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Subject: MMAC/COSBE business tour program brings more than 8,000 MPS students into local businesses
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“Be the Spark” program reaches milestone Business tour program brings more than 8,200 MPS students into local companies to explore career options

Milwaukee – The small business division of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) – COSBE (the Council of Small Business Executives) – successfully expanded its Be the Spark program to provide tours to all 7th grade students in the Milwaukee Public Schools District. The business tour program is designed to give students and educators access to small businesses throughout metro Milwaukee. Since its launch in October of 2014, more than 8,200 MPS students have participated in the program.

The “COSBE Be the Spark” program grew out of the understanding that the key to success of local businesses – and the entire region – is a strong and sustainable workforce.

“Education is more than just curriculum and report cards. And a job is more than just a paycheck,” commented Alexis Deblitz, Spark’s Project Manager. “Through Be the Spark, educators and business leaders understand they have similar goals.”

During the 90-minute tour experience, students meet employees at the host business. “As an employer in a competitive labor market, we embrace every opportunity to open our doors,” said Jeff Clark, president of Waukesha Metal Products and tour host. “We have great success with both high school and college interns. By supporting Be the Spark, we hope to encourage more young people to get involved with Youth Apprenticeship and Internship programs.”

As Be the Spark enters its fifth year of partnership with MPS in Fall of 2018, it will become the designated “Learning Journey” for 7th grade students. “The Spark career tour program is a natural fit for the Learning Journey program at MPS” said MPS Interim Superintendent, Dr. Keith P. Posley. “Each journey is custom-designed for students to connect what they are learning in their classrooms with real-world learning opportunities.”

COSBEs Be the Spark program is funded through sponsorship support of several local and nationally

recognized firms: Waukesha Metal Products, Superior Support Resources, Inc., Tredo Group LLC, Southwest Airlines, Meijer, Johnson Financial Group, Milwaukee Urban Strategic Investment Corporation and Riteway Transportation.

The following companies provided one or more tours to students in the 2017-18 school year:

<p>AW2 Logistics Berghammer Construction Corporation Bevco Engineering Company, Inc. Beyond Vision Briggs & Stratton Corporation Carma Laboratories, Inc. Charter Automotive Chr. Hansen Inc. Covanta Environmental Solutions Creative Business Interiors Inc. Crowne Plaza Hotel Milwaukee-Airport Cultivate Communications Derse Inc. Desert Aire Corp. Discovery World Douglas Dynamics Eppstein Uhen Architects Inc. Exhibit Systems Forrer Business Interiors Inc. GenMet Good Karma Brands- ESPN Milwaukee Hayes Performance Systems Healics Inc. HellermannTyton Corporation Hunger Task Force Innovative Signs Inc. James Imaging Systems La Macchia Enterprises Inc. Luther Manor, A Life Plan Community M3 Insurance</p>	<p>M3 Insurance Majic Productions ManpowerGroup Marcus Corporation Max Weiss Co., LLC Metal-Era Inc. Milwaukee Bucks LLC Milwaukee Public Museum Mortenson Construction Oldenburg Group Incorporated Pieper Electric Inc. Plum Media Poblocki Sign Company LLC Power Test Inc. PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP Reich Tool & Design, Inc. River Run Computers Sikich LLP Southwest Airlines Co. Spaulding Clinical Research Staff Electric Co Inc. Stainless Foundry & Engineering Inc. Superior Support Resources, Inc. Tailored Label Products Inc. Top Floor United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County Verlo Mattress Factory Stores Waukesha Metal Products Wenthe-Davidson Engineering Co. West Allis Blue Western States Envelope & Label Wixon Inc.</p>
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COSBE represents members of the MMAC with 1-300 employees. MMAC and COSBE provide the region's best business network, advocate for a strong business environment and support the economic development of the region.

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