



# YEARS OF PARTNERSHIPS

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2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dear Friend of the Alliance,

Forty years ago, on June 13, 1983, the Education Alliance formally received its Articles of Incorporation. This past January, we launched our yearlong 40th Anniversary Celebration which will conclude with some special activities planned for later this year. To honor this momentous occasion, the 2023 Annual Report highlights some of the many voices that reflect our history and have shaped our impact.

We are grateful that many of the original voices of our founding board members, long-time business, education, and community partners still speak to us in the rich catalogue of Annual Reports archived on our website: [EducationAlliance.org/Annual Reports](https://EducationAlliance.org/Annual%20Reports). In an effort to both honor their contribution and to engage others in the 40th Anniversary Celebration, this year's report includes a few of those historical voices gathered from prior years' reports. A quote from our very first annual report illustrates that **collaboration and partnerships among education's public/private sectors has long been our heartbeat**:

*"Recognizing that educating youth really is everyone's responsibility and to everyone's benefit the [Education Alliance] provides a mechanism through which the private sector can work for improvement for the schools while teachers, staffs, and school administrators work for improvement in the schools. It recognizes and encourages excellence and creativity in teaching and promotes a better understanding of the preparation students need for a rapidly changing world" (1983 Annual Report).*

In addition to historic voices, this year's report also includes quotes and data from our current stakeholders (students, business leaders, and educators). By capturing their voices that spoke so clearly to us throughout the past year, the report shows the **positive statewide impact of the partnerships the Education Alliance helps foster, support, and grow.**

As the Education Alliance advances into our 41st year, we want to say thank you to each of you for your collaboration, support, and commitment to the Alliance. Your contribution has been a vital part of our robust history of providing innovative, research-based school-business partnerships for students across West Virginia. We look forward to the next forty years of impact!

Sincerely,

Adam Krason  
Board Chair



Amelia Courts, Ed.D.  
President/CEO



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# About Education Alliance

The Education Alliance is a statewide nonprofit organization that mobilizes business and community partnerships to benefit West Virginia's public school students.

Funded by grants and donations, the Alliance works to advance its mission and vision through two flagship programs. Our AmeriCorps Mentor program partners caring, adult community mentors with struggling students who receive consistent in-school mentoring. Our WV Ready Careers program matches schools/classrooms with businesses who provide job-shadowing, work-based learning and paid internships.

## **2023**

- 11,964 students served
- 2,264 business & community volunteers engaged

## **2013-2023**

- 12,063 students matched with caring adult mentors =75% improved academically
- 22,501 students provided college visits, job shadowing, and internships =73% increased career readiness







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# Business Partnerships





*The Education Alliance Partnerships in Education Program links schools with businesses or community organizations in mutually beneficial, progressive, and long-term relationships that enable educators and business leaders to work cooperatively to assist today's students in acquiring skills needed for success in the workplace and in life.  
(1993 Annual Report)*





# Partnering for Careers



*Wow! This is the future of education... it is so helpful for me to actually see and understand the career opportunities so I can better encourage my students to participate in this program.*

*-School Administrator (2023)*

A background image showing a person's hands signing a document. The person is wearing a yellow wristband and a ring. The document is a form for a career partnership agreement. The text on the form includes: "Toyota & Putnam County Technical Center", "Employer or School", "AT Academy", "Pathway", "Joah Harris", "Growing need for students within the manufacturing trades and I am ready to help close the gap by committing to an opportunity in the following:", "Student Signature", "Date", and "May 2, 2023". The form is being signed with a silver pen. The background is a blurred image of hands and papers.



Throughout this past year, the Education Alliance worked collaboratively with our business partners to advance career pathways in manufacturing, healthcare, and other industries.

In fall 2022, Toyota WV supported a Family Orientation event as one of the many 4T Academy launch initiatives. On this special evening, Kanawha County students and families traveled by school bus to the plant in Buffalo.

We enjoyed meeting parents, grandparents, and students who enjoyed a wonderful dinner and a tour of the facility and 4T classroom. Families were able to learn and ask questions about the program expectations and benefits for their students.

The 4T Academy Signing Day was a great day. As part of our partnership with Toyota, high school juniors and seniors celebrated with their parents on their "Signing Day" as they were accepted into the 4T Academy starting this fall. Toyota's Plant Manager kicked off the event, and state leaders congratulated the students on the opportunity to develop their career readiness. Students from both Kanawha and Putnam County signed on to take classes on site at Toyota and get a paid internship their senior year.

