

Pinkston Collegiate Students Gain Interview Tips, Confidence at Haynes and Boone 'Mocktail' Reception

April 26, 2019 Brent Beckert

One of the most daunting parts of getting a job is the interview process, but Haynes Boone helped some students from L.G. Pinkston's Collegiate Academy overcome that fear with its annual "Mocktail" reception.

On Thursday evening, the firm welcomed a bus full of high school juniors to its Dallas office for the lively mock job interview/networking event. Several lawyers participated, including Associate [Brent Beckert](#), who helps lead Haynes Boone's involvement with Pinkston.

"This event is a great way to help students get past any fears they may have of interviewing for jobs," Beckert said. "It also helps them hone important skills that they will need in the business world, such as how to successfully network."

The students interacted with Haynes Boone lawyers and PlainsCapital Bank professionals over punch and appetizers and received interviewing tips such as: maintain eye contact, give a strong handshake, think before you speak, turn off your cellphone, and prepare questions to ask during the interview.

Just as important, Beckert encouraged the teens to "be professional, of course, but be yourselves and have fun."

Each student participated in several one-on-one mock interviews. Associate Brett Moore, who helped organize the event, said he was pleased with the effort he saw from the students.

"They prepared well and worked really hard. They are very impressive – much more impressive than I was at their age," he said.

Moore's feedback included "avoid filler words such as 'um' and 'like.' These are things that people always struggle with – the Achilles heel of interviewing," he said.

Cesar Aspeitia, who was interviewing for the first time, said the experience will help boost his confidence when he goes into a real job interview.

"It was fun. I realized these people are friendly and are here to help," he said. "They gave me some good advice, such as making more eye contact and talking about things that will help me stand out, like the fact that I play the saxophone."

Ailyah Sanders, who was participating in her second Mocktail reception, said she welcomes feedback and constructive criticism.

"I am definitely getting more comfortable with it," she said. "The interviewers said they noticed my confidence when I walked into the room."

Haynes Boone has a longstanding partnership with the Collegiate Academy, which is a business-focused program that allows students to simultaneously earn a high school degree and an

associate's degree from Dallas El Centro College.

This Collegiate partnership is an important component of Haynes Boone's pipeline programs, which are designed to help develop a diverse network of young adults interested in pursuing legal careers.

Students at the Collegiate Academy focus on one of three professional fields: health sciences, business and information technology. Guest speakers who visit the school – including Haynes Boone lawyers and staff – cover topics relevant to the curriculum, including interviewing for a job, resume writing, business ethics, and appropriate workplace behavior. Through the Collegiate Academy, Haynes Boone lawyers and staff offer real-world lessons from the business of law to reinforce students' classroom learning.

Kendra Armstrong, Pinkston's Early College coordinator, said programs like the Mocktail reception allow students to develop soft skills and technical skills. For example, the school helped the students update their resumes in preparation for Thursday's event.

"Industry partnerships like this are so important for engaging the students and introducing them to a business environment," Armstrong said. "We want them to be prepared when they leave high school to be college and career-ready."