



**Business Advisory
Councils**



March 1, 2024 Annual Report/ Joint Statement - NwOESC Business Advisory Council

Name of Business Advisory Council: Northwest Ohio ESC Business Advisory Council

Primary Contact: Kerri Weir – NwOESC Superintendent and BAC Co-Chair

Secondary Contact: Mike Remer – NwOESC Business Education Liaison and BAC Co-Chair

1. Are there any changes to your Business Advisory Councils' structure or leadership since you submitted your plan for this academic year?

There are no changes in structure or leadership since our previous submission.

The following District Boards of Education and the Northwest Ohio ESC agree that the NwOESC's Business Advisory Council shall represent the business of the school districts consistent with the authority granted by the Ohio General Assembly. This agreement is in effect until the Board(s) or ESC terminates the same by formal resolution.

Archbold-Area Local	Fulton
Ayersville Local	Defiance
Bryan City	Williams
Central Local	Defiance
Defiance City	Defiance
Edgerton Local	Williams
Edon Northwest Local	Williams
Evergreen Local	Fulton
Fayette Local	Fulton
Hicksville Exempted Village	Defiance
Holgate Local	Henry
Liberty Center Local	Henry
Millcreek-West Unity Local	Williams
Montpelier Exempted Village	Williams
Napoleon Area City	Henry
North Central Local	Williams
Northeastern Local	Defiance
Patrick Henry Local	Henry
Pettisville Local	Fulton
Pike-Delta-York Local	Fulton
Stryker Local	Williams
Swanton Local	Fulton
Wauseon Exempted Village	Fulton

1. Membership:

- a. The Superintendent of the NWOESC;
- b. The Economic Development Directors from each of Defiance, Fulton, Henry, and Williams Counties;
- c. The Superintendent of School for each School District passing a resolution indicating that it has elected to have the NWOESC BAC serve as its BAC;
- d. The Superintendent from Four County Career Center;
- e. A Representative from Northwest State Community College, as selected by the President or Dean of Academic Affairs.
- f. Up to three (3) Representatives from the NWOESC/NWOCA STEAM panel, as selected by the NWOESC Superintendent.
- g. Up to two (2) Representatives for the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (AMC), as selected by the NWOESC Superintendent.
- h. Members of the Ohio Legislature Representative of our Northwest Ohio area will be encouraged

2. BAC Mission, Vision, and Structure:

- a. NWOESC BAC Vision: A well-prepared workforce that contributes to the economic growth and development and improved quality of life throughout the Northwest Ohio region.
- b. NWOESC BAC Mission: The mission of the Northwest Ohio BAC is to bring together on a regional level the leaders in business, education, and government to advise, support and enhance the awareness, instruction and experiences students are provided in striving to gain relevant, in-demand job skills as part of their preparation for future career success.
- c. Structure:
 - i. Economic Development Director updates at each meeting – an opportunity for each county director or designee to provide information and updates to connect business and education stakeholders. A key focus is on communicating local economy and job information.
 1. Matt Gilroy – Fulton County
 2. Erika Willitzer – Defiance County
 3. Ashley Epling – Williams County
 4. Jennifer Arps – Henry County
 - ii. NWOESC BAC Liaison – Investment in personnel to support regional endeavors and further education/business linkages. Growth and expansion continue with the goal to build capacity across all four counties.
 1. Mike Remer serves part-time as liaison
 - iii. An email distribution list makes it convenient for BAC members to pass along information about events and offerings that would be beneficial for the group.
- d. BAC meetings were held at NWOESC on the following dates:
 - i. March 14, 2023

- ii. May 9, 2023
- iii. September 19, 2023
- iv. December 12, 2023

3. Of goals submitted in your 2023 Business Advisory Council Plan, on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being goal accomplished. What goals were you able to accomplish?

a. Goal: Educator Boot Camp – Enhancing our Future Workforce by Inspiring Educators; Score: 10

- i. In June 2023, the NWOESC hosted its second annual Educator Bootcamp in collaboration with the economic development directors of Henry, Fulton, and Williams Counties. This weeklong event offered area educators the opportunity to tour select local businesses in the region to better understand the opportunities and needs present in our own backyard. Participants then returned to present some of their takeaways and ideas on how they might incorporate what they learned into their curriculum. Through Ashland University and with support from the Lieutenant Governor’s office, educators were able to earn college credit. The event was a resounding success, with our students emerging as the real winners as they will now have increased exposure to opportunities as relationships between area businesses and educators continue to flourish. Another Bootcamp is being planned for the Summer of 2024.

b. Goal: Fostering collaboration, beyond the Council, among business, labor, and education personnel; Score: 10

