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Central Ohio School Districts Launch Innovation Generation

Grant of \$14.4 Million Drives Multidistrict Collaboration for Student Success

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Reynoldsburg City Schools and the consortium of 15 central Ohio school districts announced today the launch of Innovation Generation. This collaboration is supported by Columbus State Community College, Educational Services Center of Central Ohio, Battelle for Kids, Columbus 2020 and a host of community and business partners throughout Ohio to expand postsecondary options for students and close workforce talent gaps that exist across the region.

Innovation Generation provides curriculum and training in six sustainable high-impact programs that provide career pathways into four of the region's most vital industry sectors: advanced manufacturing/robotics, business logistics, health care and information technology.

"We are proud of this important collaboration, which aligns directly with the work we are doing with the Central Ohio Compact," said David Harrison, Columbus State Community College president. "We have made a collective commitment to achieve a regional goal of ensuring that 60 percent of adults obtain postsecondary degrees or certifications by 2025. The work of Innovation Generation teams will help us meet this important milestone. The Innovation Generation initiative is a direct response to the regional needs recognized by the Compact and business community."

The Central Ohio Compact, a regional collaboration supporting postsecondary attainment and career success based on the economic needs of the region, has noted that Ohio will need nearly twice as many adults with postsecondary credentials to meet workforce demands by 2020. According to Complete College America, 59 percent of Ohio jobs will require a college degree or industry-recognized certification; currently 36 percent of Ohio adults have one.

Working together, k-12, higher education and the business community are addressing the employment needs of the future. Made possible through a \$14.4 million Straight A Fund grant, Innovation Generation is a long-term career pathway approach to help students earn the credentials needed to fill some of central Ohio's fastest-growing jobs, giving them a significant head start toward earning college degrees while in high school. The \$250 million Straight A Fund was created by the Ohio General Assembly last year at the initiation of Gov. John Kasich. It is designed to drive innovation in classrooms across Ohio.

Innovation Generation is part of the national Pathways to Prosperity Network, an organization whose mission is to assemble high school, college and work-based experiences so that students graduate with economically viable career credentials as well as a head start on postsecondary studies. "This transformational effort reflects the commitment of the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio General Assembly and Gov. John Kasich to connect our education and business infrastructures with the resources necessary for catalytic change," said Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor John Carey. "Innovation Generation will allow students, teachers, parents and businesses to imagine multiple pathways to wherever a child's talents and interests may lead."

The initiative's six distinct programs are designed to support student success after high school, while increasing high school completion, reducing college remediation rates, accelerating postsecondary credential attainment by participating students, and offering productive work-based learning experiences for participating students and employers.



“This is momentous for our students and school community, and we are making bold investments in our plans for every student,” said Steve Dackin, superintendent of the Reynoldsburg City Schools, which is the lead district for the Innovation Generation initiative. “This multidistrict approach will create learning environments that allow students to explore multiple options qualifying them for careers in central Ohio’s growing economy, or to continue with their postsecondary education.”

More than 1.3 million Ohioans – 22 percent of the adult population – have accumulated some college credits but do not have a degree or certification. The goal of Innovation Generation is to prepare students to earn certification to move directly into the workforce, or enter college. The business community will play an important role in the success of students participating in Innovation Generation.

“Today’s businesses seek employees who are skilled, have a hunger for knowledge, can solve problems, work in teams, have a strong work ethic and can meet the requirements of the position,” said Kenny McDonald, chief economic officer of Columbus 2020, the region’s economic development organization. “For people who can do all of these things, the sky is the limit, and in today’s economy there are many paths to get there.”

About Innovation Generation

Innovation Generation is affiliated with the national Pathways to Prosperity Network, supported by the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Jobs for the Future. It consists of six sustainable high-impact projects that establish career pathways into four of the region’s most vital industry sectors: advanced manufacturing/robotics, business logistics, health care and information technology. Working together, k-12, higher education and business will help students earn the credentials needed to fill some of central Ohio’s fastest-growing jobs and expand their postsecondary options. For more information, visit InnovationGenerationOhio.com.

Participating districts include:

- Canal Winchester Local Schools
- Columbus City Schools
- Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools
- Grandview Heights City Schools
- Hilliard City Schools
- Licking Heights Local Schools
- Marysville Exempted Village Schools
- New Albany-Plain Local Schools
- Olentangy Local School District
- Pickerington Local School District
- Reynoldsburg City Schools
- South-Western City Schools
- Upper Arlington City Schools
- Westerville City School District
- Whitehall City Schools

Additionally, Eastland-Fairfield, Tolles and Ohio Hi-Point career centers are part of the collaboration.

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