EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER OF EASTERN OHIO

Business Advisory Council Plan: 2026-2027

The ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC), along with the ESC Career Counseling Department, is committed to building a comprehensive K–12 career exploration and workforce development system that connects education with the evolving needs of employers and communities throughout the region.

Career awareness begins at the elementary level, where students are introduced to a wide range of occupations and career pathways through age-appropriate, interactive activities designed to spark curiosity and encourage early exploration. As students progress into middle and high school, these experiences become increasingly focused and hands-on. Students participate in structured career exploration activities, industry engagement opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, and coursework that incorporates industry-recognized credentials aligned with regional workforce needs.

A key component of this approach is connecting classroom learning with authentic workplace experiences. The BAC and Career Counseling Department collaborate with schools, businesses, industry leaders, and community organizations to provide career days, employer presentations, job shadowing, work-based learning opportunities, skilled trades experiences, and other career-connected learning activities. These experiences allow students to explore career fields firsthand, interact with professionals, understand employer expectations, and develop the technical and employability skills necessary for future success.

Strong business and industry partnerships are essential to this work. Through the BAC, employers have a direct voice in helping educators understand current and emerging workforce needs, in-demand occupations, required skills, and opportunities for students. This collaboration allows the ESC and participating school districts to continually strengthen career programming and ensure students are better prepared for the opportunities available within their communities.

Collectively, these efforts create a K–12 career development pipeline that moves students from career awareness to career exploration, preparation, and ultimately career readiness. The goal is to ensure students graduate with a clearer understanding of their interests, abilities, and available pathways—whether they choose college, employment, an apprenticeship, additional technical training, or military service.

The initiative also supports long-term regional economic and workforce development across Mahoning, Columbiana, Trumbull, Stark, and Portage counties. Through Ohio's regional workforce network, Mahoning, Columbiana, and Trumbull counties are connected to the Mahoning Valley–Lake to River Region, while Stark and Portage counties are connected to the Cleveland Region–Team NEO. These regional connections expand opportunities for collaboration among education, business, workforce, and economic development partners and provide students with greater access to career pathways, industry resources, and workforce initiatives. By aligning education with business and industry needs, the ESC BAC and Career Counseling Department are helping create a sustainable

talent pipeline to prepare today's students to become tomorrow's skilled workforce while supporting the continued economic growth and competitiveness of the region.

MEMBERSHIP:

The ESC of Eastern Ohio Business Advisory Council represents thirty-two school districts throughout a five-county region. The council is convened and supported by the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio, on behalf of schools and school districts under established service agreements. These school districts include:

District	Contact	Email	Contact	Email
Austintown Local School District	Tim Kelty Superintendent	tkelty@austintownschools.org	Blaise Karlovic Treasurer	bkarlovic@austintownschools.org
Beaver Local School District	Eric Lowe Superintendent	eric.lowe@beaverlocal.org	Stacy Williams Treasurer	stacy.williams@beaverlocal.org
Boardman Local School District	Chris Neifer Superintendent	chris.neifer@boardmanschools.org	A.J. Ginnetti Treasurer	a.ginnetti@boardmanschools.org
Brookfield Local School District	Toby Gibson Superintendent	toby.gibson@brookfieldschools.us	Jordan Weber Treasurer	jordan.weber@brookfieldschools.us
Campbell City School District	Matthew Bowen Superintendent	mbowen@campbell.k12.oh.us	Nora Montanez Treasurer	nmontanez@campbell.k12.oh.us
Canfield Local School District	Joe Knoll Superintendent	jknoll@canfieldschools.net	Ben Marko Treasurer	bdmarko@canfieldschools.net
Columbiana Exempted Village Schools	Don Mook Superintendent	don.mook@columbianaschools.org	Kathy Davies Treasurer	kathy.davies@columbianaschools.org
East Palestine City School District	James Rook Superintendent	jamesrook@myepschools.org	Rick Ellis Treasurer	rick.ellis@myepschools.org
Howland Local School District	Kevin Spicher Superintendent	kevin.spicher@howlandschools.org	Julie Sloan Treasurer	julie.sloan@howlandschools.org
Jackson-Milton Local School District	Kirk Baker Superintendent	kirk.baker@jmlocal.com	Kathy Jo Beverly Treasurer	kathyjo.beverly@jmlocal.com
Lakeview Local School District	Ashley Handrych Superintendent	ashley.handrych@lakeviewlocal.org	Terry Armstrong Treasurer	terry.armstrong@lakeviewlocal.org
Lowellville Local School District	Christine Sawicki Superintendent	c.sawicki@lowellvilleschool.org	Andrea Apisa Treasurer	l.treasurer@lowellvilleschool.org
Mahoning County Career and Technical Center	John Zehentbauer Superintendent	john.zehentbauer@mahoningctc.com	Brian Rella Treasurer	brian.rella@mahoningctc.com
Maplewood Local School District	Kevin O'Connell Superintendent	koconnell@maplewoodschools.org	Merri Smith Treasurer	msmith@maplewoodschools.org

Marlington Local School District	Daniel Swisher Superintendent	d_swisher@marlingtonlocal.org	Robert Foss Treasurer	r_foss@marlingtonlocal.org
Newton Falls Exempted Village Schools	Andreas Johansson Superintendent	ajohansson@nfschools.org	Alan Boone Treasurer	aboone@nfschools.org
Poland Local School District	Andrew Tommelleo Superintendent	atommelleo@polandschools.org	Jeanette Medina Treasurer	jmedina@polandschools.org
Potential Development	Paul Garchar Superintendent	paul@potentialdevelopment.org	Jim Houck Treasurer	jim@potentialdevelopment.org
Salem City School District	Jamie Kemats Superintendent	kematsj@salem.k12.oh.us	Michael Douglas Treasurer	treasurer@salem.k12.oh.us
Sebring Local School District	Scott Cassidy Superintendent	scassidy@sebring.k12.oh.us	April Habeger Treasurer	a.habeger@sebring.k12.oh.us
South Range Local School District	Jarred Zapolnik Superintendent	jzapolnik@southrange.org	Mario Nero Treasurer	mnero@southrange.org
Southeast Local School District	Robert Dunn Superintendent	rodunn@sepirates.org	Samantha Pochedly Treasurer	spochedly@sepirates.org
Springfield Local School District	Rachael Smith Superintendent	rasmith@springfieldlocal.us	Michelle Johnson Treasurer	MiJohnson@SpringfieldLocal.us
MCCTC STEM+ME2 Academy	Mara Banfield Superintendent	mara.banfield@mahoningctc.com	Tyler Lewis Treasurer	tyler.lewis@mahoningctc.com
Struthers City School District	Pete Pirone Superintendent	pete.pirone@struthercityschools.org	Ryan Cene Treasurer	ryan.cene@struthercityschools.org
United Local School District	Lance Hostetler Superintendent	lance.hostetler@united.k12.oh.us	Melissa Baker Treasurer	melissa.baker@united.k12.oh.us
Valley Virtual Academy	Bethany Carlson Superintendent	bethany.a.carlson@sstr5.org	Ryan Jones Treasurer	r.jones@esceasternohio.org
Warren City School District	Steve Chairo Superintendent	steve.chiaro@neomin.org	Karen Sciortino Treasurer	karen.sciortino@neomin.org
West Branch Local School District	Matt Manley Superintendent	matthew.manley@wbwarriors.org	Luke Cooper Treasurer	luke.cooper@wbwarriors.org
Western Reserve Local Schools	Dallas Saunders Superintendent	dasaunders@wrls.k12.oh.us	Cathy Romack Treasurer	cromack@wrls.k12.oh.us
Youngstown City School District	Jeremy Batchelor Superintendent	jeremy.batchelor@youngstown.k12.oh.us	Michael Rock Treasurer	michael.rock@youngstown.k12.oh.us
Youngstown Community School	Michelle Payich Superintendent	m.payich@ycs.k12.oh.us	Joe Crawfis Charter Treasurer, LLC	joe@chtreasurer.com

FY27 BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

The membership of the ESC Business Advisory Council represents a broad and diverse cross-section of key industry sectors in Northeast Ohio, ensuring that students are exposed to the full spectrum of regional workforce opportunities. In addition to businesses spanning manufacturing, construction, healthcare, technology, and skilled trades, the council includes representatives from economic development agencies, workforce boards, institutions of higher education, and other community partners. This diverse membership allows the BAC to provide a well-rounded perspective on industry trends, workforce needs, and emerging career pathways. By bringing together stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, the council fosters collaboration that strengthens career readiness initiatives, aligns educational programming with local labor market demands, and helps students gain the knowledge, skills, and professional networks necessary to succeed in college, careers, and beyond.

BAC Member	Contact/Title	Email	Industry
717 Credit Union	Porscha Bell SVP, Business Development	pbell@717cu.com	Finance
Austintown Local School District	Tim Kelty Superintendent	tkelty@austintownschools.org	Education
Beaver Local School District	Eric Lowe Superintendent	eric.lowe@beaverlocal.org	Education
Boardman Local Schools	Chris Neifer Superintendent	chris.neifer@boardmanschools.org	Education
Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers	Brian Collier Apprenticeship Administrator	bcollier@oadc.net	Trades
Brookfield Local School District	Toby Gibson Superintendent	toby.gibson@brookfieldschools.us	Education
Business Journal	Deanne Johnson Senior Reporter	djohnson@business-journal.com	Communications
Campbell City School District	Matthew Bowen Superintendent	mbowen@campbell.k12.oh.us	Education
Canfield Local School District	Joe Knoll Superintendent	jknoll@canfieldschools.net	Education
Choffin Career and Technical Center	Ishmael Brown Career Service Advisor	ishmael.brown@youngstown.k12.oh.us	Career Tech Education
Columbiana Exempted Village School District	Don Mook Superintendent	don.mook@columbianaschools.org	Education
Diamond Steel	Ryan McBride Chief Operating	rmcbride@diamondsteel.com	Manufacturing

	Officer		
East Palestine City Schools	James Rook Superintendent	james.rook@epschools.k12.oh.us	Education
EDM Management	Amanda Rivera	arivera@edmmgt.com	Human Resources
Goodwill Industries	Robert Mitchell Career Services Manager	r.mitchell@goodwillyoungstown.org	Workforce Development
Howland Local School District	Kevin Spicher Superintendent	kevin.spicher@howlandschools.org	Education
Humtown	Mark LaMoncha CEO	MarkL@humtown.com	Manufacturing
Jackson-Milton Local School District	Kirk Baker Superintendent	kirk.baker@jacksonmilton.k12.oh.us	Education
Jobs for Ohio's Graduates	Michelle Sawicki Employer and Community Engagement Professional	msawicki@jogworks.org	Workforce Development
Junior Achievement	Michele Merkel President	michele.merkel@ja.org	Workforce Education and Economic Development
Kent State University	Matthew Cola Tech Prep Coordinator	mcola@kent.edu	Higher Education
Lake to River	Matt Falter Director, Talent Engagement	matt@laketoriverohio.org	Economic Development
Lakeview Local School District	Ashley Handrych Superintendent	ashley.handrych@lakeviewlocal.org	Education
Lowellville Local School District	Christine Sawicki Superintendent	c.sawicki@lowellvilleschool.org	Education
Mahoning County Career and Technical Center	John Zehentbauer Superintendent	john.zehentbauer@mahoningctc.com	Career Tech Education
MCCTC STEM+ME2	Mara Banfield Superintendent	mara.banfield@mahoningctc.com	Education
Mahoning County Health Department	Ryan Tekac Health Commissioner	RTekac@mahoninghealth.org	Health/Medical

Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition	Alex Hertzer Executive Director	alex@mahoningvalleymfg.com	Advanced Manufacturing
Mahoning Valley Works	Gerri Jenkins President	GMSully0410@aol.com	Workforce Development
MYPATH Mahoning Valley	Amanda Bertilacci Pathway Advisor	abertilacci@mypathmv.org	Workforce Development
Maplewood Local School District	Kevin O'Connell Superintendent	koconnell@maplewoodschools.org	Education
Marlington Local School District	Daniel Swisher Superintendent	d_swisher@marlingtonlocal.org	Education
Newton Falls Exempted Village School District	Andreas Johansson Superintendent	ajohansson@nfschools.org	Education
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services	Kristen Womeldorff Workforce Specialist	kristen.womeldorff@jfs.ohio.gov	Government/Workforce Development
OH WOW! Children's Museum	Katie Seminara-DeToro Director	katie@ohwowkids.org	Economic Development
Ohio House of Representatives	Lauren McNally Ohio State Representative	lauren.mcnally@ohiohouse.gov	Government
OhioMeansJobs	Carol Loomis Manager	cloomis@mctaworkforce.org	Workforce Development Board
Ohio State Highway Patrol	Lt. Daniel Morrison Lieutenant	dwmorrison@dps.ohio.gov	Public Safety
Ohio State University - Mahoning County Extension	Alex Kennedy 4-H Youth Development Educator	kennedy.1401@osu.edu	Agriculture/Horticulture
Pittsburgh Institute of Aviation	Joseph DeRamo	jderamo@pia.edu	Aviation
Poland Local School District	Andrew Tommelleo Superintendent	atommelleo@polandschools.org	Education
Potential Development	Paul Garchar Chief Executive Officer	paul@potentialdevelopment.org	Education
REM Electronics	Janet Dyer President	jdyer@remelectronics.com	Electrical

Salem City School District	Jamie Kemats Superintendent	kematsj@salem.k12.oh.us	Education
Sebring Local School District	Toni Viscounte Superintendent	tviscounte@sebring.k12.oh.us	Education
Shepherd of the Valley	Jodi Solic Corporate Recruiter	jsolic@shepherdofthevalley.com	Health
South Range Local School District	Jarred Zapolnik Superintendent	jzapolnik@southrange.org	Education
Southeast Local School District	Robert Dunn Superintendent	rodunn@sepirates.org	Education
Springfield Local School District	Rachael Smith Superintendent	rasmith@springfieldlocal.us	Education
Struthers City School District	Pete Pirone Superintendent	pete.pirone@struthersscityschools.org	Education
The Builders Association	Ken Reid Association Services Director	ken@thebuildersonline.com	Construction Trades
Tri County Tower	Elyssa Thomas Administrative Coordinator	ethomas@tricountytower.com	Trades/Communication Maintenance
Trumbull County BDD	Richard Mistovich Community Employment Liaison	richardmistovich@tcbdd.org	Education
Ultium Cell	Mike Dutton Training Specialist	mike.dutton@ultiumcell.com	Advanced Manufacturing
United Local School District	Lance Hostetler Superintendent	lance.hostetler@united.k12.oh.usson@united.k12.oh.us	Education
Valley Virtual Learning Academy	Bethany Carlson Superintendent	bethany.a.carlson@sstr5.org	Online Education
Warren City School District	Regina Teutsch Director of Curriculum and Instruction	regina.teutsch@warrencityschools.org	Education
West Branch Local School District	Matt Manley Superintendent	matthew.manley@wbwarriors.org	Education
Western Reserve Local School District	Dallas Saunders Superintendent	dasaunders@wrls.k12.oh.us	Education

Youngstown City Health Department	Erin Bishop Director	ebishop@youngstownohio.gov	Health
Youngstown City School District	Jeremy Batchelor Superintendent	jeremy.batchelor@youngstown.k12.oh.us	Education
Youngstown Community School	Michelle Payich Superintendent	m.payich@ycs.k12.oh.us	Education
Youngstown Excellence Training Center	Jackie Ruller Director	jaruller@ysu.edu	Higher Education/Workforce Development
Youngstown State University - Workforce Education and Innovation	Sherri Downey Program Manager	sgdowney@ysu.edu	Higher Education/Workforce Development
Youngstown State STEM Outreach	Emilie Brown Director of Outreach, Scholarships, and Williams Innovation Park	egbrown02@ysu.edu	Higher Education/Workforce Development/STEM
Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber	Brenda Linert Director of Government Affairs/Community Impact	brenda@regionalchamber.com	Economic Development

BAC SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS:

The Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio Business Advisory Council meets on a monthly basis. The planned meeting dates for the 2026-2027 school year include:

• September 24, 2026	• February 18, 2027
• October 22, 2026	• March 18, 2027
• November 19, 2026	• April 22, 2027
• January 21, 2027	• May 20, 2027

THE ESCEO BAC MISSION AND VISION FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR:

Mission: To advise, support and empower Mahoning Valley educators in delivering the instruction and experiences students need to develop relevant, in-demand employment skills as part of their academic and technical preparation for college, careers and/or military service.

Vision: A well-prepared workforce that contributes to the economic development and improved quality of life throughout the Mahoning Valley region.

The ESCEO Business Advisory Council (BAC) serves as a vital connection between education and the regional business community, ensuring students are prepared with the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to succeed in today's workforce. Through collaboration with local businesses,

industry leaders, educators, and community partners, the BAC helps identify in-demand careers, emerging workforce trends, and the technical and employability skills employers value most. These partnerships help schools align career exploration, curriculum, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning opportunities with the evolving needs of the regional workforce. Students benefit from meaningful, real-world experiences including career exploration, job shadowing, internships, pre-apprenticeships, workplace visits, and opportunities to connect directly with local employers and industry professionals.

By bringing education and industry together, the ESCEO Business Advisory Council helps students make informed decisions about their futures while developing the skills, confidence, and professional connections necessary for success in college, careers, and military service. At the same time, these efforts strengthen the talent pipeline and support the long-term workforce and economic development needs of our region.

THE THREE QUALITY PRACTICES:

I.) DEVELOP PROFESSIONAL SKILLS FOR FUTURE CAREERS

1.) **PROGRAM: YOUSCIENCE**

a.)Implementation Plan:

The implementation of YouScience began with the ESC Career Counseling Team during the 2023-2024 school year, laying the foundation for a data-driven approach to student career exploration. The process starts with planning and setup, where schools and districts collaborate to schedule sessions and train educators and counselors on how to interpret the assessment results effectively. Career Counselors lead these training sessions, ensuring that educators and school counselors are equipped with the knowledge and strategies needed to guide students in understanding their results and connecting them to meaningful career pathways.

Once preparation is complete, students are onboarded to the YouScience platform and introduced to the purpose and process of the assessment through orientation sessions. The aptitude and personality assessments are then administered in a structured environment, ensuring students have consistent access to technology and support throughout the process. After assessments are completed, the platform analyzes the data to identify each student's unique strengths, cognitive abilities, and interests. These results are compared against YouScience's comprehensive career and workforce demand database to generate tailored career match reports that include job fit scores, personalized career recommendations, and skills gap analyses.

Following the data analysis, students engage in career exploration and planning activities, often guided by educators or career counselors. These sessions help students review their results, explore relevant career pathways, and develop actionable plans for education or training that align with their strengths and interests. Educators and counselors receive ongoing support and professional development, led by Career Counselors, to better integrate YouScience insights into instruction, advisory periods, and career planning. At the school or district level, aggregate data is analyzed to identify trends that can inform curriculum alignment and workforce readiness initiatives.

The program includes ongoing tracking and measurement of outcomes to monitor the effectiveness of the tool. Metrics such as personalized recommendations, alignment with local workforce demands, and evidence of closing skills gaps are reviewed regularly to measure

impact. Feedback is collected from students, educators, and counselors to refine the implementation process and enhance future rollouts. Over time, the initiative can be scaled to additional grade levels, programs, or schools across the region, ensuring that more students gain access to this data-driven approach to career exploration and planning.

b.) Participating School Districts and Students Impacted:
Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School. One hundred percent of students in the aligned Business Advisory Council (BAC) districts have access to the YouScience program, depending on each school's decision to implement the program through the ESC Career Counseling Team.

c.) Participating Businesses and Their Involvement:
All ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC) members, representing a wide range of industries including manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, construction, finance, and transportation are actively engaged in supporting the ESC career exploration initiatives. These businesses play a critical role in the implementation of programs by providing real-world exposure and hands-on learning opportunities for students. Their involvement includes participating in Lunch and Learns, job shadowing experiences, career days, and serving as guest speakers, which allow students to explore career pathways, understand industry expectations, and connect classroom learning to workforce skills. By collaborating directly with the ESC Career Counseling Team, these businesses help align educational experiences with local workforce needs, ensuring that students gain relevant technical and professional skills while also fostering relationships that may lead to future apprenticeships, internships, or employment opportunities.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
This initiative helps students and educators develop in-demand technical and professional skills by combining personalized career assessments with real-world experiences such as job shadows, career days, Lunch and Learns, and guest speaker sessions. Students gain insights into their strengths and interests while building critical thinking, problem-solving, interpersonal, and industry-specific skills. Educators and counselors receive training to interpret results and guide students effectively, ensuring that learning is aligned with workforce needs and emerging career opportunities.

e.) Workforce Alignment: Addressing Skills and Pipeline Demands:
This initiative addresses the skills gap and talent pipeline challenges in the Mahoning Valley region by preparing students for careers in high-demand industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, construction, and finance. Many local employers report difficulties filling positions that require both technical expertise and professional soft skills, creating a mismatch between the skills students acquire in school and the competencies needed in the workforce. The ESC Career Counseling Team leverages YouScience assessments and BAC engagement data to identify these gaps, while participation in job shadows, career days, and Lunch and Learns provides students with real-world exposure to in-demand skills. Combined with regional labor market data and employer feedback, this initiative ensures that students gain the competencies needed to graduate career-ready and capable of filling local talent shortages in the Mahoning Valley region.

f.) Impact on Students with Disabilities:
This initiative supports students with disabilities by providing personalized career assessments and inclusive learning opportunities that highlight each student's strengths and interests. Through YouScience, job shadows, career days, and Lunch and Learns, students with disabilities can explore career paths at their own pace with appropriate support. Educators and counselors are trained to interpret results and provide tailored guidance, helping these students develop both technical and professional skills, build confidence, and become career-ready alongside their peers.

