

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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FORWARD

Dear Friend of the Alliance,

This year, the theme “Hope for the Future” captures the spirit and momentum behind everything we do at the Education Alliance. It is more than a phrase; it is a reflection of the real, measurable progress happening across West Virginia thanks to the power of partnerships. The Education Alliance is proud to share our 2025 Annual Report, a testament to what’s possible when businesses, communities, and educators come together to uplift students.

One of the most exciting developments was the evolution of our Caperton Center for School and Business Partnerships. Launched in 2023, the vision came to life this year with the debut of a statewide School Business Partnership Registry Portal where more than 100 partnerships were registered in this pilot year. Also we released a new resource, the practical Partnership Toolkit offering “how-to” guidance for partnerships. And, thanks to the generous support of Hope Gas, we launched our inaugural Hope for the Future Partnership of the Year recognition, celebrating those like state winner Pocahontas County Schools & Natures Mountain who are modeling innovative and impactful school-business partnerships.

Our Community Partnerships also grew significantly through our AmeriCorps Grow Your Own teacher pathway initiative. What began in just four counties has now expanded to eight, doubling its reach and demonstrating the deep commitment of local educators and students to shape the future of West Virginia’s teacher workforce.

In the same spirit, the 2025 Education Summit brought together thought leaders, educators, and changemakers under the theme Growing Partnerships, with special keynote speaker Jennifer Garner, actress and entrepreneur. Her words underscored the importance of local grassroots coalitions, bold thinking, and sustained collaboration—all vital to our shared mission.

Each program, partnership, and milestone this year speaks to a larger truth: hope is not just a feeling—it is a force that is built collectively. With your continued support, the Education Alliance is laying the groundwork for a future where every West Virginia student can thrive.

Thank you for believing in the power of partnerships and for contributing to our shared hope for the future!



Amelia Courts, Ed.D
President/CEO



Donald F. Mock, III
Chair of the Board of Directors



The background of the image features dark blue silhouettes of two individuals against a light blue background. The person on the left is shown from the back, wearing a uniform with a light blue belt and stripes on the sleeve. The person on the right is shown in profile, holding a pair of glasses and wearing a uniform with light blue buttons. A bright yellow horizontal bar with rounded ends is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the text 'OUR STORY' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

OUR STORY

ABOUT THE EDUCATION ALLIANCE

The Education Alliance is a statewide nonprofit organization that mobilizes business and community partnerships to equip West Virginia K12 students for success.

Funded by grants and donations, the Alliance was founded in 1983 and has a robust 40+year history of advancing its mission and vision through partnerships across the state. The organization's **Business Partnership** programs match schools and classrooms with businesses that provide job-shadowing, work-based learning, and paid internships. Our AmeriCorps programs enable **Community Partnerships** that match caring, adult community volunteers with struggling students to provide consistent in-school mentoring and support. In addition, the Education Alliance advances **Systems Partnerships** through dialogue at the annual West Virginia Education Summit, and through research-based policies and practices.





Education[★]Alliance

**BUSINESS + COMMUNITY
+ SCHOOLS
= STUDENT SUCCESS**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

2013 — 2025

14,641

students matched
with caring adult mentors



72%

improved
academically

21,418

students provided college visits,
job shadowing, and internships



74%

increased
career readiness



2024 — 2025

12,760

students served



12,150

volunteers hours
leveraged

120

new business
partnerships launched

**\$3.4
MILLION**

resources leveraged
for schools





BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

CAPERTON CENTER FOR SCHOOL BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

The Caperton Center for School Business Partnerships provides support and resources for school-business partnerships that promote student success.

In 2024-2025, through the Education Alliance and the Regional Partnership Council (RPC), the Caperton Center launched three key strategic initiatives to strengthen and revitalize school-business partnerships in the state.

RESOURCES

In September, the Education Alliance published the initial draft of the School-Business Partnership Toolkit designed to guide schools and businesses through the process of cultivating and growing effective school-business partnerships.

