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PRESS RELEASE

Bethlehem Area School District Strengthens College & Career Readiness Through Expanded Real-World Learning Opportunities

New Communications Pathway Internship and Advanced Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship Launches in 2026

Bethlehem, PA, January 14, 2026—The Bethlehem Area School District continues to raise the bar for college and career readiness by expanding real-world learning opportunities that help students explore their futures with confidence and purpose. Through its comprehensive Career Pathways Program, robust job shadowing experiences, and a growing portfolio of professional internships, BASD is ensuring students graduate with both a diploma and meaningful career exposure.

Beginning in 2026, BASD will introduce two new, innovative offerings: a **Student Communications Internship Program** and an **Advanced Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship Course**, further strengthening the district's commitment to future-ready education.

"Preparing students for life after graduation means giving them more than academic knowledge. It means giving them community-based experiences," said Dr. Jack Silva, Superintendent of Schools. "These programs allow students to explore careers, build professional skills, and develop confidence while still in high school. That kind of exposure is transformative."

Across Liberty and Freedom High Schools, students are discovering what sets BASD apart; authentic professional experiences, strong community partnerships, and hands-on opportunities that connect learning to life beyond the classroom.

Career Pathways: Helping Students Explore Their Future With Purpose

At the foundation of BASD's approach is its Career Pathways Program, which encourages students to identify interests and strengths early and explore potential careers across five broad pathways: Arts, Humanities & Communications; Business, Finance & Law; Education; Health & Social Services; and STEM.

"Beginning in eighth grade and continuing through high school, students engage in interest inventories, targeted coursework, service learning, and hands-on activities," said Dr. Maureen Leeson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools. "The goal is not to lock students into a single career choice, but to empower them with the knowledge and experiences needed to make informed, evolving decisions about life after graduation."



“Our Career Pathways model is about helping students discover what excites them and showing them how classroom learning connects to real careers,” said Amy Meyers, BASD Career Pathways Liaison “By offering multiple entry points, from exploration to job shadowing to internships, we’re meeting students where they are and helping them move forward with purpose.”

Job Shadowing: A First Step Into the Professional World

Job shadowing remains one of BASD’s most impactful early career experiences. By spending time in real workplaces, including hospitals, law offices, engineering firms, classrooms, and nonprofit organizations, students gain an authentic understanding of professional expectations and day-to-day responsibilities.

Students may also earn up to 15 community service hours for job shadowing completed outside the school day, making this opportunity both accessible and rewarding.

Internships: BASD’s Capstone Career Experience

For juniors and seniors seeking deeper engagement, BASD’s Internship Program offers structured, high-quality placements lasting between nine and 18 weeks. Internships may take place onsite or offsite and connect students with expert mentors who guide them through real responsibilities and problem-solving.

Each internship includes weekly reflections, mentor check-ins, a final reflection paper, and a professional portfolio aligned to state career standards. “Internships allow students to test-drive careers in a supportive environment,” Meyers added. “They don’t just observe, they contribute.”

NEW: Student Communications Internship Program

The [Student Communications Internship Program](#) represents one of BASD’s most dynamic expansions, offering students a professional-level experience in journalism, digital media, marketing, and storytelling.

In partnership with the BASD Communications Office, each high school will select Communications Interns to serve as writers, photographers, videographers, graphic designers, and social media interns. Students will produce real content for district websites, newsletters, and social media platforms, graduating with published work and a professional portfolio.

Throughout the semester-long, credit-earning internship, students will cover district events, write feature stories, capture photography and video, support branding efforts, and participate in workshops focused on media ethics, journalism, design, and storytelling.

“This internship gives students a voice and allows them to tell the story of our schools through their own lens,” said Dr. Silva. “It’s powerful for our students and meaningful for our community.”

Communications Interns will also have a presence in ArtsQuest’s new Creative Factory powered by PPL, currently under construction. This partnership will provide students with a dedicated creative space for media production in the heart of Bethlehem’s South Side arts community, while expanding networking opportunities and access to industry-grade resources.



NEW: Advanced Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship Course

This month, BASD will also launch an [Advanced Manufacturing Pre-Apprenticeship Course](#), designed to prepare students for and directly connect them with registered apprenticeship opportunities in the Lehigh Valley, a region home to more than 700 manufacturers employing over 37,000 workers.

Is, along with industry tours and direct interaction with manufacturing professionals. Registered apprenticeships offer students the opportunity to learn a skilled trade while earning a paycheck, creating a direct pathway from high school into stable, in-demand careers.

A Model for Future-Ready Education

BASD's commitment is clear: every student deserves access to opportunities that help them explore interests, build skills, and gain real community-based experience before graduation. Through Career Pathways exploration, job shadowing, internships, and innovative new programs, BASD students are not just imagining their futures, they are experiencing them.

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For interview opportunities and more information, please contact:

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About the Bethlehem Area School District

The Bethlehem Area School District is the 6th largest school district in Pennsylvania serving nearly 13,000 culturally and economically diverse students in 22 community-based schools. The district serves five municipalities: City of Bethlehem, Bethlehem Township, Hanover Township, Freemansburg, and Fountain Hill. The district enjoys numerous community partnerships with universities, businesses, and arts providers that extend the schools' rich curricular and co-curricular offerings.