Later that month, the students began their classes onsite at Toyota in preparation for their senior year paid internship. The room was certainly buzzing and it was wonderful to see families truly being engaged in their student's new learning adventure.



*I want to thank the Education Alliance for bringing this innovative program to us a year ago. Our monthly planning meetings with the Alliance and the schools helped us work through the curriculum, the schedule, student recruitment, and many other issues. Their expertise and facilitation enabled us to offer this new program. We're so excited to welcome you this fall.*

**-Hospital Administrator**

At the same time last fall, the Alliance team was onsite in Monongalia County with high school principals and counselors for a “behind the scenes” tour of WVU Medicine’s Ruby Memorial and Children’s Hospitals. The tour followed more than eight months of regular meetings and collaborative planning for a healthcare pathway to be modeled after the manufacturing pathway.

This program would not have been possible without the leadership and support of the Monongalia County Schools’ team which enabled the new MedEd partnership with their high schools and WVU Medicine.

Launched in fall 2023 and expanded to Jefferson County, MedEd brings students onsite to the hospitals throughout their junior and senior years for mentoring and internships.



School Administrator



# Partners in Economic Growth



Appalachian  
Regional  
Commission





In June 2023, the Education Alliance received notification of an exciting \$4.7M Grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC) ARISE program. ARC is an economic development agency whose mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia to help the region achieve socioeconomic parity with the nation. This exceptional investment will enable the Education Alliance and our partners to support workforce development and enhance communities across West Virginia and Mississippi. Our partners:

- Jefferson County Schools WV
- Kanawha County Schools WV
- Monongalia County Schools WV
- New Albany Schools MS
- Toyota MS
- Toyota WV
- WVU Medicine Ruby & Children's Hospitals
- WVU Medicine Jefferson Medical Center

In addition to the industry and education partners, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation and the Steeley Foundation played a vital role in helping secure required, matching funds for the three-year grant.

Our team and our partners are already working on our 2024 workplan. We are thrilled to roll up our sleeves and launch this new program which will undoubtedly be a game-changer for our region.

**CLAUDE  
WORTHINGTON  
BENEDUM  
FOUNDATION**



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# Revitalizing School Business Partnerships

As part of its year one plan, the Caperton Center for School Business Partnerships launched a series of statewide meetings to conduct surveys and focus group sessions on the current state of school business partnerships. The participants' candor and engagement surpassed our expectations and provided some very helpful insights.

With support from our board members, we were able to network with local Rotary groups in Greenbrier, Huntington, Martinsburg, and Morgan County to share updates on the Caperton Center and listen for strategies to strengthen school-business partnerships in the Center's future work.

This past spring, we convened the very first regional partnership council meeting with business and educators from across the state who expressed interest in helping revitalize Partnerships in Education. The council members will help us shape action items around a Caperton Center toolkit, data portal, and celebrations.





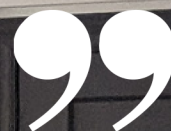


*During Covid, our business partnerships really declined but **I am ready to start working to rebuild those relationships.***

-School Principal

*One important next step that we should all take is creating a welcoming environment in our school for business partners.*

-Community Volunteer





# Internships & Work-based Learning

Each year, the Alliance partners to sponsor summer internships for rising high school juniors and seniors where students can earn \$16/hour while gaining real-world technical and professional skills with some of the state's top employers.

Summer interns receive not only excellent "on the job training" but also amazing mentoring and support from the industry teams. This support and one-on-one mentoring makes a tremendous difference for our interns.

As the 2023 Summer Internship applications closed, we received more than 120 applications for five companies' internship positions. We were excited to welcome back AEP and Toyota, and were also thrilled that first-time business partners Hope Gas, Mon Health, and Solar Holler joined us to offer high school internships across the state.







“

*I want to thank the Education Alliance for connecting us with the different businesses throughout the semester. I learned so much about manufacturing, aviation, and of course energy from AEP.*

-12th grade student

”

*Interns - you really wowed us!  
Your presentation was at or above what we would expect  
from our own employees. We definitely plan to use the  
Energy Saving marketing materials and activities you  
created. Great job!*

-Appalachian Power President



# Empowering Tomorrow's Workforce

As part of the Virtual Work-based Learning program, a team from Appalachian Power helped students learn all about their company and various careers available.

The AEP Human Resources team does a great job engaging students and providing them with skills training. This weekly training enables students to increase their awareness of career opportunities and also develop professional skills to ensure they are ready and equipped for success.

