

# From the Top Down, Bottom Up, or Meet in the Middle?

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**2023 OSEP LEADERSHIP AND PROJECT DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE**





# 2023 OSEP Leadership and Project Directors' Conference



## *DISCLAIMER:*

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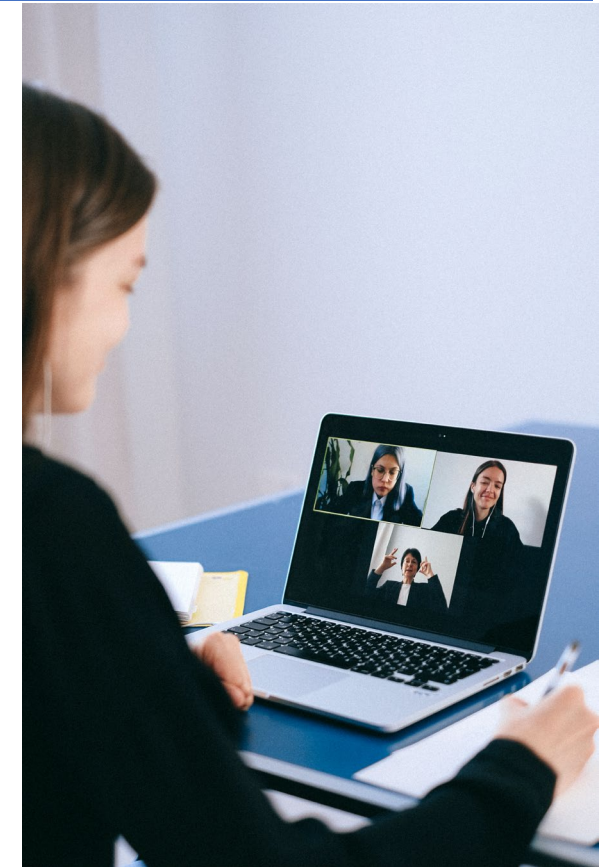
# Introduction

- Re-evaluated capacity to meet 2015 SSIP goals
- Re-examined implementation activities and strategies
- Re-visited effective dissemination of resources and supports to LEAs
- Re-engaged multiple stakeholder groups
- Re-imagined the SSIP as WV Guideposts to Graduation



# Open Door Meetings for LEAs: Purpose

- Provided an overview of the SSIP coherent improvement strategies from 2014-2020
- Reviewed the data for Indicators 1 and 2 for the past five years
- Provided an overview of anticipated changes for upcoming years
  - Change in staff at the SEA level
  - Refinement of improvement strategies



# Open Door Meetings for LEAs: Activity

Participants from LEAs were provided opportunities to respond to the following questions;

- What strategies have been most effective in increasing graduation rates for students with disabilities?
- What are the reasons students with disabilities do not graduate in your school or district?
- How can WVDOE support your efforts to increase the graduation rate?



# Open Door Meetings for LEAs: Feedback



# Engaging Internal Stakeholders

Making Connections Across the SEA



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# Engaging the SEA Stakeholders

- Build relationships
- Create 'buy in'
- Understand it takes teamwork
- Establish roles and responsibilities