REGISTRY

In October the online Partnership Registration launched on the Education Alliance website. School-business partnerships can now formally register their partnerships and receive access to resources and other support.

RECOGNITION

In January, the Hope for the Future: School-Business Partnership of the Year Award nomination process was introduced to recognize exemplary school-business partnerships and showcase their best practices.



The Hope for the Future:
School -Business Partnership of the Year Award

To recognize exemplary school-business partnerships that positively impact student success in West Virginia, the Education Alliance, with support from Hope Gas, launched the inaugural Hope for the Future: School-Business Partnership of the Year Award Program. Eight regional winners each received a \$2,000 celebration grant and competed for the title of 2025 State Partnership of the Year. The state winner, Pocahontas County Schools and Nature's Mountain Classroom, was announced at the Education Summit—featuring actress Jennifer Garner—on May 15, 2025, in Charleston. The state winner received an award package valued at \$25,000. The Hope for the Future: School-Business Partnership of the Year Award was made possible by generous funding provided by Hope Gas.

Caperton Center for School-Business Partnerships is made possible through the generous funding provided by: The Caperton Center Endowed Fund.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



Region 1 Winners

MERCER COUNTY TECHNICAL EDUCATION CENTER AND CONN-WELD INDUSTRIES

Conn-Weld provides Mercer County students work-based learning experiences in many sectors enable students to develop and apply new skills at a high level. The partnership facilitates apprenticeships and internships, delivering hands-on experience in the manufacturing sector. These real-world opportunities enhance students' technical abilities and boost employability upon graduation.



— *2025 STATE WINNER —

POCAHONTAS COUNTY SCHOOLS AND NATURE'S MOUNTAIN CLASSROOM

Every student in Pocahontas County, from pre-K through 5th grade, is given the opportunity to explore Nature's Mountain Classroom. Activities range from storybook-based playground adventures for the youngest learners to skiing, hiking, kayaking, mountain biking, and overnight camping trips for middle school students. High school students engage in career exploration and leadership skill-building. Learning has never been more immersive.





Region 2 Winners

— KANAWHA COUNTY —

NITRO HIGH SCHOOL AND APPALACHIAN POWER

This partnership has had a profound impact on Nitro High School students by providing real-world experience, industry mentorship, and career opportunities beyond the classroom. Through the project, students collaborated directly with Appalachian Power professionals to develop an invention addressing critical safety concerns for linemen. This experience deepened students' understanding of engineering, safety, and applied innovation, reinforcing the value of problem-solving in real-world contexts.



— BRIDGEVALLEY CTC —

THE WIN ACADEMY AND WVU MEDICINE THOMAS HOSPITALS

Every student in the WIN Academy participates in clinical experiences and is offered employment opportunities through externships with WVU Medicine Thomas Hospitals. These hands-on training sessions in real healthcare settings are paired with direct mentorship from professionals in the field. Through clinical rotations and paid externships, students are able to apply classroom knowledge, develop essential career skills, and establish meaningful professional connections.





Region 3 Winners

— OHIO COUNTY —

WARWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL AND WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

This long-standing collaboration demonstrates a strong and sustained commitment to enhancing STEM education through experiential learning, interdisciplinary partnerships, and community engagement. Over the past seven years, the partnership—particularly through the College of Sciences and the College of Education and Human Performance—has created enriching STEM opportunities for middle school students while offering practical teaching experiences for pre-service educators.



— HANCOCK COUNTY —

WEIR HIGH SCHOOL AND BLUE STREAM FARMS

Through involvement in a sustainable agriculture business, students at Weir High School learn not only about plant biology but also develop entrepreneurial skills such as marketing, sales, and financial literacy. These skills were showcased during Birch Creek Farmery's Market Days, where students successfully grew and sold microgreens, applying business principles in a real-world marketplace.





