



Business Advisory Councils

2023-2024 Plan

IDENTIFY THE STRUCTURE AND NAME OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL: (SCHOOL DISTRICT, EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER, JOINT VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OR INDEPENDENT COLLABORATIVE)

THE MERCER COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

LIST ALL MEMBER DISTRICTS REPRESENTED BY THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL:

District	District Primary Contact and Role	Primary Contact Email	District Secondary Contact and Role	Secondary Contact Email
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List business advisory council leads (both business and education). List industries represented on the business advisory council based on [Ohio's Top Jobs](#) classification. Include workforce boards, economic development, higher education and community partners.

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Schedule of Meetings

Planning meetings for the (Academic Year) school year include:

Quarter 1 Meeting: September 14, 2023	Quarter 2: November 30, 2023
Quarter 3 Meeting: March 2024	Quarter 4: June 2024

Sub-committees, based on strategies and events, meet more frequently and as needed. See below plan outline for timelines for committee meetings.

Note: Some business advisory councils may choose to meet more frequently; include the planned dates for those meetings in the schedule.

Business Advisory Council Mission and Vision for the 2023-2024 School Year:

We believe:

- Mercer County and our surrounding region offers a great place to work, live, and raise a family.
- Bridges between business and education are the key to a sustainable future for our community.
- Every Mercer County Student will graduate with an informed plan.

Together we are:

- Data Driven
- Action-Oriented
- Co-Designers of Student Success

Business advisory councils operate under [three quality practices](#): **Develop Professional Skills for Future Careers, Build Partnerships and Coordinate Experiences.**

Describe how the business advisory council plans to **Develop Professional Skills for Future Careers** for the 2023-2024 school year.

- Describe the plan, including initiatives, project or events. Include specific districts impacted by initiative(s) and list all businesses involved.
- Use the template as a guide to list all initiatives, projects and events used to develop professional skills for future careers (include business input in curriculum alignment with skills needed for in-

demand professions, educator engagement and development, employers in classroom involvement). Also include existing programs and how they will be sustained and scaled.

Initiative 1 Create awareness of the Business Advisory Council and its resources and events by expanding existing business ↔ student connections.

What collaborative action steps are required to facilitate achieving outcomes?

1. Create a series of smaller, targeted, hands-on events for students to learn more about the professional skills needed with companies in their areas of interest, offering one exploration event per quarter (4 per year: November/December, January, March, May). The events will be hosted by companies representing the top 4 in-demand industries in our region.
2. Provide more company tours/exposure/awareness at all grade levels and conduct follow-up surveys with students that include career path planning.
 - a. Middle School Manufacturing Tours in October
3. Continue to promote and attend Tri Star Career Fair and other community outreach/career events and partnerships.

List all districts impacted.

1. All BAC School Districts will be invited to attend.
2. Celina, Coldwater, Fort Recovery, Marion Local, St. Henry and Versailles will participate in the fall. Parkway will be re-invited in the Spring.
3. All listed schools are invited to attend.

List all businesses involved.

1. All BAC listed partners will be invited to participate.
2. Invited companies who can manage large numbers of students include:
 - a. JR Manufacturing
 - b. S&K
 - c. Fort Recovery Industries
 - d. Celina Tent
 - e. Pax Machine
 - f. VTF
3. All listed business partners are invited to attend and participate.

List all related timelines for each phase of plan development and associated deadlines.

1. Targeted, Hands-on Events:
 - a. **Form a subcommittee dedicated to planning the events (September/October)** charged with identifying high-demand careers to showcase and securing presenters; identifying students interested in attending; planning event logistics (including possible evening or after-school times to accommodate varied schedules)
 - b. Promote both event series and single events to targeted audiences
 - c. Execute event according to subcommittee plan
 - d. Complete post-event assessment and implement improvements for each subsequent event
2. Company Tours
 - a. Middle School Tours :
 - i. Identify schools interested in participating and secure company sites (September)
 - ii. Plan travel and logistics (September-October)
 - iii. Complete post-event assessment and implement improvements for 2024 (October)
 1. The ESC is coordinating a pilot program with “Find Your Grind”, a future-ready platform that provides classroom and curriculum tools at the middle and junior high school levels. Connecting the use of this classroom tool to the real-world experiences made visible by the tours will allow us to also pilot the tracking of career readiness/exploration from middle school throughout the upper grades.
 - b. **Form a subcommittee charged with exploring and implementing other tour options**, including but not limited to parent tours, teacher tours/bootcamps, and possible student summer bootcamps (October-early Spring 2024)
3. Promote and attend other career events:
 - a. Tri Star Career Fairs (September 2023 and May 2024)
 - b. School Career Days/Career Fairs (September-May)
 - c. Class Presentations, etc (Ongoing)

List the resources needed for implementation (funding, manpower, tools, etc.).

1. Targeted, Hands-On Events need staffing, event planning, registration and interest identifying mechanism (hometownopportunity.com can be utilized for identifying students), promotional items such as media/social media coverage, banners for schools, flyers for teachers. Companies will need staff to present at the events.
2. Company tours need staffing and promotion.
3. Other career events need staffing and promotion.

Identify any challenges that may impact this plan. How will the business advisory council overcome these challenges?

