

Palmetto Education Summit 2026

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about us



Thomas Monroe
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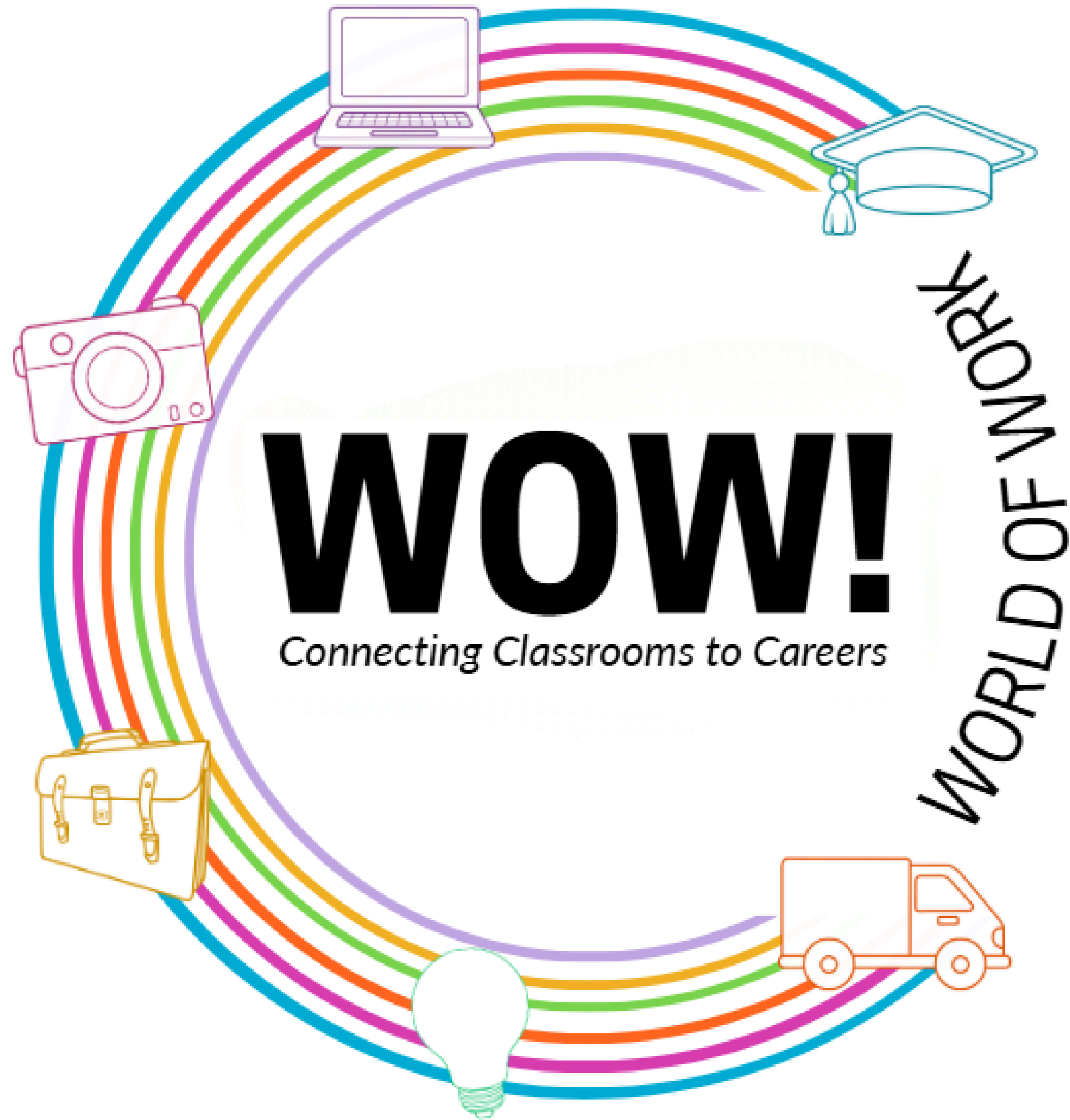
Beth Botini
