

# Former Buckeye Inspires Students

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BUCYRUS, OH -- Bucyrus High School freshman Keith Bryden is impressed with former Joel Penton, a former Ohio State University defensive lineman.

"I am a member of Teen Institute so listening to what he has to say is really helpful. He shows us that you can play football, or anything else you want to do, and still lead a positive life instead of being someone who uses drugs or just eeks their way through life," Bryden said.

Bryden's classmate and fellow Teen Institute member Alan Hedrick agrees.

"I think it's pretty cool that he has taken the time to come and talk to us. He gives us inspiration to go for our goals," Hedrick said of Penton, who came to Bucyrus High School to speak to student leaders, student body and the community at various times Thursday.

Penton's message is about commitment.

"I am telling kids about how to stand their ground. To not just make commitments, but to follow through with them. I want to inspire people to live a positive life," Penton said.

Penton, who is a member of the Ohio Fellowship of Christian Athletes, is strong in his faith.

"I am looking forward to the community meeting where my message will be more faith-based since it's not a school-related event. After graduating from OSU in 2006, I felt that it was time to hang up the cleats and do what I am doing now," Penton said.

Bucyrus High School drug and alcohol reduction grant coordinator Bob Laipply helped to bring Penton, who speaks at churches, schools and other organizations around the country, to the high school.

"Joel is about being real and setting goals. He wants people to take control of their lives even though life is not always fair, you are responsible for the decisions you make. I think it's great for all kids to see a big, strong football player talking about setting priorities and leading a positive lifestyle," Laipply said.

Penton's message includes the three Ps.

"Passion in your life, persistence in achieving goals and perspective on keeping up a positive lifestyle. I think Joel's entire message is excellent for everyone to hear," Laipply said.

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