1. Identifying event times that are attractive and don't hinder attendance at school and encourage interested students to attend – the BAC will consult with schools, businesses and students to identify the best times. Transportation during the school day can be problematic – the BAC will look into possible sponsorships and transportation solutions. Businesses need 6–8-week lead time to prepare – the BAC will give advance planning notice to ensure success.
2. Transportation to tour sites and weather-related delays or cancellations as well as finding companies to accommodate larger groups of students – the BAC will discuss transportation concerns with administrators, should issues arise. Also, helping companies and schools see value in offering tours to all age levels as appropriate – the BAC will share feedback from previous tours to ensure companies that middle school students are a great audience.
3. Helping promote other events is challenging because schools and companies need to be aware of the BAC as a resource in order to know to include all business partners – the BAC will work on awareness and promotion as another Initiative under "Build Partnerships" by creating a marketing plan.

Identify existing [data](#) and set measurable outcomes to achieve plan. If data is unavailable, identify steps being taken to acquire this data.

1. Hometownopportunity.com will be used to identify targeted students, and then their follow-up activity in the student dashboard (changing fields of interest or scheduling a follow-up job shadow or applying to positions) will be observed. In addition, all attendees will complete pre- and post-surveys. Ideally, we would like to start using hometownopportunity.com to track their ongoing interests as students progress through school.
2. Tour attendees will be sent post-evaluations via Google forms to assess the value and interest in the tours. Ideally, we would like to start using hometownopportunity.com to track their ongoing interests as students progress through school.
3. Number of attendees at each career event will be logged and follow-up surveys will be sent when possible.

Initiative 2 Address the Need for [soft skills - leadership skills - executive skills - human skills - transferable skills] Development for Career Readiness

What collaborative action steps are required to facilitate achieving outcomes?

1. Host a Skills Forum and provide follow-up for curriculum input. The action plan will also include the creation of a core group to review industry-recognized credentials in leadership and life skills, to assess how they can be implemented in to school curriculum and subsequently recognized by hiring companies, and then to work with ODE to analyze the point value of each credential.
2. Be more intentional about inviting companies to participate in classes covering this skill development by developing a quick, easy to navigate directory of BAC business partners.

List all districts impacted.

1. All listed districts will be invited and included in this action step.
2. All districts hosting career events will be connected to the directory.

List all businesses involved.

1. All BAC businesses will be invited to participate.
2. All companies accessing hometownopportunity.com will be aware of how to include their information in a directory listing contact information of staff willing to help with interviewing, team building, communication and other essential life skill development

List all related timelines for each phase of plan development and associated deadlines.

1. Forum/Curriculum:
 - a. **Form a subcommittee/task force charged with implementing the action plan (October)**
 - b. Host Forum to analyze credentials and the broad implementation in schools OR the need to work with ODE to re-evaluate the point value of these credentials. The committee will also be charged with finding common language to describe these skills and determining how to meet individual students' particular needs. Review a potential idea to reinstate acknowledgement of these skills on the back side or within the comments of high school grade cards. (November-December)
 - c. Pilot credential implementation in a minimum of 2 fully aligned ESC schools for the second semester (January-May)

- d. Evaluate success of implementation and need for continuous improvements (May-June)
- 2. Develop hometownopportunity.com as a directory, and enhance this site to become a systematic, central tool for:
 - a. Identifying classroom/career event/business speakers (speaker’s bureau/directory) for assistance with leadership skill activities, mentoring and other curriculum efforts
 - b. Communicating business information
 - c. Contacting students for scheduled events related to this and other topics. (October-December, with a launch ready for Spring semester pilot implementation).

List the resources are needed for implementation (funding, manpower, tools, etc.).

1. Committee activities require staff time; curriculum resources could be needed for classrooms.
2. Possible investment in hometownopportunity.com enhancements. Staff time to train companies how to update their listings within the system.

Overall, this Initiative should require staff resources more than monetary investment. However, this could change depending on the findings of the core group.

Identify any challenges that may impact this plan. How will the business advisory council overcome these challenges?

1. Ensuring there is attendance and participation is important – the BAC must work to get students registered in HTO so interests can be identified. A student voice is also important in this discussion – the BAC will add student ambassadors as outlined in “Build Partnerships.” Skills such as this need to be practiced every day – the BAC core committee will explore options that create an environment for repeated practice.
2. Schools prefer lunch and study hall visits; however, students don’t often attend during these free periods – the BAC will consider after school and evening events if feasible. Hometownopportunity.com administrators need to create this directory within the timeframe as listed for it to be useful – the BAC will collaborate with the developers to ensure they stay on top of deadlines for implementation.

Identify existing [data](#) and set measurable outcomes to achieve the plan. If data is unavailable, identify steps being taken to acquire this data.

1. The core group will identify a measure to track student success in the development of leadership skills. Ideally, the number of students receiving industry-recognized credentials in these skills should increase by more than 50%, if credential pathways are implemented in the pilot districts.
2. By Spring, more than 100 businesses should have updated listings in hometownopportunity.com that include contact information for a speaker directory as well as other communication made more accessible by the enhancements to the site.

Describe how the business advisory council plans to **Build Partnerships** for the for the 2023-2024 school year.

- Describe how the business advisory council will grow partnerships in alignment with in-demand careers in the region with representation from industry, workforce boards, port authority, Ohio Means Jobs Centers, industry sector partnerships, higher education, etc.
- Use the template as a guide to list all initiatives, projects and events used to build partnerships. Include information on partnership alignment, effectiveness, initiatives spearheaded by these collaborations. Demonstrate cooperative efforts between districts and partners to benefit students and businesses.

Initiative 1 Develop a communication vehicle and systematic network for businesses and schools

What collaborative action steps are required to facilitate achieving outcomes?

