

# PORTER COUNTY

## Career and Technical Education

A Division of Porter County Educational Services

[www.pccte.org](http://www.pccte.org)

2014 Annual Report Accountability Report to the Public

## 1912 - 2014

Some of the latest technological training will someday take place in a vintage 1912 building that was saved in 2014.

The historic Frank Lloyd-inspired Prairie-style Grand Trunk railroad depot made a journey for a few blocks in July to join the site of the Porter County Career and Technical Center in Valparaiso.

When renovated, the former depot will provide much-needed classroom space for some of the 36

programs offered throughout the county and in Hobart.

Other technological advances include acquisition of a Lincoln Electric Virtual Welding Trainer for Welding classes based at Ivy Tech Community College.

The trainer, said Mr. Doug McKiddy, instructor, allows first year students to start at a higher level after some practice on the unit. It teaches welding without shielding, gas or

welding electrodes.

### 'Print Shop' expands reach

The Graphic Imaging Technology class at Portage High School is always trying new things.

Its latest acquisition is an embroidering machine. Students can embroider messages or emblems on shirts, hats, blankets and sweatshirts.

Teacher Mark Fischer noted that his students make T-shirts with up to six colors at a time and do large format printing through signs, banners, posters and decals. They still print ink on paper. Their projects help most schools in the county, plus Portage Police and the Portage Fire Department.

"We do great things for great people," Mr. Fischer said.

Mr. Fischer is proud of the life lessons he emphasizes with students. He stresses: work honestly and do the best possible work you can do. Exhibit good customer service—and have fun.

### 2014 Awards for Excellence

Porter County participants were successful at the 2014 Awards for Excellence.

Paige Smith, senior from Valparaiso High School, earned the state's highest student award for her work in Health Careers and Health Occupations, plus many activities beyond the classroom.

Besides working at Bob Evans, Paige is studying nursing at Ivy Tech Community College.

The team of Mrs. Kelli Ellis and Mrs. Kate Sorensen were lauded as the outstanding guidance program in the state. Together they train student ambassadors, or "mentors", as they like to call them. The mentors show visitors around at career/technical classes and also make presentations to potential students ranging from middle schoolers to high school juniors.

The program builds on the idea that students love to hear from other students.

Industrial Mechanics has returned as an offering at Portage High School. Austin Whitaker, Wheeler High School, and Montgomery Coslet, Chesterton High School, work on hands-on labs related to manufacturing.

The Auto Program at PCCTC had a successful winter car check.

The Porter County  
Career & Technical Education  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

is a yearly communication tool to  
area businesses and to the taxpayers.

We welcome comments and  
questions about this report.

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*Participating High Schools*  
Porter County Career and Technical  
Education is proud to be supported by  
the following high schools:

Boone Grove  
Chesterton  
Hebron  
Hobart  
Kouts  
Morgan Township  
Portage  
Valparaiso  
Washington Township  
Wheeler

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# Director's Report



*"The number one predictor of  
post-secondary success is having a  
mature and realistic career goal."*

-- Kenneth Gray, author, *Getting Real*

## Welcome to our 2014 Annual Report,

Things are constantly changing in life, at work, and certainly in technology. Similarly, the Porter County Career and Tech Education (PCCTE) programs have been changing rapidly.

Our Career and Tech Center (PCCTC) has the only student-built, working solar and wind demonstration project on top of any high school in Indiana. Our Modern Machining students have built three wind turbines that have been wired by our Electronics students. Our students have also built a robotic solar tracker which points two solar panels at the sun as it travels across the sky. These projects inspire our students to learn more about alternative energy while still learning how to splice wires and calculate Ohm's Law.

Another new adventure this year is the movement of the 1912 Grand Trunk Railway station, which was slated for demolition, to the PCCTC property. The historic structure provided area residents some entertainment this summer as it was moved two blocks to its new location.

Students will be working to restore and re-purpose the building into a future classroom. Construction Trades, Landscaping/Horticulture, and Electronics students will find some work during the restoration process of the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired building. Even our Graphic Imaging program got involved in creating a promotional display, and many students have worked on it in a variety of capacities.

Our Culinary program has a new laboratory and is working closely with the Empower NWI group. In Portage our Industrial Mechanics, Diesel Tech, and Construction Trades classes all have new, vibrant instructors. Our Portage Auto program will soon become nationally certified, and dual college credit is expanding across the district. Meanwhile, Hobart CTE programs are annually demonstrating excellence. Modern equipment and industry internships are being infused into all of our programs.

