Preventing Career-Driven Students

By Marsha Moseley and Diane James, SREB

Every school wants all students to graduate on time and prepared for college or careers. Career and technical education classes and technology centers play a pivotal role in achieving this goal because they go beyond teaching academics and expose students to potential careers and authentic work experiences.

Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Oklahoma is achieving remarkable gains in its efforts to help each student develop an Individual Career Academic Plan, participate in work-based learning and earn industry certifications. “The sky is the limit for whatever training you want to get at Gordon Cooper,” says Jessica Gabeau, a high school counselor at the center.

GCTC has three combined campuses in Shawnee and Seminole, Oklahoma. As a Technology Centers That Work site, GCTC received SREB’s Gene Bottoms Pacesetter School Award in 2020. Serving nearly 1,000 students in 27 partner school districts, GCTC offers 23 full-time programs of study and opens doors for students to earn numerous industry certifications leading to lucrative careers in regional industries. Recruiting and career awareness are essential to the center’s process.

Recruiting Students

A structured recruiting and application process not only helps GCTC meet its enrollment goals — it’s also a critical first step in increasing students’ awareness of potential careers. Beginning in the elementary and middle grades, the center provides multiple opportunities for students to learn about their career and college choices after graduation. For example, elementary and middle grades students can participate in Kids’ Klasses — short-term summer classes that introduce them to the center’s facilities and many CTE programs.

Area eighth graders take field trips to GCTC that encourage them to consider their educational options there. “We’re planting that seed before they enroll as a high school student,” notes Gabeau.

In high school, tenth graders get to participate in career pathway showcases. Prior to the pandemic, Counselor Gabeau visited 27 feeder schools to introduce students to the center’s 23 programs of study. Particularly popular programs include Advanced Manufacturing & Machining, Automotive Technology, Aviation Maintenance Technology, Electrical Careers, Health Careers and more.
Tenth graders then select the three programs that most interest them — and get to visit the center to learn more during what GCTC calls *Explore the Universe Day*. When this event shifted to virtual in 2020, GCTC created colorful career cluster graphics and videos to showcase the center’s programs and launched them on social media — with surprising results. “We actually had more traffic this way,” notes Gabeau.

The center’s ongoing outreach efforts culminate in applications and interviews, followed by *Signing Days*, in which students declare their choice of pathway, and *Launching Days*, in which students enter their program of study.

**Career Trees and Individual Academic Plans**

Working with students, each pathway program instructor designs a Career Tree — a visual depiction of what careers exist at the entry, technical and professional levels in a student’s chosen career path — that helps students figure out which careers they might enjoy and excel in. At its root, each tree is supported by a foundation made up of *academics*, *experiences*, *professional skills* and *passion*.

![Career Tree Development Worksheet](image)

For example, in the center’s health care pathway, *academic* learning centers around medical math, anatomy and physiology. Students also learn more about workplace expectations and skills from guest speakers, museum tours and visits with college or business professionals. Students gain *professional skills* by participating in clinical experiences at nursing homes or taking the vital signs of other students. Teachers and counselors report that *passion* often grows out of students’ experiences of volunteerism in their career pathway of choice.

As they consider the career tree, each student puts their name on a leaf and states the career they want to pursue. Students can change their minds and move the leaf to another career pathway at any time, but using the tree “gives students a vision, a goal in mind, a light at the end of the tunnel,” maintains Gabeau.
Finding a Career Niche

Rae Ann Shafer, GCTC’s director of instruction, says that at the beginning of the school year, students put in considerable legwork to learn more about their chosen career. Students research salaries, occupational certifications and training opportunities, and similar information about the field.

All programs have advisory committees whose members visit the school to talk to students about career preparation. GCTC alumni also return and share their experiences about how they started in their careers.

Hands-on, Real-World Experiences

Off-campus job shadowing and work-based learning opportunities provide students with real-world workplace experiences that can help them deepen their understanding of their chosen career field. During their senior year, students engage in a formal application process for work-based learning and structured job placements. “We try to get as many second-year completers outward into internships and apprenticeships” as possible, says Shafer.

