



Education. Business. Government. **Together.**

K-64

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*Empowering Learners and Building a Stronger
Workforce, Fostering Economic Growth*



Executive Summary

What makes K-64 unique and is key to the program's success is the collaboration across education, business, government, and community leadership. The K-64 initiative has brought all the stakeholders to the table and created new avenues for collaboration between Catawba County Schools, Hickory Public Schools, Newton-Conover City Schools, Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, Catawba County Chamber of Commerce, and local government and business leaders. This collaborative and systemic approach to shaping future careers and meeting workforce demands will broaden local industry awareness to the citizens of Catawba County and outside talent while connecting them to high-wage, highly-skilled career pathways. K-64 will be a game changer for Catawba County, North Carolina and ensure a bright, prosperous future for its residents.

K-64 is a new approach to talent development designed to positively position communities in a globally competitive market. The initiative was chartered as part of the Catawba County Commissioners' Strategic Plan to proactively drive local economic and population growth in Catawba County in response to a decline in the working-age population and the lack of a skills-ready workforce. It is a systemic approach, based on universal principles, to connecting students and employers throughout the educational curriculum to help shape future careers, meet workforce demands, and help sustain the economic development of Catawba County. The program actively engages students of all ages in preparing for viable and sustainable careers throughout their lifetime through work-based learning, the utilization of technology, career exploration, specific skills training, and character education.

Employers in Catawba County are currently seeking to fill nearly 5,000 jobs across a variety of industries. A 2016 population study of the county indicated an ongoing gradual decline in the working-age population of its residents leading to a projected 10,000 job vacancies by the year 2035. K-64 is tackling this issue head-on by: globalizing and individualizing the learning process for every student in grades kindergarten through twelve in Catawba County by providing every student with a computer device (one-to-world technology) and training teachers how to implement technology in their classrooms; funding character education programs for all students in grades kindergarten through eight to develop the soft skills - like communication, collaboration, problem-solving, self-awareness, social awareness, empathy, and self-control - in high demand in the workplace and teach students to be good citizens; and collaborating with educators, businesses and community leaders to enhance and expand work-based learning programs to students of all ages to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce.



K-64 Organizational Description

K-64 is a bold, talent building strategy for the future of Catawba County and focuses on the following initial objectives:

- 1-to-world technology
- Character and soft skills development
- Tech savvy educators
- Work-based learning
- Employer engagement
- Career adaptability

All partners recognize K-64 has to operate out of the confines of the traditional education and government structure. The K-64 Board must be a working body, using its collective experience and expertise to plan and guide the initiative in an advisory capacity.

Although the initial outcomes exist in some form within the school systems, with the direction and oversight of the K-64 Board the outcomes can be refined and various pilot programs established so concepts can be tested and proven prior to application across the entire educational spectrum.

Initial and future K-64 Board Members will be selected based on their passion and expertise in being able to make the goals realities. While staff will accomplish much of the day to day work of implementation, history demonstrates for such an initiative to be successful, it must be close to, and thrive on, a broad base of community support and a capable and passionate board.

The Board's practical, executive leadership is essential for K-64's success and shall have the following responsibilities:

- Establishing a long-term vision and securing continuous financial support to accomplish the vision
- Transparency and accountability for the effective use of public funds
- Implementation of concrete plans with both tangible and timely goals and outcomes
- Provide direction to the executive director who shall serve at the will of the K-64 Board
- Communication and engagement resulting in continued buy-in by partner organization and the community at large

The current K-64 staff consists of a Chief Executive Office, two College and Career Advocates, and two Business Liaisons. All five have experience in education in the K-12 area and bring unique skills related to their roles from past experience working in the education environment and in collaboration with the business community. K-64 staff are employs of Catawba Valley Community College which serves as their home-base.

The Catawba County Commissioners have committed public tax dollars to seed the K-64 initiative. In addition, K-64 Board and staff are seeking funds through diverse funding streams.



K-64 Key Collaborators

Catawba County Board of Commissioners - Provides seed funding and match process for local businesses. Also made K-64 part of their local long-term strategic plan.

Catawba County Schools, Hickory Public Schools, and Newton-Conover City Schools - Utilize the resources and training provided by K-64. Also, facilitate the implementation of K-64 guiding priorities related to the K-12 students.

Catawba Valley Community College - Serves as the hub of collaboration and home for K-64. Implements new programs and pathways based on K-64 guiding priorities.