- i. Business and Education Spotlights at each BAC quarterly meeting continue to be an integral part of our BAC. Business spotlights provide opportunity for area businesses and to share information related to operations, challenges, and successes as partnerships are strengthened with education. Education spotlights provide opportunity for education entities to share practices and initiatives designed to bring awareness, experiences, and instruction to students as they prepare for future career success.
 - 1. City of Defiance Fire Chief Bill Wilkins, Fire/EMT Tyler Flory and Austin Serna, Representatives from Congresswoman Marci Kaptur’s Office regarding proposed Fire Station Project. Chief Wilkins and Tyler Flory shared about a grant application being pursued with the City of Defiance regarding the construction of a new Fire/Police station complex that would also serve as a hub for education and training across the greater Northwest Ohio area. The BAC submitted a letter of support for this effort.
 - 2. Northwest State Community College - Workforce Upskilling and Youth Opportunities – Jim Drewes, VP of Workforce Development. Jim Drewes shared information regarding Northwest State Community College and various programs impacting youth and workforce. The College has reorganized, with a mission to Reimagine, Restructure, and Realign programs to better serve our region and meet the student, community, and business needs. Custom Training Solutions (CTS) helps businesses contract for training as needed – anytime and anywhere. EDGE provides youth and adults with skills in resume writing and employability soft skills. CDL training has increased with eighty-eight students projected for Fall 2023. Apprenticeships/Pre-Apprenticeships supports are available. Pre-Apprenticeships target HS Juniors and Seniors. The Intel and Honda projects in our state will impact all of Ohio, promising growth for our Career Tech and training

centers.

3. Four County Career Center; Jeff Slattery shared about his transition to the Superintendent position and reviewed several programs at Four County including satellite programs, CBI, and adult education. He discussed how enrollment capacity works both within programs and Four County as a whole. Mr. Slattery shared about SB1's potential impact on career tech. He also discussed how large economic development projects such as Intel are driving CTE discussions along with the local need for welding, electrical, and construction labor.
4. Foertmeyer & Sons Greenhouse; Mark Foertmeyer - Founder/Owner and Lyndsey Rico, Head Grower shared their unique business model. This includes school fundraisers and moving to an online sales platform. They also developed online education modules related to plants and business operations. Foertmeyer & Sons employ degreed and skilled labor staff in areas such as horticulture, integrated pest management, and maintenance.
5. Career Coach and Education/Business Liaison, Mike Remer from NwOESC shared about the immersive mural project that was recently completed in the Swanton Middle School Career Center. He presented how this project will have a positive impact on workforce readiness for our region. Mr. Remer also discussed how it could be replicated in other schools.
6. Conrad Winkler, President of North Star BlueScope Steel, reviewed his current business outlook including how they view their workforce and culture built around people as a competitive advantage. He was joined by HR Manager, John Schwartz. Mr. Winkler discussed the different work pathways they have developed for their employees along with the associated businesses that are partnered nearby with North Star BlueScope that total approximately 2,000 employees.
7. Dr. Todd Hernandez of Northwest State Community College reviewed the State of the College Address including NSCC being named the number one community college in Ohio. He discussed the Elevate Northwest Ohio initiative and announced CCP Program Textbook Scholarships funded for \$160,000. Jim Drewes shared about Individual Micro-credential Assistance Program funding. Tori Atkinson updated on the AMC subcommittee to support connections between high school students and manufacturing employers. She also presented about AMC Good Jobs and AMC Ohio ISP Grants.
8. Dawn Bailey, Toledo Zoo & Aquarium Director of Community Affairs, shared fun facts about the zoo's business operations and workforce. She presented about custom training solutions and their Tech Credit program which provides on the job training for staff allowing for them to move to new positions.

- c. **Goal: Career Canvass Project; Score: 7** – Building upon the successful culture shift at Swanton Local Schools focused on workforce readiness, the Swanton Parents Club initiated the Career Canvass Project. This visionary project aimed to directly connect middle school students with local businesses through an engaging and interactive mural adorning the expansive wall in the Middle School Career Center. The project received financial backing from the Swanton Parents Club, with support from the NwOESC Career Coach/Business-Education Liaison who played a crucial role in coordinating the effort. Renowned muralist Dave Rickerd was commissioned to bring the immersive experience to life. The mural, positioned on the west-facing wall from the

Lucas/Fulton County line, highlights two hundred local businesses. What makes it truly interactive is the incorporation of a QR code. Scanning the code unveils an electronic replica of the mural on your device, complete with hot links for each business. By tapping on a specific link, users are instantly immersed in a customized experience designed to engage young minds while they are still in middle school. Recognizing the importance of exposing young people to opportunities in their own community, the project aimed to retain the region's best and brightest. Even remote users can enjoy this experience through the solution provided by Northwest Ohio ESC. Incorporated within the mural are playful "There's no place like home" images, serving as a reminder to young individuals about the abundant opportunities available in the region upon graduation from high school or college. While there was a hopeful vision to expand this impactful mural concept to other counties, the primary obstacle has been securing the necessary funding.

- d. Goal: Expanded Collaboration with AMC; Score: 7** – Collaboration between the NwOESC BAC and the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (AMC) is just getting off the ground for 2023. In 2022, AMC representation was added to the NwOESC BAC. More recently, the AMC organized a subcommittee inclusive of NwOESC BAC members to further support communication and collaboration in joint efforts. The AMC is an employer-driven sector partnership that strives to bring together stakeholders within the manufacturing industry, serving as the voice of manufacturing in Northwest Ohio. By expanding collaboration between the AMC and the NwOESC BAC, more can be accomplished together!

