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Friday Focus

Carter County Schools

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Teaching Consumerism

According to Merriam Webster, consumerism is “the promotion of a consumer’s interests.” In Kentucky, we are required to teach consumerism to our students in order to meet the requirements of the Practical Living/ Career Studies Program Review. Why is it so important that we train our students to become knowledgeable consumers? Clearly, our state believes it is important enough to make teaching consumerism a regulation. But why?

To begin with, being an intelligent consumer is a 21st Century Skill. Specifically, the *Life Skills* given in the P21 Framework include financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy. In other words, it is critical that our students grow up knowing how to make appropriate personal economic choices, understanding the role of the economy in society, and using entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options.

Not only does teaching consumerism prepare our children to participate in the 21st Century world, this kind of curriculum fosters the development of real world skills like problem-solving, goal setting, critical thinking, decision making, and analyzing information. Consider the type of real-world problems students will be solving when engaged in a consumerism curriculum—buying and selling, propaganda and advertising, the concept of supply and demand, understanding taxes and discounts, running a household, saving money for college, etc. All of this work is highly engaging and prepares students to solve problems and set goals in authentic situations.

The integration of consumerism curriculum into the whole school curriculum allows teachers to utilize technology, math, social studies, and language arts skills in all subjects. For example, a project about goal setting for college expenses could incorporate research (ELA, SS, and technology), as well as developing a financial plan using Excel for how to pay for the college of choice (math and technology).

When we consider the benefits of raising a generation of wise consumers, it is easy to see the importance of integrating consumer education into Kentucky schools. The challenge is finding creative ways to embed these lessons into days that seem to be already full of other extremely critical information. Please see the links provided in “Inside This Issue” for resources that might help.

Career Ed.

PLCS Program Review has also mandated career education in Kentucky. Here are some great links for teaching kids about possible job opportunities.

[Kids.gov](#)

[Kids.gov for Teens](#)

[Exploring Careers](#)

[Best Websites for Jobs](#)

[Career Education](#)

[STEM Careers](#)

[Career Sites for Kids](#)

[Career Kids \(Research\)](#)