

EntreEd
Pioneering Entrepreneurship Education for 40 Years



EntreEd™
The National Consortium For
Entrepreneurship Education



Introduction

Society's need for entrepreneurship education has changed over the last 40 years. From the start, Dr. Cathy Ashmore, founder of the National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, advocated the philosophy of "entrepreneurship for all." This philosophy was needed at the time – a time before general knowledge or awareness of entrepreneurship education even existed. During her tenure, she inspired many others from a wide array of fields and backgrounds to join her in building nationwide awareness for and support of entrepreneurship education. As a result, the organization emerged as a leader in propelling entrepreneurship onto the main stage.

Today, entrepreneurship education is broadly embraced and acknowledged as a key to lifelong learning and student success. After a rebranding that changed its name to EntreEd, the National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, the organization shifted its focus from higher education to concentrate on K-12 learners. This is a group that had been historically overlooked.

Our passion for entrepreneurial education endures, and our mission of entrepreneurship for all remains steadfast, but now we take a more focused approach. We celebrate our 40th anniversary with this special publication that highlights the groundbreaking work of EntreEd, as well as its long-time leader and entrepreneurship education pioneer, Cathy Ashmore.

Gene Coulson



Gene Coulson Ed.D.
Executive Director, EntreEd





The Entrepreneurial Mindset

Forty years ago, the fax machine and Post-it Notes arrived on the scene. Nineteen-eighty was also the year of the “Miracle on Ice” and the launch of CNN. Also breaking new ground that year was entrepreneurship forerunner Cathy Ashmore who began her work at the Center for Vocational and Technical Education at The Ohio State University (later the Center for Career and Technical Education). She led the center under the auspices of the university, eventually establishing it as an independent entity.

Cathy Ashmore’s passionate belief in entrepreneurship and her advocacy for the principles of entrepreneurship education paved the way for a national awareness and understanding of entrepreneurship as a source for lifelong skills. Her journey to achieve recognition of the need for entrepreneurship education became a lifetime pursuit – one that had her circumnavigating the nation and the world. Her journey still bears fruit today as EntreEd continues to expand the availability of youth entrepreneurship education.

“In the early 1980s, entrepreneurship was housed in the small business realm of instruction. Entrepreneurship shouldn’t be housed in the business department. It can be infused and instilled and not just be a part of small business or business umbrella.”

Gregg Christensen, former Education Specialist, Nebraska Department of Education; EntreEd past president and board member

Groundbreaking Work

Early allies of EntreEd became lasting colleagues, and their collective work formed the underpinnings of the organization. In the formative years, many came from the career and technical education sector, and encompassed a vast network of people defining the movement and articulating the goals. One of its major undertakings was establishing the National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education.

In 2003 EntreEd partnered with MBA Research and led an independent advisory council comprised of entrepreneurs, educators, and business leaders to conduct focus groups and other research. The group subsequently published 15 content standards that are still used today. The standards gave validity and integrity to drive quality teaching and outcomes, and they unified educators and businesspeople around what the teaching standards for entrepreneurship should be.

EntreEd and member organizations later developed a companion piece to the Content Standards called the “Standards of Practice” to assist teachers in creating successful entrepreneurship programs. This resource supported teachers by defining best practices and pedagogy that supported how entrepreneurship education could be taught most effectively.



To satisfy the intense appetite for information and strategies to encourage innovation and creativity – the basic elements of an entrepreneurial mindset – EntreEd created an annual Forum for entrepreneurship education. The event brings together people from all over the country – and the world. Over the past 40 years, EntreEd has hosted the Forum 37 times in more than 30 states. In 2020, it was forced to cancel the event due to the global pandemic.

"I was really impressed with one of the early Forums, held several weeks after 9/11 in Salt Lake City. It gave us hope that any one of us could make a difference...that educators to executives could impact hundreds or thousands of people through entrepreneurship."

Trey Michael, North Carolina CTE Director

Gaining Momentum and Coalition Building: Advocacy and Activism

Led by EntreEd leaders, National Entrepreneurship Week gained momentum as a national movement. In 2006, EntreEd, with the support of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, assembled a multidisciplinary panel of distinguished scholars to submit a house resolution in Congress designating the third week in February each year as National Entrepreneurship Week (NEW). It passed unanimously. Since its inception, NEW has been a highly visible celebration of entrepreneurship across the country.