2.) PROGRAM: 7th ANNUAL MOCK INTERVIEW BOOT CAMP

a.) Implementation Plan:
The Mock Interview Boot Camp is a hands-on event designed to prepare students for high school employment, college admissions, or career interviews. Students participate in practice interviews, resume workshops, and sessions on professional etiquette, interview strategies, and dressing for success, all guided by educators, counselors, and business volunteers. The goal is to boost confidence, improve communication skills, and develop interview readiness by allowing students to practice in a controlled, supportive environment. Over its five-year history, the program has helped students complete resumes, refine their responses to challenging questions, and gain the skills needed to succeed in real-world interviews.

b.) Participating School Districts and Students Impacted:
Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School. One hundred percent of students in the aligned Business Advisory Council (BAC) districts are invited to attend the Mock Interview Boot Camp, depending on each school's decision to bring their students to the event held at the ESC of Eastern Ohio

c.) Participating Businesses and Their Involvement:
The Mock Interview Boot Camp is a hands-on program supported by a diverse range of Business Advisory Council members, including Junior Achievement (education and youth development), Ultium Cell (manufacturing/industrial), MYPATH (career guidance), The Builders Association (construction/trades), ESCEO Career Counselors (education/career services), Ohio State Mahoning County Extension (agriculture and community education), Goodwill Industries (nonprofit/workforce development), OH WOW! Children's Museum (education/interactive learning), and OhioMeansJobs (workforce development and career services). These organizations play a critical role by providing volunteer interviewers, facilitating workshops, mentoring students, and offering industry insights, allowing participants to engage in realistic interview scenarios and gain exposure to multiple career paths. Over the past six years, more than 600 students have participated, all reporting that they gained valuable skills and increased confidence in interview preparation, resume writing, and professional communication. One hundred percent of students in the aligned BAC districts are invited to attend, depending on each school's decision to bring students to the event held at the ESC of Eastern Ohio. This collaboration ensures that students develop the technical, professional, and interpersonal skills needed to succeed in employment, college, and career opportunities.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
This initiative supports and teaches relevant, in-demand technical and professional skills by providing students with hands-on opportunities to practice and refine their career readiness

abilities. Through structured activities such as mock interviews, resume workshops, professional etiquette sessions, and feedback from business professionals, students develop skills in communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and workplace professionalism, all of which are highly valued by employers across multiple industries. Educators and career counselors also benefit by receiving training and resources to guide students in interpreting feedback, improving interview strategies, and connecting classroom learning to workforce expectations. Overall, the program ensures that students gain the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills needed to successfully navigate interviews and career pathways, while educators enhance their ability to support student workforce readiness.

e.) Workforce Alignment: Addressing Skills and Pipeline Demands:
The Mock Interview Boot Camp addresses the skills gap and talent pipeline challenges in the Mahoning Valley region by preparing students for careers, college admissions, and high school employment in industries where employers report difficulty finding candidates with both technical and professional skills. Many local employers cite gaps in interpersonal communication, professional etiquette, problem-solving, and interview readiness, which are critical for success in the workforce. Data supporting this need comes from regional labor market analyses, employer feedback through the Business Advisory Council (BAC), and ongoing assessment of student participation and outcomes. Over the past five years, more than 600 students have participated, with 100% reporting improved confidence and enhanced skills in interview preparation, resume writing, and professional communication. By providing students with structured practice, feedback from industry professionals, and guidance from career counselors, the initiative helps ensure that the local talent pipeline is better aligned with workforce demands.

f.) Impact on Students with Disabilities:
The Mock Interview Boot Camp positively impacts students with disabilities by providing an inclusive, supportive environment where they can practice and develop essential career readiness skills. Activities such as mock interviews, resume workshops, and professional etiquette sessions are designed to accommodate diverse learning needs, allowing students to participate at their own pace with appropriate support. Educators and career counselors are trained to interpret assessment results, provide individualized guidance, and scaffold learning experiences, helping students with disabilities build confidence, improve communication, and develop professional skills. By engaging in these structured, real-world practice opportunities, students with disabilities gain self-awareness, practical job preparation skills, and the confidence needed to succeed in employment, college, or career interviews alongside their peers.

3.) PROGRAM: CAREER EXPLORATION COURSES

a.) Implementation Plan:
The ESC of Eastern Ohio Career Counseling Team has been providing student career exploration courses to middle and high school students since 2017. These courses are designed to give students a clear understanding of their career goals and aspirations by exposing them to a wide range of professions and industries. Implementation begins with coordination with schools to integrate the courses into classroom schedules or advisory periods. Students engage in structured activities that allow them to assess their strengths, weaknesses, values, and passions, explore various career options, and learn about the skills required for different professions. Courses include interactive lessons, assessments, and exposure to real-world career information to help students develop essential professional skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, and self-reflection. Educators and career counselors guide students through these activities, providing feedback and support to ensure

each student can make informed decisions about their educational and career paths. By combining career exposure, skill development, and self-assessment, these courses empower students to discover their passions, understand workforce expectations, and prepare for future professional success.

b.) Participating School Districts and Students Impacted:
Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School. Since implementation in August 2024, over 21,000 students have participated in the program, viewing more than 27,000 VR simulations from August 2024 through May 2026. Based on enrollment across these districts, this represents a significant portion of students within the BAC districts, with the potential for 100% of students to access the program depending on each school's decision to integrate VR career exploration into classrooms.

c.) Participating Businesses and Their Involvement:
A diverse group of businesses and organizations across multiple industries, including finance, construction, manufacturing, education, telecommunications, workforce development, and public safety, actively support ESC career initiatives. Key partners such as 717 Credit Union, Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, The Builders Association, Unmanned Safety Institute, Humtown, OH WOW! Children's Museum, Tri County Tower, YSU Workforce Development, OSU Mahoning County Extension, Junior Achievement, OhioMeansJobs, and the Ohio State Highway Patrol all play a critical role by mentoring students, hosting events, providing hands-on experiences, offering pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and sharing industry insights. Their involvement spans the Mock Interview Boot Camp, Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo, Junior Achievement Inspire Event, Career Days, Career Exploration Bus Tours, ESC Youth Entrepreneurship Program, and Lunch and Learns, giving students real-world exposure and helping them develop in-demand technical and professional skills, prepare for future careers, and make informed educational and workforce decisions.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
This initiative supports and teaches relevant, in-demand technical and professional skills by providing students with hands-on experiences, mentorship, and exposure to real-world careers. Through programs such as the Mock Interview Boot Camp, Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo, Junior Achievement Inspire Event, Career Days, Career Exploration Bus Tours, ESC Youth Entrepreneurship Program, and Lunch and Learns, students develop essential skills including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, workplace professionalism, and industry-specific technical abilities. Educators and career counselors are also involved, gaining professional development and guidance on how to integrate career readiness strategies into instruction, advisory periods, and mentoring. Overall, the initiative ensures that students and educators are equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills needed to meet workforce demands and succeed in professional environments.

e.) Workforce Alignment: Addressing Skills and Pipeline Demands:
This initiative addresses skills gaps and talent pipeline challenges in the Mahoning Valley by preparing students for careers in high-demand industries such as manufacturing, construction, healthcare, information technology, finance, and public safety. Local employers report difficulties filling positions that require both technical expertise and professional soft skills, including communication, problem-solving, workplace professionalism, and interview

readiness. Data supporting this need comes from regional labor market analyses, feedback from Business Advisory Council (BAC) members, and assessment results from student participation in programs such as the Mock Interview Boot Camp, Career Exploration courses, and the ESC Youth Entrepreneurship Program. By providing students with hands-on experiences, mentorship, pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and exposure to real-world career pathways, the initiative helps ensure that students graduate career-ready and aligned with the workforce needs of the Mahoning Valley region, addressing both immediate and long-term talent pipeline challenges.

f.) Impact on Students with Disabilities:
This initiative has a positive impact on students with disabilities by providing inclusive, accessible career readiness experiences tailored to meet diverse learning needs. Programs such as the Mock Interview Boot Camp, Career Exploration courses, ESC Youth Entrepreneurship Program, and Lunch and Learns are designed to allow students to participate at their own pace with appropriate support. Students with disabilities gain exposure to real-world careers, develop technical, professional, and soft skills, and build confidence in navigating workplace expectations. Educators and career counselors receive training to provide individualized guidance, scaffold learning experiences, and interpret assessment results, ensuring that students with disabilities can fully engage in career preparation. This approach fosters self-awareness, independence, and career readiness, enabling students with disabilities to pursue meaningful educational and professional opportunities alongside their peers.

4.) PROGRAM: Career Exploration through Virtual Reality

a.) Implementation Plan:
Career Exploration through Virtual Reality (VR) provides students with immersive, interactive experiences that simulate real-world careers, allowing them to explore various professions, understand required skills, and gain insight into workplace culture. Since August 2024, the ESC Career Counseling Team has implemented VR in classrooms, where students engage in virtual job shadowing, simulated work environments, and networking activities, while educators and counselors guide reflection and career planning. The initiative helps students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills and make informed career decisions. Measurable outcomes include student engagement, knowledge retention, career paths explored, pre- and post-assessment scores, and shifts in career interests, with long-term impacts on career readiness, motivation for skill development, and post-graduation employment outcomes.

b.) Participating School Districts and Students Impacted:
Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School.

c.) Participating Businesses and Their Involvement:
All ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC) members actively support Career Exploration through Virtual Reality (VR) by providing guidance, mentorship, and industry insights to enhance student career readiness. Key partners include the Mahoning Valley Manufacturers Coalition (MVMC), which supports our career exploration efforts by sponsoring the annual Transfr VR software subscription for our 20 VR headsets.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
This initiative supports and teaches relevant, in-demand technical and professional skills by immersing students in realistic career simulations using VR technology. Through virtual job shadowing, simulated work environments, and interactive networking experiences, students develop essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and industry-specific technical competencies. Educators and career counselors also gain professional development opportunities, learning how to integrate VR into classroom instruction, guide reflection, and connect experiences to real-world career pathways. By combining technology, hands-on learning, and career exploration, this initiative ensures that students and educators are equipped with practical skills and insights that align with workforce expectations and emerging career opportunities.

e.) Workforce Alignment: Addressing Skills and Pipeline Demands:
This initiative addresses skills gaps and talent pipeline challenges in the Mahoning Valley region by providing students with exposure to high-demand careers in industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, information technology, construction, finance, and public safety. Local employers report difficulty finding candidates who possess both technical expertise and professional soft skills, including problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and workplace readiness. Data supporting this need comes from regional labor market analyses, feedback from Business Advisory Council (BAC) members, and assessment data from VR program participation, including over 21,000 students engaged and 27,000 VR simulations viewed from August 2024 to May 2026. By offering immersive, hands-on career experiences and guided reflection, the initiative helps students gain the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to align with workforce demands, strengthening the talent pipeline and addressing immediate and long-term workforce needs in the Mahoning Valley.

f.) Impact on Students with Disabilities:
Virtual Reality (VR) for career exploration can significantly enhance opportunities for students with disabilities by providing immersive, customizable experiences that accommodate different learning styles and accessibility needs. Since VR allows students to explore various career paths in a safe, controlled environment, it helps overcome physical or logistical barriers that might limit access to traditional career exploration activities. Through simulated work environments, virtual job shadowing, and interactive tasks, students with disabilities can develop critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and technical skills, while building confidence and gaining insight into workplace expectations. Educators and career counselors provide individualized guidance and scaffolded support, ensuring students can fully engage and reflect on their experiences. Overall, VR promotes inclusivity, empowerment, and informed decision-making, enabling students with disabilities to prepare effectively for future educational and career opportunities alongside their peers.

