



## Are You Ready to **HOP ON THE BUS!**

The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center worked with a team of education partners to launch the first North Carolina state-wide business plan competition for high school youth in 2006. The competition, called Hop on the BUS!, is a collaborative effort between the Department of Public Instruction, NC REAL, N.C. 4-H, Junior Achievement of Eastern North Carolina, the N.C. Rural Center and the Rural Entrepreneurship Development System partners brought together through the three-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Entrepreneurship Development System (EDS) grant. Currently, the NC Department of Public Instruction hosts the competition each year, with support from some of the original partners.

Hop on the BUS! is an opportunity for North Carolina students (grades 9 - 12) to gain knowledge of entrepreneurship. The program gives students, working as individuals or teams, a “real life” business experience within a formal or informal educational setting. The program allows young people to discover what it would be like to generate an idea and build it into a business of their own.

Through the high school business plan competition, North Carolina youth will:

- learn the basics of entrepreneurship while improving academic skills
- develop a business plan
- participate as a team member or as an individual
- discover what’s needed to run their own businesses
- gain valuable skills in youth/adult partnership building
- enhance their student portfolio

The competition consists of three rounds. Each participant must finish each round in order to move into the next, and each stage continues the students learning path in entrepreneurship. The final judging and awards will take place in Spring, 2010.

Hop on the BUS! is open to all North Carolina high school students including public, private and home-schooled youth. Students need not prequalify for the competition nor be pre-selected by their school. This competition is judged by a volunteer panel of small business counselors or advisors from throughout the state. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer judge, please contact us at [hoponthebus@yahoo.com](mailto:hoponthebus@yahoo.com) .