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Technology Coordinator Keith Sorensen (left) and Steve Elza say a robust infrastructure is essential to support devices in Fremd High School's automotive classes.

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Career-Focused Schools Use Technology to Help Students Advance

Innovative tools are a necessity in vocational programs, experts say.

by Calvin Hennick

Calvin Hennick is a freelance journalist who specializes in business and technology writing. He is a contributor to the CDW family of technology magazines.

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Fremd High School was recently featured in *EdTech Magazine*. The article explores how innovative technology is helping students become career ready. Read an excerpt below:

In the past, students in Steve Elza's automotive classes at William Fremd High School in Palatine, Ill., had to take turns using a diagnostic scanning tool that cost the school up to \$8,000. Today, the teens use an inexpensive device that connects via Bluetooth to the tablets they all carry.

"Today's cars have 100 or more computers in them," says Elza. "We have to have computers to work on them." That's just one of the ways technology is transforming automotive education at Fremd.

When the district deployed tablets, students in career and technical tracks were among the most enthusiastic adopters,

says Fremd's Technology Coordinator Keith Sorensen.

"Devices changed the automotive program the most," he says. "Students film or take photos each step of the way. They are really good at documenting their work and explaining it."

Elza, who also coaches the school's Hot Rodders of Tomorrow team and was named the 2015 Illinois Teacher of the Year, says all the software the students use is online.

"When they look up a torque spec for a brake system, they use our online software and find that information right on their tablets," he says. "They also use computers to do 3D modeling of parts."

In addition to automotive classes, Fremd offers students the chance to learn about building construction, engineering, electronics and woodworking. This sort of applied technology instruction was once called "vocational," and it was seen by many as a place to put students with limited academic skills.

But today, career and technical education programs prepare students for both college and the workplace. (Some of Elza's students go to \$18-an-hour jobs after graduation, while others pursue four-year degrees.) And, as many of these career paths become more technical in nature, school districts are investing in technology to help their students keep pace with career demands.

To read the full article, click

here: <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2017/07/career-focused-schools-use-technology-help-students-advance>