

SME to Expand SME PRIME® to Build the Next Generation of America’s Maritime Industrial Base Workforce

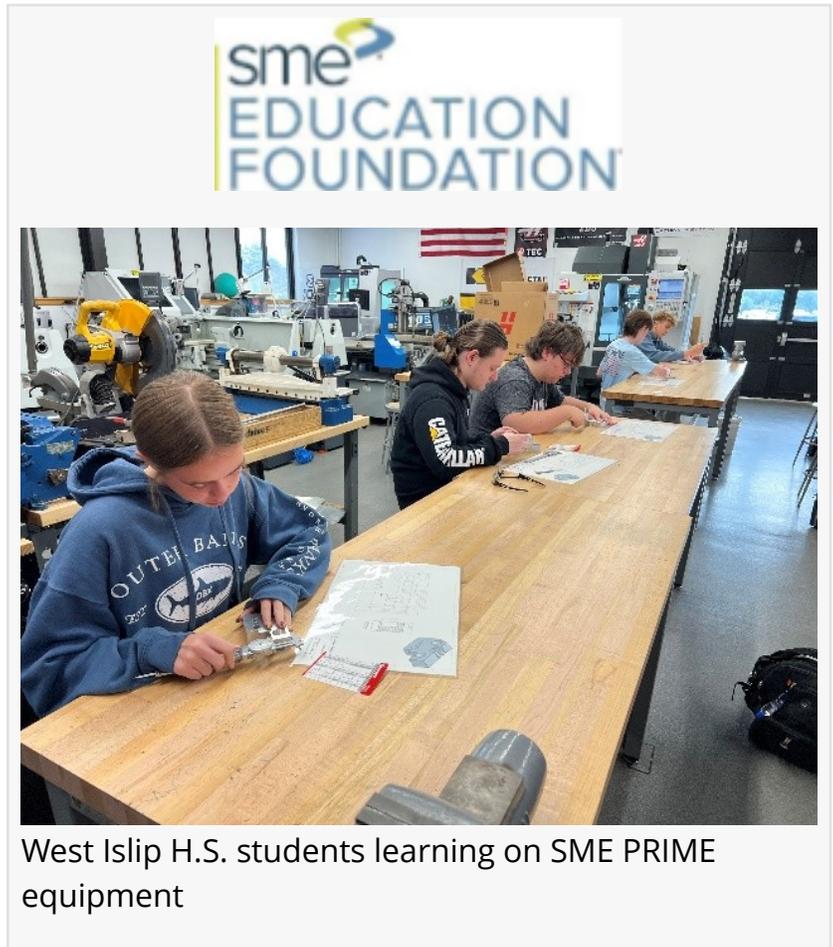
Partnership introduces hands-on maritime manufacturing pathways for high school students across the U.S.

SOUTHFIELD, MI, UNITED STATES, January 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Through an expanded 2024 [initiative](#), three maritime-focused high schools are joining SME PRIME—the Partnership Response in Manufacturing Education program, which develops customized manufacturing programs in high schools across the country—to introduce maritime manufacturing pathways to students, supporting broader efforts aligned with the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Industrial Base (MIB) Program and efforts to address critical workforce gaps.

This expansion represents the next phase in efforts to prepare the next generation of skilled talent needed across America’s submarine, shipbuilding, and defense manufacturing sectors.

SME PRIME is the signature program of the SME Education Foundation, the philanthropic arm of SME, the nonprofit association committed to building and expanding North America’s talent and capabilities and accelerating advanced manufacturing technologies. Through SME PRIME, the Foundation connects high schools with local manufacturers to deliver hands-on, career-ready learning experiences.

“We’re proud to welcome these three new high school programs into the SME PRIME network to deliver meaningful manufacturing career pathways for students while strengthening the U.S.



West Islip H.S. students learning on SME PRIME equipment

Navy's maritime industrial base," said Rob Luce, vice president of the SME Education Foundation. "By aligning education with industry and building talent pipelines where students live and learn, we are investing in their futures—and in the strength of our nation's security and manufacturing base."



Dr. Carrie Curtis, Education Initiatives Workforce Leader for the U.S. Navy Maritime Industrial Base Program, emphasized the importance of early workforce development: "Developing the maritime workforce starts long before the first day on the job. Programs like SME PRIME give students early exposure to the skills and technologies that drive national defense, ensuring a strong pipeline of talent ready to support the Navy's critical missions."

The new SME PRIME schools include:

- ACCEL Prep & Academy (Mobile, AL)
- West Islip High School (West Islip, NY)
- New Hope Solebury-Solebury High School (New Hope, PA)

"Becoming an SME PRIME school gives our students hands-on access to technologies and career pathways they might never have imagined," said Dr. Jeremiah Newell, Chief Executive Officer, Mobile Area Education Foundation, ACCEL Academy. "It's exciting to see our community come together around manufacturing education that connects students directly to high-demand, high-wage careers."

The SME PRIME program provides essential resources such as equipment, curriculum, teacher training, student scholarships, extracurricular funding, and long-term program sustainability support. Tailored to meet the needs of local manufacturers, SME PRIME aligns with 45 industry-recognized credentials and certifications. Currently, SME PRIME operates in 118 schools across 25 states, benefiting more than 12,000 students, 91 percent of whom pursue manufacturing careers after graduation.

The new SME PRIME locations will build awareness, aptitude, and skills in technologies such as additive manufacturing, welding, robotics, metrology, and CNC machining—core capabilities that support both advanced manufacturing and the nation's maritime sector.

With approximately 467,000 manufacturing jobs currently unfilled in the U.S.—a figure projected to rise to 1.9 million by 2033— programs like SME PRIME play a vital role in preparing the

workforce of tomorrow.

Through these three new programs, the SME PRIME network continues to expand into new regions, equipping students with the skills, certifications, and hands-on experience needed to support America's maritime and defense manufacturing capabilities.

For more information about the SME Education Foundation and the SME PRIME program, visit smeef.org.

About the SME Education Foundation

As the philanthropic arm of SME, the SME Education Foundation inspires, prepares, and supports the next generation of manufacturing talent. Established in 1979, the Foundation works to expose youth to modern manufacturing technologies, train students on relevant manufacturing processes, and award millions of dollars in scholarships annually. All Foundation programming seeks to empower youth to consider and pursue careers in manufacturing. We continue to inspire, prepare, and support the next generation of manufacturing talent – now as many as 14,000 students every year. Visit smeef.org and follow the SME Education Foundation on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

About SME

Established in 1932 as a nonprofit organization, SME represents the entire North American manufacturing industry, including manufacturers, academia, professionals, students, and the communities in which they operate. We believe manufacturing holds the key to economic growth and prosperity, and champion the industry's potential as a diverse, thriving, and valued ecosystem. SME accelerates new technology adoption and builds North America's talent and capabilities to advance manufacturing and drive competitiveness, resiliency, and national security. SME designs new ways to understand and solve problems, and our solutions advance the next wave of growth in manufacturing. Learn more at SME.org.

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