The economy seems to be recovering as employers are calling frequently for graduates and present students. Machinists, mechanics, and electrical trades seem to be in the highest demand.

At the end of the last school year, we announced a new scholarship opportunity for Machine Trades students. The Urschel Laboratories Next Generation Scholarship program paid for three students to get a full ride to Vincennes University and full time job at Urschel Laboratories. Task Force Tips will be doing the same thing for an additional two local students. More employers are becoming willing to invest in the educational future of their employees.

The faculty, staff, and students of the Porter County Career and Tech programs appreciate the support of our local employers, sending schools, and the Valparaiso School Board of Education for their encouragement of our work. We are committed to helping all students "find a path to success".

Jon Groth,  
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Principal, Porter County Career and Technical Center  
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# Striving To Be The Best

PCCTE teachers annually nominate their top students for consideration in the Indiana Awards for Excellence program. A local advisory board along with PCCTE Director Jon Groth reviews these nominations and selects the very best students to represent the PCCTE in the state competition.

*Congratulations to the following Award for Excellence nominees.*

## Hold on, University of Illinois at Chicago!



Katie Bodnar

**Katie Bodnar** of Portage High School is headed your way.

This senior and veteran of Health Science Education 1 and Dental Careers will first major in psychology and then study to be an orthodontist.

She works more than 20 hours a week for a national marketing group but also fits in activities ranging from cheerleading to volunteering to track to participation in the Distinguished Young Women program. She

is a top student at Portage High in the top five per cent of the class.

French teacher Andrea Flynn described Katie as all a teacher could want in a student.

## Definitely Nursing



Karlee Guerrero

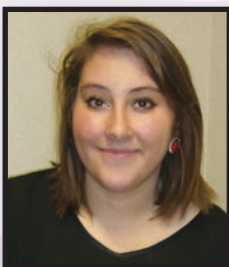
Nursing is definitely in the future for **Karlee Guerrero**, a top student at Wheeler High School.

Karlee plans to attend Indiana University to pursue her plan to be an R.N.

She cites her job shadowing experience during her Health Science Education 1 class as a valuable motivator. She is looking forward to the training in 2015 in Health Occupations to earn Certified Nursing Assistant credentials.

Counselor Michael Rosta, who has known Karlee for more than seven years, described this tennis player and Natural Helper as self-motivated, mature and hard-working.

## A Little Bit of Everything



Rachel Meeks

**“Rachel Meeks** dips her hands in a little bit of everything.”

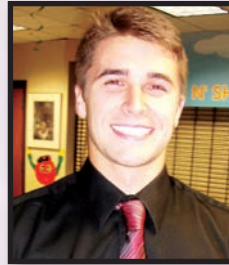
That’s according to Mrs. Jennifer Gaulin, Strategic Marketing teacher.

Whether it is 4-H, Key Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes or The Amanda Forum about preventing violence, you will find Rachel front and center.

German teacher Paula Swan-Jackowski also noted Rachel’s work ethic, compassion and maturity beyond her years.

The Morgan Township student hopes to attend Purdue University’s Krannert School of Management to study international business. She’d love to work for the United Nations and learn multiple languages.

## Athletics - Dental School



Luke Soliday

Athletics and dental school capture the attention of **Luke Soliday**, Washington Township senior.

The track, soccer and basketball athlete would like to run track at Indiana University or Wabash College. His biology major will get him started on the road to dental school.

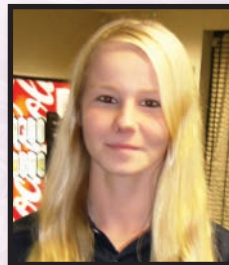
Luke found preparation helpful in Health Careers and Dental Careers.

His Dental teacher, Mrs. Rhonda Doane, noted Luke’s excellent work ethic.

Mr. Scott Bowersock, social studies teacher and basketball coach, described Luke as a true gentleman because of his integrity and ability to treat everyone with utmost respect.

Luke has participated in National Honor Society, Key Club and Student Council.

## Police Work is Appealing



Ashley Taylor

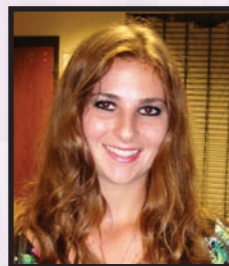
Police work is a dangerous calling but one that appeals to **Ashley Taylor**, Wheeler High School senior.