5.) PROGRAM: ESCEO Career Counseling Coloring Book for Elementary Students

a.) Implementation Plan:
The ESCEO Career Counseling Coloring Book will be implemented through a structured, interactive plan to foster early career awareness among elementary students. The project begins with the development and design of the book in collaboration with educators, counselors, and graphic designers to ensure age-appropriate, inclusive, and engaging illustrations that represent a wide range of professions. Teachers and school counselors will receive a brief orientation and resource guide to help integrate the coloring book into classroom activities, counseling sessions, or special "career exploration" events. The books will be distributed primarily to grades K–3, with activities incorporated during guidance lessons, free-choice learning centers, or designated exploration days to encourage students to discuss

the skills, education, and community impact associated with different careers. Families will also be engaged through take-home materials that promote discussions and activities, such as interviewing family members about their jobs. Feedback will be collected from teachers, counselors, and families to monitor student engagement and assess the effectiveness of the initiative, with results used to update and improve the book annually. To celebrate learning, students will have opportunities to showcase their completed pages and share their favorite careers during a "Career Exploration Showcase," helping to reinforce their understanding and excitement about future possibilities.

b.) Participating School Districts and Students Impacted:
Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School. Since all students in the school districts aligned to the ESC Career Counseling services will have access to the coloring book, the percentage of students impacted by this initiative will be 100% of the student population served within those districts that are part of the Business Advisory Council.

c.) Participating Businesses and Their Involvement:
All ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC) members are engaged in this initiative, representing a wide range of industries, including education and training, healthcare, manufacturing and skilled trades, finance and business services, technology and engineering, public service and government, hospitality and retail, and transportation and logistics. These businesses play a vital role in implementation by serving as guest speakers, participating in career days, providing career-related resources or demonstrations, and offering hands-on learning opportunities such as workplace tours. Their involvement ensures that students gain real-world insights into various professions, helping to make the coloring book initiative more engaging, relevant, and impactful for all students across the districts aligned to ESC Career Counseling services.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
This initiative supports the development of relevant, in-demand technical and professional skills by introducing elementary students to a wide variety of career paths and the associated competencies in an engaging, age-appropriate format. Through the coloring book and related activities, young learners explore different professions, learn about the skills required for each role, and begin to connect their personal interests to potential careers. This early exposure helps build foundational skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving. For educators, the initiative provides a structured tool to integrate career exploration into instruction for elementary students, guiding discussions about workplace expectations, transferable skills, and real-world applications of technical knowledge. By fostering awareness and skill-building from a young age, students are better prepared to pursue in-demand careers and make informed decisions about their educational and professional futures.

e.) Workforce Alignment: Addressing Skills and Pipeline Demands:
This initiative addresses the skills gap and talent pipeline challenges in the Mahoning Valley by introducing elementary students to a broad range of careers at an early age, helping to build awareness and interest in fields that are in high demand locally. Industries in the Mahoning Valley, including manufacturing, healthcare, skilled trades, technology, and logistics, have reported ongoing workforce shortages and difficulty filling positions with qualified

candidates. According to regional labor data, there are significant gaps in entry-level and skilled positions, with employers citing a lack of exposure to career pathways and limited awareness of the skills required for success as contributing factors. By engaging elementary students through the Career Counseling Coloring Book, the initiative aims to spark early interest in these professions, encourage skill development such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity, and lay the foundation for informed educational and career decisions. This early intervention helps cultivate a future talent pipeline that aligns with the Mahoning Valley's workforce needs, ultimately addressing local industry shortages and supporting regional economic growth.

f.) Impact on Students with Disabilities:
The ESCEO Career Counseling Coloring Book for elementary students serves as an accessible tool for career exploration among students with disabilities by providing a visually engaging and interactive medium that caters to diverse learning needs. Through coloring activities, students can express their interests and aspirations in a supportive environment, helping to build self-awareness and confidence. This approach can also facilitate discussions about various careers, allowing educators and counselors to guide students in recognizing their strengths and potential pathways, thereby promoting inclusive awareness about future opportunities.

6.) PROGRAM: ESCEO Entrepreneurship Program for Middle and High School Students

a.) Implementation Plan:
The Middle and High School Entrepreneurship Program is a hands-on, innovative curriculum designed to empower students with the skills and knowledge necessary to launch their own business ventures. Implementation begins with ESC Career Counselors working directly with participating schools to integrate the program into classroom instruction or after-school activities. Students learn the fundamentals of entrepreneurship by creating a comprehensive business plan, developing and producing a unique product, and crafting effective marketing strategies. The program includes lessons on financial literacy, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills, providing a well-rounded foundation for practical business knowledge. The course culminates in an exciting "Shark Tank" event, where students pitch their businesses to a panel of judges, showcasing their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. During the 2025–2026 school year, ESC Career Counselors continued to expand the Youth Entrepreneurship Program across several school districts. The program provides students with meaningful, hands-on opportunities to explore entrepreneurship while developing creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation skills. Students engage in activities that guide them through developing business ideas, creating products or services, understanding basic marketing and financial concepts, and presenting their ideas to others. Through these experiences, students strengthen communication, collaboration, decision-making, and financial literacy skills while building confidence and learning the value of taking thoughtful risks. Ultimately, the program inspires an entrepreneurial mindset and equips students with transferable skills that support future success in education, careers, and their communities.

b.) Participating School Districts and Students Impacted:
Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School. All school districts aligned with ESCEO Career Counseling services are eligible to participate in the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, with implementation contingent upon each district providing approval for the ESC Career

Counseling team to run the full 8-week curriculum. Once approved, all students within those districts will have access to the program, meaning that 100% of students in participating districts within the Business Advisory Council's scope have the potential to benefit from this initiative. This ensures broad exposure to entrepreneurship concepts, hands-on business experience, and the development of critical skills for future success.

c.) Participating Businesses and Their Involvement:
During the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, 717 Credit Union served as the "Shark Tank" panel, providing students with an opportunity to present their entrepreneurship projects and receive feedback from real-world professionals. All Business Advisory Council (BAC) members have the opportunity to be involved throughout the 8-week curriculum. Additionally, OH WOW! Children's Museum has partnered with the program to provide Tinkercad and 3D printing resources, allowing students to create prototypes of their products for their Shark Tank presentations. These businesses and organizations play a vital role in implementation by offering mentorship, hands-on resources, and real-world insights, enhancing the students' entrepreneurial experience and helping to develop practical skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and business planning.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
The Youth Entrepreneurship Program supports the development of relevant, in-demand technical and professional skills by providing students with hands-on experience in creating and managing their own business ventures. Students learn essential skills such as financial literacy, marketing, product development, problem-solving, and critical thinking, while also building communication, teamwork, and leadership abilities. By designing products, developing business plans, and presenting their ideas in a "Shark Tank" format, students gain practical experience with real-world business processes and decision-making. For educators, the program provides a structured framework to teach entrepreneurial concepts, integrate project-based learning, and guide students in connecting classroom knowledge to applicable workplace skills. Overall, this initiative equips students with both technical and professional competencies that are highly valued in today's economy, while also enhancing educators' capacity to deliver experiential learning opportunities.

e.) Workforce Alignment: Addressing Skills and Pipeline Demands:
The Youth Entrepreneurship Program addresses skills gaps and talent pipeline challenges in the Mahoning Valley by preparing students with foundational business and professional skills that are in high demand across the region. Local industries,including manufacturing, healthcare, skilled trades, technology, and finance have reported ongoing workforce shortages, with employers noting that many young people lack exposure to entrepreneurial thinking, financial literacy, and problem-solving skills necessary for success in modern careers. Data from regional labor reports indicate that positions in these sectors are increasingly difficult to fill, particularly roles that require critical thinking, innovation, and basic business acumen. By engaging students in an 8-week, hands-on entrepreneurship curriculum, the initiative helps develop competencies such as creativity, collaboration, communication, and leadership, while fostering an early understanding of business and workforce expectations. This early intervention strengthens the future talent pipeline by encouraging students to explore entrepreneurial pathways and acquire skills aligned with the workforce needs of the Mahoning Valley, ultimately supporting regional economic growth.

f.) Impact on Students with Disabilities:
The middle and high school entrepreneurship program can significantly impact students with disabilities by fostering essential skills like creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork in a

supportive environment. By encouraging these students to engage in innovative projects, the program can help build self-confidence and promote independence. Additionally, it can provide tailored resources and mentorship that accommodate their unique needs, allowing them to develop practical business skills and gain valuable real-world experience. This inclusive approach not only empowers them but also helps to break down societal barriers, encouraging greater acceptance and understanding of disability in entrepreneurial spaces.

II.) BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

The Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio BAC meets monthly with local businesses and groups to discuss the regionally in-demand job market and how to prepare students to enter the workforce. In today's rapidly evolving job market, it is crucial for educational institutions to establish strong partnerships with businesses in order to support student career pathways. These partnerships provide students with valuable opportunities to gain real-world experience, develop essential skills, and make informed decisions about their future careers.

Business partnerships help educational institutions align their curriculum with industry demands. By collaborating closely with businesses, schools can ensure that the skills being taught are relevant and up-to-date. This ensures that graduates are well-prepared for the workforce and increases their employability.

1.) PROGRAM: Collaboration with Junior Achievement Biztown & Finance Park

a.) <u>Developing and Expanding Partnerships to Support the Talent Pipeline:</u>

The ESCEO Career Counseling Department is actively working to strengthen and expand business and industry representation through partnerships with organizations such as Junior Achievement of Eastern Ohio, which will operate a JA Biztown and Finance Park on the second floor of the Eastwood Mall. JA Biztown is a simulated city where students assume real-world job roles, manage finances, and run businesses, while Finance Park provides students with hands-on experience managing personal budgets and financial decision-making. Students attend these facilities after completing a 12-week preparatory curriculum, which equips them with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully navigate their Biztown/Finance Park experience. Business Advisory Council (BAC) members can participate by leasing storefronts to represent their businesses and volunteering during events, offering mentorship and real-world insights to students in grades 4–9. The Builders Association, a BAC member, has already committed time and resources to assist with constructing the storefronts. The JA Biztown and Finance Park project is projected to be completed by January 2027, creating a sustainable platform for student engagement, career exploration, and the expansion of industry partnerships to address local talent pipeline needs.

b.) <u>Business and Industry Feedback:</u>

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will gather feedback from business and industry partners involved in JA Biztown and Finance Park through structured debriefs after student events, surveys, and roundtable discussions. Partners who lease storefronts or volunteer during the events will be asked to provide insights on student engagement, the effectiveness of business simulations, and how well the program reflects real-world career and financial experiences. This feedback will inform future decisions about curriculum enhancements, event logistics, and ways to strengthen student interactions with industry professionals, ensuring that JA Biztown and Finance Park continue to provide meaningful, career-focused learning experiences.

c.) **Incorporating Industry Insights to Strengthen Workforce Readiness:**
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) plans to use feedback and guidance from business and industry partners involved in JA Biztown and Finance Park to enhance both student and educator outcomes. Input from partners will be collected through post-event debriefs, surveys, and discussions regarding student engagement, understanding of business concepts, and real-world skills application. This information will inform adjustments to the preparatory curriculum, classroom instruction, and event activities, ensuring that lessons more accurately reflect workplace expectations and career skills. For educators, guidance from industry partners will help refine teaching strategies, identify areas to emphasize critical skills like financial literacy, problem-solving, and teamwork, and provide insights on emerging career trends. By systematically integrating this feedback, the BAC ensures that students develop practical skills applicable to real-world careers and that educators are better equipped to deliver meaningful, career-focused instruction.

d.) **Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:**
Identified industry partners involved in JA Biztown and Finance Park will collaborate with the Business Advisory Council (BAC) to co-develop relevant, in-demand skills for students and educators. Partners will provide real-world expertise to inform the design of activities, business simulations, and the preparatory 12-week curriculum, ensuring students gain practical skills such as financial literacy, problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and entrepreneurial thinking. Educators will benefit from guidance on instructional strategies that align classroom learning with workplace expectations and emerging industry trends. By actively participating as storefront representatives, mentors, and guest speakers, industry partners help shape learning experiences that reflect current workforce demands, equipping students with the competencies needed for future careers and supporting educators in delivering career-relevant instruction.

e.) **Partner Contributions to Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities:**
Business and industry partners involved in JA Biztown and Finance Park play a crucial role in supporting career readiness for students with disabilities. By providing mentorship, modeling workplace behaviors, and participating in hands-on simulations, partners create inclusive learning environments where all students can engage with real-world career experiences. Partners help ensure that activities are accessible and adaptable, allowing students with disabilities to explore a variety of professions, develop critical skills such as communication, problem-solving, and financial literacy, and gain confidence in their abilities. Their guidance also helps educators tailor instruction and support strategies to meet diverse learning needs, ensuring that students with disabilities receive meaningful exposure to career pathways and are better prepared for future education, work, and life opportunities.