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Celeste Tiller
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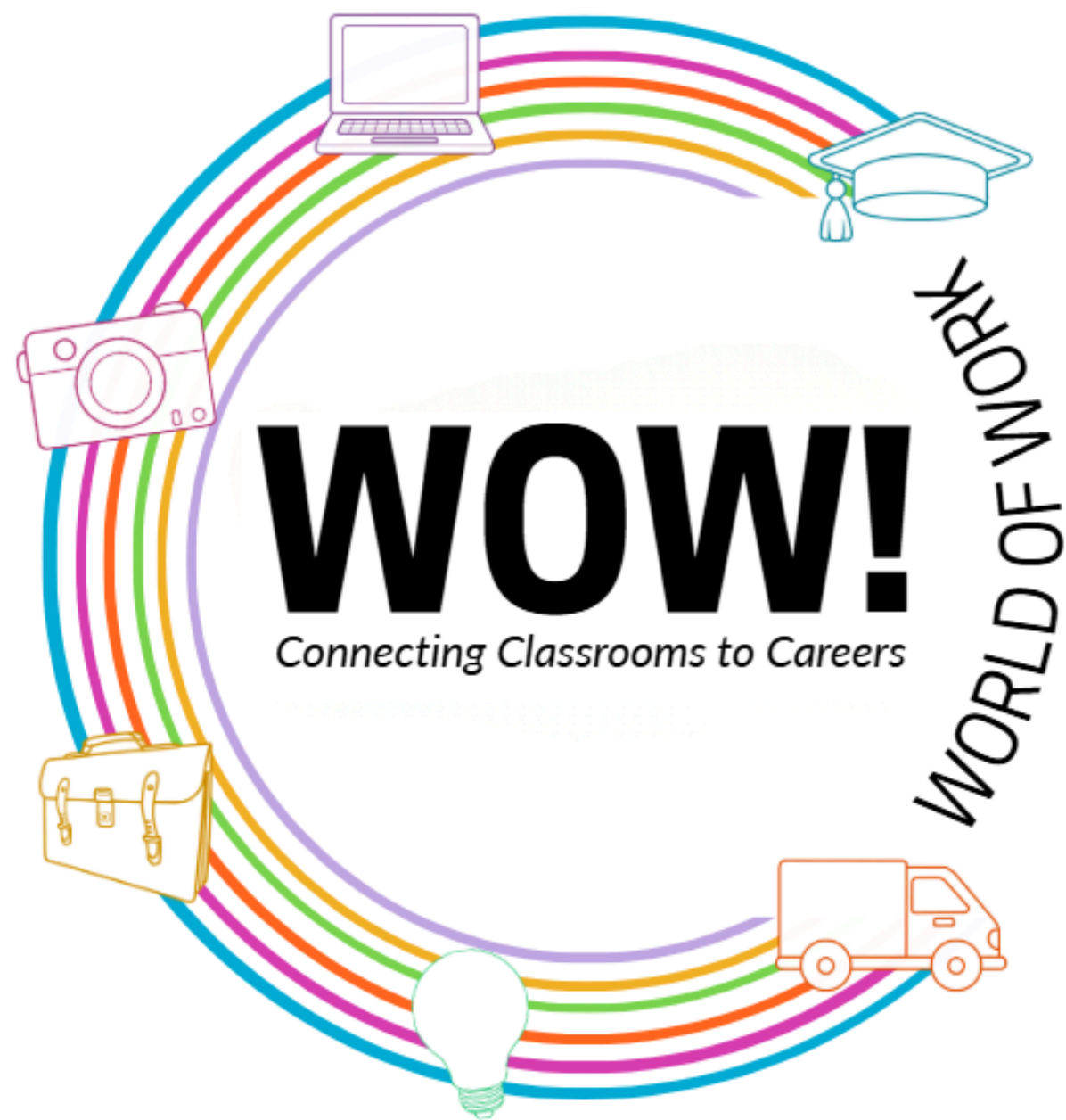
**How did you learn
about careers in
middle school?**



