

# EDITORIAL

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## A BRIGHT FUTURE IN WORKFORCE & EDUCATION

One of the challenges we face in Tennessee moving forward is the need to further develop and align the education-to-career pipeline. Governor-elect Bill Lee probably expressed this better than any candidate on the campaign trail, and his potential as governor in this arena offers great hope for a brighter future for Tennessee. The objective is clear: we must prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce. This will require targeted strategies in our schools to help ensure every child has an opportunity for success.

The Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) did a good analysis of Postsecondary and Career Readiness in Tennessee with their study: [Educating the Workforce of Tomorrow](#). As they point out a “rapidly changing economy requires urgent focus on student postsecondary and career readiness, with greater intensity than ever before.” This is where Governor Lee can make his greatest impact in education and future economic growth of the state. He has pledged to “establish a seamless path between our school districts, community and technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and local industry to empower students with the real-world skills they need to get a great job once they graduate.”

Lee has stated that “Coding, mechatronics, logistics, and computer science will become fundamental skills for the modern workforce and I will ensure every student has access to coursework in these areas by investing in the technology, materials, and instruction to get our students the opportunity they deserve.” This means that we must continually reimagine what education looks like for our students. And as Governor, Bill Lee will work to make that a high priority. This is exciting news for educators, who have seen constant change yet understand that we are transforming our schools for the next generation.

The state has started trending this way, especially in some communities in the state. Lyle Ailshie, the current acting Commissioner of Education, began his work on high school redesign as a Superintendent in Kingsport. He received national recognition for his effort. In Maury County, Dr. Ryan Jackson, principal of Mount Pleasant High School, is also garnering much national attention for his work with STEAM initiatives, dual enrollment, and dual credit opportunities and is a champion for the school’s and the district’s Project-Based Learning curriculum.

It is likely that many communities in the state will move toward these flexible school models to support new opportunities for career and technical education, work-based learning and apprenticeships, and dual-enrollment courses for students preparing for their career. The future is bright in Tennessee. Let’s make our state the envy of the nation.

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### SUMMARY

*We need to further develop and align the education-to-career pipeline in Tennessee schools. This is a high priority for the incoming Governors' administration, and many schools across the state have already begun moving in this direction.*