

THE



Introducing the  
Whitko Career Academy  
to the community

# EXPERIENCE

2020-21



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## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



As the old saying goes, "Time flies when you're having fun." That statement could not be more accurate when describing the last 15 months as Whitko Career Academy took shape. Through our relationship with lead funding partner 80/20 Foundation Trust, as well as many other donors and businesses, the vision of the WCA became a reality for the

2020-21 school year. WCA is unique in the K-12 public school world and offers students many opportunities regardless of their goals after graduation. Our partnership with Ivy Tech allows us to

offer certifications in many different disciplines. WCA also offers many courses where students can earn college credit while still in high school.

Whitko Career

Academy is designed to meet the needs of all students and will change the lives of current students and for generations to come. This is truly a tremendous asset to the community. I invite you to contact us to set up a tour if you are interested in seeing this state-of-the-art training facility right here in our district.

*"Whitko Career Academy is designed to meet the needs of all students and will change the lives of current students and for generations to come."*

**DR. BRANDON PENROD**  
brandon.penrod@whitko.org

### ON THE COVER

Precision Machining instructor Jade Hollenbaugh leads a class in the Advanced Manufacturing Lab.

## CONTACT WCA



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Larwill IN 46764

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## CONNECT WITH WCA

[Whitko.org/CareerAcademy](http://Whitko.org/CareerAcademy)

Whitko Career Academy

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Carrie Hoffman, *President*  
Matt Long, *Vice-President*  
Georgia Tenney, *Secretary*  
Bill Patrick, *Member*  
Scott Werstler, *Member*

*The Whitko Career Academy Experience* is a publication of the Whitko Career Academy. It strives to communicate and celebrate the new opportunities for Whitko students with the residents of the Whitko Community School Corporation.

**DESIGN:** Katie Brown,  
WHS Class of '95

**LOGO:** Jacqueline Craft,  
WHS Class of '18

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Nathan Haywood,  
WHS Class of '00



Dr. Brandon Penrod welcomes the community to the Whitko Career Academy.

# Honoring the Past – CELEBRATING THE FUTURE

The Whitko Career Academy hosted an open house, ribbon cutting ceremony, and recognition banquet at their campus located in Larwill, IN, on Saturday, October 10, 2020. Beginning at 3 p.m., the WCA was open to the general public. Guests were able to tour the newly renovated facility on their own or with a Whitko faculty or staff member. At 5:30 p.m., the WCA held the official ribbon cutting ceremony, and at 7 p.m., 250 guests were welcomed to the dinner and banquet.

## OPEN HOUSE

Guests viewed the exciting new changes to come to the Larwill campus at Whitko's Career Academy which include the Advanced Manufacturing Lab featuring state-of-the-art CNC machinery, the nursing wing with two separate labs, the welding wing that allowed guests the opportunity to try virtual reality welding simulators, and the Ag facility which contains a livestock area and a show ring.

## RIBBON CUTTING

The 80/20 Foundation Trust's John Wood, Whitko Superintendent Dr. Brandon Penrod, WCA Director Joe Luce, WCA Consultant Matt Dahms, Alan Tio of KEDCo, and Whitley County EDC President Dale Buuck each gave brief remarks at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

## BANQUET

The evening banquet included dinner, a motivational message by Master of Ceremonies Tyler Bradshaw (Miami of Ohio Associate Director and Sports Announcer), a presentation on the WCA vision and collaboration, a celebration of contributors and partners, and a Wall of Honor recognition by the Whitko Alumni Association. ●



Dale Buuck, Whitley County EDC President, addresses the attendees as Whitko FFA members look on.

## WALL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

- | Georgia Tenney - Long-time area resident and Whitko employee
- | Bill Patrick - Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame 2008 Inductee
- | Janie Fricke - Country Music Star
- | R.V. Reed - Long-time Whitko Principal
- | Randy Dormans - Director of Animation Production at DreamWorks Animation
- | Steve Nicodemus - 1990-91 Arthur L. Trester Award for Mental Attitude, 2016 Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame's Silver Anniversary Mens Team
- | Walter Malicki - Former Art Teacher at Whitko
- | Bill McVay - Former Agriculture Teacher at Whitko



Whitko Jr/Sr High School students Zoey Gaff, Sean Walls, and Kylie Fugett stand in the entrance to the Career Academy. They represent the Career Focus Opportunities of Agriculture, Precision Machining, and Engineering & Design.