WOW!

Connecting Classrooms to Careers

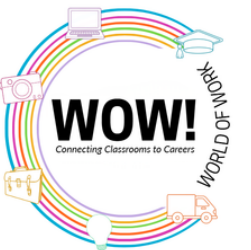
WORLD OF WORK



WOW! World of Work is an **immersive, hands-on experience** that introduces middle school students to the (modernized) **14 Career Clusters**, helping them explore real careers in their own community while jumpstarting their journey into high school and their Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). Through interactive sessions students begin to see what's possible and how their interests connect to future opportunities.

why?

- **Expose** middle school students to career pathways and workplace skills.
- **Connect** students with local business and industry professionals.
- **Increase** career awareness and engagement.
- **Support** career development goals within the school districts.
- **Strengthen** education-business partnerships.



who?

- **WOW! Planning Team**
 - Regional Workforce Advisor
 - Regional Career Specialist
 - Chamber of Commerce/Foundation
- **School Counselors, School Administration**
- **District Leadership**
- **Business & Industry Partners**
- **Community Organizations**



How?

- Step 1: **Start the Conversation**
- Step 2: **Follow-Up Survey & Interest Collection**
- Step 3: **School Planning Meetings**
- Step 4: **Partner Recruitment & Marketing**
- Step 5: **Connect Business Partners & Schools**
- Step 6: **Progress Review**
- Step 7: **Final Readiness Review & Set Up**
- Step 8: **It's Show Time!**



1 Step

Start the Conversation

During the initial meeting (w/ school or district), we discussed:

- Overview of WOW! and the conference opportunities.
- Benefits of participation.
- Conference models available:
 - Option 1: Traditional Career Conference w/ a Career Expo (vendor style)
 - Option 2: Customized Conference Format (14 Sessions/6 “Worlds” using the Modernized Career Clustrs)
- Maximum # of students to be served
- School logistics and facility needs
- Existing business partnerships w/ the school

Goal: Determine district/school interest and the needs of their students.



Step 2

Follow-up Survey & Interest Collection

- Interest survey distributed to schools.
- School indicate level of participation interest.
- Contacts at the school are identified.
- Individual school meetings scheduled.

Goal: *Build the local planning team and begin implementation.*



Step 3

School Planning Meetings

Building the event framework:

- Event goals and expectations
- Student participation numbers
- Schedule and timeline
- Room assignments and facility use
- Donations needed
- Business partner recruitment priorities

Goal: Conference framework established.



4 Steps

Partner Recruitment & Marketing

WOW! Team Responsibilities

- Recruit & confirm business and industry partners
- Develop marketing and promotional materials
- Develop a streamlined communication plan to ensure solid connection between businesses and school counselors

School Counselor Responsibilities

- Coordinate internal school logistics
- Communicate w/ school staff, administration AND presenters
- Identify student participation needs
- Manage school-specific requirements
- IT Support

Goal: *Setting expectations to ensure a successful conference.*



5 Step

Connect Business Partners & Schools

- Business partners are connected directly with the school counselors.
- School counselors provide:
 - School policies and procedures
 - Campus expectations
 - Arrival and parking information
 - Safety and security requirements
 - Event-day expectations
 - All technology and media needs/requirements

Goal: *Ensure business partners are fully prepared and supported.*



6 Step S

Progress Review

Discussion topics:

- Business partner confirmations
- Session assignments
- Event flow review
- Logistics updates
- Marketing and communication efforts
- Challenges and additional needs

Goal: *Ensure planning remains on schedule.*



Step 7

Final Readiness Review

- Confirm all business partners attending
- Review counselor communication with all outside agencies
- Verify session schedules
- Review event-day logistics
- Confirm marketing and student communication
- Review school personnel assignments
- Discuss contingency plans
- Have IT Support on site



Step 7^{cont.}

Set Up (Day Before Conference)

Checklist:

- ✓ Confirm room assignments
- ✓ Prepare signage
- ✓ Organize presenter materials
- ✓ Verify technology needs
- ✓ Prepare check-in materials
- ✓ Confirm volunteer assignments
- ✓ Review event schedule
- ✓ Communicate final reminders to staff and partners

Goal: *Event is fully prepared for implementation.*



Step 8

It's Show Time!

Main areas of focus for the day:

- Business partner welcome and check-in
- School personnel coordination
- Student engagement
- Session transitions
- Troubleshooting and support
- Celebrating partnerships and student learning

Goal: *Deliver a meaningful career exploration experience for every student.*





the impact

WOW!
WORLD OF WORK

BIG IMPACT!

TOGETHER, WE'RE INSPIRING
TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE!



SCHOOLS



6 SCHOOLS
AT 5 SITES

- ★ BUFORD MS
- ★ OAKRIDGE MS
- ★ CLOVER MS
- ★ LEWISVILLE MS
- ★ GREAT FALLS, MS
- ★ YORK MS

BUILDING
CONNECTIONS.
CREATING
FUTURES!

STUDENTS



1,655 STUDENTS
INSPIRED!

BUFORD MS	389
OAKRIDGE MS	417
CLOVER MS	319
LEWISVILLE MS (COMBINED CONFERENCE)	150
GREAT FALLS, MS	
YORK MS	380

TOTAL

1,655

EDUCATORS

117 EDUCATORS
EMPOWERING
STUDENTS!

BUFORD MS	38
OAKRIDGE MS	21
CLOVER MS	16
LEWISVILLE MS	17
GREAT FALLS, MS	
YORK MS	25

TOTAL

117

BUSINESSES

114 BUSINESSES
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE!

BUFORD MS	22
OAKRIDGE MS	17
CLOVER MS	14
LEWISVILLE MS	41
GREAT FALLS, MS	
YORK MS	20

TOTAL

114



STRONGER TOGETHER.
BRIGHTER FUTURES.



what?

Keys to Success - What Makes WOW! Work

- Strong district support
- Engaged school counselors
- Meaningful business partnerships
- Consistent communication
- Clear planning timelines
- Team-centered approach
- Student-focused experiences



questions?

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