# Who Attended the First Meeting?

- ESEA Programs
- Special Education
- Family Engagement
- Community in Schools



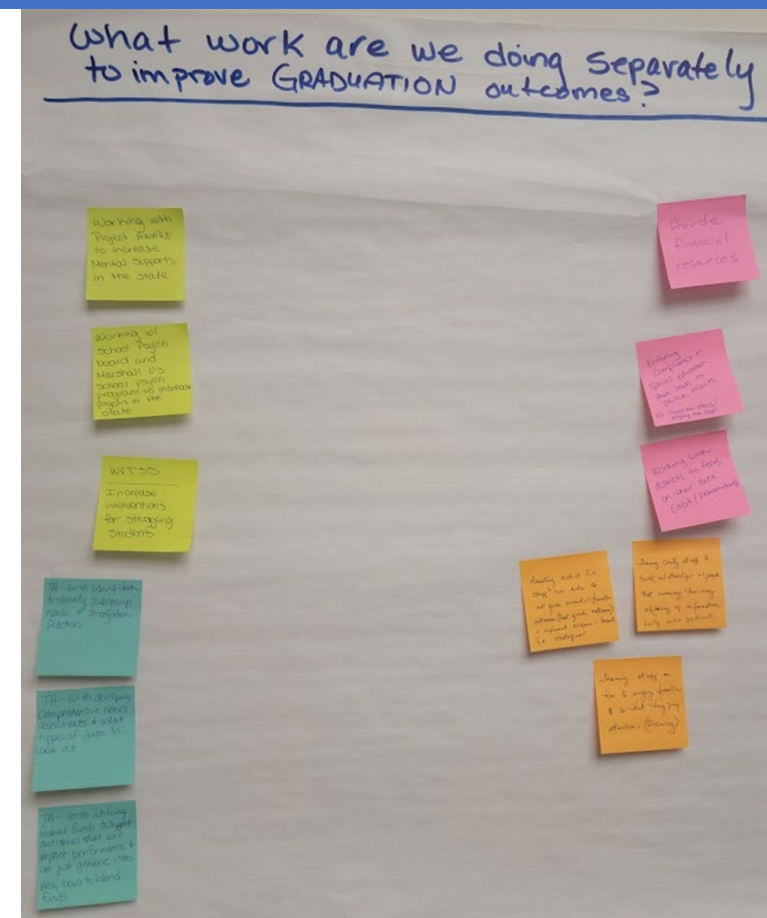
# Leading by Convening Activities

- Four Simple Questions
  - Who cares about this issue and why?
  - What work is already underway separately?
  - What shared work could unite us?
  - How can we deepen our connection?



# Additional Activities

- What work are we doing separately to improve graduation outcomes?
- What work can we do together to reduce the burden on the counties, schools, and families
- What can we do to deepen our connections?
- Who should be invited to join this work?



# Supporting Graduation Across the SEA 1

- Working with Project AWARE to increase mental health supports in the state
- Increasing interventions for struggling students through WVTSS initiative
- Using data to identify the needs of subgroups and strengthen practices
- Utilizing federal funds to support outcomes that will impact performance



# Supporting Graduation Across the SEA 2

- Enforcing compliance in special education that leads to positive results
- Training for county staff to build relationships with parents
- Providing financial resources



# What Work Can We Do To Reduce Burden?

- Develop an all-inclusive technical assistance system
- Coordinate public messaging
- Streamline data collection
- Share data between SEA offices and LEAs easily and efficiently
- Provide easy-to-find, useful, specific support that is current and represents best practices (e.g., evidence-based practices)
- Model using a team approach to reach similar goals
- Share information more often and more consistently



# The Challenge

## 5 Steps to Successful Integration of Initiatives

1. Identify the needs and resources for each initiative
2. Identify commonalities and intersections of needs and resources
3. Determine the resources that most efficiently support both initiatives
4. Utilize stakeholder input to reduce redundancies, inefficiencies and determine most effective method(s) for available resources
5. Plan, Do, Study, Act
  - If it is not working...review, revise, or dump it.