1. Develop an online BAC newsletter/website as a resource for communication, while using HTO as a central hub for information
 - a. Highlight best practices and student success stories, to showcase cooperative efforts between school and business partners
 - b. Provide easily-accessible data for in-demand careers and top jobs in the area.
 - c. Create a marketing plan for this newsletter to ensure reach to target audiences in a way that’s consumable (for example, students and parents will use different platforms) by each audience. Post to school websites and social media, and create new promotional materials to highlight links to hometownopportunity.com
 - d. Evaluate working with a student ambassador, tech intern or working with a class to develop this tool to create a work-based learning experience for a student interested in this work.
 - e. Use hometownopportunity.com as a central portal to send newsletter content such as :

- i. Company information with updated videos and data
- ii. School information with updated contact information for career or career-content related teachers
- 2. Potentially collaborate (pending application approval) with SOAR with STEM of West Central Ohio to align best practices in the delivery of opportunities for students and educators towards real world authentic learning experiences through partnerships and career exploration. Examples of these partnerships may include teacher tours, STEM competitions, LEGO leagues, esports, etc., and other targeted events that are supported and facilitated by SOAR with STEM.

List all districts impacted.

- 1. All BAC districts will be involved.
- 2. All BAC districts will be involved.

List all businesses involved.

- 1. All BAC partners will be invited to participate.
- 2. All BAC partners will be invited to participate.

List all related timelines for each phase of plan development and associated deadlines.

- 1. Newsletter:
 - a. Marketing committee will be formed to establish plan and set deadlines (October-November)
 - b. Students will be invited to be involved (November-December)
 - c. Hometownopportunity.com will be enhanced, along with above listed strategies, and ready for launch (by January)
- 2. Pending approval of SOAR with STEM application, schools will work collaboratively with businesses to execute career opportunities available via working partnerships.

List the resources are needed for implementation (funding, manpower, tools, etc.).

- 1. Funds will need to be allocated for promotional plans and materials. When possible, free options such as social media will be utilized. A work-based learning opportunity for a student will be explored, possibly using Tech Internship funds, should the next round be approved. Otherwise, SOCHE will be contacted for potential support of student wages.
- 2. Resources for SOAR with STEM will be defined by that application.

Identify any challenges that may impact this plan. How will the business advisory council overcome these challenges?

- 1. Target audience impact is difficult to gauge, and ensuring that all varied targets (businesses, schools, parents, and students) are reached is critical - the BAC will work to create a marketing plan that is measurable and addresses the multiple layers of audience reach. Identifying student success stories that are relevant, realistic and interesting – the BAC needs to work with all partners to make sure the content is engaging. For hometownopportunity.com, businesses need to be responsive in updating their information and keeping it current – the BAC will work with the Mercer County Economic Development office to ensure companies are trained on how to use the platform to their benefit.
- 2. SOAR with STEM will be challenged by a competitive application field, and with piloting implementation in our area. The BAC will work with the coordinators to ensure the strategies are incorporated into our plan, even after the plan submission deadline.

Identify existing [data](#) and set measurable outcomes to achieve the plan. If data is unavailable, identify steps being taken to acquire this data.

- 1. Measurable impact of communication will be defined by the marketing plan, and should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Increased data analytics on the hometownopportunity.com site;
 - b. Increased company profile information on the site
 - c. Marketing analysis data of communication delivery and exposure
 - d. A 50% increase of junior and senior student registrations in the Dashboard, to indicate action from the increased communication about the BAC activities and success stories
- 2. SOAR with STEM will be defined by the measurables listed in the application.

Initiative 2 Work collaboratively to provide high quality job shadow experiences in our region

What collaborative action steps are required to facilitate achieving outcomes?

- 1. Assist students with finding job shadow contacts and preparing for job shadows, promoting the Hometownopportunity.com Job Shadow indicator and dashboard to students through classroom visits, school staff professional development and other info-sharing opportunities.
 - a. Include a Job Shadow Contact listing for the companies who have a Job Shadow badge, and train companies in how to manage this listing and why it is essential to keep it up to date.
 - b. Train companies in how to look for students who have marked Job Shadow as an area of interest when registering for HTO.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Create a follow-up plan for the Mercer County Economic Development Office and the ESC that will ensure that all students choosing Job Shadow will be contacted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Assist companies with planning high-quality job shadows by providing templates or tool kits for schedules, discussion points, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a BAC committee charged with creating this tool kit, which includes sample tour suggestions, sample question suggestions, activity ideas and soft skill overview. The toolkit should also include a mechanism for feedback between both the student and the business, as well as follow-up assistance to both students and companies for ongoing evaluation of the job shadow experience.
<p>List all districts impacted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All BAC districts will be involved. 2. All BAC districts will be involved.
<p>List all businesses involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All BAC partners will be invited to participate, as well as all companies accessing Hometownopportunity.com. 2. All BAC partners will be invited to participate, as well as all companies accessing Hometownopportunity.com.
<p>List all related timelines for each phase of plan development and associated deadlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finding Job Shadows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue classrooms visits and presentations as requested (ongoing) b. Develop a professional development video for teachers for the Mercer County ESC's Professional Learning Day (October 2, then posted to ESC website for access) c. Include Job Shadow updates to Hometownopportunity.com as part of the ongoing improvements to the site (October-December) d. Develop a promotional plan to keep companies aware of the availability and use of the Job Shadow indicator (October-December) e. Create a Student Follow-Up Plan to ensure students who choose Job Shadow are being contacted (November) 2. Developing a Job Shadow Toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a committee charged with this task (October) b. Develop and implement idea for a toolkit (October-January, dependent upon materials and resources needed, with a final goal to distribute in early Spring).
<p>List the resources are needed for implementation (funding, manpower, tools, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources include those needed to enhance Hometownopportunity.com and keep the developers on task, as well as promotional items to increase awareness of the Job Shadow indicator. 2. Toolkit materials should be free and easily accessible. However, the core committee could discover the need for physical materials or promotional items necessary to deliver the toolkit to businesses.
<p>Identify any challenges that may impact this plan. How will the business advisory council overcome these challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing awareness and ensuring students are engaged and interested, not just "checking a box" in completing a job shadow, and ensuring the company understands the value – the BAC will be known as an advocate and support system for providing quality job shadows, both in student and company preparation and support. School staff are burdened by trying to help find job shadows – the BAC will encourage staff to help students use their resources to self-identify job shadows. 2. Job Shadows, time for the experience and follow-up assistance can be time-consuming – the BAC Toolkit will be developed to make this activity easier for all parties involved.
<p>Identify existing data and set measurable outcomes to achieve the plan. If data is unavailable, identify steps being taken to acquire this data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of students registered on Hometownopportunity.com, and who select "Job Shadow" as an interest, will be monitored and is expected to increase. Since this is a baseline year, we will use this data to set percentage increase plans in coming years. 2. The number of businesses with the Job Shadow Indicator and easily accessible contact information will increase. 3. Toolkit success will be measured by the number of companies using the toolkit and the evaluation tools provided, with more assessment criteria to be determined as the committee develops the kit.

