

The Cullman Area Workforce Solutions (CAWS) is an excellent program that provides a partnership between the local area businesses and teachers. Teachers participate in a week long shadowing project experiencing different aspects and levels of a specific corporation. The goal is to impact classroom teaching through exposure to skills necessary to perform well in the workplace.

As I began my week with Kevin McCormick at Standard Furniture, I was amazed to learn all of the areas of business that it takes to have a successful furniture store. Our agenda for the week was very detailed. We visited some of the local businesses such as Serta Bedding Company, HomeTex, Standard Furniture Cooperate Office and Distribution Center, as well as the Community Shoppers Guide and Cullman Times.

I did get to interview many different people from many different levels within the businesses. As I gathered my information, one thing that most people had in common was a strong work ethic and deep commitment in building relationships whether with employees or business partnerships. Everyone was deeply concerned with education and how to instill a sense of commitment and pride in our young students so that they will become a qualified workforce in the current and future employment needs of our community.

As we toured the local businesses, I became more aware of the many areas of employment opportunities from entry level positions working on assembly lines, customer service representatives, to those of sales, management, and technology. There are so many opportunities available for our upcoming workforce and educators need to prepare these students so they are well aware of the opportunities available for them and the education and skills they need to get there.

As we wrapped up our busy week, I was given the opportunity to go through each phase of the hiring process from application to termination. I look forward to having Kevin McCormick participate in my lesson of "Filling out an application".

He will offer a different perspective to my 8th grade class as they begin to look more closely into the career paths and college plans for their future.