# Engaging External Stakeholders

Making Connections Within the State of West Virginia

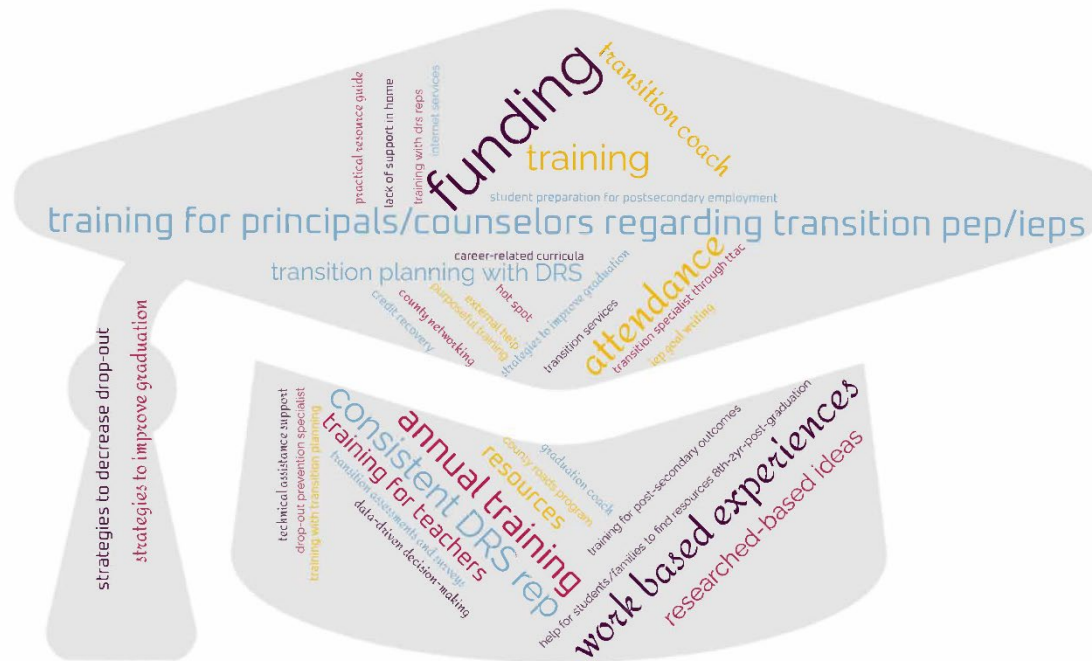


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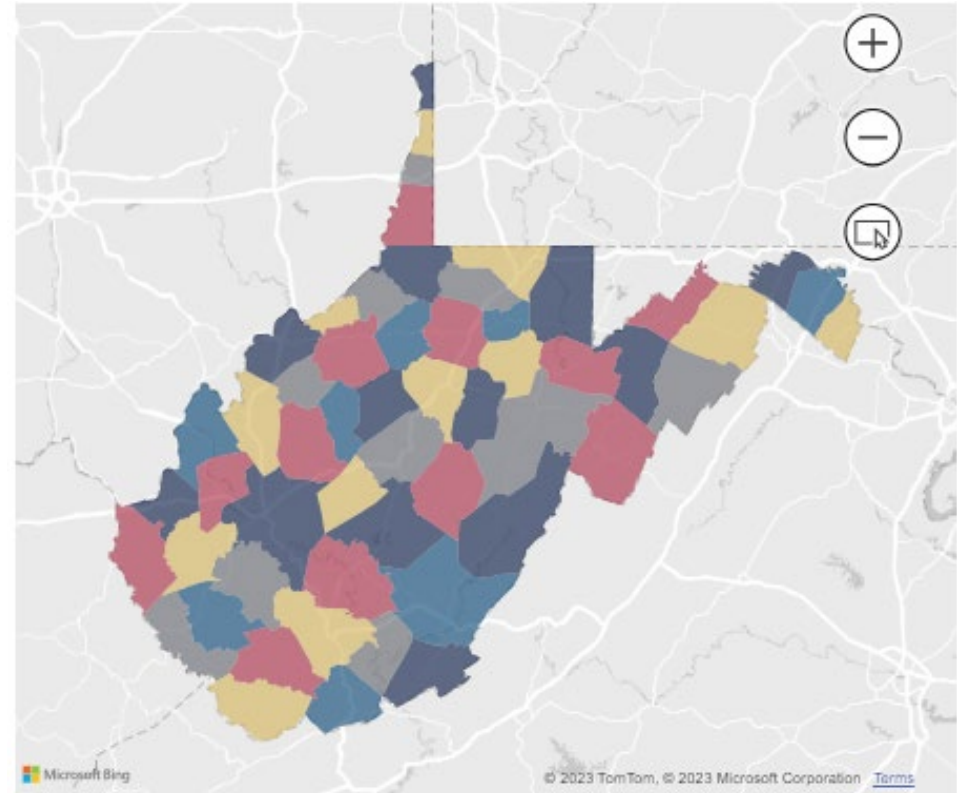


# West Virginia Guideposts to Graduation



# WV Guideposts to Graduation Website

- A Data Dashboard
- Resources
- Effective Practices
- Evidence-Based Practices
- Implementation Science
- National TA Center Tools
- Secondary Transition
- Student and Family
- Statewide Connections





# WV GUIDEPOSTS to GRADUATION

- View district-level information using any combination of the variables listed.
- Hover over individual districts for additional information.

10/18/2022  
Latest Update

### Community of Practice Participation (SY 2022-23)

- Optional
- Required

### DSIP Focus (SY 2022-23) ⓘ

- Assessment
- Graduation
- LRE
- PreK

### Communities In Schools (as of FY23)

- No
- Yes (Independent)
- Yes (WVDE)