2.) **PROGRAM: REM Electronics STEM Kit Assembly Partnership**

a.) **Developing and Expanding Partnerships to Support the Talent Pipeline:**
The Business Advisory Council (BAC), in collaboration with the ESC Career Counseling Department, partnered with REM Electronics to provide middle school students with hands-on STEM learning experiences designed to build awareness of careers in electronics, engineering, manufacturing, and other technical fields. REM Electronics professionals visited participating middle school classrooms and worked directly with students to assemble an FM Radio Science Circuit Kit. Through the activity, students explored how radios work while learning basic concepts related to electronics, circuits, components, assembly, and technology.

The partnership provides students with an engaging opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world STEM applications while interacting directly with industry

professionals. Students develop technical and employability skills while gaining greater awareness of career opportunities available within the region. The BAC will continue to work with REM Electronics and participating school districts to expand STEM Kit Assembly opportunities to additional students and schools. By introducing students to hands-on STEM experiences at the middle school level, the partnership helps build early interest in technical career pathways and supports the development of the region's future talent pipeline.

b.) Business and Industry Feedback:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) and ESC Career Counseling Department will gather feedback from REM Electronics, participating educators, Career Counselors, and school districts to evaluate the effectiveness of the STEM Kit Assembly Partnership. REM Electronics will provide valuable industry insight regarding student engagement, understanding of basic electronics and circuitry, hands-on technical skills, and student interest in STEM-related careers. Feedback from educators and Career Counselors will also be used to determine how effectively the activity connects classroom learning with real-world applications and career exploration. This information will guide future improvements to the program, identify opportunities for additional STEM kit activities, and support expansion into additional classrooms and school districts. By incorporating feedback from both education and industry, the BAC can ensure the program remains engaging, relevant, and aligned with regional workforce and talent pipeline needs.

c.) Incorporating Industry Insights to Strengthen Workforce Readiness:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will use guidance and expertise from REM Electronics to strengthen STEM learning and career readiness for middle school students. As an industry partner, REM Electronics provides students and educators with real-world insight into electronics, circuitry, manufacturing, technology, and the skills required in today's technical workforce. Through the FM Radio Science Circuit Project, students move beyond traditional classroom instruction by applying STEM concepts through a hands-on assembly experience. Students learn how individual electronic components work together to create a functioning product while developing problem-solving, attention to detail, following directions, perseverance, and technical skills. Industry guidance will help ensure future activities reflect current technologies and workforce expectations while giving educators additional resources for connecting academic concepts to real-world careers.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
REM Electronics will collaborate with the Business Advisory Council (BAC) and ESC Career Counseling Department to help students develop foundational skills that support future success in STEM, manufacturing, electronics, engineering, and other technical career pathways. Through the hands-on assembly of the FM Radio Science Circuit Kit, students are introduced to basic electronics and circuitry while practicing skills such as following technical instructions, identifying components, problem-solving, troubleshooting, attention to detail, teamwork, and completing a project from start to finish. Educators also benefit from exposure to industry-based STEM activities that can be incorporated into classroom instruction and career exploration. Working directly with REM Electronics professionals provides educators with greater awareness of the technical and employability skills regional employers are seeking. This collaboration strengthens the connection between education and industry while helping ensure students are introduced to relevant, in-demand skills early in their educational journey.

e.) Partner Contributions to Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities:
The REM Electronics STEM Kit Assembly Partnership provides an inclusive, hands-on career

exploration opportunity that can benefit students of varying abilities and learning styles, including students with disabilities. The FM Radio Science Circuit Project allows students to learn through visual, tactile, and step-by-step activities while assembling a functioning electronic device. This type of experiential learning can provide an alternative way for students to understand STEM concepts that may be more difficult to visualize through traditional classroom instruction alone. With appropriate instructional support and accommodations, students can participate in the assembly process while developing problem-solving, fine motor, communication, teamwork, perseverance, and technical skills. Working alongside educators, Career Counselors, and industry professionals also provides students with encouragement and exposure to STEM and technical careers they may not have previously considered. By creating accessible opportunities for students to explore electronics and technology, the partnership promotes greater inclusion in STEM career exploration and helps all students recognize potential pathways into the regional workforce.

3.) PROGRAM: OH WOW! Children's Museum - Tinkercad and 3D Printing

a.) Developing and Expanding Partnerships to Support the Talent Pipeline:

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) partners with OH WOW! Children's Museum provides students in grades 5–12 access to Tinkercad and 3D printing, a hands-on program where students design digital prototypes and print them using 3D technology. This experience develops technical skills, problem-solving, and design thinking while exposing students to careers in engineering, manufacturing, and product development. The BAC identifies new partners through outreach to local businesses and workforce networks, ensuring programs align with regional talent needs. Partners contribute expertise, resources, and mentorship, helping both students and educators gain practical, career-ready skills and strengthening pathways to in-demand professions.

b.) Business and Industry Feedback:

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will gather feedback from industry partners, including OH WOW! Children's Museum, through structured debriefs, surveys, and post-event discussions. Partners who provide Tinkercad and 3D printing resources will share insights on student engagement, skill development, and the effectiveness of hands-on learning experiences. Feedback from educators and students will also be collected to assess how well the program aligns with career readiness and technical skill goals. This information will guide curriculum enhancements, program improvements, and future partnerships, ensuring that initiatives remain relevant, impactful, and aligned with regional workforce needs.

c.) Incorporating Industry Insights to Strengthen Workforce Readiness:

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) plans to use feedback and guidance from industry partners, such as OH WOW! Children's Museum, to improve both student and educator outcomes in hands-on programs like Tinkercad and 3D printing. Partners provide insights on the effectiveness of activities, student engagement, and skill development, which inform curriculum adjustments and instructional strategies. This guidance helps educators better integrate technical and problem-solving skills into classroom instruction and allows students to gain competencies aligned with real-world workforce expectations. By systematically incorporating partner feedback, the BAC ensures that students acquire practical, in-demand skills, while educators receive support to deliver instruction that reflects current industry standards.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:

Identified industry partners, such as OH WOW! Children's Museum, will collaborate with the Business Advisory Council (BAC) to co-develop relevant, in-demand skills for students and

educators by providing expertise, resources, and hands-on mentorship. Partners help shape program activities, such as Tinkercad and 3D printing, ensuring students build technical skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and design thinking aligned with workforce needs. Educators benefit from guidance on integrating these tools into instruction, enabling them to teach real-world applications of STEM and technical skills. Through active participation, industry partners ensure programs are practical, engaging, and aligned with current industry standards, preparing students with competencies that are highly valued in today's job market.

e.) Partner Contributions to Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities:
Industry partners, such as OH WOW! Children's Museum supports career readiness for students with disabilities by providing hands-on, accessible learning experiences through programs like Tinkercad and 3D printing. Partners help adapt activities and tools to meet diverse learning needs, ensuring students with disabilities can actively participate in design and engineering projects. Through mentorship and guided instruction, students develop technical skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and confidence, while learning how to navigate real-world work scenarios. Partners also provide guidance to educators on inclusive teaching strategies, helping ensure that all students gain meaningful exposure to STEM careers and acquire skills that prepare them for future education, training, and employment opportunities.

4.) PROGRAM: Shepherd of the Valley CNA Career Pathway Partnership

a.) Developing and Expanding Partnerships to Support the Talent Pipeline:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC), in collaboration with the ESC Career Counseling Department, partners with Shepherd of the Valley to provide high school students with a structured pathway into healthcare and nursing careers. District outreach began in December 2025, followed by information sessions and an open house in January and February 2026. In February 2026, more than 41 students representing 10 school districts attended the CNA Open House to tour Shepherd of the Valley, learn about healthcare careers, and explore the CNA pathway. Students must be at least 16 years old and complete an interview and onboarding process that includes a background check and drug screening, both paid for by Shepherd of the Valley. Students then complete a three-month commitment phase working in a paid, entry-level position such as Hospitality, Resident Assistant, or Resident Activities before advancing to CNA training. Shepherd of the Valley covers the $1,800 cost of the 80-hour CNA training course and certification exam for eligible students who successfully complete the required commitment phase. Upon successful completion, students can earn the 12-point Ohio Department of Health Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Industry-Recognized Credential, an Industry-Recognized Credential Diploma Seal, OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal, and work-based learning hours. The partnership creates a direct talent pipeline from high school to employment while helping address the regional demand for qualified healthcare professionals.

b.) Business and Industry Feedback:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will gather feedback from Shepherd of the Valley, participating school districts, educators, Career Counselors, and students throughout the CNA Career Pathway Program. As students progress through interviews, onboarding, entry-level employment, CNA training, certification, and continued employment, Shepherd of the Valley will provide valuable feedback regarding student engagement, attendance, dependability, professionalism, communication, technical skill development, and overall workplace readiness. Student participation and interest, including the 41+ students from 10 districts who attended the February 2026 CNA Open House, will also help evaluate program demand and guide future recruitment efforts. Feedback will be used to strengthen the program, improve student

preparation, and ensure the pathway remains aligned with current healthcare workforce needs.

c.) Incorporating Industry Insights to Strengthen Workforce Readiness:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will use feedback and guidance from Shepherd of the Valley to ensure the CNA Career Pathway Program reflects real-world healthcare expectations. Students gain authentic workplace experience by working for three months in entry-level positions prior to CNA training, allowing them to develop and demonstrate professionalism, dependability, communication, teamwork, and commitment in an actual healthcare environment. Students who successfully complete this phase advance to an 80-hour CNA course and certification exam, providing a direct connection between work-based learning, technical training, credential attainment, and employment. Industry insight from Shepherd of the Valley will help educators and Career Counselors better understand healthcare workforce expectations and prepare students for successful entry into high-demand healthcare careers.

d.) Developing In-Demand Skills for Students and Educators:
Shepherd of the Valley collaborates with the Business Advisory Council (BAC) and ESC Career Counseling Department to help students develop technical and employability skills that are highly valued within the healthcare industry. Through paid work-based learning and CNA training, students develop skills in patient care, safety, communication, teamwork, professionalism, compassion, responsibility, time management, and problem-solving. Successful participants have the opportunity to earn the 12-point CNA Industry-Recognized Credential, Industry-Recognized Credential Diploma Seal, OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal, and work-based learning hours. Educators and Career Counselors also gain greater knowledge of healthcare career pathways, employer expectations, credential requirements, and advancement opportunities, allowing them to better advise and prepare students. The pathway extends beyond CNA certification, as Shepherd of the Valley offers tuition assistance for students who continue their education toward a nursing degree, creating opportunities for long-term career advancement from entry-level healthcare employment to professional nursing careers.

e.) Partner Contributions to Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities:
Shepherd of the Valley supports career readiness for students with disabilities by providing eligible students with opportunities to experience a real healthcare workplace, develop employability skills, participate in paid work-based learning, and explore healthcare career pathways. With appropriate support and accommodations, students who meet program and credentialing requirements can participate in entry-level employment opportunities and develop skills in communication, teamwork, responsibility, professionalism, dependability, and workplace problem-solving. Exposure to positions such as Hospitality, Resident Assistant, and Resident Activities also allows students to explore different roles within a healthcare organization and identify career opportunities that align with their strengths and interests. Collaboration among Shepherd of the Valley, educators, Career Counselors, students, and families helps support inclusive career preparation while providing meaningful pathways to employment, industry-recognized credentials, continued education, and long-term careers in healthcare.