Describe how the business advisory council plans **Coordinate Experiences** for the 2023-2024 school year.

- Describe how the business advisory council will connect students to experiential learning to show competency of skills learned through hands-on demonstration (for example, internships, problem-based learning, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships).

Initiative 1 Implement Pre-Apprenticeship Opportunities for high school seniors.

What collaborative action steps are required to facilitate achieving outcomes?

1. Work collaboratively with the Lake Campus Business Enterprise Center and local high schools to establish a pilot cohort of 8-15 students to participate in an "Introduction to Manufacturing" Pre-Apprenticeship program via a Good Jobs Challenge grant awarded to the Mercer County ESC in July 2023.
2. Create awareness of work-based learning, internships, problem-solving based learning and other experiential opportunities, and explore other in-demand areas and gather information about offering additional pre-apprenticeships and industry sector partnerships.

List all districts impacted.

1. All BAC districts will be involved.
2. All BAC districts will be involved.

List all businesses involved.

1. All BAC partners will be invited to participate, as well as all companies accessing Hometownopportunity.com.
2. All BAC partners will be invited to participate, as well as all companies accessing Hometownopportunity.com.

List all related timelines for each phase of plan development and associated deadlines.

1. "Introduction to Manufacturing" Pre-Apprenticeship:
 - a. Recruit and enroll students and businesses to participate in pilot (August-December)
 - b. Finalize curriculum based on state requirements and grant guidelines (September/October)
 - c. Assess pilot for continuous improvement and as required by Good Jobs Challenge grant stipulations.
2. Utilize BAC Quarterly meetings to continue to explore these options, how they can be implemented within the schools, what other in-demand areas might benefit (such as business, healthcare and Lean Six Sigma)

List the resources are needed for implementation (funding, manpower, tools, etc.).

1. Resources for the Pre-Apprenticeship program are provided through the Good Jobs Challenge Grant and include materials/supplies and costs of instruction.
2. Experts in the area, best practice examples and referral contacts/staff to support school and business questions to make implementation of these programs as smooth as possible are critical.

Identify any challenges that may impact this plan. How will the business advisory council overcome these challenges?

1. Myths and misperceptions regarding the quality of these programs exist – the BAC will provide an environment to connect with experts to overcome this perceived barrier.
2. School staff, parents and students need to better understand the differences between all these options – the BAC will work with each individual school to identify where the misunderstandings are and create a plan to address the concerns.

Identify existing [data](#) and set measurable outcomes to achieve the plan. If data is unavailable, identify steps being taken to acquire this data.

1. The Pre-Apprenticeship pilot will be tracked via the tool provided in the Good Jobs Challenge grant, which includes student count, success and post-assessment.
2. The number of students participating in these programs is expected to increase. Since this is a baseline year, we will use this data to set percentage increase plans in coming years.

Initiative 2 Raise awareness of industry-recognized credentials, graduation seals, and how graduation requirements can be recognized and valued in the workplace.

What collaborative action steps are required to facilitate achieving outcomes?

1. Host informational sessions and how-to forums, which provide easily accessible information about what these are, how they are earned, and what they mean to employers.
2. Working in tandem with the committee examining "Leadership Skill" credentials in "Developing Professional Skills (Initiative 2)", create pathway maps that show common credentials and the positions they could serve. Survey the region's employers to identify the credentials they would value and increase the number of credentials students receive in those areas.

List all districts impacted.

All BAC districts will be involved in all collaborative action steps.

List all businesses involved.

All BAC partners will be invited to participate, particularly with invitations to how-to forums and to complete surveys, as well as all companies accessing Hometownopportunity.com.

List all related timelines for each phase of plan development and associated deadlines.

