

# Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Alyssa Goodgame

**PHONE:** (325) 513-5952

## **Workforce Solutions and Parkhill partner to help area students gain career exposure**

**Abilene, Texas** — The Work-Based Learning Program at Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas offers a series of connected educational and training opportunities for students at participating schools to explore and gain experience in high-demand career fields. This spring, students who identified a strong interest and aptitude in a healthcare or manufacturing related career through job shadowing participated in internships to gain hands-on experience in their selected fields.

Noeh Rodriguez, a Merkel High School senior, and Elijah Browning, a Wylie High School senior, were selected to intern at Parkhill via an application and interview process similar to that of a full-time job. They worked under Jesse Bernard, AIA, with a focus on design experience and 3D printing, and Kendra Hanfeld, PE, who provided insight into the field of engineering. “It has been fun to have some high school students in and around the office working on things, getting some exposure, education,” said Jesse Bernard. “That’s a big part of our interest in the program. It goes beyond ‘Building Community’ being a big part of Parkhill’s mission, and that is largely through the projects that we develop, but also, we’re looking at the young workforce in architecture and engineering, trying to bolster and encourage that and give a little bit of exposure of what it is that we do.”

Employer partners in the program host students for industry tours, job shadowing and potentially internships that give students the opportunity to learn about a career opportunity, immerse themselves in the job, and work for pay or credit towards high school graduation. It’s valuable preparation for students before going on to pursue postsecondary training and enter the workforce. “I can get more of an accurate picture of how things work,” said Elijah Browning. “Interacting with some of the people here every day, I see the kind of progress you can make as you get better at your job, as well as more opportunities that lead to fun projects that you get to do.”

Work-based learning is not only a benefit to students, but to employers as well. Through their partnership in the program, employers have improved talent pipelines, and more engaged and productive workforces. During the 2023-2024 school year, 131 students across eight high schools including gained exposure through job shadowing and 31 students went on to complete spring internships. For more information on the program and how to participate, please visit [www.wfswct.org/wbl](http://www.wfswct.org/wbl).

*The Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board is charged with oversight and policy-making responsibility for local workforce and training programs. We are committed to strengthening the economic vitality of our 19-county region by investing in the success of residents and businesses. Our assistance and expertise are provided to both the job seeker and the employer. Visit our website at [www.wfswct.org](http://www.wfswct.org). Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to individuals with disabilities. Relay: 1-800-735-2989 (TTY) / 711 (voice). Programs/services are funded 92.5% with federal funds and 7.5% with non-federal funds.*

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