



Beechwood  
Independent

Bellevue  
Independent

Boone County

Bracken County

Campbell County

Covington  
Independent

Dayton  
Independent

Erlanger-Elsmere  
Independent

Fort Thomas  
Independent

Kenton County

Ludlow  
Independent

Newport  
Independent

Northern Kentucky  
University

Pendleton County

Silver Grove  
Independent

Southgate  
Independent

Walton-Verona  
Independent

Williamstown  
Independent

October 17, 2017

#### To Whom It May Concern:

Northern Kentucky stands willing and ready to create a true work readiness network among P-12 schools, higher education, and business and industry that will lead to solutions and action to match workforce with job needs in our communities.

It's no secret that a serious disconnect has existed with regard to workforce readiness, especially for the top five sectors of industry: advanced manufacturing, information technologies, logistics, health services, and construction. In July 2017 it was publicly reported<sup>1</sup> that 80,000 jobs are unfilled in Kentucky due to lack of skilled labor, especially in those five identified fields.

2017 ACT results showed that only 20% of Kentucky students achieved college readiness in all four core subjects, and the readiness score for every one of the four core subjects was below national averages. Despite focused efforts, these data have remained relatively stable since 2013.<sup>2</sup>

Yet 84% of Kentucky students state their intent to achieve postsecondary education and 72% of students plan to get a bachelors degree or higher, a primary indicator of a disconnect between career preparation and reality for many students.

Lack of coordination among schools, workforce development agencies and employers; uneven information and awareness of workforce opportunities from school to school; workforce training opportunities that are not a good fit for students available; lack of ongoing support for students participating in opportunities; and a limited range of appropriate job shadowing, apprenticeship, internship and other hands-on workplace experiences all contribute to this disconnect.

School staff often do not understand workplace needs, and workforce developers often do not understand the requirements of the P-12 schools. Kentucky's youth need and deserve more and better support to take advantage of employment opportunities

[/www.rcnky.com/articles/2017/07/06/op-ed-kentucky-free-tuition-available-these-programs](http://www.rcnky.com/articles/2017/07/06/op-ed-kentucky-free-tuition-available-these-programs)

[/www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/cccr2017/Kentucky-CCCR-2017-Final.pdf](http://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/cccr2017/Kentucky-CCCR-2017-Final.pdf)

Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Education Services

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that exist. Opportunities for early training opportunities need to be expanded. And it's time to increase intentional focus on workplace readiness in our schools to meet the education needs of students for whom skilled labor is a more logical choice.

Northern Kentucky NaviGo College and Career Network will provide ongoing support for students that will help them make realistic choices and prepare for achievable results. The Network will support coaching, connections, and collaboration among all key partners: higher education, P-12 schools, workforce preparation agencies, and business and industry. It will provide staffing and settings where collaboration can occur, as well as training for schools and employers and supports for students.

The Northern Kentucky NaviGo College and Career Network plan will work through the local education cooperative, Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services, to bring together schools and employers to:

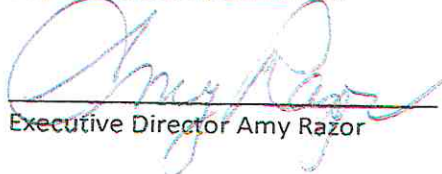
- Share needs and opportunities for effective job shadowing, apprenticeship, internship and other hands-on workplace experiences
- Develop and expand those effective experiences
- Advocate for legislative support for needed changes in support of workforce readiness
- Train workplace staff and school staff about opportunities for youth
- Promote those opportunities in the community and enroll youth
- Provide ongoing support for success in job shadowing, apprenticeship, internship and other hands-on workplace experiences

This Network has the potential to transform our state's economy, as evidence from the Northern Kentucky pilot develops and can be used to support similar approaches in other educational cooperatives throughout the state.

We are asking you to help us champion this strategy in Frankfort. We need support to fund the salary and benefits for the Network coordinator, along with training costs for schools and employers and to market the program. These costs are estimated at \$120,000 for the pilot year, which will create a program that later can be scaled across other Kentucky communities for the future.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working together to improve the education of our youth in Kentucky.

All Kids ~ Our Kids,

  
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Superintendent Robb Smith  
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Executive Director Amy Razor

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