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For More Information, Contact  
Eileen Cassidy  
(703) 264-7200  
E-mail: [ecassidy@npes.org](mailto:ecassidy@npes.org)

**MARYLAND AND PGAMA PROMOTING PrintED® AS KEY TO BETTER  
CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has embraced PrintED, a national accreditation and certification program, as a powerful tool to improve career and technical education in the area of graphic communications, encouraging local schools to pursue PrintED accreditation and providing them with the financial support to accelerate the process.

“The printing industry has been changing tremendously and we wanted to facilitate the upgrade of graphics and printing programs in Maryland to industry standards,” explains Rosemary Bitzel, regional coordinator, Systems Branch, in MSDE’s Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning.

“The Printing & Graphics Association Mid-Atlantic (PGAMA) told us about PrintED, and it was the only accreditation program that met the state’s criteria.”

MSDE’s first exposure to PrintED came in 2004, through the sole PrintED accredited site in the state, the Dr. James A. Forrest Career Center in St. Mary’s County. Since then, two more Maryland sites have earned accreditation and fifteen additional schools in ten local systems are progressing toward that goal.

The two recently accredited programs are the Western School of Technology in Baltimore and the Occupational Skills Training Center, which is located inside a Baltimore City prison.

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MSDE awards grants of \$5,800 to interested local school systems to support the accreditation process. Aspiring PrintED schools also participate in MSDE/PGAMA supported professional development to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to offer an accredited program to students. In addition, through the efforts of PGAMA, instructors have access to an electronic bulletin board system for online communication.

Bitzel says these resources include individual consultation with experienced educators and opportunities to participate in multi-day training programs. In addition, one accredited system, the Baltimore County Public Schools, has opened its meetings with currently accredited PrintED schools to all programs in the state.

“More and more local school systems are considering the benefits of having a certified graphics program,” says Roman Budzinski, vice president of PGAMA, “and the state wanted some way to determine that technology students were learning what they needed to learn to meet the needs of employers.”

PrintED gives prime emphasis to aligning curricula and program content with actual current needs of industry, and promotes this alignment by encouraging industry participants to be deeply involved in local education programs. “PrintED advisory committees, comprised of industry professionals, meet at each school on a regular basis,” Budzinski says.

For PGAMA, Budzinski says the benefits are clear. “We have a workforce development responsibility to our membership. The students coming out of PrintED accredited programs are simply more skilled and knowledgeable.”

PrintED provides schools with a blueprint to follow so that teachers continuously update their skills and knowledge. “Teachers tend to teach what they know and get

advice from whom they know,” says Bitzel. PrintED and the partnership with PGAMA will bring welcome standardization and industry involvement to this process.

A variety of metrics are being used to measure outcomes from the program, Bitzel adds, including the number of schools obtaining accreditation, the numbers of students passing their year-end assessments and PrintED exit exams, and successful placements of students in jobs after graduation.

PrintED is one part of GAERF’s mission. In addition to this program, the Foundation administers two other programs designed to support recruitment and training of a skilled workforce: the grant-making program which since its inception in 1983, has awarded over \$4.5 million in funding, and MAKE YOUR MARK® in Graphic Communications, a campaign to high schools aimed at promoting a positive image of the printing and graphic communications industry and raising student awareness of the industry’s diverse career opportunities.

The Graphic Arts Education and Research Foundation was created by the National Association for Printing Leadership, NPES The Association for Suppliers of Printing, Publishing, and Converting Technologies and the Printing Industries of America in 1983. These three national associations jointly own the Graphic Arts Show Company (GASC®). GAERF was created to channel a portion of the revenues earned by GASC-managed shows into projects supporting a strong future for the industry.

For additional information about the Foundation and its programs, visit the GAERF web site at [www.gaerf.org](http://www.gaerf.org) or call toll-free at (866) 381-9839.

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