Each of the weekly live modules showcases a different business and is facilitated by an Alliance team member. The modules are then recorded and uploaded on our website for schools across the state to access "on demand" (see [EducationAlliance.org](http://EducationAlliance.org)).

The Education Alliance is so appreciative of AEP's financial support that enables this program as well as the time and energy of their team. AEP and many other great West Virginia companies are helping equip our students for success!

The students' Capstone presentations are a culminating event each year that showcase students' abilities to solve real-world problems through partnerships.

Throughout the spring semester, student teams receive weekly calls and coaching from the company as they work on a project assigned by the company in January.

The company executives join the capstone and give students feedback on their problem-empathy, data analysis, problem solving, and teamwork.

In recognition of their hard work, the Education Alliance presents the students with certificates and graduation cords.



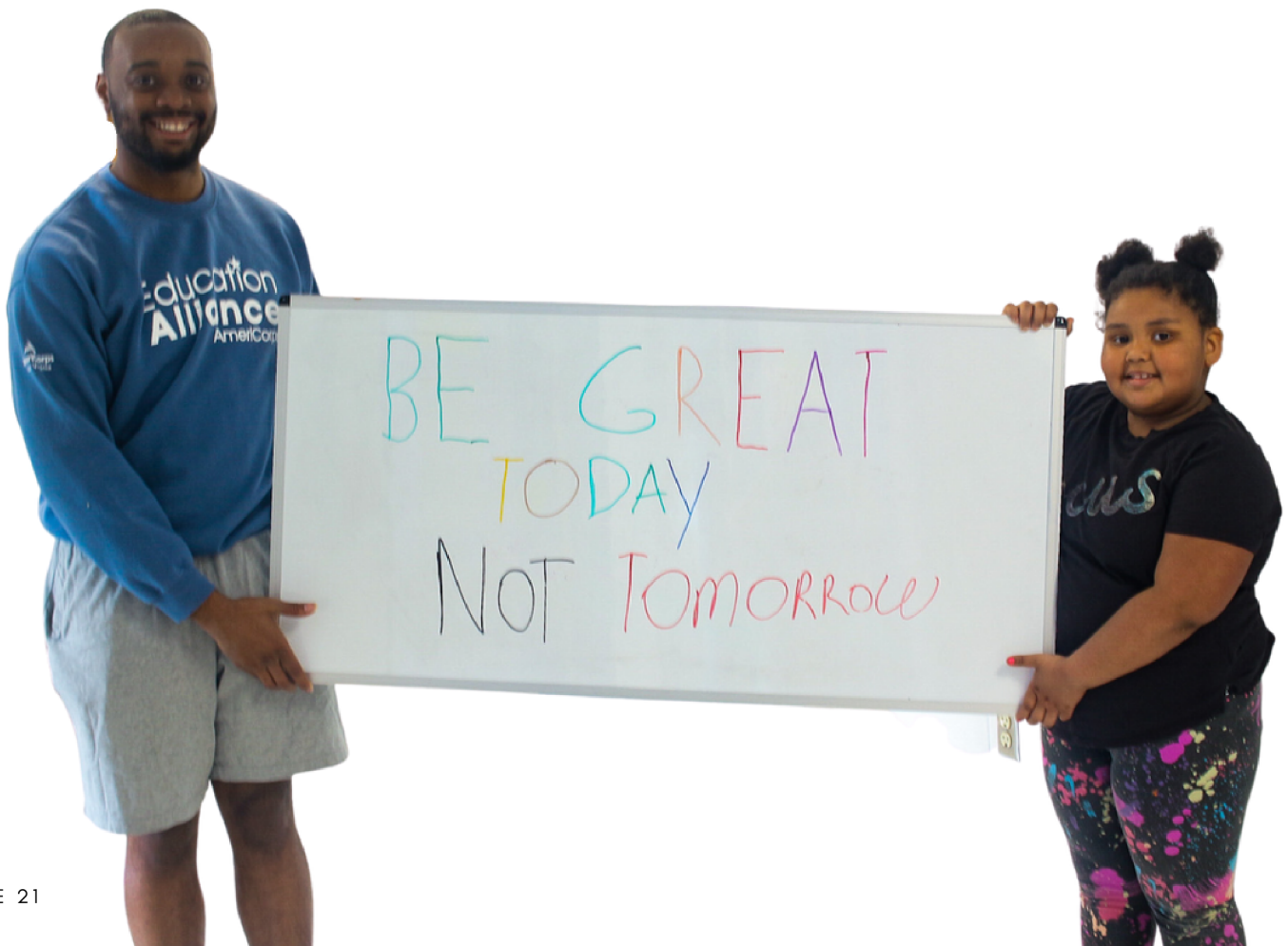








# Community Partnerships







*The Education Alliance AmeriCorps Mentors  
have made such a difference for my students. I  
never want to go back to teaching without them  
in my classroom!*

- Elementary teacher hosting  
AmeriCorps Mentor



**Volunteer  
West Virginia**

*The State's Commission for National and Community Service*

Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 





Many students are still struggling to come to school, behave, and do well in class. We are grateful to our AmeriCorps Mentors who stand along side educators to help mentor and support students.