Lenoir-Rhyne University - President of the University serves on the K-64 board. LRU works with K-64 to develop pathways through the community college and down to high school. Also collaborates with K-64 to provide 50% discount to K-64 stakeholders meeting 3.5 GPA requirements and in developing 2+2 programs in partnership with CVCC.

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation - President serves on the K-64 board and committees. Partners with K-64 to attract new people and businesses to the community based on positive impact of K-64 priorities.

Catawba County Chamber of Commerce - President serves on the K-64 board and committees. Partners with K-64 to attract new people and businesses to the community based on positive impact of K-64 priorities.

Local Business Leaders - Serve on the K-64 board and invest financially in the K-64 program. Provide internships, employment, mentoring, and direct input into making education relevant to local job opportunities.

K-64 Staff

The K-64 staff consists of a Chief Executive Officer, two College and Career Advocates, and two Business Liaisons, all of whom have experience in the K-12 area of education and in the business community. Each brings unique talents, skills, and gifts to the K-64 Team to ensure the success of the program.



Program Overview

Our Vision	K-64's vision is to ensure a bright economic future for residents and businesses in Catawba County, NC.
Our Mission	To develop and attract a relevant talent pool to meet the growing workforce needs of local businesses in Catawba County, NC.
The Problem	Employers in Catawba County are currently seeking to fill nearly 5,000 jobs across a variety of industries. Economic growth in Catawba County is at risk from a projected decline in working-age population and the lack of a skills-ready workforce.
K-64 Solution	The K-64 approach to driving local economic and population growth by connecting local students and employers and attracting new families and industry to our community is vital to sustaining and growing the economy of Catawba County.
Our Approach	K-64 is a systematic approach to talent development established to proactively drive local economic and population growth in Catawba County by connecting students and employers through local educational programs proven to prepare a qualified workforce. K-64 actively engages students of all ages in preparing for viable and sustainable careers throughout their lifetime through work-based learning, the utilization of technology, career awareness events, and character education. Through K-64, local government, Catawba County Schools, Hickory Public Schools, Newton-Conover City Schools, Catawba County Chamber of Commerce, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, and local business and industry are partnering together to develop and sustain a future-ready workforce for Catawba County and ensure a bright economic future for all its residents. The K-64 workforce development model is replicable and can benefit communities statewide and nationally.
Our Goals: 2018-2023	<p>K-64 strengthens the economic sustainability of Catawba County by reaching these goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand and individualize the learning environment of every Catawba County public school student in grades kindergarten through twelve. 2. Increase student participation and employer investment in real-world educational pathways. 3. Connect students to real-world careers and related career choices. 4. Develop soft-skills across all ages to meet the demand from businesses for these skills in the current and future talent pool. 5. Expand post-secondary educational opportunities and awareness to students in Catawba County. 6. Empower adults to enhance their employability in a dynamic work environment.



Background, Context, and Funding

The K-64 initiative was born out of a 2016 population study of Catawba County that indicated an ongoing gradual decline in the working-age population of Catawba County. In an effort to proactively drive local economic and population growth, the Catawba County Board of Commissioners identified education as one of eight critical growth sectors in their strategic plan, and commissioned the K-64 Initiative to lead the way. K-64 is providing new pathways for Catawba County Schools, Hickory Public Schools, Newton-Conover City Schools, Catawba County Chamber of Commerce, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, Catawba Valley Community College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, and local government and business leaders in Catawba County to partner together to ensure a brighter future for everyone.

K-64 is a systematic approach to shaping future careers and meeting workforce demands by connecting students and employers throughout the educational curriculum. The program actively engages students of all ages in preparing for viable and sustainable careers throughout their lifetime through work-based learning, the utilization of technology, career awareness events, and character education. It is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by staff employed by Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC). The K-64 initiative leverages tax dollars, private contributions and grant funds to support program expansion and sustainability. Finances for K-64 are handled by the Catawba Valley Community College Foundation, which is CVCC's 501(c) 3 education foundation.

The six guiding priorities of K-64 are:



1-to-World Technology

Accelerating learning inside and outside the classroom by connecting students with access to relevant technologies.



Character & Soft Skills Development

Teaching critical soft skills, such as goal setting, interpersonal communication and team building, to ensure students are well prepared to engage in work and in life.



Tech Savvy Educators

Continually equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to incorporate leading-edge technologies into lesson plans and classroom environments.



Work-based Learning

Facilitating job shadowing, internships, co-ops, work-study programs and apprenticeships to connect students with global career opportunities and local employers.



Employer Engagement

Cultivating collaborative partnerships with businesses to invest in the development of a well-prepared and highly engaged workforce of tomorrow.