Health Science Education students participate in a variety of hands-on experiences in the Nursing Lab.



# Welcome to the Whitko Career Academy

CREATING OPPORTUNITY CLOSE TO HOME

The WCA offers an extraordinary educational environment and has created additional opportunities for students within the Whitko Community School Corporation.

WCA students will take a concentrated sequence of courses in a chosen career field in order to give them a jump-start on their future. Students benefit from hands-on, real-world learning experiences while meeting and learning from mentors in the workforce. Additional benefits include opportunities to earn college credit while in high school, the option to work during school hours, and the ability to gain experience that will attract future employers.

The Jr High Experience is for all eighth grade students and offers class rotations of *Intro to Agriculture*, *Preparing for College & Careers*, and *Intro to Engineering & Design/PLTW*.

The WCA allows ninth grade students to choose one of three Academies: *Agriculture*, *Public Service*, or *Skilled Trades*.

Additional Career Focus classes offer sophomore through senior students the opportunity to choose a more concentrated area of study in *Advanced Manufacturing*, *Agriculture*, *Business Education & Marketing*, *Construction Trades*, *Cosmetology*, *Criminal Justice*, *Culinary Arts*, *Early Childhood Education*, *Education Professions*, *Engineering & Design/PLTW*, *First Responders*, *Health Science*, *Precision Machining*, or *Welding Technology*.

## GENEROUS GRANT FUNDING

The invaluable partnerships with the 80/20 Foundation Trust and the Community Foundation of Whitley County paved the way for an exciting future for our school district. One year after an initial investment of \$400,000 in 2019 to begin the Whitko Career Academy, the 80/20 Foundation Trust, led by John Wood and the Board of Directors, decided unanimously to invest an additional \$2,433,877 in the future of manufacturing.

Whitko Community Schools used the grant funding for renovations to the Larwill Campus and investments in technology that have propelled the Career Academy toward success in courses focused in engineering and skilled trades. Expenses of the project included nearly \$1 million in machine and welding equipment and tools, and \$300,000 to fund necessary teaching staff and support positions. Meanwhile, another \$1 million of the grant has been directed toward site renovations including an Advanced Manufacturing Laboratory, entrance lobby to the AML, and AML tool crib.

The WCA partnership with the 80/20 Foundation Trust has led the way to new funding and new partnerships. With additional donors slated to contribute, the initial investment continues to provide momentum for the school's goals to become reality.

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Culinary Arts student Taryn Miller preps baking sheets for the cookie dough she has prepared. The fresh baked cookies will be used in the weekly box lunches that can be ordered by WCA staff.



Students on the Blue Team perform valuable tasks around the Career Academy. The Blue Team assists the Culinary Arts students by washing vegetables, helps the Transportation Team with bus sanitization, collects recycling, and provides daily care of the fish tank.



Agriculture instructor Kelley Sheiss discusses the proper care and maintenance of livestock with her ninth grade Animal Science & Natural Resources class during a hands-on learning experience in the Ag barn.

## A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Q. How will the WCA be sustained?

A. The WCA is filling a huge void recognized at the state and federal level. To encourage schools to fill this void, Career and Technical Education (CTE) dollars have been set aside and are given to schools who train students to meet the country's demand in trades and skilled labor needs.

Q. What is the participation at the WCA?

A. Approximately 70% of students in grades 10-12 have chosen to take classes at the WCA.

Q. Were taxes raised to create the WCA?

A. No, funding came from donors. In addition, taxes were already set for 2020 (at a lower rate than 2019) when the WCA opened.

Q. Will taxes be raised to sustain the WCA?

A. No, funding will come from CTE money the school receives for students taking the WCA classes. In 2019, the tax rate was 1.2210. In 2020, the tax rate has been lowered to 1.1463, and will drop again in 2021, as Whitko is operating under budget for the 2020 calendar year.