Region 4 Winners

HARDY COUNTY SCHOOLS AND PILGRIM'S PRIDE

This impactful parent outreach initiative reflects the strong engagement of both partners. Pilgrim's Pride provides the physical space, grants parents time off during work hours, and ensures participation by compensating time and offering reminders—even retrieving parents from the production line when needed. Hardy County Schools leads the educational and training aspects of the program, ensuring that parents receive high-quality, accessible learning experiences without logistical or financial barriers.



— MONONGALIA COUNTY —

NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND BLACK AND WHITE SMALL BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

This innovative partnership created Equal Grounds Coffee, a student-run business operated by elementary students working alongside peers of differing abilities. Involving a local business as classroom experts helped students see that their efforts had real-world implications—not just theoretical classroom exercises. Students collaborated toward a shared goal, such as purchasing a new swing set for the school, and in doing so, learned problem-solving, cooperation, and persistence. This partnership truly embodies a “wow factor.”



The Hope for the Future School-Business Partnership of the Year Award is made possible through the generous funding provided by: Hope Gas

CAREER READINESS & MASTERY BASED LEARNING

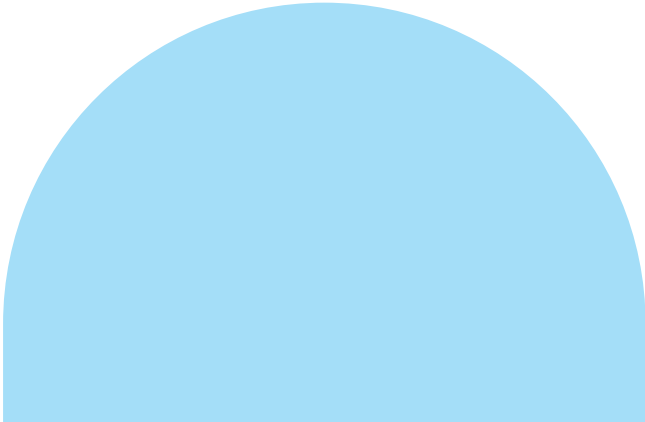
The Mastery-Based Learning initiative supports a network of high schools committed to implementing competency-based learning approaches and structures that promote student success.

What an exciting season for growth in career readiness and mastery-based learning.

The Hope for the Future: School-Business Partnership of the Year award has served as a powerful springboard to strengthen and renew both existing and new partnerships. Focused outreach to community businesses resulted in an enthusiastic response—there were more volunteers than could be scheduled.

A new speaker series was launched in Ohio County during the spring 2025 semester. Guest speakers provided students with insights into both technical and soft skills required for a wide range of careers. Students had the opportunity to apply for jobs and received fun giveaways during the events. More than 250 students were reached thanks to the generosity of participating professionals.

Student engagement in career exploration has been inspiring.



One student reflected
on her internship application:

“I do not really wish to have a career in the automotive industry; however, I want to work for lots of businesses to learn how they are managed. I plan to open my own specialty carpentry business.”

Such reflections demonstrate the thoughtful approach students are taking to plan their futures.

Looking ahead, the Education Alliance is building a strong foundation to expand student work-based learning opportunities, including internships, job shadowing, lunch-and-learn tours, and project-based partnerships. Sincere appreciation goes to the more than 25 business partners who have stepped up to participate in these impactful programs.



CAREER ACADEMY

This year, the Education Alliance partnered with Gear Up WV and WV Higher Education Policy Commission to launch an unforgettable experience for 2,000 students from 11 rural counties across West Virginia. Held at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center, the event was a high-energy day of career discovery, connecting students with 58 businesses from across the state. From healthcare to high-tech, construction to creative arts, students explored a wide range of career paths—all actively growing in the Mountain State. The event demonstrated that the future students envision does not require leaving West Virginia—because opportunity already exists here at home.



The Career Academy was made possible through the generous funding provided by: GEAR UP

WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Virtual Work-Based Learning program is a semester-long virtual program in which businesses partner with high schools to provide students with career awareness through virtual job-shadowing modules and work-based learning.

