

# KY YES Initiative to Help High School Students Gain Real-World Work Experience

An agreement between the Kentucky Department of Education and global human resource agency Adecco will pave the way for Kentucky high school students to gain valuable work experience through cooperative education opportunities and pre-apprenticeship programs.

The Kentucky Youth Employment Service (YES) agreement will allow students to be more involved in their co-op experience while alleviating some major legal issues for business and industry partners that have hindered co-op programs in the past.

“As the need for trained workers grows and the spotlight on Career and Technical Education brightens, now is the perfect time to assist these high school students with the chance to experience the workforce in more of a hands-on way as opposed to something merely observational,” said KDE Associate Commissioner Dale Winkler.

Working with students under the age of 18 has been a barrier due to workers’ compensation liability restrictions, said Mary Taylor, training and development specialist with the Office of Career and Technical Education.

“We are so excited to now have this as an opportunity for our students and businesses,” she added. “Companies that weren’t able to employ students in the past will have this as an option,

therefore developing their pipeline for skilled employees sooner rather than later.”

The agreement covers any co-op student anywhere in the state, noted Taylor.

Winkler said that while cooperative education is not new, regulations have kept students under the age of 18 from participating in on-the-job training opportunities.

“This agreement will help alleviate some of the barriers we have faced in the past and therefore allow more students to become involved,” he said. “This is critical as we grow our Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) program as well as other work-based learning initiatives.”

Taylor said the business and industry community will also benefit greatly knowing there is an agreement in place that will allow them more flexibility in bringing high school students to their workplaces.

“This is a great opportunity for employers to say “YES” to working with students under 18,” she said.

Interested participants can contact Katie Penn, Adecco Senior Recruiter at 859-797-2832 or [Katherine.penn@adeccona.com](mailto:Katherine.penn@adeccona.com).



*“The Kentucky Youth Employment Service agreement will allow students to be more involved in their co-op experience and allow employers more flexibility to bring in high school students to their operations.”*