### SPP/APR 2020 Graduation Target Met ⓘ

- No
- Yes

### SPP/APR 2020 Drop Out Target Met

- No
- Yes

### >1% WVASA Participation (Math - SY2021-22) ⓘ

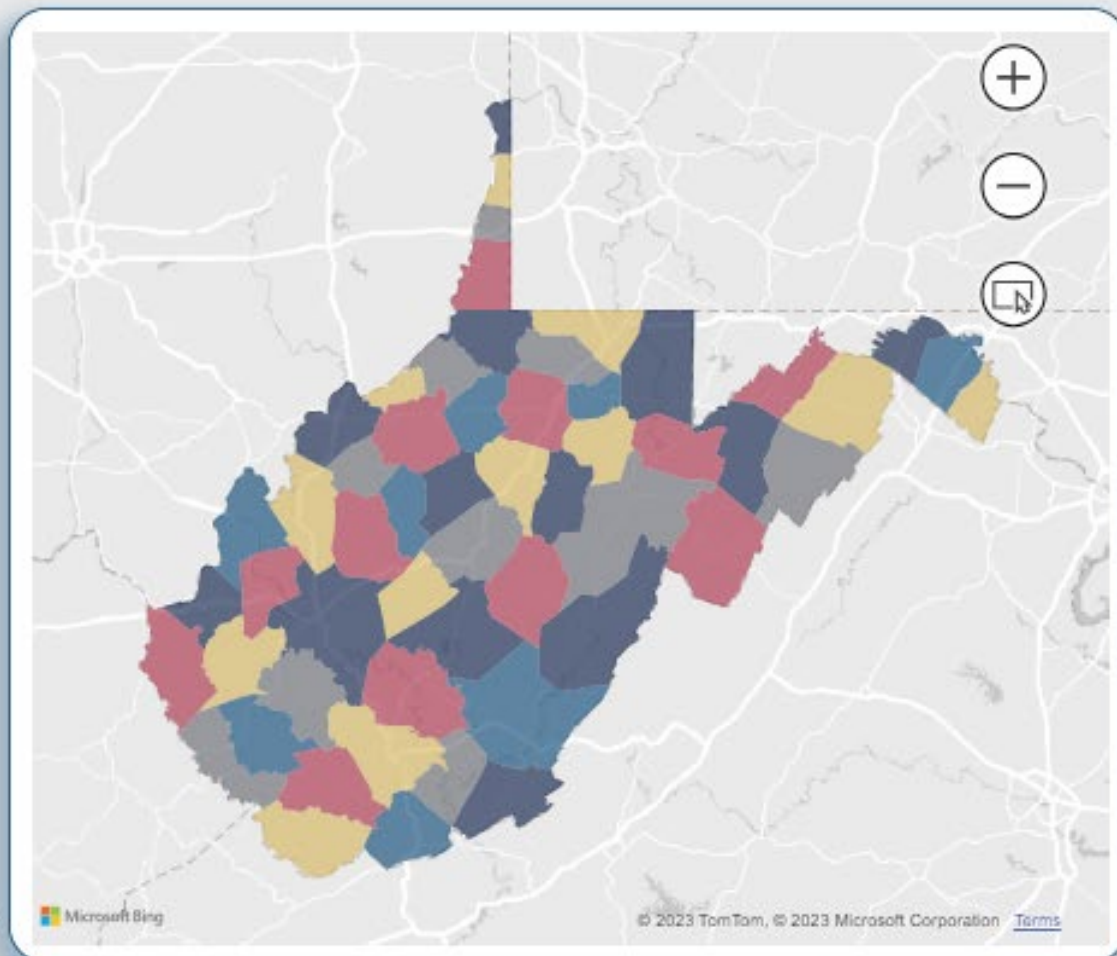
- No
- Yes

### >1% WVASA Participation (ELA - SY2021-22)

- No
- Yes

### >1% WVASA Participation (Science - SY2021-22)

- No
- Yes



### Indicator 1: Graduation - ⓘ

% of youth with IEPs graduating with a regular diploma.  
**State Target:  $\geq 84.21\%$  (SY 2020-21)**

### Indicator 2: Drop Out -

% of youth with IEPs dropping out.  
**State Target:  $\leq 5.17\%$  (SY 2020-21)**

### WVSDB ⓘ



# Effective and Evidence-Based Practices

- Evidence-Based Practices Resource Bank
- Implementation Science Resources
- National TA Center Tools (e.g., IRIS Modules)

## West Virginia Evidence-Based Practices in ESSA and IDEA Resource Bank



### Introduction

The Evidence-Based Practices in Secondary Transition Resource Bank (EBP Resource Bank) is a product of the West Virginia Department of Education Guidepost to Graduation (WVGtG) Team. The purpose of this resource bank is to provide information and resources to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) across the state of West Virginia related to the implementation of evidence-based practices to improve graduation and dropout outcomes.

The evidence-based practices (EBPs) highlighted in this resource are based on a variety of publicly available research sources that synthesize key findings. The resources provided in this document have been compiled from a variety of reliable sources including national technical assistance centers, universities, and departments of education. These organizations are described, and website links are provided in Appendix A of this document. It is important to note that the resources provided in this resource bank are not endorsements by the West Virginia Department of Education but compiled as examples for local educational agencies to reference in their work to improve graduation outcomes for students with disabilities.

Evidence-based practices are specific interventions to teach skills to secondary students/youth with disabilities and are based on the results of intervention research. The evidence-based practices identified have been evaluated regarding the amount, type, and quality of the research conducted and are labeled as:

- » ESSA Tier 1 – Strong Evidence;
- » ESSA Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence;
- » ESSA Tier 3 – Promising Evidence; and
- » ESSA Tier 4 – Demonstrates a rationale.