III.) COORDINATE EXPERIENCES

1.) PROGRAM: 6th Annual Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo
a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) plans to increase work-based learning for students through initiatives like the annual Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo, which this September 2027 will mark its 6th year. The expo provides hands-on workshops, demonstrations, and direct interactions with industry professionals, giving students practical exposure to skilled trades and workplace expectations. The event introduces students to Building Trades pre-apprenticeship programs in their school districts, where they can earn industry-recognized credentials while in high school and have the opportunity for direct entry into an apprenticeship after graduation. Last year marked the first inclusion of middle school students, expanding early career awareness. The goal of the expo is to raise understanding of diverse career pathways, increase student engagement, and strengthen connections between students and local industry professionals, supporting the region's workforce development.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
Students from school districts across five counties—Mahoning, Columbiana, Trumbull, Stark, and Portage—will benefit from the Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo. Over the course of three days, the event will host an average of more than 6,000 students, providing them with hands-on exposure to skilled trades, career pathways, and work-based learning opportunities.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
Under the leadership of The Builders Association, the Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo will feature a wide range of trades, including Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement Masons, Electricians, Elevator Constructors, Floor Layers, Millwrights, and Pile Drivers, Glaziers & Glass Workers, Insulators, Ironworkers, Laborers, Operating Engineers, Painters & Drywall Finishers, Plasterers, Plumbers & Pipefitters, Roofers & Waterproofers, Sheet Metal Workers, Teamsters, and Tile Setters & Terrazzo. These industry partners will provide hands-on demonstrations, mentorship, and guidance, offering students practical exposure to diverse skilled trades and helping them explore potential career pathways in the Mahoning Valley.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
The Builders Association plays a key role in planning and implementing the Mahoning Valley Skilled Trades Expo by leading meetings throughout the year with the ESC Career Counseling team and the trade unions under its umbrella. These collaborative sessions ensure the event aligns with workforce needs and provides meaningful learning experiences for students. Additionally, an annual school counselor breakfast is held to update counselors on the event, highlight the benefits for their students, and showcase the various career pathways available in the skilled trades. This ongoing involvement ensures that businesses actively guide both the planning and execution of the expo.

2.) PROGRAM: Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The Business Advisory Council is committed to increasing Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities for students by expanding access to the Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program, a hands-on initiative designed to equip students with the in-demand skills and resources needed to pursue successful careers in the building trades after graduation. This program has been successfully implemented in our aligned school districts for the past five years and is now offered in 19 aligned school districts, demonstrating its growth, sustainability, and strong impact across the region.

To make the program more well-rounded and comprehensive, we have gradually added feeder courses and experiences such as the Lencyk Masonry Program and interactive visits by the plumbers union. These additions give students greater exposure to a variety of trades,

helping them explore multiple career pathways within the construction industry while gaining a broader set of practical skills.

The program provides high school students with an immersive learning experience that blends classroom instruction with practical, real-world training in areas such as measuring, safety protocols, and the use of hand and power tools. Through partnerships with local trade unions and industry experts, students work on authentic projects that replicate real construction environments, ensuring they gain both technical expertise and workplace readiness skills. Under the guidance of experienced instructors and industry mentors, students develop not only a deep technical understanding of the trades but also critical problem-solving skills that prepare them for the challenges of the workforce.

The program also places a strong emphasis on soft skill development, including teamwork, communication, adaptability, and time management. By collaborating on group projects, students experience the value of cooperation and coordination, mirroring the collaborative nature of professional job sites. These transferable skills position students for success not only in the construction field but also in a variety of other career pathways.
The goal and expected outcome of this initiative is to provide a comprehensive, industry-aligned curriculum that creates a direct pipeline from high school to pre-apprenticeship programs and, ultimately, to full apprenticeships or employment. By strengthening these opportunities, building on the success in the 16 participating districts, and expanding feeder courses that expose students to additional trades, the Business Advisory Council ensures that students are better prepared, more confident, and career-ready, meeting the current and future demands of the local and regional workforce.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
The Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship initiative is currently offered across 19 aligned school districts, benefiting over 300 students each year. The participating districts include: Austintown, Boardman, Beaver, Brookfield, Canfield, East Palestine, Jackson-Milton, Maplewood, Marlington, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Struthers, Springfield, Western Reserve, Warren City, United Local, and West Branch. Through this program, students gain hands-on experience, develop technical and soft skills, and prepare for direct entry into apprenticeships or careers in the skilled trades after graduation.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship initiative involves a variety of local businesses, trade unions, and industry partners that provide hands-on training, mentorship, and real-world exposure to students. Key partners include The Builders Association, which represents trades such as Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement Masons, Electricians, Elevator Constructors, Floor Layers, Millwrights, Pile Drivers, Glaziers & Glass Workers, Insulators, Ironworkers, Laborers, Operating Engineers, Painters & Drywall Finishers, Plasterers, Plumbers & Pipefitters, Roofers & Waterproofers, Sheet Metal Workers, Teamsters, and Tile Setters & Terrazzo. Additional partners include Lencyk Masonry for masonry training and the plumbers union, which provides classroom and site-based instruction. These industry partners ensure students receive broad exposure to multiple trades and gain the skills necessary for high-demand careers in the construction industry.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Businesses and industry partners play a critical role in planning and implementing the Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship initiative. The Builders Association leads meetings throughout the year with the ESC Career Counseling team and the trade unions under its umbrella to ensure

the program aligns with workforce needs and provides meaningful experiences for students. Industry partners also contribute expertise, resources, and mentorship for hands-on projects, ensuring students gain real-world skills. Additionally, an annual school counselor breakfast is held to update counselors on the program, highlight the benefits for their students, and explain potential career pathways. These coordinated efforts between business and education ensure the program is both effective and aligned with regional workforce priorities.

3.) **PROGRAM: Expanding Work-Based Learning Through the YSU Partnership**

a.) **Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:**

The Business Advisory Council (BAC) is expanding Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities through a partnership with Youngstown State University (YSU) to support students who are not currently meeting Ohio's graduation requirements but have an interest in the manufacturing, 5G, or information technology (IT) fields. This initiative, which has been successfully implemented for three years, provides students with access to structured credentialing pathways that lead to gainful employment or post-secondary opportunities. Students participate in a hybrid learning model, completing coursework remotely and attending hands-on training sessions at the Youngstown State University Excellence Training Center. Through this program, students can earn a variety of industry-recognized credentials, including Certified Manufacturing Associate (CMfgA), Universal Robotics Core Training, OSHA 30-Hour General Industry, OSHA 10, CompTIA IT Fundamentals, CompTIA A+, Stop the Bleed, and CPR/First Aid/AED certifications. By combining online learning, in-person technical training, and real-world skill-building experiences, the program helps students build the technical expertise and confidence needed to succeed in high-demand industries. The goal of the program is to guide students toward a career pathway that aligns with their future goals while helping them meet the Ohio 2023 and Beyond graduation requirements. Students complete a 12-point industry-recognized credential pathway, which serves as a foundational skill set under the career and technical competency options. By completing the program, students not only meet graduation criteria but also graduate with credentials that make them career- and college-ready, creating a direct pipeline to local employment opportunities or advanced post-secondary education.

b.) **Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:**

A total of 10 students from six school districts will benefit from this initiative in partnership with the Youngstown State University Division of Workforce Education and Innovation Career Pathways. The participating districts include United Local, Lowellville Local, Southeast Local, Brookfield Local, Warren City, and Valley Virtual. Through this collaboration, students from these schools will gain access to structured credentialing pathways, work-based learning experiences, and industry-recognized certifications that not only help them meet Ohio's graduation requirements but also prepare them for successful careers or advanced post-secondary opportunities.

c.) **Industry and Business Involvement:**

The businesses and industries involved in this initiative include the technology departments within the participating school districts, where students are paired with district technology coordinators to gain hands-on experience. The following districts serve as host sites for students: United Local, Lowellville Local, Southeast Local, Brookfield Local, Warren City, and the Educational Service Center of Eastern Ohio (ESCEO). These partners provide students with real-world exposure to information technology support and related career pathways.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Business plays a critical role in both the planning and implementation of this initiative by providing mentorship opportunities for students. Industry partners actively host work-based learning experiences at their facilities, allowing students to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings. Through this hands-on engagement, businesses help shape the learning experience, ensure training aligns with workforce needs, and support students in developing the technical and professional skills necessary for future career success.

4.) PROGRAM: Drone Education Part 107 Remote Pilot Certification

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) is expanding Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities by introducing students to the growing field of drone technology and its applications across multiple industries. This program, now in its third year, provides students the opportunity to explore and train for careers that utilize drones, preparing them for both recreational and commercial uses. Students can earn their FAA-Certified Drone Commercial Pilot Certification (Part 107), as well as VSO Level 1, VSO Ground, and VSO Flight certifications, giving them industry-recognized credentials that validate their technical skills and workforce readiness. By combining hands-on drone operation training with classroom instruction and certification preparation, students gain practical experience that mirrors real-world applications in sectors such as agriculture, construction, emergency services, and logistics. The goal of the program is to introduce students to evolving drone technology within the K-12 setting and expand their use of drones from recreational activities to professional, commercial applications. By earning their FAA Part 107 Remote Pilot Certification and completing advanced VSO Ground and Flight training, students develop the expertise necessary to pursue careers in this emerging field, creating a pathway for continued education, workforce readiness, and local industry talent development.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
A total of 160 students from twelve school districts will benefit from this Work-Based Learning initiative focused on drone technology. The participating districts include Struthers, Jackson-Milton Local, United Local, Springfield Local, Boardman, Sebring, East Palestine, Brookfield, Columbiana, and South Range. Through this program, students in these districts will gain access to industry-recognized drone certifications and hands-on training that prepares them for careers in agriculture, construction, emergency services, logistics, and other fields where drone technology is rapidly expanding.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The businesses and industries that will be involved in this initiative include a diverse group of partners spanning education, energy, agriculture, public safety, manufacturing, and workforce development. These partners are: Youngstown State University STEM, Eagle Eye Agriculture LLC, FirstEnergy, Gates Drone Service, YSU Workforce, Davey Resource Group, Butech Bliss, Youngstown Police Department, Aero Club, Workforce, YSU Police Academy, and the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office. Together, these organizations provide students with access to expertise, mentorship, hands-on training, and career pathway opportunities across multiple high-demand industries.

