

Middle Bucks Institute of Technology

Amazing things are happening at 2740 Old York Road in Jamison! That is the address of the Middle Bucks Institute of Technology (MBIT), which is by no means your typical “Tech School.” Opened in 1969 and renovated in 2007, MBIT provides career development, advanced technical training, and pre-professional programs for high school students. MBIT currently serves approximately 800 students between the Centennial (28%), Central Bucks (54%), Council Rock (16%), and New Hope/Solebury (2%) school districts. Enrollment may also include students from Archbishop Wood and those who have been home-schooled. MBIT helps many students achieve success by finding the right niche.

Although MBIT does not fit the needs of all students, there are many Council Rock students who can and do benefit from what MBIT has to offer. Programs include: Automotive Technology, Building Trades Occupations, Commercial Art & Design, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Dental Occupations, Drafting & Design Technology, Health Occupations, Multimedia Technology and Practical Environmental Landscaping – just to name a few. Some courses offered are college level precursors to careers varying from Architecture to Engineering and more.

Students enrolled at MBIT spend half of their day at CR North or South, taking their required courses (Math, English, Social Studies) and the other half of the day at MBIT taking courses in their chosen program. Students receive instruction from faculty members who are experienced, knowledgeable and well respected in their fields. Programs combine classroom lectures with plenty of hands-on supervised training. As in other schools, there is an active student government called SkillsUSA. Teachers and students also meet with an Occupational Advisor at least twice a year.

The education program at MBIT is organized into 10 career clusters and 21 career pathways (i.e. major courses of study). Typically students enroll in one career pathway as their major field of study and then complete a core set of courses common to the career cluster with a highly rigorous technical sequence of courses related to their career pathway. Students may complete additional specialized courses as they advance beyond the standard secondary curriculum. The career cluster model is recognized as one of the most effective educational initiatives for preparing young people for the new economy. MBIT students consistently place very high in SkillsUSA competitions locally, statewide, and nationally in many of the curricular areas.

Many of the MBIT programs offer students internship opportunities in the community where they receive valuable hands-on training in the work force. MBIT students are often sought after and there are times when there are more internships or cooperative education opportunities to fill than there are students to fill them!

Below are highlights of some of the MBIT programs:

The **Construction Carpentry** class assumes the lead role for the Middle Bucks Student Built House project, now in its 33rd year. Students in the Drafting, HVAC/Plumbing and Electrical & Network Cabling programs work collaboratively to fully construct a house built to the highest residential specifications. The project is inspected and certified by the PA Dept. of Economic and Community Development, Division of Manufactured Housing. Sealed bids are then accepted for the fully completed 2,200 square foot house.

Recently added Career Education areas include the **Building Trades** program, which teaches skills beyond new construction in repair and renovation, as well commercial mechanical systems and maintenance. Other new programs much in demand in today's workforce are **Networking and Operating Systems Security** providing instruction in Computer Hacking and Forensics, and **Public Safety**, which encompasses courses and certifications in the fields of Police Science, Fire Science and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

The aspiring young chefs in the **Culinary Arts** program operate Aspirations. This restaurant is open for lunch on Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year. The upscale menu items include a variety of fresh meats, poultry, seafood and pasta. A special buffet is served on the last Thursday of each month. Reservations are required and are taken 2 weeks in advance of the requested date. Reservations are only taken on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 9:00 – 10:00 am and 12:00 – 2:00 pm. Please call 215-491-5647 for reservations. Most students taking this course become certified in the mandated Serve-Safe Certification. The state of the art equipment and extraordinary instructors provide a unique training opportunity for those desiring a future in the food service and hospitality fields. Each student learns every aspect of this industry from food prep to serving to management, both behind the scenes and to the public. Additionally, this course is one of the few in the state, which is accredited by American Culinary Federation (ACF) and students graduate with ACF certification.

The **Early Childhood Care & Education** program operates Li'l Bucks Partners in Learning, a state licensed childcare center for children between the ages of 18 months and 5 years. This center is approved through the PA Dept. of Public Welfare. The educational program offered to children at Li'l Bucks Partners in Learning is unique in that the center serves as a teaching and learning clinic for the students in this MBIT program. Complementing the existing staff with student teachers affords children more individualized and small group instruction than generally found in most other preschool settings.

The **Cosmetology** students operate Salon Extreme, a full service salon offering all services (cuts, coloring, up-dos, manicures, etc.) but at greatly reduced rates. Students, under the supervision of teachers, do all work. Call 215-343-2480 x119 for an appointment.

Students who attend MBIT are well prepared after graduation to head into their chosen fields. Many acquire certifications while at MBIT. Some go on to attend two or four year colleges. Most have a definite advantage when applying for jobs in their field. MBIT turns out very capable, skilled and employable young men and women who are ready for what it takes to succeed in today's competitive economy.

Citizens for Education was quite impressed with their tour of the MBIT facility, realizing that there is so much more to MBIT than what they and most others perceive as technical education. Many more students may benefit if it were better communicated to staff, parents and students. We encourage every high school and middle school counselor to take a personal tour of the facility so that all who may benefit from this path, whether it is on to a two year or four year college or directly into the work force, don't miss this opportunity to gain a head start on their future.

For more information about MBIT and its programs, please go to www.mbit.org.