

## Guest Viewpoint: Students need a better path to jobs

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As the principal of Newfield High School, I am proud to say that we continue to make significant progress in supporting many of our students in becoming college and career ready.

Community aspects of this support include collaborating with Cornell University's Upward Bound Program, TC3's Concurrent Enrollment Program, Ithaca College's Education Department and the Park School of Communications, and our work with Tompkins County Civil Service. Within the school, we have ensured that all juniors took the PSAT and can now log in to College Board to prepare for the SAT, we have implemented CCR (College and Career Ready) Labs to replace study halls, we have re-structured our schedule so that most teachers can meet by department, and our building-goal committees continue to help us all take responsibility for our work and actions.

There is one area, however, where I feel like we haven't yet been able to make as much progress as I had hoped for. Last spring, when local education administrators were invited to attend the annual meeting of Workforce Tompkins, it was explained to us that many local businesses and industries have difficulty finding qualified candidates to fill open positions.

One of my hopes and dreams continues to be that our school help more young people develop their skills and build the right networks so that they will be offered jobs that pay a living wage and provide them with access to health care and other essentials necessary to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. I am reaching out to request your help in making this dream come true.

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond defines a network as a net that works. It is in this spirit, that I propose we build a Newfield High School/jobs in Tompkins County network. Do you work in a local business or industry that has difficulty finding qualified candidates to fill open positions? Do you know of someone who does? Would you be willing to work closely with our school to help us generate student interest and help us teach our students the specific skills and work-habits that you are looking for?

Too often, good ideas get lost in the juggling of priorities and the busyness of our day-to-day lives. I don't want to lose this idea. I want to create concrete partnerships that will help many of our students identify and prepare for real jobs that they will be well positioned to move into when they graduate from Newfield High School. This is the work of our school vision. We are Newfield: Conscious, consistent, and committed to what is best for our community.

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