On-the-job training helps students cement their goals and decide whether to extend their training beyond high school, move straight into the workforce, enroll in two- or four-year college, or choose a two-year program at Gordon Cooper.

The Proof Is in the Data

GCTC’s efforts to support its CTE programs have paid off for students. The center’s 2019-2020 data indicates that of 975 students enrolled, 42% were CTE program completers and graduated from their program, nine percent were career concentrators and 38% continued in their chosen career program. Only six percent transferred to a different program. “It means we’re setting them up for success from the beginning,” says Shafer.

One-year follow-up data showed that 44% of continuing education students who were course concentrators went on to a two- or four-year school and 42% of GCTC program completers were employed in a career related to their program area.

Contacts: Rae Ann Shafer, raeanns@gctech.edu; Jessica Gabeau, jessicag@gctech.edu

Partnerships for IT Pathways: 4,000 Credentials and Counting!

By Beth Green and Jahana Martin, SREB

Partnerships between schools and business and industry leaders play an essential role in helping students explore careers and prepare for success after high school. The relationships students form with business and industry mentors not only allow students to engage in real-life work experiences while in school, they also help students earn certifications and credentials before they graduate.

The Academies of Louisville in Kentucky’s Jefferson County Public Schools make experiences like these a key component of how they prepare students for a global workforce. “We know that every time a student engages with a business partner or touches an authentic project or problem, they learn faster. We know that exposing them to authentic work is the magic to help kids be successful,” says Christy Rogers, the district’s former assistant superintendent.

Academies of Louisville

The 55 Academies of Louisville serve over 17,500 students in grades eight through 12 in 15 JCPS high schools. Over 120 companies serve as business partners in support of dozens of unique pathways in these academies.

JCPS’s strong pathways in Information Technology have grown out of the district’s investment in administering student interest surveys, examining regional workforce data, engaging with local businesses in need of expert IT support and creating a rigorous four-course sequence leading to relevant industry certifications that will help JCPS graduates secure great jobs.
Each IT pathway includes integrated opportunities to earn dual credit and industry certifications, gain work experience, and benefit from professional mentorships with area business partners. “It’s a lot of integration of work-based experience, authentic case challenges, certifications, on-site tours, field trips and guest speakers. This is grounded in student interest and industry need,” says Rogers.

**Partnering With CompTIA**

One of JCPS’s most important partnerships is with CompTIA, an organization focused on advancing the tech workforce through quality certification and training. CompTIA’s nonprofit organization, Creating IT Futures, helps increase access to high-demand, high-skill, high-wage IT careers among populations that have been under-represented in IT as well as among individuals who may lack opportunities to prepare for, secure and succeed in IT careers. JCPS piloted Creating IT Futures’ CyberPrep curriculum, which prepares students with the foundational digital skills they need to earn IT certifications.

“It is exciting to partner with CompTIA to develop a real-world curriculum and authentic work leading to industry certification,” says Rogers. That’s “the ultimate goal — that our students leave with a diploma plus a certification.”

Academies of Louisville students have earned over 4,000 certifications in many different areas, including the ITF+, A+, Network+ and Security+ certifications from CompTIA. “We’ve worked hard in the field of IT for diversity and equity to make sure we expand options for girls and girls of color. We want all students to have an opportunity to see themselves in IT,” Rogers shares.

School leaders and teachers, too, can benefit from this IT curriculum model as a tool for teacher recruitment and retention. Both students and teachers can earn an industry-recognized credential through CompTIA.

Tazneen Kasem, director of Creating IT Futures’ Youth Learning Program at CompTIA, says it is easy for non-technical teachers to teach this fun, plug-and-play curriculum. “It’s hard to find a technical teacher who knows the content. A lot may leave and join the IT workforce. We want to build a new group of teachers who can become more technical. The way we developed the content is so anyone can teach it and have the resources to learn and teach fundamental content,” she says.

The curriculum can also be used in various settings — in-person, online or hybrid. That flexibility helped JCPS educators continue instruction when schools were shuttered due to COVID-19.

