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Owsley County Schools Join Dataseam Partnership

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (March 7, 2023) - Dataseam has announced Owsley County Schools, Booneville, Kentucky, unanimously voted at their February 2023 Board of Education meeting to rejoin the statewide Dataseam partnership.

“We are excited to have Owsley County Schools in the program and continue to provide advanced opportunity for their students,” said Brian Gupton, Dataseam CEO. “As workforce development demands increase across Kentucky, partnerships with schools like these will help ensure Kentucky students are best prepared to meet them.”

Dataseam, a nonprofit education and workforce development organization, provides technology and workforce training through industry-standard certification and US Department of Labor-approved Registered Apprenticeships in information technology. Participating public schools, generally the largest employer in 100 of 120 Kentucky counties, earn high-end Apple workstations addressing curriculum needs reflective of a knowledge-based workforce. These computers comprise the statewide DataseamGrid supporting the Commonwealth’s research and commercialization efforts at the University of Louisville’s Brown Cancer Center.

Dataseam currently serves 48 Kentucky districts statewide accounting for just over 206,000 of the state’s approximately 630,000 K-12 public school students.

Owsley County Superintendent Gary Cornett commented, “the Dataseam program has been great for our district, providing technology we would not be otherwise able to afford. Owsley County originally joined Dataseam in 2006. During the 2011 school year, I was principal at Owsley County High School. Our math proficiency district-wide at the time was 7%. The technology earned via Dataseam through upskilling Owsley’s district instructional and technology staff helped us implement curriculum and measures to begin to address this unfortunate statistic. Within two years, proficiency increased to 40%. We were also able to provide innovation for our students many districts had. That would have been difficult to do otherwise.”

Located in Appalachia, the Eastern Kentucky school district serves approximately 700 students grades K-12. With poverty rates over 3 times the national average, a workforce participation rate

of 30%, and an average annual household income of \$18,097, Owsley County is one of the poorest counties in the United States.

Despite these daunting statistics, initiatives designed to improve outcomes for the county have created results. Owsley County households have access to gigabit broadband Internet through the People's Rural Telephone Cooperative, bringing opportunity and improved employment prospects. Broadband has allowed county residents to participate in remote employment initiatives provided by Teleworks USA through the regional workforce investment board, Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP). With 453 of Owsley County's 3,953 residents taking advantage of this opportunity to date, remote work has been a major employer, providing family-sustaining wages and outcomes.

Gupton continues, "the work we resume with Owsley County Schools will create a pipeline of students moving into the workforce through higher education, DOL Registered Apprenticeships, and EKCEP's remote work initiatives. We can learn a lot from Owsley County; that's what partnerships are all about. If these things are possible here, the right leadership and vision can make them possible anywhere."

Dataseam is funded through the Kentucky General Assembly, the US Department of Labor, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The organization has a nearly 20-year record of providing opportunity to rural and underrepresented populations in its mission of advancing education and workforce initiatives supporting Kentucky-based innovation and commercialization.

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About Dataseam

Dataseam provides education and workforce development opportunities to 48 participating Kentucky K-12 public school districts as part of research computing infrastructure advancing Kentucky-based innovation and commercialization. More information at www.dataseam.org