By this time, EntreEd had become a nationally recognized advocate for entrepreneurship education with a 25-year track record and a network of 100 member organizations. The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration requested that EntreEd produce a national competency model for entrepreneurship training, emphasizing self-sufficiency, innovation, and other entrepreneurial attributes. EntreEd leaders, along with local and regional educators, produced a 198-page landmark report entitled, "Think Entrepreneurs: A Call to Action - Integrating Entrepreneurship into the Public Workforce System." The work resulted in 10 specific recommendations for bringing self-employment and entrepreneurship fully into Department of Labor-sponsored programs for the unemployed.

During the early 1980s, more than 300 universities offered entrepreneurship courses in small business and entrepreneurship. Within a decade, that number grew to 1,050 schools. According to a 2007 article in *Entrepreneur*, early entrepreneurship centers were overwhelmed with phone calls and requests for speakers to help solve entrepreneurial problems. Networking breakfasts and workshops focused on entrepreneurship became common across the nation.

"Cathy nurtured entrepreneurship educators in different fields. When you didn't get support from your school, you got it from Cathy. She grew leaders in the entrepreneurship space across the country and internationally."

Ronni Cohen, Educator, EntreEd former board chair and member

"Once learned, entrepreneurial skills provide young people with the ability to persuade, sell, problem solve, and work together. If you get them young enough, they are willing to try anything without reservation."

Pamela deWaal, co-founder, TREP\$

Risks & Rewards: Major Wins and Tenuous Times

The recession of 2008-2009 imperiled many businesses and organizations, including EntreEd. It lost some state memberships due to budget cuts, and attendance at the annual Forum dropped considerably. The organization's membership-based model became strained, underscoring the importance of local grants, private support, and partnerships.

Acting entrepreneurially, EntreEd leaders began to cultivate alliances with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Coleman Foundation, the Kauffman Foundation, Junior Achievement, the National Foundation of Independent Businesses, the National Governors Association, the U.S. Association of Small Business Enterprise, and the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, to name just a few.

"The Risk and Rewards binder ... it was the size of three Sears catalogs!"

Horace Robertson, former regional coordinator for Career & Technical Education for Central North Carolina; chief consultant for Marketing Education, North Carolina DPI; EntreEd board officer

As a new emphasis on entrepreneurship education in community colleges emerged, EntreEd leaders became involved in early meetings with the Entrepreneurial Institute at Springfield Technical Community College in Springfield, Massachusetts, which offered entrepreneurship education and support to K-12 and community colleges. In 2002, the institute became the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE). Today, NACCE has over 340 member colleges, representing nearly 2,000 members and approximately 3.3 million students.


EntreEd also published a comprehensive curriculum called "Risk and Rewards" that enabled educators to teach entrepreneurship from a risk/reward perspective in their classrooms. Highly customizable, it was one of the most comprehensive set of guidelines developed for teaching entrepreneurship. In addition, the *EntrepreNews & Views* newsletter and the "Emily the Entrepreneur" doll were among the imaginative ways used to engage young learners in entrepreneurship.

From this work, EntreEd steadily emerged as a thought and action leader in entrepreneurship education. A few examples:

- In 2008, the Aspen Institute's Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group (YES Group) published the "Youth Entrepreneurship Education in America: A Policymaker's Action Guide," in partnership with the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) and E*TRADE Financial, highlighting work done by EntreEd. The same year *Entrepreneur* published an article "School's in Online" about teaching entrepreneurship virtually, which prominently featured EntreEd leaders.
- The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development published an article in 2009, "Educating Emerging Enterprises: Teaching Entrepreneurship Early," which featured the TREP\$ program (an award-winning entrepreneurship program for children in grades 4-8), the importance of developing 21st century skills, and acknowledged the work of EntreEd, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and the Young Entrepreneur Foundation (YEF).
- In May 2012, *Time Magazine* published an article about entrepreneurship education in the United States, including EntreEd leaders who emphasized the need for state and federal funding and changes in curriculum.
- In 2013, Cathy Ashmore was honored by her alma mater, The Ohio State University, and was inducted into the Entrepreneurship Education Forum's Hall of Fame.



