

Kentucky Board of Education
October 4, 2017
Report from the Secretary
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Requiring Post-Secondary Success Prior to High School Graduation

The world of work is changing fast. For those with a repetitive motion job, one can almost be guaranteed those jobs will be gone in five years. The rapid advances in technology and automation are affecting every industry. In agriculture for example, the latest farm shows feature cableless tractor prototypes run remotely by computer with exact positioning systems, reproducible to within ½ inch in the field.

In Kentucky, middle-skill jobs represent 58% of all jobs, while less than half of our adults have the education or skill level to fill those jobs. Kentucky is already behind and there is a need to raise the education and skill level for 200,000 adults just to meet the current employer demand.

Last year, Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce released the startling results from a groundbreaking study of the 2008-2010 recession and the recovery over the next six years. They found that 80% of the over seven million jobs lost during that period were to those with a high school diploma or less. The least educated bore the bulk of the pain. What is even more startling however, is that in the 11 million-job recovery, 99% of all new jobs have gone to individuals with at least some college.

A high school diploma alone is simply not enough. Every student needs college on either the academic or the technical path. The world of work has changed and unless K-12 education systems adapt to the need for increased education and skill levels, we will leave a vast number of people without the ability to support themselves let alone make it to the middle socio-economic class.

Recent estimates say that by 2025, 80% of all jobs will require some college. We state in the Cabinet that every single student needs college, college on the academic path or college on the technical path. There is no better way to improve the likelihood that students will pursue post-secondary education than to provide opportunities for post-secondary success while students are still in high school. Research shows that 90% of students who earn post-secondary credit while still in high school will go on to additional education within six years.

Kentucky has had several recent initiatives to expand post-secondary opportunities available to high schools; specifically aimed at removing cost as a barrier to students' participation in post-secondary learning experiences. In 2016, the Kentucky General Assembly appropriated \$15 million in funding for high school dual credit courses for the first time in KY history. The amount of college credit earned through dual credit coursework in Kentucky high schools shot up 83% in one year. Other routes to achieving post-secondary credit such as advanced placement and articulated credit have also seen significant increases in participation and success in recent years.

In order to advance post-secondary success for students on a technical college path, a \$100 million state bond was issued to upgrade facilities and purchase industry relevant equipment across the state. These dollars have been leveraged with additional local and private sector funds totaling a \$250 million infusion into technical facilities over the next 24 months. Every course offered in the state's area

technology centers (ATCs) and local school district-operated technology centers could become a college course that could be applied to an industry-recognized certificate, diploma, and associates of applied science degree.

Recent scholarships are helping high school teachers earn 18 graduate credit hours in their content area to become eligible for college adjunct faculty status. Tuition agreements have been in place for some time allowing occupation-based technical education teachers to further their education and earn additional credentials at minimal cost. In order to blur the dividing line between secondary and post-secondary, we will need no less than 30% of all high school teachers to be eligible to serve as adjunct college faculty in order to maintain long-term economic sustainability. A new teacher rank of 1A should be considered to recognize teachers with the credentials needed to be eligible to serve as adjunct college faculty while teaching in our high schools.

In summary, the nature of work has fundamentally changed. Increased education and skill levels on either the college academic or the college technical path are quickly becoming mandatory for employees. Without post-secondary credentials, our upcoming graduates will face an increasingly difficult economic future and will likely be unable to support themselves and a family.

Kentucky has the opportunity to lead the nation in requiring some measure of post-secondary success in high school for nearly every student as a requirement for high school graduation in 2022 and beyond. This requirement would necessitate increased exposure to the wide breadth of career opportunities. When a student's interest ignites through exposure to an area of interest, what happens educationally is breathtaking.