1. Informational Sessions:
 - a. Provide information at our quarterly BAC Meetings, including guidelines on how to find more information about this topic (September, November, March, June)
 - b. Include information in the BAC newsletter described in "Build Partnerships (Initiative 2)"
2. Create Pathway Maps from Credential Earned to Position Gained:
 - a. Administer business survey in (November-December)
 - b. Create pathway maps based on high-demand credentials (January-March)
 - c. Integrate high-demand credential options into classrooms (if not already available)
 - d. Assess number of credentials earned

List the resources are needed for implementation (funding, manpower, tools, etc.).

1. Staff time to review and promote the credentials, both in the schools, in the businesses and ESC Teaching & Learning Department, and experts in this area to continue to share this information.
2. Staff time to review and promote the credentials, both in the schools, in the businesses and ESC Teaching & Learning Department, and experts in this area to continue to share this information.

Identify any challenges that may impact this plan. How will the business advisory council overcome these challenges?

1. These topics are constantly changing – the BAC will commit to staying on top of the most current information and updates via contacts at ODE and by attending monthly Career Readiness Leader Meet-ups. Relevant information from these sessions will be shared with all members of the BAC.
2. Surveys are often overlooked or do not gain a large response – the BAC will use existing meeting time to ensure partners are able to complete surveys and provide information necessary to developing pathway connections.

Identify existing [data](#) and set measurable outcomes to achieve the plan. If data is unavailable, identify steps being taken to acquire this data.

Utilizing the reports available via ODE (<https://reports.education.ohio.gov/report/report-card-data-industry-recognized-credential-attainment-%E2%80%93-masked-version>), the BAC will evaluate the number of students participating in these programs at the end of each school year, both to gauge success and identify areas in need of improvement.

Ohio' Business-Education Leader Awards for Excellent Business Advisory Councils Overview

The Ohio Business-Education Leader Awards for Excellent Business Advisory Councils recognize educators, business partners, staff, schools, businesses, educational service centers, joint vocational school districts and communities who come together to create dynamic, career-focused learning environments for students.

Selected business advisory councils demonstrate excellence in ensuring Ohio students are prepared for successful career paths, including college, industry credentials, apprenticeships, military enlistment or a combination of these. Business advisory councils pursuing this recognition will be considered for awards of excellence and star ratings.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- **Enrollment Eligibility:** Business advisory councils seeking the award must submit their annual plans and required addendum using the approved template in the Ohio Department of Education's Forms Submission Application by **Sept. 30**.
- **Data Considerations:** Data metrics can include, but are not limited to, trend data on previous school-year graduation cohorts earning the OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal, completing work-based learning and earning industry-recognized credentials.
- **Conditional Selection:** The award is subject to the Ohio Department of Education's review of the accuracy of the business advisory council's submission. The award review committee will consist of Department staff and business and education leaders.
- **Awards:** In addition to a star rating, state business and education leaders will select the following:
 - Excellence in Developing Professional Skill for Future Careers
 - Excellence in Building Partnerships
 - Excellence in Coordinating Experience

QUALITY PRACTICES

The business advisory council award is based on implementation of the following quality practices. During the recognition year, the business advisory council, in consultation with the local governing board, should:

1. **Develop Professional Skills for Future Careers** – Work together to delineate key professional skills needed for the future job market. Develop a curriculum that instills these skills while advising on changes in the economy and job market.
2. **Build Partnerships** – Develop and increase collaborative relationships among businesses, labor and education personnel. Partnerships should align with in-demand industries in region.
3. **Coordinate Experiences** – Create environments that allow students to demonstrate proficiency in critical professional and specialized skills that will aid in future employment.

In addition to the addendum to the Business Advisory Council Plan, the following information is requested from the submitting organization to qualify:

- A link to the previous year's joint statement or a copy of the joint statement:
 - [2022-23 Joint Statement](#) (link via Google Drive to PDF)
- Local data measuring the implementation of the Quality Practices. Data may be obtained from the school counselor, administration, career navigators, etc.
 - See questions below for data references.
- If the business advisory council represents multiple school districts, specify initiatives and objectives for each district and provide data for each district served.
 - See questions below for specific school mentions and data
- Responses to the following questions:

1. How has the business advisory council helped students prepare and successfully enter the local workforce? See below for detailed responses.

- a. Include any curriculum changes influenced by the business advisory council (state-specific initiatives, include outcomes and data).

2022-23 marked Year 2 of the implementation of the Career Navigator Service at the Mercer County ESC. The caseload of seniors needing one-on-one career coaching and mentoring support grew significantly, more than doubling in size as all Mercer County ESC schools (see list on page 1) referred more students to the program. The Career Navigator works to connect learning and experiences with career exploration by highlighting individual student strengths and skills that will be utilized in future careers.

Highlights of Year 2 include:

- i. 82% of students participating in the program graduated in May 2023 with an informed Career Plan, up slightly from 81% in Year 1.
- ii. New this year, students were both self- and staff-assessed on a Career Readiness Scale, rating from their readiness from 1-10, both the beginning and end of the school year. **The average readiness score change was 3.6 points, with students averaging a score of 4.71 in Fall 2022 versus an average score of 8.45 in Spring of 2023.**
- iii. YouScience was adopted as the primary assessment tool for students, and **75 of 76 students served indicated that the results were highly accurate and useful.**
- iv. The Career Navigator at the Mercer County ESC has completed the National Career Development Association's courses for certification in Facilitating Career Development (FCD) and for a School Development Career Advisor (SCDA), with The Pritchard Group. The FCD 120-hour training program prepares individuals to be career practitioners in schools, businesses, universities, and private practice. The training is known globally as learners practice and master skills to serve their clients and gain cutting-edge knowledge about career development. NCDA's School Career Development Advisor 45-hour training program prepares individuals to be career practitioners in K-12 schools or in other settings working with youth. Completers are eligible to apply for this industry-recognized credential: NCDA's Certified School Career Development Advisor. **This training had an immediate impact on the classroom/coaching activities essential to the program, including the above implementation of YouScience and the Career Readiness Scale.**

- b. Include how the business advisory council is preparing students with skills needed to address local business needs (technical and professional skills).