TIME



“At the heart of our mission is to spread entrepreneurship education to students across the country so they can be successful for the rest of their lives.”

Chad Rieflin, EntreEd board president



The Vision through New Lenses...The Work Continues

Cathy Ashmore's health sharply declined in 2012 and 2013, and she transitioned into emeritus status. In 2014, Gene Coulson became the executive director. Building on EntreEd's legacy, in 2015 the board redefined its commitment as an advocacy organization and shifted its focus to K-12 students. It also rebranded itself as EntreEd, the National Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, and steadily developed programs that put entrepreneurship in the hands of educators in K-12 classrooms while building awareness among administrators about the benefits of entrepreneurship education for young students. Over the past several years, the organization has greatly expanded its partnerships and is bringing entrepreneurship education into 11 states throughout the Appalachian region and beyond.

Among the current initiatives are:

EntreEd Academy – These immersive digital courses help K-12 educators gain an understanding of entrepreneurship education, best practices for aligning entrepreneurship in their classrooms, and resources to help students succeed in their future careers. These self-paced programs are applicable in any and every classroom.

America's Entrepreneurial Schools – Designed to recognize K-12 schools that have provided entrepreneurship education to every student, every year, it emphasizes engaging all students, even if they never start a business, instills entrepreneurial mindsets in students to diversify career pathways, and forges a more entrepreneurial America by focusing on the workforce of tomorrow. To earn the designation, schools must provide an entrepreneurship experience to every student in a school building in a given year.

ESTEAM – Funded through a POWER grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, with support from The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, the program helps infuse entrepreneurship into STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) initiatives in middle and high school programs in a seven-state region. It is a sustained, collaborative effort between EntreEd, The EdVenture Group, the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE), and the National Center for Resource Development (NCRD).

The Forum – The annual conference is designed to inspire attendees to create the next generation of young entrepreneurs and innovators. Attendees walk away with resources, knowledge, and guidance to easily integrate entrepreneurship into any grade level, classroom, or school.



“Entrepreneurship education levels the playing field. Students derive different benefits from it, especially in the ESTEAM program. The delivery is realistic, experiential, and provides a tangible experience that is immediately implementable.”

**Amber Ravenscroft, program director for
Fostering Self ESTEAM in Appalachia's Emerging Workforce Program**





“Younger kids are more comfortable with risk, accepting that you’ll make a mistake and it’s ok. They have the ability to rebound better, especially in a program that frames failure positively as part of the learning process.”

Hayley Romano, co-founder, TREP\$

Looking Ahead

Today, EntreEd continues to follow Cathy Ashmore’s vision of “entrepreneurship for all.” By advocating for and offering entrepreneurship education where it’s most needed and making sure it is sustainable, scalable, and accessible to large numbers of learners, EntreEd makes entrepreneurship education available to students at a younger age when they are most eager and able to try new things and learn from their experiences.

EntreEd is increasingly making entrepreneurship initiatives deliverable through digital platforms, while making these offerings more inclusive and diverse. It has built good will and awareness of the value of entrepreneurship in the Appalachian region due to the highly successful POWER grants and work in STEM and ESTEAM areas, thanks in large part to generous support from ARC, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, and assistance from other partners. EntreEd leaders are forging new partnerships in regional networks to do even more.

Acting entrepreneurially, the organization preserves the ability to pivot and take advantage of opportunities – even when they are cloaked as major challenges. EntreEd is excited about what it is doing today and looks forward to what it will achieve tomorrow. Its leaders and staff take pride in its rich history of showcasing the value of entrepreneurship education – a mission that its founder, Mary Catherine Ashmore, ignited forty years ago.



“There are currently more than 100 active university-based entrepreneurship centers in the U.S. and more than 270 endowed positions in entrepreneurship, an increase of 120 percent in just the last five years.”
— The Kauffman Foundation



“We are gradually moving outward to other states, and our models are sustainable and replicable on a national scale.”

