

BREAKING NEWS» Woman killed in fatal traffic accident identified

Local News

[/ News / Local News /](#)

[« D.C. forum inspires 2 local...](#)

[Poll: Many still struggle to...»](#)

- [Local News](#)
- [Breaking News](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Living](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Web Exclusives](#)
- [W.Va. News](#)
- [National News](#)
- [International News](#)
- [SUBMIT Your News](#)
- [Bullying: When Growing Up Hurts](#)
- [Need to Know](#)

Local leaders gather for EDTalks forum

June 20, 2014

dsp By Jenni Vincent (jvincent@journal-news.net), Journal News

[Save](#) |

CHARLES TOWN - A wide variety of interests were represented Thursday, when approximately 100 people attended "EDTalks: Connecting Education, Jobs and Our Future," a luncheon session that included speaker presentations as well as audience participation that centered on strengthening the state's educational system.

American Public University System hosted the event which was sponsored by The Education Alliance, a nonprofit organization based in Charleston that advocates statewide for quality public education.

Audience members included some local politicians as well as representatives from area businesses, higher education, school districts, community organizations and the military.

Article Photos



Journal photo by Jenni Vincent

Featured speaker Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., who participated via Skype from Washington, said this kind of networking is important because the state's school systems and students benefit from collaborative efforts.

Being prepared is especially important as students move into an increasingly global market where technology is important, and they "must be skilled and ready for the 21st century," he said.

Although the state is moving ahead with efforts to expand broadband availability and improve its speed, Manchin said a recent report shows that West Virginia still has a lot of work to do.

That's because West Virginia ranked 49th in the 2014 State New Economy Index recently released by the Information, Technology and Innovation Foundation, while Mississippi was 50th on the index and

Martinsburg, WV



87°F

[Extended Forecast](#)
[Find Another Location](#)

Data provided by The Weather Channel ©

News, Blogs & Events

I am looking for:

in:

- News, Blogs & Events
- Web
- EZToUse.com

Massachusetts scored the best, Manchin said.

"Don't just meet here today, go out and make something happen tomorrow," he said.

West Virginia Teacher of the Year Erin Sponaugle and APUS President Dr. Wallace Boston also spoke during the session.

Results from the small-group discussions - when participants talked about impediments to a stronger school system, as well as what cooperative efforts can strengthen it - will be posted on the organization's website, www.educationalalliance.org, said president Dr. Amelia Courts, who emceed the event.

She said this is the second in a series of the EDTalks events that will be held around the state.

"We are happy to be in the Eastern Panhandle, because we wanted to get out of Charleston and get feedback from across the state," Courts said.

There have already been some forward-thinking ideas generated, including breaking down barriers between different levels of education - from primary to technical education, she said.

"We all have our little silos, but if we want to think about connecting education and jobs we need to be much more collaborative and do a lot more communicating so that it can be seamless for students. So that is a great suggestion we need to push forward," Courts said as she watched audience members jot down ideas from their discussion groups.

James Klein, director for Shepherd University's Martinsburg Center, said education's importance can't be overstated.

"It's important to maintain the importance of education on a state scale as well as in the communities, especially if we want to maximize the opportunities that exist," Klein said as he prepared to leave the event.

Klein said raising salaries is also necessary in order to keep qualified residents from leaving the state to take jobs elsewhere.

- Staff writer Jenni Vincent can be reached at 304-263-8931, ext. 131.

© Copyright 2014 Journal News. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

[Save](#) |

Recommend Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

 **+1** 0

[Subscribe to Journal News](#)

Journal News

207 W. King Street , Martinsburg, WV 25402-0807 | 304-263-8931

© 2014. All rights reserved. | [Terms of Service and Privacy Policy](#)