By volunteering to serve as a caring, adult role model, our AmeriCorps Mentors are serving at-risk students across West Virginia. They are integrated members of the school community, participating in professional learning, and playing a direct role by helping classroom teachers support students.

In 2022, we received a generous grant from the Highmark WV Charitable Fund for Health and the Pallottine Foundation to help address students' needs after the pandemic. We worked with a consultant and a team of experts to develop a Toolkit for Mentors to Support Students' Social Emotional Learning and provided training to more than 320 people across WV.

# Mentors Matter

Each year, we host an annual event to honor the service commitment of Education Alliance AmeriCorps and VISTA Members. The celebration recognizes the success of the Members in positively impacting the lives of students throughout the state. Members engage in reflective activities, learn from other mentors, and receive recognition for the service they provide to West Virginia students. This is truly a highlight each year as we see the direct impact of this program on the lives of students.

**731** Students Mentored

**79%** Improved Academically

**33,000+** Volunteer Hours Leveraged



*I'm very happy and thankful for the work I've been able to do with the Education Alliance – it has shifted my life. You people are so awesome to work with! I hope you know the impact you are making on the community as well as the people that work with you. It never goes unnoticed.*

-WV Ready VISTA







# Coats4Kids

In January, in honor of Martin Luther King Day, we asked our partners around the state to take a moment to search their closet for gently used coats, jackets, and hats to donate for our annual Education Alliance AmeriCorps Coats4Kids Service project.

In 2023, by donating new or gently used items, they collected 2,000+ winter items at 38 drop-off sites across WV (an increase from last year). The result is 17 schools, 9 non-profits and thousands of WV students benefiting directly from the drive.

“

*The power of community service extends beyond those who are being helped... my service project has also had a lasting impact on me and others who are serving.*

-Education Alliance AmeriCorps Mentor









# Growing Future Educators

Through a new partnership with the WV Department of Education, the Alliance helped support new Grow Your Own teacher programs in counties across West Virginia. During the Spring 2023 semester, high school seniors served daily clinical hours during the school day in a nearby elementary or middle school setting.

As an Education Alliance AmeriCorps member, they applied their service hours through the school clinical experience. Similar to a “paid internship” they received training, a living allowance, plus an Education Award for college.

Through their practicum, the students work under the supervision of trained educators and engage in a variety of activities that include reading to students, tutoring, and teaching actual mini-lessons. They also participate in afterschool activities including Title I nights and Kindergarten registration.

Our AmeriCorps Grow Your Own program continues to expand. We now have students enrolled in Braxton, Cabell, Calhoun, Fayette, Lewis, Mercer, McDowell, and Pocahontas counties. We are really excited for these young people to explore the opportunity to become a teacher in West Virginia.







*The thing that makes me the most excited is when I can see my students improving. I have one student whose reading level has improved a grade and a half since the beginning of the year. He smiled so big and has gained so much confidence because he knows how much he's improving. It totally made my day!*

-Education Alliance  
AmeriCorps Mentor

# College Visits

In fall 2022, the Education Alliance had the exciting opportunity to speak with 1,500 middle school students who attended the WV GEAR UP Student Leadership conference at the Clay Center.

WV GEAR UP provided the students with training to “stretch out of their comfort zone” and take big steps like going to college. On behalf of our business partners, we reminded students that there are many exciting career opportunities in the mountain state and the Alliance is here to help them find their passion and keep learning.

In spring 2023, in partnership with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, we provided West Virginia middle school students the opportunity to learn more about college by participating in free, 1-hour virtual visits to 16 different college campuses.

**6,903** students participated

**16** college campuses visited







HOGAN HALL

# Partnerships for the Future

## POLICY PRIORITIES

Thanks to the work of our Board's Research and Outreach Committee, we led outreach efforts to advance policy priorities that provide a quality education for students.