Toi Hershman, regional coordinator, America's Entrepreneurial Schools, EntreEd



"We have a long way to go with entrepreneurship education. We need to have educators who understand the cause and we need effective metrics. Yes, there has been a rise in programs and awareness in colleges and in K-12, but we need to embrace experiential-based learning even more."

Gary Schoeniger, entrepreneur, founder & CEO, Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative; co-author, *Who Owns the Icehouse?*



"Cathy's greatest legacy was her determination and desire for the growth of entrepreneurship in our country. She brought it to life and walked the walk."

Susan Rice, West Virginia Department of Education, Coordinator of Entrepreneurship Education, EntreEd former board member and chair

"We cannot be certain that the careers our students will pursue in their adult life are even in existence yet, but if we teach students to think for themselves, be creative, empathetic, have grit, and work well with others, our students will be prepared for anything they wish to do in the future."

Amanda Jones, coordinator of Professional Learning, Special Projects, and Innovation; principal, Barton Academy for Advanced World Studies; EntreEd board member

"The biggest obstacle in teaching young people about entrepreneurship is having a success mindset. Being entrepreneurial means looking at challenges as opportunities. Entrepreneurial mindset means you're going to look at everything and try to move forward."

Rebecca Corbin, president & CEO, NACCE

**A Tribute to Mary Catherine Ashmore
(1933 – 2014)**

Founder, the National Consortium for
Entrepreneurship Education/EntreEd



“Dr. Ashmore’s support of entrepreneurship education was more than a passion. It was a driving force in her life. She mentored hundreds of secondary students in her early days of teaching, and later, many teachers who ultimately became leaders in Career-Tech Education and in the delivery of entrepreneurship education nationwide. Cathy quite literally continued giving to the cause until her last breath.”

James Gleason, CEO Emeritus, MBA Research, EntreEd board member

“She had the endurance of a marathoner to further the entrepreneurship experience for all people.”

Trey Michael, North Carolina CTE Director

“Cathy increased awareness about the value of entrepreneurship education and because of it, more than one million students in North Carolina middle schools and high schools are taking courses that focus on entrepreneurship.”

**Delores Ali, section chief of Curriculum,
North Carolina DPT, EntreEd past president, current board member**

Today, the mission and work of EntreEd continues.
Many thanks to the following EntreEd partners and sponsors:

Appalachian Regional Commission
Burton D. Morgan Foundation
Cisco
Coleman Foundation
Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
National Federation of Independent Business
The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
The Ross Family Foundation
United States Department of Agriculture (4-H Clubs of America)
United States Department of Labor

Past supporters and friends:

Distributive Education Clubs of America
Future Farmers of America
Illinois Institute for Entrepreneurship Education
Ohio Council for Economic Education
REAL Entrepreneurship

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to all of our colleagues, friends, and partners in education, government, industry, and the nonprofit world who have graciously volunteered their time to contribute to this booklet. The occasion of EntreEd's 40th anniversary coincided with the unforeseen and unimaginable global pandemic, making it more of an imperative to chronicle the history of our organization and preserve its place in entrepreneurship education.

Thank you to EntreEd Executive Director, Gene Coulson and board members Delores Ali, Jim Gleason, Amanda Jones, Horace Robertson, and Chair, Chad Rieflin, as well as former board members Ronni Cohen and Gregg Christensen whose valuable recollections of the early days of the organization helped recreate an organizational timeline. Also, many thanks to North Carolina CTE Director, Trey Michael, a steadfast supporter and former board chair and member. EntreEd staff members Toi Hershman and Laura McCall provided valuable new program content and historical background.

Many thanks to EdVenture Group partner Amber Ravenscroft whose insights on key learning initiatives were critical in bringing this narrative full circle. Thank you to Pamela deWaal and Hayley Romano, co-founders of TREP\$ and enthusiastic supporters whose work inspires us. The Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative's Gary Schoeniger, and the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship's Rebecca Corbin, provided valuable context about the complementary aspects of adult and K-12 entrepreneurship education and training. And thank you to former board chair and member, long-time educator, friend, and supporter Susan Rice, who reminded us of the passion and commitment that the organization was founded on and continues to embrace. Without the insights and contributions of these individuals, this chronicle would not have been possible.



310 Woodbridge Drive · Charleston, WV 25311
entre-ed.org