

State Scholars Initiative announced for Cabell County

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The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- More than 1,900 eighth- and ninth-graders attending school in Cabell County will be visited during the week of March 16 by business and community members hoping to point children toward a path of success.

The program is part of the State Scholars Initiative, launched locally by Cabell County Schools, Education Alliance and the Huntington Area Development Council.

HADCO president Jerry McDonald said during the Wednesday announcement that education, not jobs, is the most important thing in life. Even more so when you're talking to students.

"To be competitive in today's global economy, our work force must be both skilled and well-educated," he said. "The State Scholars Initiative places business and community leaders in the classroom to relate real-world experience and requirement, and encourage a demanding course of study to better prepare students for whatever career path they choose."

The volunteers who will talk to the students will be asking the question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

Though it sounds like an elementary-age question, the answer is most important at this age, because it involves students rising to the challenge by taking Advanced Placement courses in science and math.

"We don't want them to blow off their senior year," McDonald said. "We want them to take four years of math and science and a foreign language. We want these students to commit to being a state scholar."

Students who graduate as a state scholar are looked at more highly by college admission counselors or other post-secondary institutions. But it's just as important for those who don't see a four-year degree program as their path in life.

"Jobs in the 21st century require students to have the skills of someone getting into a four-year degree program," said Education Alliance President and CEO Patricia Kusimo.

The 60 volunteers also fill the role as mentor and encourager for some students, Kusimo added.

"It provides an opportunity for some students who may not have an adult in their life to point them in the right direction," she added.

The volunteers, who represent the city of Huntington, Cabell County and various businesses, also will talk about how they have managed to find success. For many, it started with taking their education seriously while in middle and high school.

Thomas McChesney, the director of marketing and business development for Huddleston Bolen, said the volunteers, who went through a training session, will talk about what life is like for those who work hard and apply themselves and for those who don't see education as important.

"Illustrate to kids in very practical ways what happens when you slip through school and don't work hard and when you do work hard," he said. "And that type of quality of life that produces."

The State Scholar Initiative is funded by donations from area businesses, many of which have volunteers. For more information, visit www.educationalalliance.org.

Business and community leaders volunteering for the initiative include City of Huntington representatives Kim Wolfe, Brandi Jacobs-Jones, Tom Bell, Scott McClure, Charles Holley, Skip Holbrook, Greg Fuller; Cabell County representatives Tom McComas, Doug Ferguson, Chris Tatum; Chamber of Commerce Young Professional Committee members Christie White, Adam Daniels, Sarah Elaine Benda, Brooke Maynard, Elizabeth Ayers, Terri Rowe, Elizabeth Cremeans, Jill Morris, Charles Schumaker, Massie Boster, Anders Lindberg, Keri Arbison, Kerry Adkins, Tim Krouse, Carrie Cline, Brad Myers, Wally Smith, Romie Mundy, Maria O'Reilly, Mitch Webb, Tracy Harmon, Bill Rawlinson, Ed Dorsey, Tom Pressman, Sandi Martin, Mary Witten Wiseman, Jeff Groves, James Kirk, Chad Stutler, Brent Pyles, Jean Chappell, Chris Preston, Cathy Burns, Doug Korstanje, Tim Bogren, Larry Cartmill, Dr. Hoyt Burdick, Phoebe Patton Randolph, J.D. Maynard, Leah Edwards, Bill Bissett, Betsy Dulin, Jason Roma, Audy Perry, Eleni Kontos-Miller, Cindy McCarty, Chris Plybon, Thomas McChesney, Melissa Bird and Karen Poulton.

Getting involved

Business and community leaders volunteering for the State Scholars Initiative include:

CITY OF HUNTINGTON representatives Kim Wolfe, Brandi Jacobs-Jones, Tom Bell, Scott McClure, Charles Holley, Skip Holbrook, Greg Fuller;

CABELL COUNTY government representatives Tom McComas, Doug Ferguson, Chris Tatum;

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE YOUNG PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE members Christie White (First State Bank), Adam Daniels (First State Bank), Sarah Elaine Benda (Jenkins Fenstermaker), Brooke Maynard (United National Bank), Elizabeth Ayers (Cabell County Health Department), Terri Rowe (BB&T), Elizabeth Cremeans (The Herald-Dispatch), Jill Morris (Rucker, Billups & Fowler), Charles Schumaker (Cabell Huntington Hospital), Massie Boster (City National Bank), Anders Lindberg (Steptoe & Johnson), Keri Arbison (Alcon Research, Ltd).

BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES: Kerry Adkins (Huntington Federal Savings Bank), Tim Krouse (Huntington Federal Savings Bank), Carrie Cline (WSAZ Newschannel 3), Brad Myers (WSAZ Newschannel 3), Wally Smith (BB&T), Romie Mundy (West Virginia American Water), Maria O'Reilly (Okuno International), Mitch Webb (State Electric Supply Co.), Tracy Harmon (Strictly Business Computer Systems), Bill Rawlinson (Strictly Business Computer Systems), Ed Dorsey (Strictly Business Computer Systems), Tom Pressman (Strictly Business Computer Systems), Sandi Martin (Foundation for the Tri-State), Mary Witten Wiseman (Foundation for the Tri-State), Jeff Groves (Alcon Research Ltd), James Kirk (Alcon Research Ltd), Chad Stutler (Alcon Research Ltd), Brent Pyles (Becker/SMC Electrical Products), Jean Chappell (Marshall Community & Technical College), Chris Preston (Ohio Valley Bank), Cathy Burns (The Empowerment Zone), Doug Korstanje (St. Mary's Medical Center), Tim Bogren (Bogren Chiropractic Health Center), Larry Cartmill (RCBI), Dr. Hoyt Burdick (Cabell Huntington Hospital), Phoebe Patton Randolph (Edward Tucker Architects), J.D. Maynard (Edward Tucker Architects), Leah Edwards

(Marshall University), Bill Bissett (Marshall University), Betsy Dulin (Marshall University), Jason Roma (Huddleston Bolen), Audy Perry (Huddleston Bolen), Eleni Kontos-Miller (Huddleston Bolen), Cindy McCarty (Huddleston Bolen), Chris Plybon (Huddleston Bolen), Thomas McChesney (Huddleston Bolen), Melissa Bird (Huddleston Bolen) and Karen Poulton (Huddleston Bolen).

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Positive report as abuse	Good idea. Today's youth are not prepared for college ... show comment
WV report as abuse	Glad to see business involved.