These designations indicate the confidence in the likely effectiveness of the intervention when implemented as defined and recommended. Each of the evidence-based practices are described in Table 1 on the following page.

March 2023

1



# West Virginia Statewide Connections

- Vocational Rehab (WV DRS)
- Project SEARCH
- Behavior & Mental Health TA Center
- Autism Training Center
- WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities
- Advisory Council
- WV Parent Training Information Center



# Building Capacity

- Contracted services to build capacity at state and local level
- Monthly Community of Practice
  - Presentation and Break Out Rooms
  - SEA follows-up on questions/needs from the LEAs



# Building Capacity Continued

- Purchased Secondary Transition Course
  - Delivered via online learning management system (Canvas)
  - Made some course material available for public on the WVGtG website
- Collaboration and Cooperation across the SEA
  - EBP Workshop with Federal Programs
  - Invitations to provide Professional Development with Gen Ed Teams
    - Summer Leadership Conference (administrators, central office, principals)
    - Student Success Summit (counselors/school psychologists)



# Statewide Relationships and Collaborations

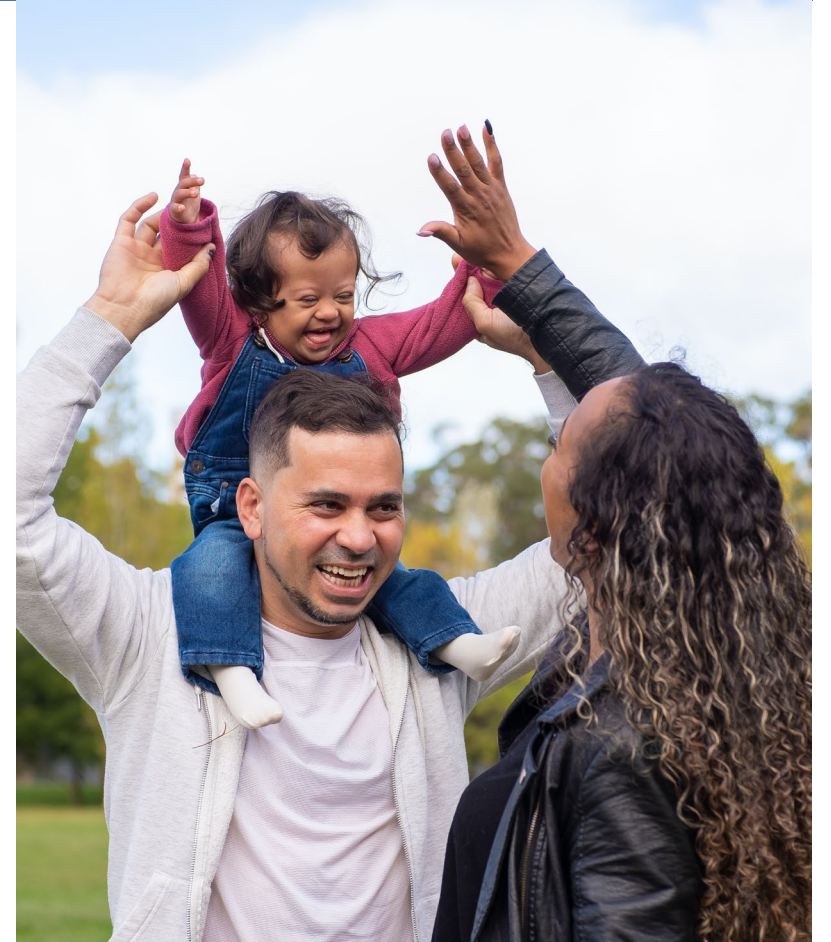
- Developmental Disability (DD) Council (Quarterly Meetings)
- Employment First Initiative
  - State Independent Living Council
- Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Monthly meetings with the VR, Education, and NTACTION: C
    - Added PTI and WV CASE representatives in May 2023
  - Co-developed a revised interagency agreement at NTACTION: C CBI and subsequent meetings
- Advisory Council for Exceptional Children