With the gaveling in of the 2023 legislative session, we began advocacy efforts to support: a Comprehensive Early Literacy Approach for Reading by 3rd Grade and Career Pathways for high-wage, high-demand Workforce Needs.

We were pleased to partner with many other organizations that also championed these priorities. Legislative leaders took action and both of these policies saw tremendous momentum as substantive changes were enacted in 2023.

## MASTERY-BASED LEARNING

School leadership teams from Berkeley, Kanawha, Ohio, Upshur, and Wetzel counties are part of a network of schools striving to move towards more competency-based learning.

During January, our team, partnering with the West Virginia Department of Education and Great Schools Partnership, led a site visit to New England for six high schools to study Mastery-Based Learning.

Mastery-Based learning is innovative because it shifts the focus to student learning (not seat time) and can enable students to demonstrate their learning successes and areas where they need more time and support.





*The Summit was a great showcase that connected the pipeline from middle school education through careers, it was really great for me to hear about workforce needs from the leaders themselves.*

-Summit Attendee

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# WV Education Summit







*The best thing about the Education Summit was becoming informed about the awesome ways we are working toward ensuring our students are ready for the future.*

-Summit participant



# Strategies to Grow Your Own at the Summit

Our 2022 West Virginia Education Summit addressed “Pathways to the Future—Strategies to Grow Your Own.” Built on the belief that a robust talent pipeline is the key to West Virginia’s success, the Summit brought 200+ policy makers, business leaders, and community leaders together to ask how the business and the education community can work together to ensure West Virginia Grows Our Own talent starting with our youth.

The summit engaged industry leaders such as Aaron Walker, the President of Appalachian Power, David Rosier, President of Toyota WV, who served as Industry Panelist, Abby Reale, Director of External Affairs at Mountain Health, and David Donaldson from Harvard University, who featured as keynote speaker.





# EDTALKS®

Our 2023 WV Teacher of the Year Amber Nichols, and MU Chief Aviation Officer Bill Noe provided outstanding EDTalks, at the Bill Noe Flight School at Yeager Airport, Charleston. More than 100 participants left EDTalks both informed and inspired. Focused on the “The Sky’s the Limit – Exploration and Innovation for West Virginia Students” EDTalks was about more than Aviation... it was about cultivating a strong talent pipeline in the mountain state.

WV Teacher of the Year Amber Nichols shared how she is growing the state’s talent starting in Kindergarten and how we can help students truly take flight by supporting their “lift, thrust, drag, weight.” Marshall Chief Aviation Officer Bill Noe reminded us that we need “line of sight to opportunity” to help students see the tremendous careers they can have in the aviation industry.





# Heartbeat of Partnerships

In this year of achievements and challenges, we are ever more grateful for our dedicated team, who stand as the heartbeat of our organization.

Their unwavering commitment, passion, and innovation have bridged the worlds of education and industry, and revitalized connections that benefit our students and community.

We are grateful for their spirit and drive that turn possibilities into realities.

Thank you for embodying the essence of partnerships and collaboration, and for your hard work to support a brighter, shared future for all.









THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

# DONOR SUPPORT



# DONOR HONOR ROLL

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## **President's Circle (\$10,000 - \$24,999)**

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EQT Foundation  
Parkersburg Area Community Foundation  
Uncle Larry's Fund  
WV Community & Technical College  
System

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David Rosier  
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James Thomas  
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Marathon Foundation  
Pleasants County Schools  
Service Wire Company  
Steptoe & Johnson-Charleston







# DONOR HONOR ROLL

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## **Cum Laude (\$500-\$999)**

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Erica Steratore  
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Lacy Rice  
Lloyd Jackson  
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Tomblin, Joanne  
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## **Dean's List (\$499 or below)**

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Allison Stickel  
Amazon Smile Foundation  
Caroline Goodall  
Danny Wilkerson  
Gat Caperton  
George Bonneau  
Herk Sims  
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Marbelys Brown  
Michelle Rotellini  
Mrs. Wright  
Pam Farris  
Paula Flaherty  
Sammy L. Gray II  
Siems  
Stephen Hastings  
Toney Stroud



“

*I think the most important next step for strengthening partnerships in our community is a strong communication effort by both businesses and schools. Partners need to understand how they can work together and how the collaboration will benefit the business, the schools but most importantly, the students!*

*I often feel like I'm working in isolation on school business partnerships. It's such a wonderful and encouraging opportunity to be part of this collaborative group to learn from other leaders and Education Alliance.*

”







**@TheEduAlliance**



**EducationAlliance.org**



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