- i. In addition to the one-on-one coaching program, the Career Navigator partnered with the Mercer County Economic Development office to provide Professional Development for Career Content teachers and School Counselors, hosting "New Career Exploration Tools: How to Help Connect Your Students to Awesome Job Shadows!" in October 2022, as part of the ESC's Professional Development Day. An overview of hometownopportunity.com, this session encouraged teachers to use the new student dashboard to help registered students find job shadows in our area. The program also highlighted In-Demand Jobs data that could be used in classrooms where career discussions were taking place. Participation in this session grew from 12 in 2021 to 25 school staff in 2022, and the session was recorded and posted on the ESC's website for reference throughout the year.

2. How has the business advisory council and its members supported students in work-based learning (internships, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship) opportunities? (Career exploration activities such as should not be included in data.) See below for detailed responses that outline support.

- a. How many students have been placed in work-based learning experiences?

Mercer County ESC Fully-Aligned School District	Count of Students in Work-Based Learning Experiences	Count of Businesses hosting Students
Coldwater EV Schools	33 (Agriculture Capstone)	15-20
Fort Recovery Local Schools	116*	
Marion Local Schools	10 (Agriculture Capstone)	3-4
St. Henry Schools	7	
Tri Star Career Compact	180	55
TOTAL Students	346	73-79

*Fort Recovery students in Agriculture, grades 9-12, all include a WBL component in their program.

- b. What are some examples of high-quality work-based learning supported by your business advisory council?
 - i. Ejae Diehl, a 2023 graduate of Coldwater High School, completed both the Tri Star Construction Trades and P3 (Personalized Professional Pathway) program. His senior year, he worked for Bruns Construction in a work-based learning experience. According to Nick Koesters of Bruns Construction, Ejae is now working full-time and doing an excellent job. His programs at Tri Star allowed him to earn skills to become a productive employee with this local employer.
 - ii. Addison Gerlach began her work experience in March of 2023, helping RCS with Property Management at Boardwalk Village. Originally, her goal after graduating from Coldwater High School was to work with RCS temporarily, before starting her college career in Nursing this Fall. Addison fell in love with her work in property management and has since chosen to attend Wright State-Lake Campus, pursuing a business degree instead while remaining employed with RCS/Bruns. She recently told her employer that she is “really, really happy with us and would’ve never imagined this path for herself 6 months ago before starting with us.”

c. How many of your business partners have accepted students into work-based learning experiences? **See table above.**

d. How has work-based learning benefited students and employers?
 Work-based learning has created pathways for students to follow as soon as they graduate, providing both employment for the student and filling the talent need for the businesses. In 2022-23, our combined BAC recognized the need to better assist with all aspects of work-based learning, from helping all partners identify the difference between all the options available to students (work-based learning, internship, pre-apprenticeship, etc.) to helping schools and companies track the success of these programs. We believe wholeheartedly in the benefits student gain from these valuable experiences, which is why we have written specific goals into our 2023-24 Mercer County ESC Plan and worked to create a smaller, more focused and intentional BAC that works alongside Auglaize ESC to provide better, trackable and more meaningful experiences for our students.

3. How has the business advisory council supported mentorship programs and/or provided networking opportunities for students and professionals? See below for detailed responses.

a. What career activities have been influenced by the business advisory council? (Include districts involved and data on students involved in each activity.)

The 2023 Career Connections event hosted 950 juniors from 12 Mercer and Auglaize County

schools with 60 business representatives from 45 local companies. Students were asked to choose career areas of interest and then spent their time in classroom discussions with business representatives where they were encouraged to explore not just job openings, but the path to jobs in that industry. Highlights of the event included the following comments, collected via Google Forms:

- i. "I thought it was very organized and helped me open my horizons of other career paths."
- ii. "I felt it was most helpful to see the huge variety of jobs and different services that are offered so close to us. It sometimes seems like you have to move away to find a job that you are looking for but seeing all of these different companies up close brings the pressure down for plans after school."

In addition to the constructive feedback, the committee also concluded the event need to be reassessed to determine if students prefer a more hands-on experience, like other Career

Academy and Student Boot Camp events offered in neighboring counties throughout the region.

One student gave the following feedback: "I didn't like it, i thought it was a little boring. It wasn't for me," indicating that offering more hands-on experiences could be very well-received.

In addition, this feedback serves as another example to support having a BAC dedicated to only one county, allowing us to provide more strategic events where we can better use data to invite and inform students to more targeted, hands-on activities, with more efficient follow-up.

- b. What professional development opportunities are available through the business advisory council for teachers? (Include teacher bootcamps, externships and tours.)

Thanks to support through the Office of Workforce Transformation, the Mercer-Auglaize BAC was able to provide a summer Educator Boot Camp, a five-day experience for area educators which included first-hand experience about rewarding careers available in in-demand industry sectors in Auglaize and Mercer Counties. Participants received 3 graduate credits from Ashland University, paid for by the Office of Workforce Transformation. **14 educators participated** in the week, which included tours of 5 businesses, Tri Star Career Compact, and the Wright State University-Lake Campus Business Enterprise Center, culminating in a day of presentations where the educators shared how they would bring what they learned back to their classrooms.

