

NEWS RELEASE

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It's Back to School Season for Ohio Businesses as Well

Partnerships between business leaders and educators are increasingly important for preparing students with the skills they'll need for future success.

COLUMBUS, OH – They're not stocking up on backpacks and notebook paper, but Ohio business leaders are joining students and teachers by going "back to school" this month. That's because more and more business owners and managers are building partnerships with educators in their local schools.

"The recent growth of business-school alliances is a measure of our state's strong economy," said Lisa Gray, president of Ohio Excels, a nonpartisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving education for every Ohio student. "Steady economic growth means businesses have more job openings, often in highly skilled areas like technology, advanced manufacturing and health care. As a result, schools and businesses are working together more closely than ever to ensure a strong supply of well-prepared, career-ready graduates to fill those jobs," she said.

"By making themselves available as a resource for schools, businesses can introduce students to career options at a younger age, helping them to see the real-world value of what they're learning in class," Gray explained. "Later, in high school, these partnerships can lead to co-ops and internships that provide important skills training, motivation and inspiration to seek higher education. Schools know that by providing students training in the in-demand skills that

businesses need, their students are more likely to experience success later in life – in the workforce and in college.”

Gray cited three examples among the many business-school partnerships already having a positive impact on education across Ohio:

- Working with the local business community, Cincinnati Public Schools designed a career-based learning curriculum for its high school students in the 2018-19 school year. This partnership produced a speaker series, business-led skills workshops, career expos, job shadowing, mock interviews and training opportunities with specific businesses in healthcare, information technology, manufacturing and other in-demand career fields.
- Montgomery County’s educational service center brought local schools and businesses together to create a career awareness, exploration and planning curriculum for students from kindergarten to senior year. High school programs focus on professional skills and local in-demand industries such as aerospace, healthcare, information technology and manufacturing.
- In Washington County, school districts and business leaders in Washington County created Building Bridges to Careers in 2012, building connections between to between education and employment opportunities for all students. The program provides job shadowing, internship and career mentoring opportunities for students. Businesses also participate in Career Awareness Day and support project-based learning in local schools.

For students in districts like these and for the thousands of other young Ohioans heading back to school this year, the future is bright, Gray said. “Opportunities are plentiful. With the right preparation, aligned with the needs of a growing economy and supported by an increasingly collaborative business-school partnerships, today’s students will soon be tomorrow’s professionals, heading off on their own successful careers.”

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