**Academy Perks**

“We want to build digital agility for all students,” says Rogers. When students enter the program, they begin building a “digital backpack” in which they keep evidence of their work. At the end of the eighth and 12th grades, students must defend their digital readiness through their digital backpacks. “Every industry certification and exposure to technology enhances their evidence. In their senior year, they must give a defense to graduate in areas of innovation, collaboration and use of technology,” explains Rogers.

Students in the Academies of Louisville can also participate in registered apprenticeships. Well-known businesses like Louisville-based Yum! Brands, operator of restaurants like KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, place JCPS students in IT roles like their Help Desks. Jefferson County Public Schools is a registered apprenticeship provider with the Kentucky Labor Cabinet and employs many graduates to fill IT roles in its own schools.

**Explore CyberPrep at #SREBSummer**

Explore CyberPrep and learn more about JCPS’ efforts to grow its IT pathways at the 2022 Making Schools Work Conference in Grapevine, Texas, in sessions like these:

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<tr>
<td>How Any Teacher Can Teach IT!</td>
<td>Jenny Schoonover&lt;br&gt;Oasis Charter Middle School, FL&lt;br&gt;Tazneen Kasem and Natasha Pender&lt;br&gt;Creating IT Futures, CompTIA</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 20&lt;br&gt;11 a.m. – noon&lt;br&gt;Thursday, July 21&lt;br&gt;8 – 9 a.m.</td>
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<td>How We Started an IT Pathway With Certifications and Seamlessly Expanded to Five Schools!</td>
<td>James Moore&lt;br&gt;CTE Instructional Lead, JCPS&lt;br&gt;Tazneen Kasem&lt;br&gt;Creating IT Futures, CompTIA</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 20&lt;br&gt;2:30 - 3:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Start Your Technology Education Program in the Middle Grades Today!</td>
<td>Sara Neiman and Tazneen Kasem&lt;br&gt;Creating IT Futures, CompTIA</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 20&lt;br&gt;8:30 - 9:30 a.m.</td>
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**Contacts:** Tazneen Kasem, tkasem@comptia.org

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Southern Regional Education Board | Promising Practices Newsletter | 22V06w | SREB.org
Earn College Credits in High School
By Jahana Martin, SREB

Many students enter high school with the dream of going to college. But students at Waverly-Shell Rock High School in Waverly, Iowa, get a head start on their collegiate careers because they can start earning college credits while in high school.

The school offers opportunities for students to learn business skills while earning college credit by using High School of Business, a program from the MBA Research & Curriculum Center in Columbus, Ohio, a not-for-profit organization that provides resources for business and marketing educators.

The High School of Business curriculum uses project-based learning, accelerated content and a business classroom experience that positions students for future success by stressing teamwork and interaction with the business community.

“The High School of Business curriculum was designed with college credit in mind,” says Laurie Urich, program director of MBA Research & Curriculum Center.

In designing the curriculum, MBA Research reviewed college syllabi and business and industry needs to determine what courses needed to contain. “We wanted to make it easy for schools to work with colleges on dual credit agreements,” she says.

According to Ken Burrow, a business teacher at Waverly-Shell Rock High School, High School of Business is a great fit.

The six courses provide a foundation in business, including principles of business, economics, marketing, finance, management and business strategies and entrepreneurship. Classes are led by business and industry professionals and consist of either multiple projects or one project that spans a whole semester.

Burrow says some students have graduated with 15 college credits. “We have found that our students are better prepared for college. They’re better prepared for the workplace. They develop great community connections, and the parents can see the results and get excited about the program.”

Connect With Colleges
To help students make smooth transitions to college, the team at Waverly-Shell Rock High School connected with leaders of the business school at nearby Hawkeye Community College. After describing the High School of Business curriculum and discussing performance indicators and learning outcomes, the Waverly-Shell Rock team and college leaders found that four High School of Business courses were a close match to Hawkeye courses, making it easy to add opportunities for students to earn dual credit at the community college.

High School of Business students also explore how to start their own businesses through an entrepreneurship program at the University of Iowa called Biz Innovator. With Biz Innovator, students can earn college credits in courses offered by teachers trained in the Biz Innovator model. However, this is not a dual credit program. “Students must pass a test at the end of the course and can earn three college credits and pay for the courses at a reduced rate,” Burrow explained.

