

Big Sandy Vocational Advisory Council Report 2024-2025

The Big Sandy School District is dedicated to equipping all students with essential 21st-century skills, ensuring they can thrive in an ever-evolving, technology-driven society. Our educational philosophy emphasizes providing diverse learning opportunities that challenge and engage students of all learning styles. The District Committee takes great pride in these programs, with student success serving as a testament to their rigor and quality of instruction.

Big Sandy Schools currently offers two state-funded vocational programs: Business/Technology and Industrial Arts. Additionally, Auto Mechanics is available to high school students, further expanding hands-on learning opportunities. Each of these programs is led by experienced, veteran educators whose dedication and expertise greatly enhance student learning.

We are grateful for the commitment of our educators and the impact they have on shaping the future of our students. Their passion and knowledge ensure that Big Sandy continues to provide high-quality, career-focused education that prepares students for success beyond the classroom.

Secondary Business/Technology/FBLA

Big Sandy Schools offer a comprehensive selection of business and technology courses, led by Mr. Tim Tucker. Students from kindergarten through twelfth grade participate in a range of classes, including technology, Introduction to Coding, Computer Science, Vegas/Movie Studio, Economics, and Personal Workforce Readiness/Senior Seminar. Junior high technology instruction is provided by Mrs. Sedlak, while elementary K-3 is taught by Mrs. Allen. Mr. Tucker also teaches fourth-grade technology. Currently, approximately 55 high school students are enrolled in business and technology courses.

The technology department remains committed to reviewing and upgrading the district's technological infrastructure. As the district's Technology Director, Mr. Tucker oversees these advancements, with additional support from BOCES. Last year, the district purchased 40 new laptops for the computer lab, funded through a Pikes Peak CTE grant. Looking ahead, interactive projectors in classrooms are due for replacement, and Mr. Tucker, alongside Mr. Wilson, recently submitted a grant to help fund this equipment.

Technology integration across the district continues to expand. Every elementary and junior high student has access to their own Chromebook, and five high school classrooms now operate on a 1:1 Chromebook model. Additionally, three stationary computer labs are available for student and teacher use, and 100% of classroom teachers have laptops. The district currently maintains approximately 200 laptops and 300 Chromebooks. Internet accessibility has also improved with the installation of additional access points. Furthermore, the department has acquired two 3D printers, a large-format poster printer, a laser engraver, and a Cricut machine through a Perkins grant, enhancing hands-on learning opportunities.

The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter serves as the leadership component of the business vocational program. Under the guidance of Mr. Tucker and Ms. Sielaff, the program has a strong track record of success, with students excelling at district, state, and national competitions. This year, 36 students are involved, and 22 will compete at the state competition in

Denver at the end of April. They will present projects in Broadcast Journalism, Website Design, Partnership with Business, Parliamentary Procedures, Community Service, and Coding/Programming, while others will participate in an Agbusiness objective test. Students placing in the top four at the state level will qualify to compete at the national competition in Anaheim, CA, this summer.

The business and technology programs at Big Sandy continue to provide students with valuable skills, hands-on experience, and leadership opportunities, preparing them for success in both academic and professional pursuits.

Industrial Arts

For the past 32 years, Mr. Dave Schmidt has been the driving force behind the Industrial Arts program at Big Sandy Schools. As he prepares to retire, we recognize and celebrate the incredible impact he has made. Under his leadership, the program has flourished, producing high-quality student projects year after year. His dedication and expertise have shaped a lasting legacy that will continue to influence students for years to come.

Currently, around 60 students from grades 7-12 participate in the Industrial Arts program. Safety remains a top priority, with all students required to pass safety tests before using any machinery. Once certified, they embark on designing and building their own projects, taking responsibility for materials while also having access to an inventory of supplies. At the end of each year, student projects compete at the East Central BOCES Industrial Arts Fair in Limon, Colorado, showcasing their craftsmanship and skills.

Beyond technical expertise, the program instills essential life skills such as design, measurement, construction, and tool operation. Mr. Schmidt has also encouraged students to explore career paths in Industrial Arts education, woodworking, construction, and other vocational fields. Leadership and teamwork are integral to the program, with upperclassmen mentoring younger students to foster collaboration and a strong work ethic.

Additionally, the program has greatly benefited from the generous contributions of Mr. Bollar, a former business owner of Diversified Machine Systems. Volunteering his time, he provides instruction in CNC programming and router operations, significantly enhancing the quality of student projects. Through his support, the school has also been able to integrate Master-Cam, a computer-aided drafting program, further expanding students' technical skills. His contributions, including an expanded inventory of router bits, have been invaluable in preparing students for future careers.

We extend our deepest gratitude to both Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Bollar for their dedication and impact. Their efforts have shaped an outstanding Industrial Arts program that continues to inspire and equip students for success.

Auto Mechanics

With recent personnel changes, we are pleased to welcome back Mr. Jerry Dole as our Transportation Director. In addition to overseeing transportation, he is now leading instruction in the Auto Mechanics program.

This year, high school students are actively engaged in automotive service and maintenance, gaining hands-on experience through various projects. Their work includes conducting winter vehicle checklists and performing essential repairs such as oil changes, tire maintenance, and brake replacements.

For students interested in pursuing careers in the automotive industry, Big Sandy's Auto Mechanics program provides valuable foundational skills and post-secondary opportunities. This program equips students with practical knowledge and experience, preparing them for future success in the field.