Career Adaptability

Ensuring access to relevant educational services and training opportunities to help adults develop nimble skill sets and assure career longevity.



Project Leadership

The K-64 Initiative is supervised by a specialized Board of Directors. The governing board is comprised of 12 members representing the private and public sectors and is supported by 8 ex-officio members representing K-64's founding partners. The K-64 ex-officio members, including the three local K-12 district superintendents, CVCC's president and LRU's president, will provide oversight to ensure implementation to the K-64 project adheres to established school systems policies and procedures to protect all program participants.

Funding and Sustainability

The K-64 initiative leverages tax dollars, grants, corporate sponsorship, and private contributions to support program expansion and sustainability. The Catawba Valley Community College Foundation, a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt organization, is the fiscal agent for the K-64 initiative.

K-64 staff and board members collaborate with the Catawba Valley Community College Foundation to secure grants and private contributions as follows:

- 2018-19: Raise \$1.3 million in funds to secure matching dollars from the Catawba County Commissioners
- 2019-2023: Leverage \$2.6 million. Catawba County Commissioners have pledged \$1.0 million and will match an additional \$300,000 raised by K-64.

Key Performance Indicators

- **Short-Term:** Increased student and employer participation in real-world educational pathways designed to meet workforce needs.
- **Mid-Range:** More local jobs filled in targeted industries as a result of educational alignment.
- **Long-Term:** A seamless, demand-driven, replicable education system that consistently cultivates a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce ready to fill local jobs and help drive the economy.



Catalog of K-64 Conduits

- Job Shadowing
- Internships
- Work-based Co-Op
- Apprenticeships
- WINS Soft-Skills Training
- Career Readiness Training (CRC)
- Skills USA
- Career Technical Student Organizations
- Job Fairs
- Career Days
- Extreme STEM Tours
- Professional Career Speakers
- Community College Career Center
- Career Academies
- ESL Programs
- Character Education Programs
- Career & College Promise
- Career Technical Pathways and Programs
- High School / College Articulation
- Community College / College Articulation
- NC Works
- WPCOG
- Teacher Externships
- PRC 014 State Funding
- PRC 017 Federal Funding
- NC Digital Learning Competencies
- The Friday Institute
- My Future NC
- Employability Skills Alignment Project
- Vetted Digital Content and Practices
- In-house Business Training Programs
- Hometown Strong



Overview of WBL-120 Pilot

WBL-120 is part of the K-64 framework connecting students and employers through local educational programs that help shape future careers and meet workforce demands.

Purpose

Our purpose for the WBL-120 pilot course is to have a vehicle that allows us to bring together all of the guiding priorities of K-64 and local economic development through education.

Development Strategies

- Provide soft-skills training based on local industry needs.
- Incorporate proven soft-skills strategies.
- Provide local businesses an entry point into work-based learning.
- Utilize Career and College Promise to include high school students.
- Allow for customization based on specific industry and business needs.
- Incorporate digital content to utilize one-to-world access.

Face-to-Face Content

32 to 60 hours of local business contact

- Industry Guest Speakers
- Business Tours
- Internships
- Pre-Apprenticeships
- Certifications (continuing education)
- Chamber Business Events
- Economic Development
- Small Business / Entrepreneurship

Online Content Structure

- Units linked to SkillsUSA Values
- Weekly Lessons
- Local Lessons in Leadership
- Final Project with Rubric



Accomplishments

- Over \$6 million raised locally in less than 2 years.
- Placed 14,131 devices in the hands of K-12 students.
- Placed hotspots in local schools to provide internet access to students with no home access.
- Invested more than \$300,000 in teacher training.
- Invested in character education programs for three public school districts.
- Increased CVCC Career and College Promise enrollment by more the 50% for two consecutive semesters.
- Drove overall CVCC enrollment to a 3% increase.
- Partnered with CVCC faculty and staff to expand the Academy Model, increasing programs and high school student enrollment in the Construction and Furniture Academies.
- Collaborated with Lenoir-Rhyne University to provide 50% tuition discount to Catawba County students graduating from high school with 3.5 GPA – now expanded to all NC high school graduates.
- Engaged more than 300 businesses to visit and partner with the CVCC Workforce Solutions Complex.
- Serving almost 30,000 K-16 students in the CVCC service area.
- Collaborative efforts generated \$119 million in new investment in Catawba County.
- Collaborative efforts created 398 new jobs.
- Served the MyFutureNC Commission to establish NC future attainment goals.
- Share lessons and achievement statewide on a regular basis.