

Penta Career Center Wins 2022 Pacesetter School Award

Center honored for helping students with disabilities transition to independence and careers

July 19, 2022 — Penta Career Center in Perrysburg, Ohio, is the winner of a 2022 Gene Bottoms Pacesetter School Award from the Southern Regional Education Board. A three-time Pacesetter Award winner, the Center will be honored on July 19, 2022, at SREB's Making Schools Work Conference in Grapevine, Texas.

Pacesetter School Awards recognize schools that are implementing one of SREB's Making Schools Work school improvement frameworks and are achieving success in meeting bold goals related to graduation rates, readiness for college and careers, and credential attainment.

Penta Career Center implements [High Schools That Work](#), SREB's school improvement design for comprehensive high schools. Penta developed a job training program to serve students with intellectual and other disabilities and helps to support their successful transitions from high school to adulthood. The program empowers students with disabilities to aim high, gain employment in their area of interest, live independently and become productive, positive, thriving members of their communities.

Students learn to build life skills and effective communication skills by engaging in community-based education — a best practice for students with disabilities — in a real-world environment that includes activities like grocery shopping, preparing meals and banking, for example. Participants participate in a broad range of work-based learning experiences by volunteering with community-based sites and employers like T.J. Maxx, Toledo Metroparks and the Ronald McDonald House.

Penta has also implemented a transition program called Transition to Independence, Employment & Success (TIES). Students intern five days per week and explore their career interests at the University of Toledo and the University of Toledo Medical Center. Students are assessed daily and receive immediate feedback on criteria such as maintaining focus, appropriate social interactions, following safety rules and timeliness. At the end of the program, students work with state agencies to secure employment. Penta Career Center's job training program and TIES have helped over 70% of its graduates gain employment.

SREB's [Making Schools Work Conference](#) is held annually and provides educators with opportunities to participate in professional development, network with colleagues from across the country and build school and district leadership capacity.

The Southern Regional Education Board works with states and educators to improve education at every level, from early childhood through postsecondary education. Learn more about SREB at sreb.org. SREB media contact: Alan.Richard@SREB.org, (404) 879-5528.