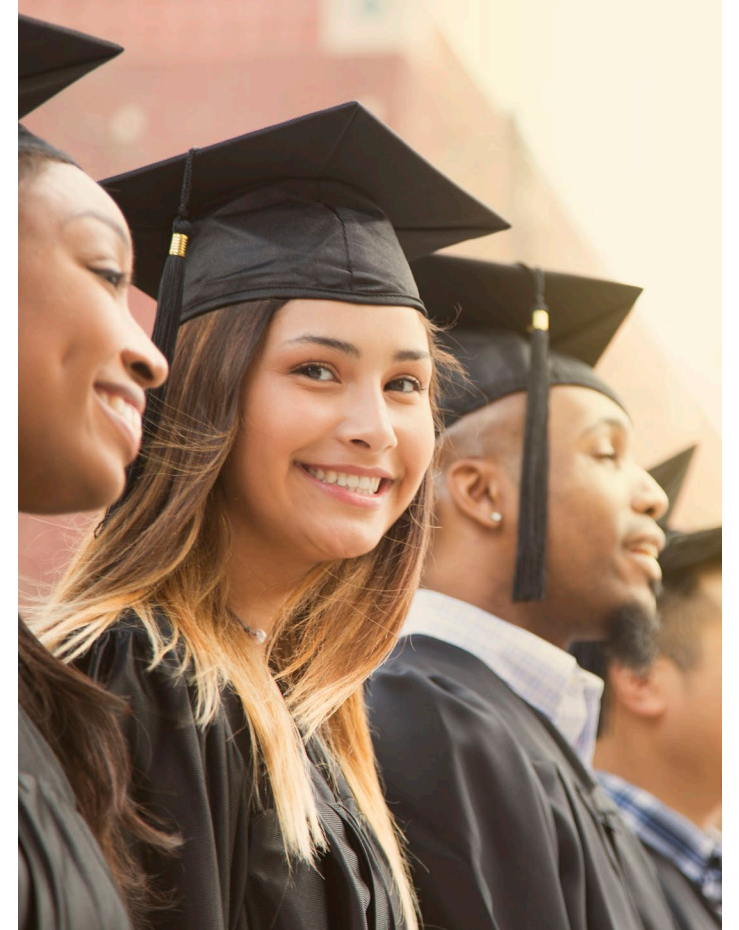
# Plans for 2023-2024 School Year 1

- DD Council and the Department of Education partnering to provide training for families
- The Department of Education is providing grant funding to the WV PTI to train families on secondary transition and post-school outcomes



# Plans for 2023-2024 School Year 2

- Competitive Grant funding for LEAs
  - Educational Supports
  - Student and Family Engagement
  - Systemic Improvements
  - Secondary Transition Services
- CoPs will focus on Transition Planning
  - Align with LEA improvement Plans
  - Align with Accountability and Monitoring



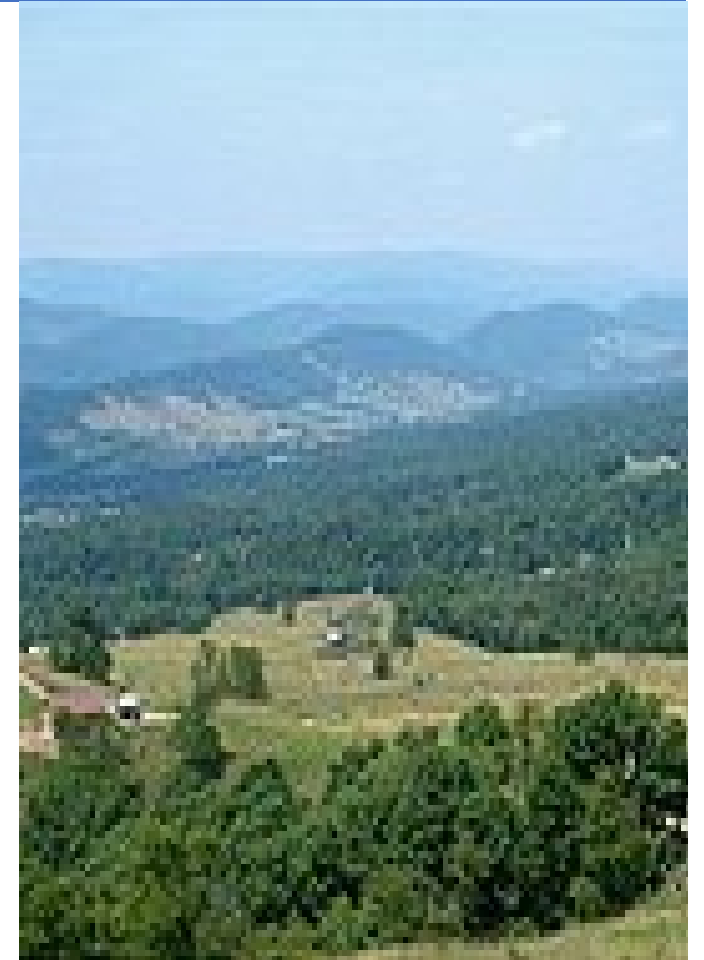
# Pendleton County Schools

- Total Student population of 867 students
  - 3 schools = 484 students
  - 1 middle and high school combined = 383 students