The new Mercer ESC BAC recognizes the value of partnering for events like these camps; in reviewing the success and future plans, we are committed to providing a mechanism to follow-up with the participants to share the subsequent follow-up classroom success stories.

4. What major decisions has the business advisory council influenced for the member school districts and how have decisions impacted students?

- a. Our BAC remains committed to implementing new and expanded work-based learning in our districts through the following initiatives:
 - i. Our BAC forged a valuable partnership with higher education in 2022-23, joining forces with the Wright State University-Lake Campus Business Enterprise Center to earn a "Good Jobs Challenge" grant which allows us to offer a pilot Pre-Apprenticeship in Advanced Manufacturing. Students will have the opportunity to receive the Certified Manufacturing Associate (CMfgA) credential, and the grant funds the entire cost (ToolingU access, certification exam, instructor fees and lab/work supplies such as steel-toed boots).

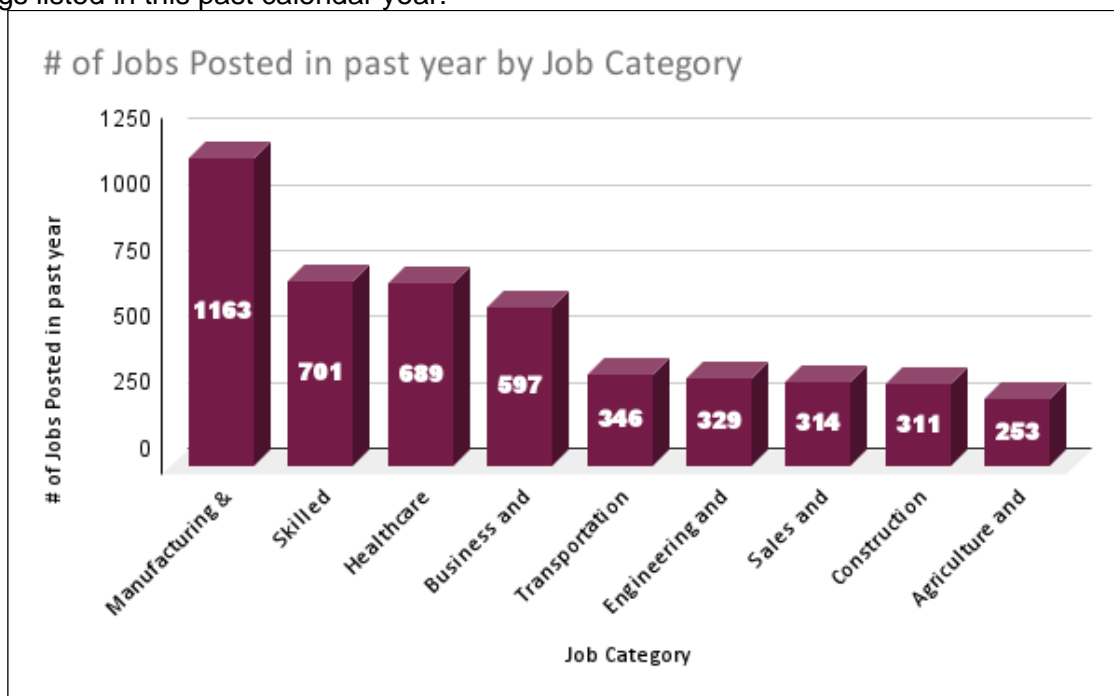
In addition to technical training, the program will provide career coaching and instruction in job readiness skills such as Work Habits, Team-Building, Industry-specific Information, Resume/Interviewing Prep and Job Searching. Set to launch in the 2023-24 Plan, the pilot is aimed to provide 8-12 students with this opportunity, with the intent to assess and add 3-5 more students in grant Year 2.

- ii. Our BAC also, through the Spring Success Bound conference, connected with SOCHE (Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education) to explore financial support for paid internships, a barrier to student and company participation in these efforts.

Our intent is to improve in this area for our next plan year. In May 2023, when Ohio Lt. Governor Jon Husted, announced the launch of “Find Your Career Pathway,” key components highlighted include Career Technical Education, College Credit Plus, Industry-Recognized Credentials and Pre-Apprenticeships. This launch provided a critical turning point for our BAC. Career Technical Education, provided to Mercer and Auglaize Counties by the Tri Star Career Compact, College Credit Plus and Industry-Recognized Credentials already exist in the educational offerings available to ESC-district students. Pre-Apprenticeship and work-based learning efforts need to be better established in order for us to provide additional, formalized pathways for students in the region. Our Mercer County ESC BAC is committed to continued improvement in this area.

- 5. How are the members of the business advisory council representative of the job market of the area you serve? (Specify industries represented on the business advisory council reflective of in-demand occupations in the area.)*

Working in collaboration with the Mercer County Economic Development Office, the BAC reviews in-demand job data gathered via hometownopportunity.com. Below is an updated graphical summary of job postings listed in this past calendar year:



In response to the review of this data, the BAC includes the following members in the top areas listed:

- 1. Manufacturing/Production: 10
- 2. Skilled Trades/Advanced Manufacturing: 8
- 3. Healthcare: 2 (including representation from Mercer Health, the region’s largest employer in this area)
- 4. Business and Sales/Marketing: 10
- 5. Transportation/Logistics: 2
- 6. Engineering: 2
- 7. Construction: 3

8. Agriculture:

3

Note that some areas intentionally overlap and provide insight into more than one area (such as Manufacturing and Engineering).

