

## Let BEN hook you up!

Looking for a way to bring the real world into your classroom? The [Business & Education Network](#) – known as BEN – is a new and innovative way to help Fayette County Public Schools connect with local professionals who want to promote workforce readiness and career awareness among students.

BEN is a one-stop internet portal that links businesses, community organizations and professional associations with volunteer and educational opportunities in the school district. Both businesses and schools can register online so that BEN can match their needs.

“If it’s done right, (schools will) have access to a database of professionals in the community who want to volunteer and share their story,” said Pam Trautner, executive director of Commerce Lexington’s Partnership for Workforce Development. “The hope is for it to be the funnel or portal for busy professionals to find out about opportunities as they arise and decide if it works for them.”

BEN can help schools find the resources they need for mock interviews, lunch and learn sessions, field trips, internships and career days. The varied business volunteers have included the Bluegrass Youth Ballet, the Central Kentucky Blood Center, Community Trust Bank, Hillenmeyer Landscape Services, Kentucky Utilities, the Lexington Children’s Museum and the Radisson Plaza.

BEN, which was formed by Commerce Lexington and Leadership Lexington, evolved from the premise that businesses must get more involved in the education and training of future employees. The network tries to strengthen lines of communication between businesses and existing educational partners and to make sure that both sides are aware of the opportunities.

For more about BEN, contact Kelly Cain at [kcain@commercelexington.com](mailto:kcain@commercelexington.com) or (859) 225-5005.