# Pendleton County's Challenges 1

- No Levy to bolster educational programs
- Enrollment has declined by 40% in last 30 years
  - From 1,452 in 1994 to 867 currently
- Schools serve 1.24 students per square mile
  - 696 square miles and 867 students
- Low socio-economic status
  - Low tax base



# Pendleton County's Challenges 2

- Limited business partnership opportunities
  - 1 chain restaurant - Subway
  - 1 grocery store - locally owned
  - No hospital
- Teacher shortage
  - Various education vacancies being left unfilled
- Job Exploration Coordinator position was posted from August until December



# WV Office of Special Programs Annual Desk Audit Data

- Indicator 14: Percentage of students with an IEP, no longer in school that are competitively employed, in higher education or a training program.
  - 2022: 42.86%
  - 2023: 62.50%
- West Virginia's state target is 71.51%



# Implementation Team

- Associate Superintendent
- Special Education Case Manager
- School counselors—middle and high school
- Community in Schools Coordinators-middle and high school
- Special Education Director
- Job Exploration Coordinator



# WVGtG: LEA Participation

- Monthly Data Dive Meetings
  - Provided effective guidance
  - Excellent and varied resources
  - On-going support
  - Networking opportunities.
- Open Door Meetings
- On-going support from West Virginia Department of Education





# WVGtG: LEA Implementation

- Grant opportunity provided funds to hire a Job Exploration Coordinator
  - A retired paraprofessional with 30 years of experience
  - Job responsibilities included
    - Completing the Career Cluster/Future Plans surveys with students
    - Coordinating schedules with teachers
    - Collaborating with business partners
    - Completing insurance agreements
    - Scheduled students for job exploration placements



# Business Partners

- Faithfull Friends Animal Clinic
- The Sheriff's Office
- Pendleton County Courthouse
- Alt's Welding
- Potomac Hardware (Small motor repair)
- Local Elementary Schools
- Tiny Tots Daycare
- Potomac Highlands Recreation Center
- Subway



# Good News Spreads

 **West Virginia Department of Education** ✓

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Ms. Rexrode is the coordinator of [Pendleton County's](#) "West Virginia Guidepost to Graduation" program, which assists with improving the graduation outcomes of participating students. In partnership with local businesses, Ms. Rexrode's efforts have provided these students with a role model and work experience. 📦

[#WVEd](#) [#ThankATeacher](#)  
[#CountySpotlight](#)

👍 5

2 shares

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**Pendleton County Students Benefit from Hands On Mentorship in County Businesses**

February 26, 2023 · In Local School · Reading Time: 4 min read



By Stephen Smoot

"You can tell he's been around vehicles some," said Franklin mechanic Billy Rowe, smiling as he watched Andrew Mowery get his hands dirty helping to replace a set of front brakes. The Pendleton County High School student said that he enjoys that "satisfaction of fixing it," while getting hands on experience doing repairs on automobiles.

Mowery is part of the Work Exploration Program offering workforce type education opportunities for students in counties across the state. Pendleton County joined the program last year but some counties, such as Berkeley, started participating as early as 2007.

According to Berkeley County Schools, "the Work Exploration Program is, simply, business owners and managers allowing students to come into their places of business for job observation and educational work experience." Students receive placements at local businesses to work and learn. They are allowed to "shop" to a certain extent between placements to find what best suits their interest and motivation.

Dilly Rowens, who administers the program for Pendleton County Schools, said "my prayer each morning has been to help each kid to be the best that they can be." Through helping the students "experience different jobs," she is helping them to find which job they may want to pursue after graduation, maybe even for a career.

Some students, like Mowery, come in with prior experience. He said, "I started watching videos on YouTube (about auto repair) and it got me interested." That experience helped him when he was asked to help with complicated tasks. "I've learned to take a transmission out," Mowery explained. "It's kind of difficult."

One of the benefits of the program lies in exposing students to high skilled trades fields that give opportunities close to home, such as auto repair. James All, a Troublesome Valley based welding company owner with 33 years of experience, enjoys opening young people's minds to the possibility of a rewarding career where one can earn high salaries and/or own their own business.

"Welding work has really been good to me," All explains. He added that "I encourage these kids to go to trade school."