In addition, this past April 2026, these businesses came together at YSU Innovation Park to support the Northeast Ohio Future Pilots Drone Showcase held on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Williamson Innovation Park. The showcase brought together over 200 students and instructors from 12 school districts for a day of hands-on drone demonstrations, industry insights, and career exploration. Leading organizations in the drone

sector, including the Mahoning County Sheriff, Unmanned Safety Institute, Rudolph Libbe Group, Diversified Drone, Drone Animal Rescue, Marcraft, Censys Technologies, Eagle Eye Agriculture LLC, FirstEnergy, Gates Drone Service, Davey Resource Group, Butech Bliss, YSU Workforce, and YSU Police Academy, connected directly with students enrolled in drone certification programs. Attendees explored live demonstrations, engaged with industry leaders, and discovered future career opportunities through hands-on interaction with vendors representing multiple areas of the drone industry. The Williamson family also attended to celebrate this milestone as the first major event held at Williamson Innovation Park.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Business plays an essential role in the planning and implementation of this initiative by actively engaging with students through multiple avenues. Partners provide career exploration and mentorship opportunities by participating in career events, supporting drone classrooms, and contributing to the annual Drone Showcase. In addition, they host work-based learning (WBL) opportunities for students pursuing drone certifications, ensuring that students gain real-world experience alongside their classroom training. Through these efforts, business partners help align program activities with industry needs, expose students to diverse career pathways, and strengthen the pipeline from education to employment.

5.) PROGRAM: 3rd Annual Building Trades Competition

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) will continue to expand Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities for students through its Annual Building Trades Competition. Each year, the competition provides students from participating school districts with structured, hands-on learning experiences that allow them to apply technical skills, problem-solving, teamwork, and workplace practices in an authentic project-based setting. Building on the success of last year's competition, which engaged 22 students from Boardman, Brookfield, Warren, Jackson-Milton, Struthers, and West Branch, the BAC will continue to grow participation and strengthen connections between classroom instruction and careers in the skilled trades. The annual competition aligns with the Career Connections Book 2 curriculum, with a new or designated construction project providing students an opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have developed throughout the school year. Students may participate individually or as a class, with each school permitted to submit up to two completed projects for the annual competition. This format provides students with a meaningful, hands-on Work-Based Learning experience while promoting craftsmanship, career readiness, and exposure to career pathways within the building and construction trades. To enhance WBL, the BAC leverages strong industry partnerships, particularly with mentors from the Builders Association, who visit classrooms to provide direct technical guidance, share trade expertise, and introduce students to real-world career opportunities in the building trades. By embedding industry mentorship within the classroom setting, students gain practical woodworking experience while also developing critical problem-solving, teamwork, creativity, and communication skills.

Looking ahead, the BAC intends to build on this model by expanding participation to additional schools, increasing the number of student submissions, and deepening industry involvement. These efforts will not only provide more students with valuable hands-on experiences but also strengthen their career readiness, confidence, and awareness of potential pathways within the construction and building trades industries.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
Students from six school districts will benefit from this initiative. The participating districts include Boardman, Brookfield, Warren, Jackson-Milton, Struthers, and West Branch. These students will gain hands-on experience through the Building Trades Competition, guided by industry mentors, allowing them to develop technical skills, enhance career readiness, and explore potential opportunities within the construction and building trades.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The businesses and industries involved in this initiative include the Builders Association of Eastern Ohio and the Carpenters Local Union No. 171. These partners represent the construction and building trades industries and provide students with mentorship, technical guidance, and exposure to real-world career opportunities in the skilled trades.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Business plays a key role in the planning and implementation of this initiative by actively facilitating the Building Trades Competition. Partners provide judges and prizes for student projects, ensuring that assessments are aligned with industry standards. Specifically, four judges from the carpentry field evaluate each project using a structured rubric, offering expert feedback and awarding prizes based on technical skill, creativity, and craftsmanship. Through this involvement, business partners help ensure the competition reflects real-world expectations, motivates student engagement, and strengthens career readiness in the construction and building trades.

6.) PROGRAM: Pathful Connect

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) plans to increase Work-Based Learning (WBL) for students through the use of Pathful Connect, an interactive platform that connects middle and high school students directly with industry professionals. Now entering its third year of implementation, Pathful Connect provides virtual events where students can engage in live Q&A sessions, access career resources, and gain insights into a wide range of professions. These experiences expose students to real-world careers and help them understand the skills, education, and pathways necessary to succeed in various fields, including science, technology, arts, and trades.

The BAC's approach emphasizes active engagement and mentorship by ensuring that students have meaningful interactions with professionals who can share practical knowledge, career guidance, and industry expectations. Through Pathful Connect, students are empowered to explore their interests, ask informed questions, and make decisions about their future career paths. By integrating these virtual experiences into broader career exploration and WBL initiatives, the BAC enhances students' understanding of workplace expectations, strengthens career readiness, and fosters confidence in pursuing their chosen professions. Ultimately, this strategy creates a structured yet flexible pathway for students to connect classroom learning with real-world career experiences, expanding access to mentorship and professional insights that might otherwise be unavailable in traditional school settings.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
Approximately 2,100 students from nineteen school districts benefited from the Pathful Connect initiative in its third year of implementation. The participating districts and student numbers include: Lowellville (120), Poland (360), South Range (15), Beaver Local (260), Columbiana Exempted Village (320), Campbell City Schools (145), Valley Virtual (2), Western Reserve (45), Struthers City Schools (30), United Local (80), Jackson-Milton (56), MCCTC (2),

Marlington (65), Southeast (75), Brookfield (50), Austintown (120), Boardman (200), Sebring (25), and West Branch (75), Canfield (100). Through this program, these students gain direct access to industry professionals, explore diverse career pathways, and strengthen their career readiness through meaningful virtual engagement and mentorship opportunities.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
Pathful Connect brings together thousands of volunteer professionals from over 5,000 companies across the United States to provide students with direct access to diverse industries and career fields. Through the platform, students can engage with experts in science, technology, engineering, the arts, skilled trades, healthcare, business, finance, entrepreneurship, public service, and more. These professionals volunteer their time to connect with students through virtual career panels, workplace tours, industry chats, project feedback, and live Q&A sessions, making it possible for students to explore a wide range of professions without the barriers of travel or logistics. By leveraging this extensive nationwide network, Pathful Connect ensures that students have meaningful opportunities to learn about daily responsibilities, required skills, and career pathways directly from individuals working in the field, ultimately expanding access to mentorship and career exploration in ways that would not otherwise be possible.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Businesses play a central role in the planning and implementation of Pathful Connect by volunteering their time and expertise to engage with students across a wide variety of career fields. Industry professionals from thousands of companies nationwide participate in virtual career panels, live Q&A sessions, workplace tours, and project feedback, ensuring students receive authentic insights into real-world career pathways. These professionals help design and deliver relevant programming that aligns with workforce needs, while also serving as mentors who can answer questions, share experiences, and provide guidance. ESC career counselors work alongside Pathful Connect to coordinate and integrate these opportunities into schools, ensuring students have structured, meaningful experiences that connect classroom learning to career readiness. Through this collaboration, businesses not only inform students about the skills and education needed for success but also help shape the future workforce by inspiring and preparing the next generation of professionals.

7.) PROGRAM: Job Shadowing Experience

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC) plans to increase Work-Based Learning (WBL) for students by expanding job shadowing opportunities across a variety of industries. We have been providing job shadow experiences for the last seven years through our BAC members as well as outside businesses that are not part of our BAC, including Akron Children's, Salem-Regional Medical Center, Columbiana Health Department, University of Mount Union, Youngstown Area Electrical JATC, Howard Hanna, No Limits Bakery & Cafe, Private Practice, United EarthWorks, Lake Milton State Park, Kent Elastomer Products Inc (Kent Location), Northeast Ohio Carpenters, and Briarfield Place. These job shadows are organized through the ESC Career Counseling Department, ensuring a structured and supportive experience for all students. Job shadowing allows students to spend time directly with professionals in their field of interest, observing daily tasks, understanding the skills and competencies required for success, and gaining a realistic perspective on what a typical workday entails.

The BAC's strategy emphasizes active engagement and mentorship, ensuring that students not only observe but also have the chance to ask questions, seek advice, and interact with professionals who have navigated similar career paths. These experiences provide invaluable

networking opportunities, helping students build connections that can lead to future internships, employment, or long-term mentorship. By facilitating these job shadowing experiences, the BAC helps students develop career awareness, explore potential pathways, and gain insights into workplace expectations, thereby strengthening their career readiness and enhancing the likelihood of successful transitions into post-secondary education or the workforce.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
Over the last eight years, more than 500 students from 30 school districts have benefited from the job shadowing initiative organized through the ESC Career Counseling Department. The participating districts include Austintown, Badger, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Jackson-Milton, Lowellville, Marlington, MCCTC, Valley STEM, Poland, Potential Development, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, and Western Reserve. Following the job shadow experience, career counselors meet with students to review their experience and determine if another job shadow should be scheduled in a different career path. These opportunities allow students to gain firsthand exposure to professional environments, explore various career options, and build connections that support skill development, career awareness, and future workforce readiness.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The businesses and industries that will be involved in the job shadowing initiative include a wide range of partners from healthcare, education, construction, manufacturing, skilled trades, public safety, and service industries. These include:

- **Healthcare & Medical:** Akron Children's, Salem-Regional Medical Center, Columbiana Health Department, St. Elizabeth Hospital, Private Practice, Shepherd of the Valley, East Liverpool Hospital, Briarsfield Nursing Home, Coleman Professional Services, Aultman Hospital

- **Education:** Youngstown State University (YSU), Kent State University, ESCEO, University of Mount Union

- **Construction & Skilled Trades:** Youngstown Area Electrical JATC, Youngstown Local 33 JATC - Sheet Metal, Plumbers and Pipefitters, Carpenters, Brian Collier (Brick Laying and Tile Setting), Eddie Kane Steel, Jesse Clay Cement Mason, Koncrete Design LLC, Northeast Ohio Carpenters, Operating Engineers, Lencyk Masonry, Gault HVAC, Sam Pitzulo Architecture, United Earthworks

- **Manufacturing & Industrial:** Kent Elastomer Products Inc, Starr Manufacturing, LM Cases, Goodyear, Humtown Products, Canfield Industries

- **Public Safety & Community Services:** Cortland Fire Station, Lake Milton State Park, WFMJ News Station, Campbell Fire Department

- **Business & Service:** Howard Hanna, No Limits Bakery & Cafe, United EarthWorks, Nick Demars Tattoo, Briarfield Place, PennOhio Clay Guild, MS Consultants, Olsavsky Jaminet Architects, Sunny Ridge Veterinary, Youngstown Courthouse, Atty. Mike Yacovone Attorneys at Law, Linesville Fish Hatchery, Ksquare Marketing

These organizations provide students with hands-on exposure, mentorship, and networking opportunities across a variety of career pathways, helping to enhance career readiness and workforce development.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Business plays a vital role in the planning and implementation of the job shadowing initiative by opening their doors to students, providing meaningful opportunities to observe, ask questions, and engage with professionals in real-world work environments. Industry partners contribute by sharing their expertise, demonstrating daily job responsibilities, and mentoring students as they explore potential career paths. In collaboration, ESC Career Counselors work with both students and businesses to coordinate these experiences, ensuring that placements align with student interests and career goals while also meeting industry needs. This partnership creates a structured framework where businesses provide the setting, mentorship, and practical insights, while career counselors guide and support students throughout the process. Together, this approach strengthens students' career readiness, expands networking opportunities, and fosters pathways to future internships, training, and employment.

