

# KEYNOTER

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NEWS

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## Keys education program becomes model for Houston

*Texas schools send representatives to view facilities*

By BRANDI SIMPSON  
bsimpson@keynoter.com

What started as a way to help kids get employable vocational skills in the Keys has become a model program for 37 high schools in Texas.

Marathon High School and Key West High School both boast new construction-technology labs, just installed this year. Houston officials visited in September to find out how to employ the program in their schools.

The Marathon classes, which incorporate the use of 16 construction modules, are designed to teach a variety of job skills that would have a career path, said Mark Hooper, the Monroe County School District's coordinator of vocational services.

"The construction [module] is not only designed to provide students with a career path after high school, but also give kids the chance to learn very practical knowledge," he said.

Job-related skills such as electrical, plumbing, heating, venting



Keynoter photos by BRANDI SIMPSON

Representatives from the Monroe County School District, the Houston School District, Marathon High School, Questech Inc., Lab Resources Inc. and the National Center for Construction Education tour Marathon High School's construction lab.

and air conditioning, cabinet making, carpeting, tiling, telephone and cable installation, masonry, small-engine repair and sheet-metal work are taught over a one-year course.

There is a three-year track for interested students, said John Andola, director of vocational services for the Keys School District. The first year, students

get basic skills in construction trades. In the second year, students work on major projects within construction trades. In the third year, students are assigned to internships with contractors in the community.

"This class came about because we realized that throughout the district we had these old-fashioned woodshop programs," Andola said. "We wanted to get rid of those and come into the 21st Century and offer classes

that were more practical and would help kids get jobs."

Funded through the School District's budget, the class caught the attention of the Houston School District.

The director of career and technology education for that district and others under his direction came to the Keys to tour the construction lab classrooms, in hopes of duplicating the same programs at all of Houston's 37 high schools.



Luis Carnahal and Christina Beloffi stand in a construction-lab module holding supplies that are provided by Questech Inc. to help students learn practical job skills.

"I was extremely impressed with [the district representatives] from Houston," Andola said.

Hooper said the directors from Houston were impressed with the county's program and said they were going to continue speaking with the company that supplies the materials, Questech Inc.

Questech supplied the Keys district with individual modules, workbooks, audio tapes and other things to help the class succeed.