

News Release

Further information:
Reena Kankaria (202) 469-7821 / rkankaria@ced.org

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CED Issues Recommendations for Workforce Readiness

Washington, D.C., March 29, 2018...In a [new report](#), the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board (CED) identifies strategies for increasing the effectiveness of business engagement, and the information and supports parents need to ensure student success in the workplace. [Building Supports for Successful Transitions Into the Workforce](#) focuses on community-based, community-driven insights and ideas to build workforce readiness for high school graduates.

In 2017, CED embarked upon a national study of business leaders and parents to discuss firsthand information about workplace demands and aspirations for high school graduates. With generous funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the study included conducting focus group sessions with parents and business leaders in Oakland, CA; Westfield, MA; Tupelo, MS; Marysville, OH; and Norfolk, VA.

CED developed recommendations based on a common thread running through the communities to help students navigate a path toward a successful, rewarding career. Recommendations include:

- **Coordination & collaboration among stakeholders.** Business leaders expressed frustration over the lack of a single, community-based intermediary to help them connect and inform students, parents, and educators.
- **Communication among stakeholders.** Communities need an intermediary to serve as a conduit for gathering and sharing information, as well as a strategic plan for communicating information about career pathways and available career opportunities.
- **Tools, resources, and supports to identify career pathways.** On a more global scale, students, parents, and businesses need tools, resources, and supports to help them develop a community-based plan for addressing career readiness. Inserting a support person who can serve as an intermediary between all stakeholders makes good sense.
- **Work-based learning opportunities.** Discussions focused on providing students with opportunities to experience the full continuum, beginning as early as elementary school: awareness, exploration, preparation, and training.
- **Development of soft skills.** Business leaders in each community emphasized the importance of soft skills and how they can make or break a student's chance for success in the workplace. Parents, families, and educators are vital to teaching, modeling, and reinforcing these skills.

The common goals and aspirations shared from community to community revealed a shared hope for students as they chart a course for the future. Parents and business leaders echoed the value of coming together to discuss the topic of career readiness. In each discussion, there was a deep understanding that the success or failure of students to thrive in the workplace impacts everyone, from the individual student, to their parents, their neighbors, and more globally, the entire community and economy.

View the new CED report, *Building Supports for Successful Transitions Into the Workforce*, [here](#), along with an executive summary and accompanying infographic.

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Founded in 1942, the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board (CED) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, business-led public policy organization that delivers well-researched analysis and reasoned solutions to our nation's most critical issues. CED's work is grounded on seven core principles: sustainable capitalism, long-term economic growth, efficient fiscal and regulatory policy, competitive and open markets, a globally competitive workforce, equal economic opportunity, and nonpartisanship in the nation's interest. Learn more at www.ced.org