

## 9: Convergence of Education and Workforce with Guest Dr. Jeff McCord

**Dr. Jeff McCord has unique insight following a decades-long career of straddling the worlds of business and education. After 20 years in the private sector working for *Fortune* 300 companies and then as Vice President at Northeast State Community College in Tennessee, he has seen a pressing need for educators and business leaders to communicate in order to improve workforce development at the regional and national levels.**

**In his current role as Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, McCord stresses the need for practical execution in creating partnerships for the health of the workforce. In this episode of *Ready for Work*, McCord talks with ACT's Jasen Jones about the importance of understanding all voices with a stake in the workforce and sharing a common language.**

**“Educators might not understand that business and industry have educational systems within their walls,” McCord says, “so how do we as educators integrate into those systems so we can have opportunities and cut down on misunderstandings between those two systems?”**

**McCord also sees skilled and technical jobs as key to workforce prosperity. “For 30 years, we disparaged those jobs and disabled the infrastructure for those jobs,” he says. Communities need to work on rebuilding a skills pipeline consisting of industry veterans who know the skills needed for those jobs and who can prepare the incoming generation for success. “We have a**

**business issue that can have positive social impact if we can solve it,” McCord says.**

**This episode covers:**

- **The importance of aligning education and workforce**
- **Tips on rebuilding the workforce for 21st-century demands**
- **Success stories from workforce development partnerships in Northeast Tennessee**
- **Why apprenticeships can drive individual and national prosperity**
- **A preview of Dr. McCord’s presentation at the upcoming ACT Workforce Summit**

## **Join the Conversation**

**Jeff McCord:** [@JeffMcCordTN](https://twitter.com/JeffMcCordTN)  
**Jasen Jones:** [@JasenCJones](https://twitter.com/JasenCJones)  
**ACT:** [@act](https://twitter.com/act)

## **Resources**

[TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development](#)

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[ACT® Apprenticeship Resources](#)

[ACT® Work Ready Communities](#)

[ACT® Workforce Solutions](#)

## **About Dr. Jeff McCord**

**Dr. Jeff McCord, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, will be the keynote speaker at this year’s ACT Work Ready Communities Awards luncheon.**

**Before being appointed by Governor Bill Lee, Commissioner McCord spent seven years at Northeast State Community College in Kingsport, Tennessee, where he was Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development.**

**At Northeast State, McCord led Workforce Solutions, the state's workforce development partner for the region. Dr. McCord was responsible for leading Northeast Tennessee's first ACT Work Ready Communities initiative, which led to regional initiative that now includes eight counties participating, two of which are fully certified. Dr. McCord also provided the organizational leadership team for adult education programming in the First Development District and served as the lead administrator for the nationally recognized Kingsport Academic Village. In addition, McCord was responsible for developing registered apprenticeship programs in the Northeast Tennessee and operating the Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing.**

**Prior to Northeast State, McCord spent more than 20 years in business and industry, holding a variety of leadership positions with specific experience related to corporate learning and development, organization effectiveness, process improvement, and information technology.**

**Commissioner McCord is an author of *Awkward Grace*, published by Twilight Times Books, and has written more than 500 columns for two Tennessee newspapers.**

**McCord received his Bachelor of Science degree from Georgia Tech, earned a Master of Business Administration from Kennesaw State University in Georgia and his Doctorate of Education from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.**

**The ACT Work Ready Communities Awards Ceremony and Recognition will recognize the participating ACT Work Ready Communities teams for their achievements over the past year. This will include counties and parishes that have reached their goals and become certified ACT Work Ready Communities, as well as those that have completed a new set of goals to maintain their certification.**