The Virtual Work-Based Learning program expanded this past year to include 11 businesses and 9 schools. Each week, a participating business delivered a virtual training module to showcase its industry and introduce students to various team members and career pathways. These weekly sessions helped students broaden their awareness of career opportunities while developing key professional skills essential for future success. Each virtual session was facilitated by an Education Alliance team member and recorded for statewide, on-demand access via the Education Alliance website (EducationAlliance.org/WBL).

In addition, several schools opted to go deeper by participating in a Capstone Challenge assigned by a participating business partner. In 2024–2025, Lincoln County High School, Wayne High School, and Valley High School all engaged in real-world Capstone projects that fostered data analysis, problem-solving, and teamwork. As a culminating activity, students presented their findings to leadership from Appalachian Power.



The Work-Based Learning program is made possible by the generous financial support of: Appalachian Power, Dominion Energy, Dow, Enterprise, MPLX, and Toyota.

EQT INNOVATION SHOWCASE

The EQT Innovation Showcase is a competition and exhibition for innovative student projects in Wetzel County. Supported by the EQT Foundation and the Education Alliance, the event highlights student-developed solutions to local challenges. In 2025, middle schools were included for the first time in the “Shark Tank”-style competition. Students from four Wetzel County high schools and middle schools competed for cash prizes by applying Design Thinking to engineer impactful solutions. The 7th annual event was held at Magnolia High School in May 2025 and was judged by representatives from EQT, the business community, the school system, and the Education Alliance.

Valley High School took first place among the competing high schools. Among the middle school teams, Longdrain Middle School received first place for its Homework Buddy app, a platform offering real-time tutoring in a confidential setting to support students who may feel uncomfortable asking for help. The student team developed and coded the app independently and plans to launch it within the school system.



The EQT Innovation Showcase program is made possible by the generous financial support of the EQT Foundation

WV READY SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

The WV Ready Internships program is a paid, four-week summer program that provides quality, real-world career readiness internships or high school juniors and seniors.

The 2024 Summer Internship Program connected 33 high school students with hands-on career experiences at four leading businesses across West Virginia: Appalachian Power, Hope Gas, Mon Health, and Toyota Motor Manufacturing WV. Over the course of the month-long program, interns rotated through multiple departments, gaining valuable insight into company operations, workplace culture, and potential career paths.

Students were selected through an application and training process and placed with business partners statewide. These high-quality internships provided career awareness and work-based learning experiences designed to help participants make informed decisions about their future pathways.



WV Ready Internships is made possible by the generous financial support of: Appalachian Power and Toyota.

CAREERS

The Career Acceleration, Readiness, and Employment Experiences for Region Students (CAREERS) Initiative provides high school students with hands-on learning and internships to enhance skills and employment opportunities in high wage/high skill careers.

Even though the program is only now completing year two of a three-year grant, CAREERS Initiative partners have already exceeded most of the grant's performance benchmarks. The initiative leverages partnerships with Toyota Motor Manufacturing in West Virginia and Mississippi, along with WVU Medicine, to accelerate career pathways in manufacturing (4T) and healthcare (MedEd).

In 2023–2024, the program expanded significantly. The MedEd program with WVU Medicine grew in both reach and opportunity. In this innovative healthcare pathway program, students spend one day per week onsite at local hospitals, rotating through departments to explore a range of healthcare careers. During their senior year, students are matched with a department for a full-year placement, which includes a paid internship in the second semester.

Monongalia County Schools increased enrollment from 23 to 39 students—a 70% growth—and introduced a new phlebotomy pathway at J.W. Ruby Memorial and WVU Children's Hospitals. Jefferson County Schools saw enrollment rise from 18 to 29 students—a 48% increase—and launched a new radiology pathway in partnership with Jefferson Medical Center. MedEd continues to provide students with hands-on experiences and direct exposure to high-demand healthcare careers, building both confidence and post-graduation plans.