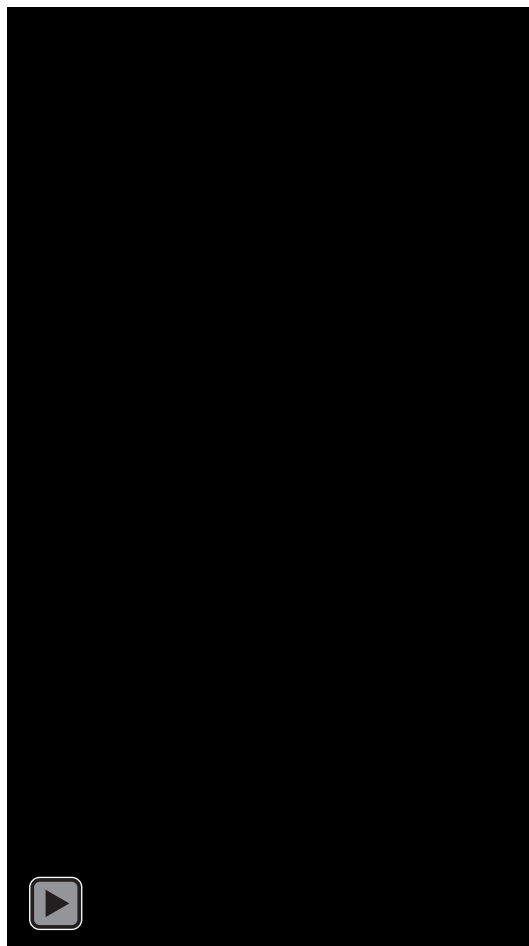
Let us see in other placements. All emphasizes education his mentees in how to do the job both correctly and safely. "I tell these young boys



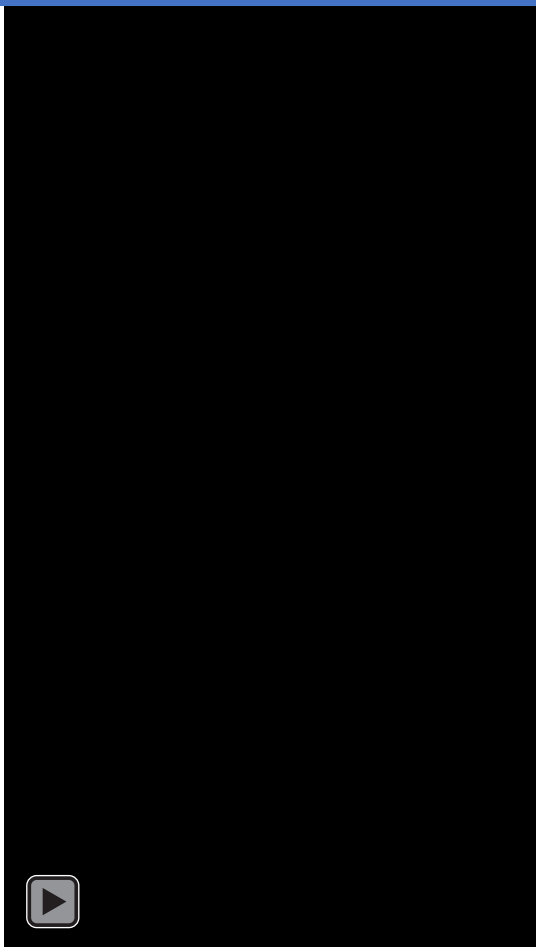
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# Student Experiences: Andrew



# Student Experiences: Skyler



# Successes

- 40% of students with transition services in their IEP participated in the Job Exploration Program
- 13 of the 14 students enrolled completed the program; 6 students' attendance improved greatly once the program began in February.
- 1 student was hired and is still employed in the position



# Successes Continued

- 1 student was accepted into the vocational welding program for next year
- Students wanted to continue the program beyond June
- Graduation rate increased from 81.82% in 2022 to 90% in 2023.



# Goals for 2023-2024

- Increase participation from 40% to 50%.
- Have job placements for each student no later than October 1st.
- Include a workshop to address resumes, job applications, and interviews
- Provide graduates that complete the program a distinctive cord indicating program completion.
- Increase the job exploration placements to a minimum of two per semester.





# Resource Spotlight

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) website
  - Brings together IDEA information and resources from the Department and its grantees.
  - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
- IDEAS That Work
  - For information from research to practice initiatives funded by OSEP that address the provisions of IDEA and ESSA. This website includes resources, links, and other important information relevant to OSEP's research to practice efforts.
  - <https://osepideasthatwork.org/>
- West Virginia Guideposts to Graduation website
  - For information and resources related to improving graduation and post school outcomes for students with disabilities.
  - [WV Guideposts to Graduation \(WVGtG\) - West Virginia Department of Education \(wvde.us\)](https://wvde.us)





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