

Charter High School Chooses Intelitek® to Train Students for Local Industry



Preparing students for fulfilling careers in advanced mechatronics

THE CHALLENGE

To create a College and Career Center to ensure that Jackson County (GA) has a qualified workforce to take advantage of career opportunities in the local area—in this case, manufacturing opportunities.

THE SOLUTION

Empower College and Career Center serves grades 9-12 with 26 career pathways in 11 different career clusters. They have partnered with Lanier Technical College to create courses, including advanced technology and engineering (mechatronics).

THE RESULTS

By adopting the Intelitek curriculum, students can earn credentials in mechatronics, automation, and advanced manufacturing, qualifying for jobs immediately after graduation.

“It is our mission here at Empower to ensure that all students who walk through our doors are college and career-ready upon graduation from high school.”

John Uessler, CEO of Empower College and Career Center

EMPOWER COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER

Integrated manufacturing training prepares students for real industry roles



REAL-WORLD EDUCATION

When John Uessler was hired as CEO of Empower College and Career Center in 2019 in Jefferson, Georgia, he brought with him his skills and experience as CTE Director and CEO/Principal of the Academy for Advanced Studies in Henry County, Georgia. Empower is part of the Career Academy movement across the state. It is a program under the strategic waivers contract in Jackson County Schools with educational partnerships with businesses in the surrounding area. Through real-world work experiences, students progress toward goals to help them reach career and college objectives, including [completing pathways and earning credentials](#).

“While we were establishing the Empower College and Career Center, it became clear that mechatronics, advanced technology and engineering, as we call it, was an emerging important area we needed to develop,” said Uessler.

“There was a \$3.1 million grant that flowed from the Georgia legislature through the technical college system down to the Career Academy level,” he said. “Our primary Technical College partner is [Lanier Technical College](#), through which we administered the grant, but we also have a partnership with the [University of North Georgia](#), so we can offer multiple certifications and dual

enrollment course credit opportunities for the students of Jackson County.”

LOCAL DEMAND FOR SKILLED GRADUATES

Demand exceeded expectations right out of the gate for the Career Academy. The planning committee hoped for 500 students the first year during the 2021-2022 school year. They had three times that number in the first year and growth has continued to exceed expectations:

2021-2022: 1,451 enrolled students
2022-2023: 1,671 enrolled students
2023-2024: 2,018 enrolled students

Uessler reports enrollment for the upcoming school year may continue to climb. “We still have opportunities to grow the program because students are not all in the building at the same time,” he said. Some of the local companies they have partnered with include Toyota Industries (TICA/TACG), SK Battery, Huber Engineered Woods, Roper Pumps, and Solmax (formerly TenCate Geosynthetics).

INTELITEK PROGRAMS AT EMPOWER

Phase 1 - JMTS – JobMaster Trainers and Curriculum

Foundations of Manufacturing
Electrical Series Training Benches
Mechanical Series Training Benches
Automation Training Benches (Hydraulics/Pneumatics /PLC)

Phase 2 - Advanced FMS (Flexible Manufacturing Lab) with Curriculum

Yaskawa Industrial Robotics (with Certification)
CNC Machining
Conveyor, Machine Vision, and Automated Storage and Retrieval (ASRS)
PLC Control

Phase 3 – Expanded Program

Added advanced levels of training for the Electrical Series
Expanded PLC training for new PLC families
Added to Industry 4.0 Curriculum as well as labs
Added Smart Sensors to Automation Trainers
Added Condition Based Monitoring to Mechanical Trainers.



INTELITEK CURRICULUM TRAINS FUTURE WORKERS

The Intelitek curriculum is so robust that students can earn credentials. “In addition to what we’ve put in our lab, Lanier Technical College will start offering dual enrollment classes in industrial electrical, and industrial controls so students can earn Technical College certificates if they choose to,” said Uessler.

“I think we’re making great progress. But we’re going to continue to work with our instructional partners, our students to make sure that what we’re doing is giving them the experiences they need to be prepared for their future,” he said.

According to Uessler, traditional education focuses on the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent. “While we serve the top and bottom 10 percent, Empower is really a school for the middle 80 percent because we look at each individual student to help them figure out where each of them wants to be,” said Uessler.

“When they graduate from high school, they’re either going to be enrolled, enlisted or employed in wherever their path is taking them.”

WHY INTELITEK?

“The thing we value about Intelitek is their robust online curriculum, which teaches the content, but it also offers the same simulations in a virtual environment that can be completed in the lab.”

“We explored every single vendor that had mechatronics courses and provided the kind of training equipment we were looking for and asked for a proposal,” said Uessler. “What drew us to the Intelitek curriculum was the realness of it. You’re working with real electrical systems, motor controls, and it feels authentic,” he said.



**JACKSON COUNTY
SCHOOL SYSTEM**



ABOUT EMPOWER COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER

The Empower College and Career Center (EmpowerC3) is an educational partnership with businesses in Jackson County and the surrounding area. The Empower Center engages students in career relevant learning experiences. Through partnerships with business and industry, higher education and our community, students work toward goals that help them reach their college and career objectives. Some of these goals include completing pathways and earning credentials.

EmpowerC3 provides a variety of high-tech and academic opportunities as part of the high school experience. Students can work toward associate's degrees through the University System of Georgia or the Technical College System of Georgia while earning their high school diplomas, qualifying them immediately for a variety of professional careers and post-secondary opportunities. Parents of students participating in dual enrollment will save up to two years of post-secondary tuition.

Students will leave high school with authentic experiences that will help them define and refine their choices about college, careers, or the military. EmpowerC3 will provide a continuum of work-based learning experiences, internship possibilities, and a pervasive use of science, math, technology and engineering within the classroom curriculum.

The ultimate goal for every EmpowerC3 student is to graduate prepared for a successful career in an ever-changing world.

INTELITEK PARTNER NETWORK

Our business and technology partners share our vision of enhancing Career and Technology education by helping schools achieve their CTE goals.

Empower Community College and Career Academy was supported by our partner in the region, Learning Labs Inc.

