Over the course of the weekend, IEI hosted its first annual BB&T Leadership Symposium. With FutureWork still in mind, I watched with admiration as teams of young entrepreneurs representing six different regions came together to hone their leadership abilities and refine their social ventures and startups. Though all were lured with the prospect of $10,000 in seed funding for their venture, I couldn’t help but sense the presence of some greater goal—an unspoken mission to simply make North Carolina better. In the process, these young people were not only creating jobs for themselves but also employing their peers in positions that did not exist just a few years ago. As we lose traditional fields of employment to automation, how can we encourage an entrepreneurial and socially conscious spirit in all of our students—providing each one with the skills and desire to create opportunity where none exists?
Our Forum participants spoke loud and clear: project-based learning (PBL)—though certainly not a new concept—is a critical element to creating the next generation of thinkers and makers. When our students learn by doing, they gain confidence, competence, and skills necessary to survive the looming economic changes.

But PBL doesn’t begin and end in the classroom. Whether you’re a community member, a business leader, or a member of a local civic group, you can join the movement to get our young people ready for FutureWork—and young people, you have the ability to lead your peers to engage in project-based learning, too! Whether it’s through establishing a social venture, completing a portfolio in class, or working on a new product with a local business, you can engage in project based learning to prepare for our rapidly evolving economy.

If you’re interested in joining the PBL movement, please join us on one of our virtual engagement sessions!

Here’s what we’re reading this month. Share your favorite youth engagement literature, and your pick could be featured in the May newsletter!

**Using Entrepreneurship to Transform Student Work** (Edutopia)

**Project-Based Learning and the Role of Learning Boundaries** (Harry Scarbrough, Jacky Swan, Stéphane Laurent, Mike Bresnen, Linda Edelman and Sue Newell)

**Engaging Middle-School Youth Through Project-Based Learning Clubs** (Youth Development Institute)

**Opportunities**

Every month, we’ll highlight great opportunities for youth to engage across North Carolina. Let us know if you have an opportunity you’d like us to share!

Get exposed to workforce opportunities in your community through NCBCE!

Find a summer opportunity through NCWorks Online.

**Spotlight**

We’ve had the pleasure of partnering with some great organizations in our initial youth engagement work. Reach out to us, and we’ll feature your organization in our next issue!

**North Carolina Business Committee for Education** (NCBCE)

**BB&T Leadership Institute**

**NC New Schools**