and business plan management, according to the organization's Web site

"Greenfield is indicative of the quality (PLTW) program that's being developed in Indiana," Tebbano said. "That (reputation for being progressive in implementing PLTW) is something that the state of Indiana should be very proud of."

