



The Republican.

Vocational school gets pep talk

Friday, September 26, 2008

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WESTFIELD - Vocational-technical education offers great career opportunities and teaches 21st-century skills, said Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray during a visit to the city's Vocational High School on Thursday.

"Spread the word among your friends," Murray told students in the manufacturing technology program. "Vocational-technical students are the most valuable people in terms of preparing a much-needed skilled workforce."

He spoke during a ceremony recognizing Siemens USA Corp. and the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, which recently awarded the school with software and new computers.

The school's manufacturing technology department, which enrolls 53 students, received the GO PLM software from Siemens USA. It is valued at \$14 million, said instructor Clement D. Fucci.

In addition to the software, the department has received \$50,000 from the Society of Mechanical Engineers Education Foundation to purchase 24 computers for handling the Siemens CAD programming, he said.

"We are recognizing today all those people who made it happen," said Fucci. "This software is going to change the paradigm in a way you do design on computers. I am just ecstatic being able to put that technology in the hands of my students."

Bart A. Aslin, director of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation, urged the students to "use this technology to learn as much as you can."

A working group comprising local educators and business leaders desperate for skilled workers was set up recently.

It will be working through a series of regional career days, mobile training units, and a summer camp for middle school students.

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