



# Chamber education committee addressing needs of schools

**Olivia Moorehead** | Northeast Polk Chamber of Commerce

Our Chamber is proud to support our local schools. We have several schools that are members of our Chamber, however, we try to support all of our local schools regardless of their member status.

In recent years, our Chamber has maintained an education committee. The committee is composed of school staff members and local businesspeople. Out of that committee, the idea for our monthly school newsletter originated. Every year, we also recognize our local schools' nominated school related employees and teachers of the year at our Annual Education Celebration Luncheon. Plus, we offer and host a yearly Youth Leadership program for 11th grade students.

Our Chamber's education committee was created to address the needs facing our schools. We wanted to take a more active role in advocating for the schools on a local and legislative level. The education committee meets once a month. Each meeting is an opportunity for school representatives to discuss needs and issues facing their schools. The committee works hard to come up with resolutions to problems and ways to fulfill needs. One of the com-

mittee's main focuses is to help schools connect with local business supporters.

The yearly Youth Leadership program is a unique program offered to 11th grade students. Students from local schools submit applications, undergo interviews, and are chosen to be a part of this free program. During the program, students go on one day trips per month. Each trip highlights a different business sector in the Northeast Polk County area and features tours of businesses and places that highlight the different sectors. The goal of the program is to show the students what type of career opportunities exist in their home communities.

Throughout our work and involvement with the schools, we have seen firsthand the importance of education in our communities. Today's students are tomorrow's leaders, and they deserve the best education and the most opportunities possible. Some schools struggle to provide these things due to funding, and it is the business community's job to step up and offer the needed support. Better education leads to a better future economy because well-educated students will continue on to be successful contributing individuals in the business community. ♦

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