

ENSURING A STRONG TULSA WORKFORCE BY CONNECTING SCHOOLS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

“We are bringing together leaders in education, business and the workforce to improve education outcomes and to build and sustain a strong economic future for the Tulsa area.”

—Mike Neal, CCE, CCD, President & Chief Executive Officer, Tulsa Regional Chamber

The Tulsa Regional Chamber believes education is the primary factor in determining a person’s long-term financial and professional success. The Chamber also recognizes that the region’s business expansion and retention is dependent on a skilled, prepared workforce. The Tulsa Regional Chamber is therefore committed to providing access to education, training and work-based learning opportunities that deepen students’ engagement in and understanding of core academic subjects, and to working collaboratively with educators, community leaders, students and parents to create a supportive environment for education. These types of efforts—centered around key components of Deeper Learning—prepare students for high-skill, high-wage employment in fulfilling careers of their choice.

Connecting Schools and the Business Community through Deeper Learning. Teachers and students too often do not understand the needs and expectations of 21st century jobs, and some schools lack the basic resources that allow students to thrive. For these reasons, the Tulsa Chamber has connected schools with the business community through key programs.

- **Partners In Education:** Since 1983, this collaboration between the Tulsa Regional Chamber and Tulsa Public Schools has connected schools with corporate, education, volunteer, government and civic leaders who have served as career coaches for high school students, become Reading Buddies for elementary students and pledged donations to fill a range of critical school needs.
- **Oklahoma Scholars:** This outreach program encourages 8th graders to enroll in a rigorous high school curriculum to prepare for post-secondary education and training. Students pledge to take higher-level math and science courses and are given Oklahoma Scholar awards during a ceremony their senior year. Always looking to improve engagement between the business community and schools, the program is transitioning to incorporate information on Tulsa’s high-growth industry sectors under the new banner Career Pathway Navigator, which will more closely link educational attainment with workforce readiness.

Quick Facts: Tulsa

- Through 2018, nearly 60% of Oklahoma job vacancies will require post-secondary education. (Source: [WorkforceTulsa](#))
- Almost four out of 10 Oklahoma high school graduates who enroll in the state’s higher education system require at least one remedial course. (Source: [Tulsa World](#))

The Tulsa Regional Chamber is working to solve these challenges by:

- Developing programs for students and educators to connect with business
- Advocating for effective education policies
- Supporting higher academic standards

The Chamber funds its education work through a combination of membership funds, campaign sponsorships, grant opportunities and investments.

Building a Supportive Environment. To ensure students are connected to Deeper Learning opportunities, the Tulsa Regional Chamber works to create an informed, supportive and collaborative environment. The Chamber acts as a

backbone organization to convene educators, parents, students and business leaders, and to coordinate on talent pipeline and education initiatives starting in pre-K. It also advocates for higher academic standards that will prepare students for earning a postsecondary certificate or degree and competing in tomorrow's workforce.

- **Tulsa Regional Workforce Initiative:** This 24-week initiative was launched to gauge the state of the Tulsa area's workforce and to draft a regional plan for workforce development to improve job training opportunities for residents and keep the area's economy competitive.
- **Expect More OK!:** The Tulsa Regional Chamber is a member of Expect More OK!, a coalition of state leaders and education, business, community, parent, child and military organizations—all of whom support clear, consistent and higher academic standards in public education. The Expect More OK! website makes the case for the Common Core and provides a forum for coalition members to help persuade lawmakers to support education development.
- **Education Forums and other Chamber events:** These forums and events provide an opportunity for the public to discuss and learn about current issues affecting education in Tulsa—from the legislature and funding to policy and curriculum.

Board Service & Advisory Council Roles

The Tulsa Regional Chamber serves on boards and advisory councils that are working to improve education and economic outcomes in Tulsa.

- **Leadership Tulsa:** An organization comprised of community leaders contributing to improve Tulsa through service and leadership development
- **OK2Grow:** An organization whose High School Completion Coalition program broadens students' knowledge and awareness of career opportunities with an emphasis on high school completion
- **Workforce Tulsa:** A private-industry board that fuels economic development by connecting business with job-ready talent through public and private partnerships
- **Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance:** A program that works to build and stimulate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) activities in the Tulsa Region for pre-K to high school students

For a comprehensive list, visit:

<http://finishforgreatertulsa.com/blog/>



Deeper Learning uses interactive techniques such as project-based learning and real-world application to engage students in core academics and build the skills they need for success in college and career.

Your Chamber can prepare the future workforce for success in a globally competitive economy by building partnerships across sectors that help students become innovative, collaborative and flexible employees.

Visit www.tulsachamber.com/subject/education-workforce to learn more.