

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Emily Pratt

(304) 342-7849

emily@educationalliance.org

Business and Education Leaders Launch ‘WV Ready Graduate’ Initiative

Charleston, WV – Today in Charleston, West Virginia business and education leaders announced they are joining forces to help ensure West Virginia students are “ready” for future success in their career.

The initiative, which is a collaboration between The Education Alliance and Leadership West Virginia and funded by a grants from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and the Roy and Gwen Steeley Foundation, provides a “portrait” or “snapshot” of what a WV Ready Graduate should look like—the knowledge, skills, and characteristics high school graduates must possess to be successful.

Over the past year a working group, made up of business and education leaders from around the state and co-chaired by Leah Curry from Toyota Motor Manufacturing WV and Pat Kelly from the WV Hospital Association, studied current business hiring criteria, promotion criteria, and college admissions criteria as well as other research to develop a clear picture of the needed skill sets.

“Investing in our next generation is critical to the future success of West Virginia,” said Leah Curry, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, West Virginia (TMMWV). “It is critical that business and community members step forward to prepare our future workforce. Toyota believes that every child deserves a chance at success and by investing in the WV Graduate Internship program, we are proudly committed to helping prepare the state’s future workforce through education.”

To support these efforts, The Education Alliance also announced the launch of the WV Ready Internship Program pilot, a 4 week, paid summer internship opportunity for rising high school Juniors and Seniors within West Virginia businesses. The 2019 pilot will place interns at Toyota Motor Manufacturing WV (Buffalo, WV), Appalachian Power (Charleston, WV), and Cabell Huntington Hospital (Huntington, WV). The interns will participate in a day-long training in May that focuses on soft-skill development, weekly virtual cohort meetings throughout their internship period, and complete a final presentation on their internship experience at the conclusion of their internship. Upon completion of all required internship responsibilities, the students will receive college credit from Mountwest Community and Technical College.

The Education Alliance announced that they plan to expand the internship program next year with the goal of going statewide in the coming years.

“West Virginia has a bright future, and we want to ensure our students possess the skills necessary to be successful. The WV Ready Graduate is a simple, easy to understand framework that specifies the

knowledge, skills and characteristics students need to be successful,” said Dr. Amelia Courts, president and chief executive officer of The Education Alliance. “The Alliance commends our business partners for their leadership in launching the innovative WV Ready Internship Program. Through this partnership, West Virginia businesses will provide real-world learning opportunities for high school students.”

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About The Education Alliance

Founded in July 1983 as the first statewide public education fund in the nation, The Education Alliance is a private-sector initiative to help businesses understand the importance of financially and resourcefully supporting the state’s public schools and to give business a voice in public education that advances policies and practices to continually improve public school student achievement in West Virginia.