“Make the Most of It”
In the High School of Business economics course, one of the six projects students complete is called “Make the Most of It.” The project’s goal is for students to find the best use for a vacant lot in a specific location. Learning outcomes include building innovation skills, identifying opportunity costs and using decision matrices. At a project opening kick-off event, guest speakers like real estate agents or economic development or planning and zoning leaders talk to students about zoning requirements and community needs. Students get excited about the project when they hear from local leaders, like Waverly’s director of economic development, who has visited Burrow’s class for the past few years.
Students visit the vacant lot in person or virtually and receive a statement of work that describes the project objective, time frame and deliverables. Then the class is divided into groups, with each group creating a contract to define their roles and responsibilities, a project plan to guide their team and a set of bylaws. Each group then creates a decision matrix they’ll use to write their proposals and a final presentation they make to the same guest speaker who kicked off the course.

“It is a team paper, and they share the responsibility,” Burrow says. Students are also required to dress professionally during team presentations. “I believe there are between 15 and 20 times… during the three years in the program [that kids] will get up in front of someone and present, so they really get a good basis for great public speaking skills as they move through this,” Burrow explains. “This is going to help them in the long run not only in their schooling but in the workplace as well.”

The Coffee Shop

While working on a project to market the High School of Business program, Burrow’s students shared in a survey that they would really enjoy running a business — a student store specifically.

That was the impetus of the school’s coffee shop, which started with one table, one coffee machine and a once-a-day coffee delivery. The coffee shop now features a permanent counter with coffee machines and drink refrigerators.

Students get experience running a business and learning problem-solving skills. “One class gets to run the store every year. The next year, the next class takes it over and decides how they want to run it and how they want to improve it,” Burrow says.

Student Success

“The curriculum is engaging and challenging,” says Sadie Hansen, a former High School of Business student at Waverly-Shell Rock High School.

In Hansen’s junior year, she discovered her passion for human resources while working in the student store as a human resources director. After graduating from high school with 15 college credits, she attended her local community college and completed its human resources program in just one year. After earning her associate degree, she then transferred to a university and secured a job as a full-time human resources associate while still in college.
“Last year, on average, a student completing the High School of Business program graduated from high school with 9.5 credits earned because of their participation in this program,” says Urich. At Waverly-Shell Rock High School, Burrow says students usually receive 12 hours of dual credit with Hawkeye Community College and three potential credits through the University of Iowa Biz Innovator program.

Waverly-Shell Rock High School student data shared by the MBA Research & Curriculum Center shows that:

- 92% of program participants are confident in succeeding in college
- 93% believe participation will increase their ability to succeed in a career
- 100% achieved state benchmarks in math and English language arts

Teacher data shows that:

- 92% of teachers report improved relationships with the local business community
- 71% of teachers improved relations with colleges and universities

Learn More at #SREBSummer

MBA Research & Curriculum Center staff will present and exhibit at the 2022 Making Schools Work Conference in Grapevine, Texas. Stop by Booth 309 in the Education Marketplace or attend session 1206 to chat with April Miller about High School of Business and MBA Research & Curriculum Center’s other curricular products and tools.

Contacts: Ken Burrow, ken.burrow@wsr.k12.ia.us; Laurie Urich, urichl@mbaresearch.org

Become an Explorer in Your Own Classroom

By Leslie Eaves, SREB

The National Geographic Society’s Learning Framework helps students embrace curiosity, responsibility and empowerment while developing and using observation, communication, collaboration and problem-solving skills. How can we grow these skills and attributes in ourselves?

As teachers, we design engaging learning experiences that provide time and space for students to express their curiosity about the world by observing and asking questions. We teach them how to find answers by conducting research, reading varied texts and investigating phenomena.

We challenge students to accept responsibility for their learning by providing opportunities for them to engage in self-reflection, tap into their metacognitive abilities and organize their thoughts. Our students become leaders when they take on exploratory, problem-solving roles, collaborate on complex tasks and create imaginative solutions to real issues.
We help students develop strong, unique voices by facilitating conversations in which they can share their insights and present their findings to peers and members of the school community. As teachers, we empower the next generation of young leaders to boldly recognize, confront and solve the problems they find in their communities and their world.

