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Career Tech and Engineering Academy Showcase Innovations at Statewide Conference

Gov. Whitmer Joins Conversations Sparking Education Moonshots

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. – The invitation to participate in an event showcasing boldly innovative school programs was right up North Ed’s alley. Northwest Education Services (North Ed) Career Tech leadership and a team of instructors and students attended the May 7 gathering in East Lansing to participate in panel discussions on cutting-edge education programs that are both innovative and produce significant student success.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was the opening speaker at the event titled [What School Could Be: Michigan](#). It brought together Michigan schools who are leading the way with programs that support elevated learning and maximize student outcomes. Gov. Whitmer was joined by *What School Could Be* founder and author Ted Dintersmith and Michigan Speaker of the House Joe Tate.

Representing Career Tech in the event’s panel discussion was Engineering Academy instructor Debby Oliver and Engineering Academy students, Maddy Stewart (Benzie Academy), Logan DeFour (Leland) and Preston Breitmeyer (home schooled/Buckley). There were seven other schools selected to participate, and organizers visited each school to interview students and educators to produce videos for each individual school, and a video summarizing the project. All of the videos are available to [view online](#).

“We were pleased to join this conversation in an effort to inspire new ideas for preparing students for the challenges that await them beyond high school,” said Oliver. “We are particularly excited about the quality of our two-year mentoring program where our students are coached by industry professionals on teamwork, engineering ethics, project management, robotics and more. As a result, they come out of our program with a huge head start.”

The panel discussion highlighted creative ways that schools are meeting the needs of students by offering PEAK: purpose, essentials, agency and knowledge. Another key topic covered was how

the school programs strive to meet the needs of the communities they serve by preparing youth to make meaningful contributions to the economy and local organizations.

“As educators we are excited to learn from our peers and idea leaders about how to continually improve opportunities for our students,” said Pat Lamb, North Ed assistant superintendent of Career & Technical Education. “Sharing how our Engineering Academy students have the advantage of blending academics with real-world exposure illustrates the ways we help prepare them to think creatively and problem-solve holistically.”

[Engineering Academy](#) is an award-winning program for high school juniors and seniors at North Ed Career Tech that integrates courses in engineering, English, mathematics and science around the themes of robotics and manufacturing. Engineering Academy is currently accepting [applications](#) from current high school sophomores for admission for the 2024-25 school year.

[North Ed Career Tech](#) offers more than 20 [programs](#) to high school juniors and seniors from Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties. Students are educated in career and technical fields, offering hands-on practical experiences, job shadowing, career exploration and early college opportunities, along with rigorous academic integration.

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Photos below



Top: Career Tech Engineering Academy students Maddy Stewart (Benzie Academy), Logan DeFour (Leland) and Preston Breitmeyer (home schooled/Buckley) pose for a photo at the What School Could Be: Michigan event in East Lansing on May 7 where they participated in a panel discussion moderated by “What School Could Be” author and founder Ted Dintersmith.

Bottom: Career Tech staff, students and leaders gather with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer at the What School Could Be: Michigan event in East Lansing on May 7. (Photos courtesy of Northwest Education Services)