8.) PROGRAM: 2nd Year Junior and Senior Business Advisory Council

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC) will continue to expand Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities for students through the second year of its Junior and Senior Business Advisory Council, composed of student leaders from aligned school districts. Building on the foundation established during the program's inaugural year, students will continue to engage directly with the ESC BAC to gain a deeper understanding of how the council operates, collaborates with local businesses and industry partners, and develops programs that provide meaningful career exploration and Work-Based Learning opportunities for students. During the second year, the Junior and Senior Business Advisory Council will further strengthen student involvement in BAC discussions, planning, and decision-making. Students will have opportunities to interact with business and community leaders, provide input on career-related initiatives, and gain firsthand experience in how education and business collaborate to strengthen career pathways, Work-Based Learning, and workforce readiness. Student voice will remain an important component of the initiative. Members will share their perspectives on career interests, the factors that may influence their decisions to remain in the Mahoning Valley after graduation, and the skills and experiences they believe are most important for future employment. By continuing and expanding the Junior and Senior BAC in its second year, the ESC BAC will build upon lessons learned during the inaugural year, strengthen student leadership and business engagement, and ensure career-connected initiatives remain responsive to both student interests and the evolving workforce needs of the region.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
The following school districts will have the opportunity to provide a student leader from their district to participate in the Junior and Senior Business Advisory Council: Austintown, Beaver Local, Boardman, Brookfield, Campbell, Canfield, Columbiana, East Palestine, Howland, Jackson-Milton, Lakeview, Lowellville, Maplewood, Marlington, MCCTC and Valley STEM, Newton Falls, Poland, Potential Development, Salem, Sebring, South Range, Southeast, Springfield, Struthers, United, Valley Virtual, Warren City, West Branch, Western Reserve, and Youngstown Community School.

These student leaders will engage directly with the ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC) to learn how it functions, how it collaborates with local businesses, and how it develops programs

that provide meaningful career experiences and exploration opportunities for students and school districts. By participating, students gain firsthand insight into how schools and businesses work together to enhance career pathways, Work-Based Learning, and workforce readiness, while also providing valuable perspectives on career preferences, regional workforce retention, and the skills and experiences needed for future success.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
Students participating in the Junior and Senior Business Advisory Council will collaborate directly with all members of the ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC). These members represent a wide range of industries and sectors, providing mentorship, guidance, and real-world insight into career pathways.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Businesses play a critical role in both the planning and implementation of the Junior and Senior Business Advisory Council initiative. ESC BAC members collaborate with student leaders, school districts, and the ESC Career Counseling Department to design meaningful career exploration and Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities. They mentor students, share industry expertise, and provide guidance on real-world career expectations through participation in council meetings, career day events, and other advisory activities. Students in the Junior and Senior BAC are learning how to work directly with business partners and how professional networking can create opportunities for their future careers. Businesses also offer insight into the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed for success in their fields, helping shape programming that is relevant and impactful for students. By actively engaging with the Junior and Senior BAC, industry partners ensure students gain firsthand exposure to professional environments, build career readiness skills, and develop the networks necessary to explore future education and workforce pathways.

9.) PROGRAM: Pathway 2 Teach Pre-Apprenticeship Program

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC), in collaboration with the ESC Career Counseling Department, Kent State University, and participating school districts, supports the Pathway 2 Teach Pre-Apprenticeship Program to provide 11th- and 12th-grade students interested in education careers with meaningful, hands-on Work-Based Learning (WBL) experiences. Students have the opportunity to shadow and learn from licensed teachers in preschool through second-grade classrooms while participating in hands-on activities with students. The program provides 25+ Work-Based Learning hours and allows students to explore the teaching profession before graduating from high school. By connecting students directly with educators and authentic classroom environments, the program builds awareness of education careers and creates an early talent pipeline for the teaching profession.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
The Pathway 2 Teach Pre-Apprenticeship Program is designed for 11th- and 12th-grade students who are interested in entering the education field. Participating students gain firsthand experience working alongside licensed educators in preschool through second-grade classrooms, allowing them to better understand the responsibilities, skills, and daily experiences associated with teaching. Students also receive guidance and support from district educators, Kent State University, and ESCEO staff throughout the experience. In addition to career exploration and WBL hours, students have opportunities to earn a 12-point ODEW teaching credential, Industry-Recognized Credential Diploma Seal, OhioMeansJobs Readiness Diploma Seal, paraprofessional certificate, and pre-apprenticeship certificate, strengthening both college and career readiness.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The Pathway 2 Teach initiative brings together the ESC Business Advisory Council, ESC Career Counseling Department, Kent State University, participating school districts, and licensed educators to create an education-focused pre-apprenticeship experience. District educators serve as important workforce partners by allowing students to observe and participate in authentic classroom environments and learn directly from professionals currently working in education. Kent State University and ESCEO staff provide additional guidance and support as students explore education careers. This collaboration connects secondary education, higher education, and employers to help develop a future pipeline of educators while giving students a clearer understanding of the education and training required to enter the profession.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Education partners play a critical role in implementing the Pathway 2 Teach Pre-Apprenticeship Program by providing mentorship, classroom-based experiences, professional guidance, and opportunities for students to develop career-ready skills. Licensed teachers serve as mentors and role models as students shadow them and participate in hands-on classroom activities. These experiences help students develop communication, professionalism, collaboration, responsibility, leadership, problem-solving, and classroom-management skills while gaining a realistic understanding of careers in education. Through the combined support of district educators, Kent State University, ESCEO, and the BAC, students are provided with a structured pathway that connects career exploration, Work-Based Learning, credential attainment, and future postsecondary education.

10.) PROGRAM: ESC Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC), in collaboration with the ESC Career Counseling Department, supports the ESC Eastern Ohio Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, which provides students with opportunities to develop specialized skills in high-demand career pathways while connecting classroom learning to hands-on workplace experiences. The program currently includes pathways in Health Science, Finance, Information Technology, and Hospitality & Tourism. Students participate in career-related coursework or clubs and complete Work-Based Learning (WBL) activities connected to their chosen field. These experiences may include internships, job shadows, career simulations, employer site visits, and school-based projects. By combining academic instruction with career-connected experiences, the program helps students develop employability skills, explore potential careers, meet graduation requirements, and prepare for future education, training, and employment.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
The ESC Career Counseling Pre-Apprenticeship Program provides students in participating school districts with access to structured career pathways that can be incorporated into courses and extracurricular programs already available within their schools. To participate, students enroll in a qualifying course or club for at least one full semester, maintain a minimum C average, and complete five Work-Based Learning activities related to their career pathway. Through successful participation, students can earn a 12-point Industry-Recognized Credential, OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal, official Work-Based Learning hours, and progress toward state graduation requirements. The program may also satisfy the Student Strength Demonstration Replacement for an honors diploma. These benefits allow students to graduate with meaningful career experiences and credentials that demonstrate their readiness for postsecondary education and the workforce.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The ESC Business Advisory Council (BAC) and Career Counseling Department work with regional businesses and industry partners to connect students with authentic career experiences within the program's Health Science, Finance, Information Technology, and Hospitality & Tourism pathways. Industry partners help students understand workplace expectations and provide opportunities for career exploration through activities such as internships, job shadows, simulations, site visits, and career-related projects. By connecting students with professionals in their areas of interest, business and industry partners help students understand how classroom knowledge and employability skills are applied in real-world settings while strengthening the regional talent pipeline.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Business and industry partners play an important role in implementing the ESC Career Counseling Pre-Apprenticeship Program by providing students with meaningful Work-Based Learning experiences connected to their chosen career pathways. Partners can host job shadows, internships and site visits, participate in career simulations, support school-based projects, and provide students with firsthand knowledge of career opportunities and workplace expectations. These experiences help students develop communication, teamwork, problem-solving, professionalism, responsibility, and other career-readiness skills while completing the program's required WBL activities. Because students must complete five career-related Work-Based Learning activities, partnerships with regional employers are an important component in connecting academic learning to authentic workplace experiences.

11.) PROGRAM: 2nd Annual Northeast Ohio Future Pilots Drone Showcase

a.) Enhancing Career Readiness with Work-Based Learning:
The Business Advisory Council (BAC), in partnership with the ESC of Eastern Ohio Career Counseling Department, will continue to expand Work-Based Learning (WBL) and career exploration opportunities through the 2nd Annual Northeast Ohio Future Pilots Drone Showcase. Building on the success of the inaugural event, the annual showcase brings together high school students participating in drone programming, educators, business and industry professionals, and postsecondary partners for an interactive experience focused on the rapidly growing use of drone technology across multiple career fields.

The Drone Showcase provides students with an opportunity to move beyond classroom instruction and connect their drone knowledge and technical skills to real-world applications. Students interact directly with professionals from the drone industry, participate in live demonstrations, explore career pathways, and learn how unmanned aircraft systems are being utilized in today's workforce. The event is designed specifically for high school students and instructors participating in drone programming and incorporates multiple industry vendors, live demonstrations, and career exploration experiences. The showcase complements the ESC's ongoing drone programming by giving students an authentic opportunity to see how the skills they are developing can translate into future employment, postsecondary education, and industry credentials. Through conversations with professionals and exposure to real-world drone applications, students develop greater awareness of careers involving aviation, technology, engineering, public safety, utilities, construction, infrastructure, and other industries utilizing unmanned aircraft systems.

Looking ahead, the BAC will continue to grow the annual Drone Showcase by increasing student and school participation, expanding the number and variety of participating business and industry partners, and providing additional hands-on demonstrations and career-connected experiences. These efforts will strengthen the connection between

classroom-based drone education and the regional workforce while providing students with meaningful exposure to emerging technologies and high-demand career pathways.

b.) Schools and Students Benefiting from the Initiative:
High school students and instructors participating in drone programming throughout ESC-aligned and regional school districts will benefit from the 2nd Annual Drone Showcase. The event provides participating students with access to career exploration, industry professionals, live demonstrations, and hands-on learning experiences that may not otherwise be available within their individual school districts. By bringing multiple schools together for one regional event, the BAC can provide a broader and more diverse career-connected learning experience while allowing students to see how drone technology extends beyond recreational use into a variety of professional occupations and industries. The event also benefits educators by connecting them with industry professionals and providing information that can be incorporated into future classroom instruction and drone programming.

c.) Industry and Business Involvement:
The Drone Showcase brings together partners representing drone technology, aviation, higher education, workforce development, public safety, utilities, construction, engineering, and other industries utilizing unmanned aircraft systems. Youngstown State University and the Williamson Innovation Park serve as important partners in connecting students with technology, innovation, postsecondary pathways, and industry applications. The event is held at Williamson Innovation Park in Canfield. Additional business and industry partners participate as exhibitors, presenters, and career professionals, providing students with direct exposure to the ways drone technology is being incorporated into today's workforce. The involvement of multiple industry vendors is a central component of the showcase and provides students with opportunities for live demonstrations and career exploration.

d.) Role of Industry Partners in Implementation:
Business and industry partners play a key role in the planning and implementation of the 2nd Annual Drone Showcase by providing students with authentic connections between their classroom drone instruction and real-world career applications. Industry professionals participate in the event by conducting live demonstrations, showcasing drone equipment and technology, discussing how unmanned aircraft systems are used within their organizations, and introducing students to related occupations and career pathways. Industry partners also serve as career resources for students, allowing them to ask questions about education and training requirements, industry credentials, technical and professional skills, workplace expectations, and employment opportunities. These interactions help students understand not only how drone technology operates, but also how the skills they are developing can be applied within actual workplaces. Through continued collaboration among the BAC, ESC Career Counseling Department, Youngstown State University, educators, and business and industry partners, the 2nd Annual Drone Showcase provides a coordinated Work-Based Learning and career exploration experience that connects education, emerging technology, and regional workforce needs. The annual nature of the event also allows the BAC to sustain and expand the initiative each year by introducing additional industries, technologies, employers, and career pathways to participating students.