Teachers have the magical power to look at students from all backgrounds, cultures and belief systems and say — “I know you can do this!” With our support and guidance, students can learn, do and become so much more than they ever thought possible.

So how do we create this magic for ourselves? One answer is to participate in professional learning systems that help us embody the “explorer’s mindset” we cultivate in our students.

“Curiosity has its own reason for existing.” — Albert Einstein

I don’t have to tell you: Teaching is not easy. When we become explorers of our own teaching practices, however, we unlock our curiosity about our students’ worlds. We also open ourselves up to seeing and hearing things that inspire us to ask questions, seek information and ask more questions that lead to deeper truths and understanding.

Spend a moment — even five minutes — observing your students. Take a clipboard and jot down notes as if you were a scientist making observations in the field. How are your students interacting with the tasks you give them? Notice how they talk with each other and what questions they ask — or don’t. Allow your observations to spark questions. Consider these:

- Why are students engaging in this assignment? What makes it work?
- Why is this student having difficulties? What can I change to make this assignment work for them?
- How can I take what’s working right now and apply it to my next unit?

Questions can guide your research and lead you to play with new ideas in your classroom. Gain insights and perspectives from peers by bringing your questions to professional learning communities, workshops or conferences.
“A problem shared is a problem halved.” — English proverb

As teachers, we shoulder a lot of responsibility, but we can’t own everything that goes wrong in our classrooms. Ask yourself:

- What do I have responsibility for?
- What do I have control over?
- What do I not have control over?

We gain greater control not only by thinking critically about how we personally approach classroom challenges but also by finding thought partners with whom we can collaboratively work through thorny student issues or tough learning concepts.

“The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.” — George Eliot

We grow in power as educators when we unleash our inner explorers and take and share responsibility for our successes and challenges in the classroom with others.

What does growth look like for you? Maybe you choose a professional learning opportunity that will help you become the teacher you want to be. Maybe you speak up in a workshop and ask the facilitator to address a concern in your classroom. Maybe you partner with an instructional coach to think through a problem together.

Each choice you make to examine and improve your practice empowers you to make the next choice, and the next, toward being the educator you want to be.

Take the Next Step With Us

SREB is partnering with the National Geographic Society to blend our approach to job-embedded instructional coaching into a high-quality professional learning series on creating and cultivating explorer mindsets. This spring and summer, teachers like you are joining us for virtual professional learning courses and individualized coaching that will help you harness the National Geographic Learning Framework and become an explorer in your own classroom.

Interested in participating? A repeat of our learning series on Developing Inquiry and Explorer Mindsets runs June 6 – August 3, 2022, with additional trainings to come. Email me at leslie.eaves@sreb.org to learn more. Although you may come to the series as the sole participant from your school, you’ll be surrounded by educators from across the globe who are also seeking to use National Geographic resources and our Powerful Instructional Practices to design transformational learning experiences for their students.

Contact: Leslie Eaves, leslie.eaves@sreb.org
Take Valuable Industry Exams for Free at #SREBSummer

Thanks to our generous partner, Certiport — A Pearson Vue Business, SREB is delighted to make it possible for attendees to take Certiport certification exams for free at the 2022 Making Schools Work Conference in Grapevine.

Conference attendees can choose from over 40 in-demand exams. Four — Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing and Computational Thinking — are brand new. You could be among the first educators to experience these exams!

Learn more on our website and register for #SREBSummer today!

Available Exams

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Available Exams
Celebration and Book-Signing in Honor of Gene Bottoms

Coming to #SREBSummer?

Join us Thursday, July 21, at 5:30 p.m. Central to celebrate your successful conference experience and kick off the school year to come. Have fun, relax and network with friends and colleagues as you enjoy drinks, delicious State Fair foods and classic carnival games like horseshoes and shuffleboard.

Spend time with our guest of honor, Gene Bottoms, senior vice president emeritus of SREB and founder of High Schools That Work. Your paid ticket includes a free copy of his new book, Tomorrow’s High School: Creating Student Pathways for Both College and Career, published by ASCD, SREB’s conference bookstore partner.