The 4T Academy also continues to expand across West Virginia and beyond, preparing students for high-wage careers in advanced manufacturing with Toyota. Now in its third year in Kanawha County and second year in Putnam County, the WV 4T Academy enrolled 67 high school juniors and seniors combined. The Class of 2025 included 30

students who accepted full-time job offers with Toyota Motor Manufacturing WV and were recognized with graduation cords and Toyota-sponsored awards.

Through the Appalachian Regional Commission's ARISE grant, the Education Alliance partnered with Toyota Motor Manufacturing Mississippi and the New Albany MS School District to launch the Mississippi 4T Academy. The first cohort began in August 2024 with 20 students expected to complete the program in 2026. The 4T program continues to deliver hands-on, industry-led training that leads directly to employment—creating a clear path from classroom to career.



CAREERS is made possible through the generous funding provided by: Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the Claude Worthington Benedum and Steeley Foundations.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

AMERICORPS MENTORS

The Education Alliance AmeriCorps Mentor program engages community members to serve as caring adult role models, mentoring at-risk students and empowering them to see their potential and achieve success.

In 2024–2025, Education Alliance AmeriCorps Mentors supported students academically and contributed to overall improvements in course performance. By helping reduce the “ABC” risk factors—attendance, behavior, and course performance—more students are now on track for school success.

During the program year, the Education Alliance implemented the Mentor program in West Virginia counties including Jefferson, Logan, Lincoln, Kanawha, and Wood. Mentors received training and support to integrate into classrooms, providing teachers with an extra set of helping hands and offering students consistent academic assistance.



Education
Alliance
AmeriCorps

OUTCOMES

3,790

Students Served through
combined AmeriCorps
programs



57%

Showed Academic Improvement

31,652

Volunteer Hours Leveraged through
combined AmeriCorps programs

AMERICORPS GROW YOUR OWN

The AmeriCorps Grow Your Own (GYO) program enables high school juniors and seniors participating in their school district's GYO program to serve as AmeriCorps members in elementary and middle school classes. The GYO members gain hands-on career "practicum" experience in the teaching field as they progress on a career pathway to become a professional educator.

The Grow Your Own program creates an accelerated pathway for high school students interested in pursuing a career in teaching, while also encouraging them to remain in-state upon completion of their degree. By serving in AmeriCorps, members earn a paid living allowance, an education award, and additional educational benefits—while gaining valuable, hands-on classroom experience.

In 2024–2025, Education Alliance Grow Your Own members served in programs across Jackson, Jefferson, Lewis, McDowell, Mercer, Putnam, Roane, and Wayne counties. These programs collectively hosted 71 mentors, each of whom received training and support to make a meaningful impact by assisting younger students while advancing their own future careers in education.



COLLEGE AMBASSADORS AND VISTAS

The Education Alliance College Ambassadors and VISTA programs build the capacity of partner organizations to support education and student success.

The College Ambassador program engages dynamic individuals as AmeriCorps members who serve as an “ambassador” to coach and support high school students and adults to enroll in college.

In 2024–2025, the College Ambassador serving at WVU Parkersburg worked directly with the institution’s Admissions and Student Services offices to support increased student enrollment and retention. College Ambassadors also connected with local middle and high schools within their recruitment regions to promote college access and readiness. Outside of recruitment season, Ambassadors provided support to enrolled students, helping them navigate the transition to college life. By serving as a familiar and approachable presence on campus, Ambassadors played a key role in helping students access resources and build a foundation for success.



The Education Alliance's WV Ready Graduate VISTA program provides public schools and nonprofit organizations additional people power to develop and enhance education-based programming to help students develop world-class knowledge, college and career skills, and life characteristics.

This year five VISTAs supported their organizations by building capacity to support STEM education, member development, and resource allocation.



