Education Advocacy Organization ReadyCT Deepens Its Affiliation with CBIA to Advance Academic Excellence and Career-Connected Learning for All Public School Students in Connecticut

ReadyCT was formerly known as CCER, the Connecticut Council for Education Reform, and steadfastly maintains that ZIP codes must not determine student outcomes or limit access to opportunities.

---

HARTFORD, CT -- ReadyCT, a nonprofit education policy and program organization (f/k/a CCER), and CBIA, the Connecticut Business and Industry Association, announce their deepening affiliation to advance academic excellence and career-connected learning for all public school students in Connecticut.

The move merges the education expertise of ReadyCT with the business acumen of CBIA.

"As an organization dedicated to promoting relevant, inspired classroom experiences and work-based learning for Connecticut’s public school students, we welcome the opportunity to involve more of the business community in meaningful ways," said Shannon Marimón, executive director of ReadyCT. "That collective voice can help inform ways in which we can position all students for success."

This more formal affiliation is, in part, the result of proximity. For the last several years the organizations have been co-located at 350 Church Street, Hartford, and talks have been ongoing about aligning efforts to impact students, school systems, the business community, and the overall economic stability of Connecticut.

CBIA president and CEO Joe Brennan said the affiliation with ReadyCT will help further expand the state’s workforce development pipeline and better address the growing skills shortage impacting a number of industries, particularly the manufacturing sector.

"The skilled worker shortage is what keeps Connecticut employers awake at night," Brennan said.
"The affiliation with ReadyCT is designed to drive critical policy changes and develop and promote coordinated, statewide efforts to build the workforce our economy needs."

United by common purpose, the organizations will remain separate entities with separate board governance. Each, though, will benefit through consolidation, particularly since ReadyCT will absorb the Education and Workforce Partnership (EWP) initiative formerly led by CBIA.

This arrangement is an example of streamlining for maximum impact. For nearly a decade, ReadyCT has been pursuing policy and programming to improve academic outcomes for all Connecticut public school students. By leveraging cross-sector collaboration with the business, civic, and education communities, ReadyCT can be more purposeful in defining how academic experiences can translate into college and career readiness and success. CBIA, which has long focused on addressing workforce needs through education, can inform those efforts by offering real-time insight into industry and employer needs.

Early returns on increased partnership are promising. For example, CBIA has brought ReadyCT into its work at Hartford Public High School, where a collaboration that includes CBIA member, United Technologies Corporation and the Gawlicki Family Foundation (the sponsor of paid summer 2019 internships for nearly 60 HPHS students) strives to make students college and career ready around the theme of engineering/green technology. Notably, students participate in STEM-focused internships where work product has tremendous value for employers. Interns have redesigned record retention and destruction systems, developed communications strategies that engage young residents of Hartford, and completed research projects that streamline business operations.

Based on this, ReadyCT is designing a strategy that would offer career pathway experiences featuring a similar internship structure at schools across the Greater Hartford region. Implementation will support both academic rigor and work-based learning opportunities. Ultimately, this strategy can spread across the entire state and potentially impact the over half a million students in Connecticut’s public schools.

Other key areas of focus for ReadyCT include supporting computer science (CS) education in Connecticut’s K-12 public schools (as mandated by P.A. 19-128), and supporting school and district leadership development. Because business and industry have deep knowledge in both CS workforce needs and strategies that promote effective leadership, connection to these communities through CBIA should prove invaluable.

###

**About ReadyCT**
For more information, visit [www.readyCT.org](http://www.readyCT.org)

**About CBIA**
For more information, visit [www.cbia.com](http://www.cbia.com)