

Enterprise Transformation: Shipbuilder Academy

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Ingalls Shipbuilder Academy is one of the building blocks that we have in workforce development for young adults and students to grow and develop careers here at Ingalls Shipbuilding.

This program is transforming students' lives. I have the privilege of working with Ingalls Shipbuilder Academy, which is a high school internship program that teaches high school students nine trade craft skills here at Ingalls. And we actually give them hands-on training on every aspect of what the shipyard has to offer them.

Once they've graduated the program, we actually offer them opportunities to come out and be employees of the shipyard two weeks after high school, and they are rolling and transforming themselves from high school students into actual careers.

We looked at the business need and saw that there's a huge skills gap coming with the manufacturing industry, and we wanted to be at the forefront of that and build a pipeline. So we reached out to all of the local high schools and efforts to collaborate, as well as the community, to see what we could do to initially stand up an internship program.

The high schools came to the table, and they were over the moon, to be honest with you. We've worked with the Department of Education with Mississippi, and we've also stood up another campus in Harrison County, which started in 2019. So we have 14 schools that we are actively collaborating with. We just completed our fifth year – we've had 235 students successfully complete the program, and actually we have 119 job offers that were accepted, and we still have most of the students still working here.

Signing day is the most exciting day of the year. It always happens in May, and this is where the students get to come in, put on a hat, sign their offer letter like a college scholarship would be for an athlete, and we get to celebrate all of these students and their amazing accomplishments.

We are transforming high school seniors into grown adults.