## DEDICATED STAFF

A dedicated set of staff interact daily with enthusiastic students, welcoming them to the WCA. The instructors and students work together to create a culture of high expectations in every classroom and throughout the school. Along with supportive parents, the students and staff have already made Whitko Career Academy a thriving location for furthering education, and a natural progression for the exciting future of our district. ●

## MEET THE DIRECTOR

Joe Luce is currently in his 27th year of working in public education where he has worked as a high school administrator for much of his career. As a result of the great success of the Engineering and Manufacturing Academy at Jeffersonville where Joe was the principal, he was offered the job of developing and creating the Whitko Career Academy in 2019. Joe officially became Director of the Whitko Career Academy in August of 2020.

Joe is married to Karrie Luce. They are the proud parents of seven children: Mason, Tommy, Jake, Kelsey, Kylee, Gracey, and Alyvia, and one granddaughter, Layla.

**JOE LUCE**

joe.luce@whitko.org



## WCA INSTRUCTORS & STAFF

**CHRIS BENEDICT** - *Director of Alternative Education/Corporation Scheduling Coordinator*

**SANDY BENEDICT** - *Work Based Learning Specialist/WCA Assistant Director*

**JIM BUMBAUGH** - *Transportation Team Director*

**ROGER CARR** - *Agriculture*

**TAMMY COYLE-WALTER** - *Health Science*

**CHAD DAHMS** - *Engineering & Design/Tool Room Supervisor*

**MATT DAHMS** - *Consultant*

**MATT DICE** - *Agriculture*

**JUSTIN FAW** - *Criminal Justice/First Responders*

**JOEL FRANK** - *Custodian*

**DANNY GERBERS** - *Custodian*

**DENISE HEARLD** - *Cosmetology*

**ELI HENSON** - *Special Education*

**JADE HOLLENBAUGH** - *Precision Machining*

**ANGIE IRWIN** - *Business Education & Marketing/Education Professions*

**JOHNATHAN IRWIN** - *Alternative Education Aid*

**PHIL JENSEN** - *College & Careers/Work Based Learning*

**JUSTIN JORDAN** - *Health & Wellness*

**JOE LUCE** - *WCA Director*

**TERAH MAYS** - *Administrative Assistant*

**BRENT MESSMORE** - *Construction Trades*

**HEATHER MILLETT** - *Agriculture*

**JAY OCKEN** - *Welding Technology/Advanced Manufacturing*

**MALLERY PIERCE** - *Culinary Arts*

**TRACY RHODES** - *Special Education Aid*

**RON RIDER** - *Custodian*

**ASHLEY ROBERTS** - *College & Careers/Business*

**KELLEY SHEISS** - *Agriculture*

**GRACEY SLINKER** - *Receptionist*

**DERREK SORG** - *Engineering & Design/PLTW*

**WCA TRANSPORTATION TEAM**

**BRYAN WILBURN** - *Precision Machining*



**WHITKO CAREER ACADEMY**  
710 North State Road 5  
Larwill IN 46764



Do you know that the **WHITKO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** has a home at the Career Academy? Memorabilia from your days as a Wildcat are likely a part of a rotating display and a newly created Alumni Room. It's a goal of the Whitko Alumni Association to preserve and celebrate Whitko history by sharing their collection. The Whitko Alumni Association can be contacted by email at [whitko.alumni@whitko.org](mailto:whitko.alumni@whitko.org).

Are you interested in learning more about WCA?  
☎ 260-327-3603    ✉ [joe.luce@whitko.org](mailto:joe.luce@whitko.org)  
[Whitko.org/CareerAcademy](http://Whitko.org/CareerAcademy)

## CHILD CARE SERVICES

### BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Whitko Career Academy proudly offers before and after school care for students pre-k and up. Before school care drop off begins at 6:30 a.m. and after school pick up ends at 5:30 p.m. Students are taken to school in time for morning breakfast and are provided an after school snack at WCA. Before and after school care is \$25 per week, per child. Care in either the morning or afternoon only is just \$15 per week, per child. Enrollment is ongoing.

### LITTLE CATS CHILD CARE

Coming soon to Whitko Career Academy, Little Cats Child Care for children ages 2-5 years old.

For more information on either of these programs, please contact Terah Mays at 260-723-5146 ext 6207 or [terah.mays@whitko.org](mailto:terah.mays@whitko.org).

