



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Able Trust Partners with Local Education Foundations to Expand Program for Students with Disabilities

Futures in Focus will Assist Students with Career Development and Planning for the Future

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Able Trust is announcing the launch of [Futures in Focus](#), a career and postsecondary education exploration program for students with disabilities in grades 6 to 12. The Able Trust is launching Futures in Focus in partnership with the **Consortium of Florida Education Foundations**, who announced today that grants for Futures in Focus are being awarded to the following local education foundations: DeSoto County Education Foundation, Dixie Education Foundation, Flagler County Education Foundation, Hernando County Education Foundation, Jackson County Education Foundation, Education Foundation of Lake County, Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation, and Santa Rosa Education Foundation.

As students move from high school into postsecondary education or the workforce, many students with disabilities struggle to make a successful transition. Florida's high school graduation rate for students with disabilities is 85.5% compared to 88% for students without disabilities. This gap extends into postsecondary enrollment and Florida's workforce.

Futures in Focus is based on The Able Trust's [High School High Tech](#) program. High School High Tech has an almost 30-year history of increasing the high school graduation rate of students with disabilities and provides a broad range of academic and career development experiences that will help them envision a future they might not have imagined. Futures in Focus will be available to high school students but expanded to reach middle school students, giving them the opportunity to learn about programs such as Career and Technical Education classes that are available in high school.

"This partnership with education foundations in eight communities across Florida is vital to helping us reach more students with disabilities, said Allison Chase, President & CEO of The Able Trust.

"Research shows that educational and career development programs have a positive impact, offering students opportunities to learn about postsecondary options and participate in career development activities that help to ensure they are on a path that leads to a fulfilling career."

Futures in Focus uses the principles and framework of the nationally recognized research- and evidenced-based *Guideposts for Success*. Through this pilot program, education foundations will work with local school districts to enroll students with disabilities and give them experiences that include:

- Introduction to secondary education pathway options such as Career and Technical Education, pre-apprenticeship, and other certification options (for Middle School students).
- Introduction to postsecondary education options: certificate programs, apprenticeship, technical school, state college and/or university (for High School students).
- Introduction to in-demand or growth occupations and industries.
- Connected to relevant resources that will assist with education and employment.
- Given opportunities for development of self-esteem and leadership skills.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with The Able Trust on the Futures in Focus program. This initiative offers a transformative opportunity for our students with disabilities in communities around the state, and we are eager to see the positive impacts,” Mary Chance, President & CEO of the Consortium of Florida Education Foundations.

About The Able Trust

The Able Trust is working to advance employment for Floridians with disabilities through engagement, investment and collaboration. The Able Trust has an almost 30-year history in supporting Florida’s youth with disabilities through High School High Tech, a comprehensive career and postsecondary exploration program for high school youth. Established by the Florida legislature to support the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), The Able Trust has worked with community organizations throughout the state to help thousands of Floridians with disabilities of all ages enter the workforce. To learn more about The Able Trust and other programs for youth with disabilities, visit www.abletrust.org.

About the Consortium of Florida Education Foundations

The Consortium is the membership organization for Florida’s school district-wide local education foundations. Established in 1987, the Consortium connects individuals, organizations, and financial resources to build the capacity and effectiveness of Florida’s local education foundations. Together, Consortium members raise more than \$83 million annually for a variety of locally driven initiatives and are led by 1,200 board members, 80% of whom are local business and community leaders working in partnership with school district leaders. The Consortium manages the nation’s only 1:1 legislative match for education foundation initiatives and a variety of privately funded grant programs. To learn more about the Consortium or connect with any member local education foundation, visit <https://educationfoundationsfl.org>.