This student of Criminal Investigations and Criminal Justice wants to get further education at St. Joseph’s College in Rensselaer. She would then love to work for the Porter County Sheriff’s Department and ultimately the FBI.

Mr. Ralph Iler, Criminal Justice instructor, described Ashley’s quiet strength, great organizational skills and potential as a future public servant.

Ashley’s activities include National Honor Society and Key Club.

## Pediatric Intensive Care Nursing



Alicia Wood

Pediatric intensive care nursing is in the future for **Alicia Wood**, senior at Portage High School.

A serious health scare in 2011 helped Alicia know she’d like to emulate the kind and helpful nurses at Children’s Memorial Hospital.

This golf team captain and senior class president is very involved at school and in the community in activities ranging from the Distinguished Young Women scholarship competition to National Honor Society.

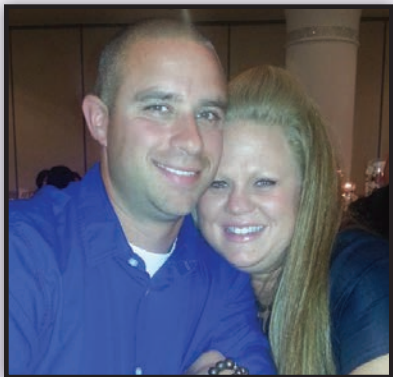
She’d like to study at Indiana University Northwest and ultimately become a nurse practitioner.

Alicia has gotten her foundation for her future career by taking Health Science Education 1 and Health Occupations.

*PCCTE students earned more than 4,400 dual college credits during 2013-14.*

# Success Stories

The articles below represent just a few of the hundreds of successful graduates from PCCTE.  
*Please read and enjoy the success our graduates are experiencing.*



Albert and Wendy Cannon

## Married couple finds success from CTE support

Career and Technical Education classes put two 1999 Portage High School graduates on paths to careers that they love.

Wendy (Cannon) and Albert Forgas, together since freshman year in high school and now married, forged their own paths.

Wendy took Business Ownership Lab with Mrs. Judy Commers. (The class is now called Entrepreneurship and includes Sports and Entertainment Marketing).

She said the class inspired her to pursue interior design and painting, crafts that she now pursues through her business, What About Wendy?, [www.whataboutwendy.com](http://www.whataboutwendy.com).

Her degree in interior design from Western Michigan University gave her lots of hands-on activities. Other jobs gave

her experience, but she fell in love with creating furniture and painting.

Mrs. Commers said that Wendy “excelled at everything she was involved in. She was an outstanding softball player and an excellent student. She was a fun loving person who made others enjoy being around her.”

Husband Albert has found his niche by sticking with a single employer—Arnell Motors—since high school.

Teacher Bonnie Manuel of Portage’s Work Study program helped Albert move up from his entry-level car detailing to part-time then fulltime car sales.

Work Study “gave me a little more confidence,” Albert noted. “I learned about the workforce and the real world.”

Tom TenHove, general manager at Arnell Chevy-Kia, said one thing that really makes Albert stand out is dependability.

“When I hired him back 15+ years ago, he was (and still is) a very conscientious worker who was always very receptive to learning.”

Entry-level workers could learn from Albert’s example about communicating well, Mr. TenHove added.

## Mrs. Jennifer Gaulin has Come Home to the Career Center



Mrs Jennifer Gaulin, right, organized a DECA Day to prepare students for competition.

In a sense, current Entrepreneurship teacher Mrs. Jennifer Gaulin has come home to the Career Center.

The Washington Township High School grad took over in fall, 2014, to teach Entrepreneurship plus Strategic Marketing Internship, a work-based experience program for seniors.

Mrs. Gaulin is also a former student of Mrs. Commers and is now in her “dream job”, according to the former girls’ basketball coach and athlete.

Other work-based learning CTE programs include Strategic Marketing Field Experience at Hobart with Mrs. Kari Roach, Work Study at Portage currently with Mrs. Debbie Gannon and Work Study at Chesterton with Mr. Scott Truelove.

Students get hands-on experience on the job site while also learning valuable employment skills.

***PCCTE will host open houses  
Jan. 22 and Feb. 5 at most locations.  
See our website, [www.pccte.org](http://www.pccte.org), for details.***