

Gov. Beshear Announces Competency-Based Learning, a New Partnership in Apprenticeship Education in Kentucky

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German-owned automotive supplier Dr. Schneider partners with Labor Cabinet, Department of Education

RUSSELL SPRINGS, Ky. – Kentucky Labor Cabinet Secretary Larry L. Roberts and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday joined local and company officials today at Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems in Russell Springs to celebrate a new partnership for competency-based learning in apprenticeship education in Kentucky.

Gov. Steve Beshear applauded the partnership with the German company. The announcement comes after the Governor recently visited Germany to share Kentucky's accomplishments in workforce training and promote Kentucky's thriving automotive industry at an international automotive conference.

"Career readiness is a crucial part of our economic well-being now and into the future," said Gov. Beshear. "This competency-based initiative not only helps students build better lives for themselves, but it sets a new standard in apprenticeship education in the Commonwealth that will better prepare our workforce to meet the needs of employers and continue to attract new companies to Kentucky."

The new initiative, which is the first of its kind, allows high school students to receive up to half of their apprenticeship hours before graduation based on competency in registered apprenticeship programs – instead of a set amount of classroom and on-the-job training hours previously required for many apprenticeships.

"For the first time in Kentucky, the apprenticeship program will recognize competency-based learning, which provides participating high school students a more customized approach to training," said Secretary Roberts. "This enhancement of Kentucky's current apprenticeship program will allow students a more personalized approach to job training at an earlier age than many apprenticeships have in the past. Also, it will give business partners a chance to grow a new generation of employees trained specifically for their operations."

The program at Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems works with an established pre-apprenticeship program known as Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK), which allows students to also gain apprenticeship hours through their career and technical education classes and participating local business and industry partners.

The pre-apprenticeship program aligns with several criteria a community must meet to obtain Kentucky Work Ready Community certification, which assures employers that a local workforce has the talent and skills necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require.

Russell County is currently one of 33 counties in the state that has achieved Work Ready Community in Progress status. This shows that a community is working with its businesses, education workforce and economic development leaders to set and meet common goals that will give the county and economic edge. TRACK impacts the high school graduation rate, educational attainment and development of soft skills. Students completing the program will acquire employability and occupational skills required of the workforce.

“Work-based learning experiences are essential for Kentucky students to gain the skills and competencies needed for 21st century careers,” said Commissioner Holliday. “Kentucky and the U.S. in general are lagging behind other nations in this regard. As we look to expand work-based learning experiences for more students in Kentucky, this program will serve as a model for the rest of the state.”

Through an extensive screening process, Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems has already placed two students from the nearby Lake Cumberland Area Technology Center in this new training program. Garrett Foley, who works as an industrial maintenance technician, and Tyler Moore, who is an injection mold setter, are considered regular Dr. Schneider employees.

“My wish is to advance this whole program,” said Torsten Langguth, CEO of Dr. Schneider Automotive Systems. “I have been impressed with what the students have learned, and this spring we would like to start the process of looking for four more students to participate in this program. In operating this way, you have to look at apprenticeships differently, and realize these students are like diamonds that are being shaped, and eventually they will have lifelong skills.”

For more information on apprenticeship in Kentucky, visit www.labor.ky.gov.

To learn about Kentucky’s TRACK program, click [here](#).

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