4. What challenges have you experienced implementing your goals?

- a. There is no funding for BACs across Ohio to assist with coordination or initiatives. With no targeted support, challenges exist related to activities, time, and personnel.

5. What new partnerships have your Business Advisory Council formed for the SY24?

- a. The NwOESC BAC has been a catalyst for each county and school district therein to develop more community specific connections, inclusive of local businesses and education, with the support of the Economic Development leaders in each respective county.

6. Have you added or removed any goals submitted in your SY24 Business Advisory Council Plans? If so, please provide details.

- a. We will likely not achieve the goal of replicating four career canvas/murals across the northwest Ohio region.

7. Have you received any media coverage or participated in any case studies as a Business Advisory Council? If so, please share.

- a. The Educator Bootcamp had excellent social media coverage. A video of the week's events was created and used for further promotion.
- b. The Career Canvas/Swanton Mural Project was well publicized. There was a public roll out on August 15th during Middle School Open House to kick off project.

8. The nature of the council's advice and recommendations, if any, on needed employment skills and curriculum development to instill those skills:

- a. Continue to focus on the development of basic employment skills/soft skills – reliable attendance, coworker interactions, problem solving, organization, conflict resolution, etc.
- b. Build upon efforts that promote work ethic and civic pride.
- c. Drug free – prevention efforts remain critical.
- d. Providing youth with opportunities to expand upon strengths and interests through avenues such as robotics clubs, eSports, STEAM learning labs, are vital as student grow and develop.
- e. Continue to increase credentialing and apprenticeship opportunities for students.
- f. Continue to provide student opportunities for job placements through their local communities and through the vocational school as applicable.
- g. Tap into Community College opportunities and resources to build the workforce: Tech Cred; Strengthening Community College Training Grant; Choose Ohio First program and Earn and Learn programs.
- h. Ensure students K-12 have access to technology and devices.
- i. Identify creative approaches to get manufacturing in schools to increase awareness/exposure.
- j. Expand and strengthen career awareness efforts K-12.
- k. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is an emerging topic.

9. The nature of the council's advice and recommendations, if any, on economic and job market changes and the types of employment in which future jobs are most likely to be available:

- a. Manufacturing continues to be a huge industry sector in NW Ohio. Parents and students need information on how this sector has evolved over time, with many employment opportunities for skilled and high paying positions. Parents need to see and experience the vocational school and business/industry settings to better understand what they offer. There is a continual struggle to bridge the gap between career, college, and workplace.
- b. Retail and the Construction industry are other large sectors.
- c. Utilize available data on in demand jobs/labor pool needs in critical conversations with employers, students, families, and other stakeholders.
- d. Continue to build upon and further develop STEAM activities and initiatives across the four-county area at all levels P-16. Shift toward bringing in business that offers more 'quality positions,' i.e., higher pay
- e. Job and Manufacturing fairs are critical and valuable events.
- f. Need to retain young families by analyzing and developing amenities appealing to them in small town/rural settings.
- g. Conduct and review wage and benefits surveys across the five-county area to stay competitive.
- h. Area business expansions continue - AquaBounty, broadband efforts, solar field development, etc.
- i. Demand for employees is high and is expected to last for at least several years.
- j. Workforce demand is high with concerns for attraction and retention.

10. The nature of the council's advice and suggestions, if any, for developing working relationships among businesses, labor organizations and educational personnel:

- a. Work to build capacity to strengthen the connections between education and business & industry.
 - i. Ideally, there would be resources to support Ohio's ESCs to employ one person/position per county to ensure students are aware of and connected to regional opportunities and businesses and education is better aligned to meet area work force demands. Funding is needed to make this happen.
- b. Completion of housing studies and their impact on the labor pool in the area – continue to share information.
- c. Continue to use the NwOESC BAC meetings as an opportunity to share successful strategies, network and learn from one another, and build understanding and respect for the challenges faced by education and business/industry in Northwest Ohio.
- d. Economic development agencies value the role education/schools play in attracting new businesses and residents to our area.
- e. Education appreciates the connections made with area Economic Development Leaders in each county.
- f. Northwest State Community College is a great asset to the area providing access to excellent and affordable education, training, and services to improve the lives of individuals and strengthen communities.
- g. Four County Career Center provides excellent options for students in experienced based education to prepare them to excel in the workforce, further education, and a range of careers.
- h. Leveraging AMC efforts, including the Manufacturing Grant (Good Jobs Challenge) will increase apprentice and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for students.
- i. Continue to plan and offer opportunities for educators to learn about local and regional businesses (awareness, skills, opportunities, etc.), through PD and “bootcamp” experiences.
- j. Strategize how to engage/involve small business owners in NwOESC BAC presentations/activities.

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