ATT DIGITAL CONNECT

As part of AT&T's Digital Connect initiative, Education Alliance Grow Your Own AmeriCorps Mentors in McDowell County led a community service activity that provided free, hands-on digital training for parents and grandparents. As part of the event, two audience members were selected through a random drawing to receive brand-new laptops, courtesy of the Digital Connect initiative.



AmeriCorps programming is made possible by generous support of: Volunteer West Virginia, AT&T, Fenton Foundation, and the Parkersburg Community Area Foundation.

AMERICORPS COATS4KIDS

Each year, in honor of Martin Luther King Day, Education Alliance AmeriCorps members and volunteers work to collect winter clothing and gear for West Virginia children and families in need.

The 5th annual Coats4Kids coat drive was conducted from December 1, 2024, through January 20, 2025. The Education Alliance partnered with local businesses and community members to establish drop-off donation locations across West Virginia. Through the direct efforts of the campaign, the following items were collected and distributed within local communities:





852 Coats



120 Gloves



137 Hats



90 Other clothing items

1,215 Total items collected



The background of the entire image is a solid light blue. Overlaid on this are dark blue silhouettes. In the upper left, a person's head and arm are visible, holding a pen or pencil as if writing. In the center, a person wearing a hard hat is shown in profile. To the right of the hard hat, a hammer is depicted. In the lower half, another person's arm is visible, holding a clipboard. The text 'SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS' is centered horizontally and partially overlaid by these silhouettes.

SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

WV EDUCATION SUMMIT

The 2025 Education Summit was a truly unforgettable day centered on the theme “Growing Partnerships – Cultivating Opportunities for Student Success.” Through thought-provoking panel discussions, powerful conversations, and inspiring displays of student work, the Summit showcased the best of what is possible through collaborative efforts. The event proudly welcomed West Virginia’s own Jennifer Garner, whose presence brought warmth, vision, and energy to the Education Alliance’s mission.



Sincere appreciation goes to all who made the day possible—panelists, Student Expo participants, sponsors, and the more than 300 attendees who contributed to the experience. Continued partnership and support remain essential to advancing student success, and the Education Alliance looks forward to building an even brighter future for West Virginia students.

The Summit was made possible by the following generous support:

- ★ Hope Gas, WVU Medicine
- ★ EQT Foundation, AEP
- ★ Alpha Innovations, Encova, Moses Auto Group, Toyota West Virginia, United Bank, ZMM Architects & Engineers, Bowles Rice, Jackson Kelly
- ★ CAMC/ Vandalia Health, Conn-Weld, Huntington Bank, Jeanie & Mark Prince, Marshall Health Network, MPLX, WV Economic Development Council, WV Wesleyan
- ★ Bright Futures, Charleston Area Alliance, Citation Investments, Poca Valley Bank, Service Wire Co.

EDTALKS®

More than 100 business, community, education, and legislative leaders attended the free afternoon EDTalks® event in December 2024 at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. Two distinguished speakers were featured: Congressman-elect Riley Moore from West Virginia's 2nd Congressional District and Hope Gas President and CEO Morgan O'Brien. Both addressed the EDTalks® theme: "Future Forward: Connecting WV Students with Real-World Experiences."

School-business partnerships play a vital role in enriching students' real-world learning, and EDTalks® provides a platform for collaboration that sparks innovative ideas benefiting both students and businesses—fostering creativity, practical skills, and meaningful community connections.

EDTalks® was made possible by the following generous support:

- ★ Appalachian Power, Bowles Rice, Dow, EQT Foundation, Jackson Kelly, Toyota WV







PARTNER

APPRECIATION



EDUCATION ALLIANCE TEAM

In a year marked by achievements and milestones, the Education Alliance extends deep gratitude to its dedicated team. Their unwavering commitment, passion, and innovation have strengthened impactful partnerships between education and industry—benefiting students and communities across West Virginia. Their spirit and drive continue to turn possibilities into realities.





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(\$100,000 and above)

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