Students from Pearl City and Waipahu High Schools attended the Chamber’s Annual Membership Luncheon last year to connect with business leaders. The principals, administrators and students from both schools underscored the incredible work they have been doing through their career academies.

The Chamber is partnering with Harold K.L. Castle Foundation and Hawaii P20 on a Chamber Career Connect (3C) Program to connect business industry professionals with Waipahu and Pearl City High Schools and their students. These partnerships are centered around work-based learning opportunities that focus on career awareness, preparation, exposure and training.

The Chamber’s role in this 3C Program is to serve as an intermediary between the schools and business partners to establish, build and strengthen connections. The goal is to create sustainable partnerships by monitoring current and creating new relationships, and collecting data to show the program’s impact on students’ college and career readiness.

Creating career pathways will better equip students as they enter the next phase of their lives, while also providing teachers with guidance in developing curriculum that is relevant to present and future career paths.

Work-based learning opportunities include career or job fairs, providing interactive opportunities for businesses to expose students to a range of employment opportunities; guest speaking, where business partners and subject matter experts visit the classroom to speak on a topic of interest; and having business partners serve as judges for student projects, business plans, presentations or other programs.

Teachers also have opportunities with externships that help them stay current on industry practices and trends, and learn practical applications for what they teach. A core element of this teacher externship is tracking how they implement what was learned from the business into the classroom. Businesses will also play a role in helping these teachers shape their lesson plans to be relevant to their industry’s present and future qualifications.

For businesses that are interested in participating in this initiative, please email Program Coordinator Aran Wilson at awilson@cochawaii.org.