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KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL ATTENTION

(LEXINGTON, Ky.) – The Tech Ready Apprenticeship for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) program was in the national spotlight Wednesday as U.S. Assistant Education Secretary Scott Stump toured a program site in Lexington as a part of the U.S. Department of Education’s “Rethink School” Back-to-School tour.

“Secretary DeVos commonly says, ‘Question everything to ensure that nothing limits students from being prepared for what’s next,’” said Stump. “On the national level, we’re pleased to see programs like TRACK breaking down barriers for students who want to participate in non-traditional education opportunities like apprenticeships.”

TRACK is a business and industry-driven approach designed to create a pipeline for students to enter postsecondary apprenticeship training while gaining credit for courses taken and on-the-job hours worked in high school. Employers are able to tailor the program for their specific needs and select the Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and students for their apprenticeship program. The program offers high school students with seamless career pathway opportunities into Registered Apprenticeship. TRACK is a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and Kentucky’s Office of Apprenticeship.

Led by KDE Associate Commissioner David Horseman and Industry Training and Development Specialist Mary Taylor, Stump visited AMTECK’s TRACK training facility in Lexington. During the visit, Stump participated in a discussion with Career and Technical Education instructors, students and parents to learn about TRACK and to identify barriers to high school apprenticeship opportunities.

“Throughout the visit, we had great conversations with Secretary Stump,” said Horseman. “We identified barriers that will need to be broken down in order to grow high school apprenticeship programs, including providing transportation to training sites, updating child labor laws, and clearing up general misconceptions about apprenticeships.”

Following a tour and a webinar with state CTE directors, Stump lauded Kentucky’s efforts to “rethink school.”

“In order for the U.S. economy to continue to grow, we must reduce the skills gap that is keeping workers from obtaining jobs in the skilled trades,” he said. “Kentucky’s TRACK program is ahead of the game compared to how other states are preparing high school students for careers and exposing them to exciting opportunities in the workforce.”

Taylor said she is seeing student success stories throughout the state.

(more)

“It’s amazing how students respond when they find their passion,” said Taylor. “And these opportunities are growing beyond technical careers. We are now seeing high school apprenticeship opportunities in fields such as early childhood education, social work and engineering.”

Interim Commissioner Wayne Lewis was unable to attend the tour due to a speaking engagement in Washington, D.C., however, he said he was thrilled for the TRACK program to “receive the recognition it deserves.”

“Programs like TRACK truly transform students’ lives – especially students whose interests and talents align with the tens of thousands of high demand, high wage career opportunities available in technical fields” Lewis said. “In a state where only 65 percent of our students are deemed college or career ready upon high school graduation, we see TRACK as program that has the potential to dramatically increase that percentage as it expands throughout the Commonwealth. We’re honored that the U.S. Department of Education recognizes its value.”

Learn more about [Kentucky's TRACK program](#) on the Kentucky Department of Education website.

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