

Statewide Virtual Career Fair to take place in May

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By Catherine Bart

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SCARBOROUGH — Maine’s first virtual career fair will take place from May 17-21, offering students an opportunity to explore different paths and goals.



The Community Coordinators Collaborative, an organization comprised of educators, will host the ME Virtual Career Fair, that will be the first statewide event, according to a press release. This year’s event is a collaboration with Educate Maine and the Association of Computer Technology Educators of Maine.

According to the written statement, “The ME Virtual Career Fair’s primary focus is to introduce students in grades nine through 12 to Maine businesses that represent a variety of careers and professions available in the state. Numerous sessions will be hosted in the form of live speaker talks with question-and-answer and will feature businesses and organizations from varying industry clusters.”

South Portland has a large career fair each year under normal circumstances, but the hope for the virtual event is to touch more rural communities, said Sheree Inman, a career preparation teacher at South Portland High School and co-coordinator of the event.

“Schools are handling it in different ways, so we’re leaving it open to interpret how they want to implement the virtual career fair in their schools, because we want to hit every school in Maine, not just South Portland, which throws a large career event every year, but also rural towns in Maine that don’t often have these types of opportunities,” Inman said.

The event will feature prerecorded keynote speakers and promotional videos that students can watch a day or two ahead of time, Inman said.

“We’ll have the live sessions for three days, and then on Friday, we’re working on curriculum for schools that can be supplemental activities for schools that can be supplemental to enhance the live sessions,” she said.

Christy Zavasnik, career pathways coordinator at Scarborough High School, said the event’s flexible nature will make it easy for students to attend sessions, and some teachers will be promoting the event based on their course’s content.

“We anticipate a significant interest from students because of the flexibility that is offered for them to attend different sessions and to be able to attend sessions based on what their interest area might be,” she said.

Flexibility is one of the event’s benefits, Zavasnik said.

Inman said the hope is that students will make connections.

“In past events we’ve seen things come full circle,” she said. “I’ve had presenters in the past talk at an event and then years later see a student going through their program.

“I’ve heard feedback where some students liked having that connection to employers and understanding the value of their education, and it can help motivate them to stay on track and excited for what they want to do. I think that’s the overarching goal is just to get students to get information from the source and what they need and how to reach their goals.”

The event’s website, www.mevirtualcareerfair.org, contains additional information about the sessions.

A valuable aspect of the career fair is the way it connects students to the world that exists after high school, Inman said.

“It’s beyond anything we can teach in the classroom, so I think that is a really authentic experience for the students,” she said.

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