

# Nicholas County Career and Technical Center Wins Pacesetter Award

*Technical center honored for ensuring each student has access to high-quality career pathways that align with his or her interests*

July 10, 2019 — Nicholas County Career and Technical Center in Craigsville, West Virginia, is the winner of a 2019 Gene Bottoms Pacesetter School award from the Southern Regional Educational Board. NCCTC was honored at SREB's Making Schools Work Conference on July 10 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Pacesetter School Awards recognize schools that are implementing one of SREB's Making Schools Work school improvement frameworks and are achieving success in meeting bold goals related to increases in student graduation rates, readiness for college or careers, and credential attainment.

After several years of declining enrollments, in 2017-18, NCCTC successfully put in place strategies to increase awareness of its high-quality career and technical education programs and overcome misperceptions about the value of CTE.

To reignite interest in its programs, NCCTC invited ninth-graders from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds at rival high schools to participate in a pilot program called *Exploratory* — a semester-long elective class. Students rotated through each of the center's programs and engaged in nine-day, project-based learning units that gave them a taste of what NCCTC's programs and classes have to offer. The ninth-graders wore T-shirts with the Exploratory logo every Wednesday, sparking interest and conversations at their home schools. The strategy paid off.

In 2018-19, NCCTC experienced a 44 percent jump in its overall enrollment; over 95 percent of the Explorers said they planned to enroll full-time. NCCTE currently plans to add four new programs.

The Making School Work Conference brings together educators from schools that are implementing the instructional strategies of SREB's school improvement programs. These schools have increased their focus on quality career and technical education by redesigning assignments around projects that integrate academic and technical knowledge and skills.

*The Southern Regional Education Board works with states and educators to improve public education at every level, from early childhood through postsecondary education. Learn more about SREB at [sreb.org](http://sreb.org).*

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