Bottoms will also be available for book signings at the ASCD Bookstore in our Education Marketplace, where his book and other ASCD titles will be available at 50% off for conference attendees!

Cost: $35, payable at registration, includes two drink tickets, fair food and a free copy of Tomorrow’s High School

Date and Time: Thursday, July 21, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Central

Location: Longhorn Exhibit Hall, Convention Center Level 1 (Conference Dining Hall)

Register now!

Gene Bottoms, vice president emeritus of SREB, and his new book, Tomorrow’s High School, available in the ASCD Bookstore at #SREBSummer
Career Pathways Cocktail Hour, Sponsored by Territorium

You don’t have to be a CTE educator or a member of our Technology Centers That Work Network to appreciate the power of quality career-focused instruction to spark student success.

If you’re attending #SREBSummer, join us Wednesday, July 20, at 5:30 p.m. Central to celebrate CTE and the efforts you make to set students on career pathways to the future. Kick back, relax and network with new friends and old colleagues as you enjoy a beer and wine bar and nosh on snacks and passed hors d’oeuvres.

Territorium, proud sponsor of the Career Pathways Cocktail Hour, will be on hand to share how you can use TerritoriumCLR to create Comprehensive Learner Records that capture student competencies aligned to K-12 pathways and aligned to postsecondary programs of study and curated employment opportunities.

Cost: $25, payable at registration, includes two drink tickets

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 20, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Central

Location: Tate Ballroom Prefunction Area, Vineyard Tower (Level 2)

Register now!
Explore What Makes You SHINE at the Shine & Wine! Networking and Leadership Development Event

Attending #SREBSummer?

Join us on Wednesday, July 20, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., at the Shine & Wine! evening event to enjoy networking, leadership development, light bites, wine and an exclusive private tour of House of Shine’s exhibits and programs.

House of Shine is a nonprofit, interactive museum dedicated to the study of you. Discover new things about yourself, revealing intriguing possibilities for the future. House of Shine’s engaging exhibits, programs and events help you unearth your SHINE and use it to help others. House of Shine also works alongside educators, helping students discover who they are, learn to lead and work together.

Don’t miss sessions with lead Shineologist and career educator Claudia Beeny, plus check out House of Shine’s booth and pop-up shop in our Education Marketplace in the conference exhibit hall!

Cost: $25, payable at registration, includes transportation from the Gaylord Texan to House of Shine and return

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 20, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Central

Location: 334 S. Barton Street, Grapevine, TX 76051

Register now!
Explore Top Texas Businesses at #SREBSummer

Go behind the scenes at some of the most prominent businesses in the Grapevine and Dallas-Fort Worth area on Friday, July 22, from 8 a.m. to noon. Attendees are limited to one tour. We welcome spouses, children or other guests for an additional fee. Choose your tour at registration — learn more on our website. We are adding new tours in the weeks to come!

The Henry B. Tippie National Aviation Education Center

Take your instruction sky high in CTE, literacy, math, social studies, STEM and more with resources and inspiration from the educators, historians and aviation experts at the Henry B. Tippie National Aviation Education Center.

Join educators Nancy McGee and Brenda Townsend for a tour of the NAEC’s Education Wing, which includes Build Guild Classrooms, a Homefront Classroom, the Flight Deck and more. The STEM Innovation Hangar, a hands-on working and educational space, houses World War II aircraft that serve as living, breathing examples of the STEM principles taught at the NAEC.

Cost: $33 includes admission and transportation

Tour Date and Time: Friday, July 22, 9 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Central

The Western Experience in the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District

Explore the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District, where you’ll witness the world’s only twice-daily cattle drive of Texas Longhorns. Guests of this four-hour multi-stop experience will attend the Fort Worth Herd interactive demonstration, take a Stockyards Heritage historical walking tour, visit the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame, take on the challenge of the Cowtown Cattlepen Maze and see the cattle drive at 11:30 a.m. Central.

Cost: $40 includes admission and transportation

Tour Date and Time: Friday, July 22, 8 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Central

Register now!
Making Schools Work Conference
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