In addition, we are excited to include 2 local government representatives as well as additional higher education partners for the coming plan year.

Our newly established Mercer County ESC BAC by-laws (approved at our September meeting and included on our new website: <https://www.mercercountyesc.org/BusinessAdvisoryCouncil.aspx>) allow for open membership and we encourage and invite all business partners with a vested interest in this work to participate.

6. How is the business advisory council collecting, implementing and responding to feedback? Include samples of feedback (business, educator and student)?

Google forms continue to be the most utilized mechanism for gathering data, utilized for Career Navigator one-on-one coaching evaluations, Middle School Manufacturing Tours, Career Connections and Boot Camps.

Samples (Links to Google sheets summarizing responses are provided):

- a. [Career Navigator Job Shadows](#)
- b. [Middle School Manufacturing Tours](#)
- c. Career Connections:
 - i. [Students](#)
 - ii. [Educators](#)
 - iii. [Businesses](#)

In addition, the Mercer ESC BAC was thrilled to host a "BAC Brainstorming and Idea-Sharing Kick-Off" in August, attended by 75 partners who spent the morning collaborating about how to write our 2023-24 plan to best serve students in our area. Facilitated by Cassandra Palsgrove of Ohio Excels and Michelle Washington with the Ohio Department of Education, this working session created the foundation for our 2023-24 Plan. Partners were asked to complete a pre-event survey, which was used to spur table discussions and individual commitments to plan objectives. [Summaries of the event are included in this Google sheet link.](#)

7. What barriers has your business advisory council encountered in implementing these quality practices?

Resources continue to be a challenge, primarily with staffing. Business partners need to have their employees on task, so there is a conflict in trying to pull people away from their jobs. The Auglaize-Mercer BAC, while successfully awarded a 3-star recognition in the last plan year, struggled to find business representatives to serve at events such as Career Connections, and saw dwindling attendance at meetings as business partners were called to other work-site priorities.

In addition, helping to dispel myths related to work-based learning and illustrating the value of non-traditional pathways is a challenge for the education partners.

And last, creating awareness of the BAC and highlighting successful practices in action can be obstructed by conversation. The BAC strives to be action-oriented, and finding partners with time to dedicate to action following rich conversations can be difficult.

- a. How has it overcome these barriers or what needs to occur to overcome these barriers?

The plan to create a Mercer ESC BAC with intentional, action-driven strategies will allow for better focus and concentrated efforts on not just achieving initiatives but implementing follow-up assessment and activities to ensure ongoing success.

Working closely with school administrators by intentionally opening BAC membership to more staff (several content teachers, principals and counselors have come on-board since August) will help expand communication about “earn and learn” options for students.

And finally, dedicating time to creating a website, newsletter, and social media strategies to help market the BAC’s success, best practices, and ongoing strategies will create awareness of the action-driven plans we will implement in the future.

8. What additional information would you like to share about how the business advisory council develops professional skills for future careers? Please provide any details on how the work of the business advisory council is shared within the community.

Representatives involved in the Business Advisory Council were asked to attend and assist in the planning of multiple classroom visits, career days and job fairs where information about in-demand jobs, regional opportunities and the use of hometownopportunity.com as a tool for career exploration was presented. In 2022-23, this included examples like:

- a. Marion Local Career Day (approx. 250 students)
- b. St. Henry Middle School Career Day (approx. 250 students)
- c. Coldwater Middle School Career Day (approx. 200 students)
- d. Celina HS English Classes (approx. 30 students)
- e. Parkway HS Senior English Classes (approx. 40 students)
- f. Coldwater HS Senior Civics Classes (approx. 40 students)
- g. Fort Recovery Sophomore Career Class (approx. 30 students)
- h. Tri Star Spring and Fall Career Fairs (approx. 600 students)

In addition to discussing career tools and regional career opportunities, the time is also used to demonstrate appropriate social media use, how to present yourself to a professional and other skills that are critical to job success.

These activities are shared with the community via ESC and Career Navigator social media, as well as school newsletters and newspapers. Again, the intent for the coming plan year is to be more strategic in creating BAC awareness.

9. What additional information would you like to share on how your business advisory council works collaboratively on initiatives to build partnerships and enhance experiences for students?

Expanding the Career Navigator Program in all 7 Mercer County ESC-service district schools has created a direct link to high school counselors and administrators, where the regular presence allows for relationships that form the foundation for contributions to program improvements. The Career Navigator maintains a regular, consistent presence at monthly meetings for school staff, including:

- a. Monthly Guidance Counselor Meetings
- b. Monthly Principal Meetings (includes elementary, middle/junior high and high school staff)
- c. Monthly Superintendent Meetings

At these meetings, the Career Navigator promotes events, provides updates from businesses, listens to feedback and updates from schools, and shares BAC strategies and best practices for bridging schools and businesses

The Career Navigator also attends state-wide meetings, such as the monthly Career Readiness Leaders Meet-Ups, July Virtual Learning Series events, and BAC Awards, to keep the BAC informed of state-wide initiatives and updates. As an example, the connection to SOCHE regarding internship opportunities was borne from this attendance.

10. What additional information would you like to share about how career readiness experiences are coordinated? How have these experiences benefited students and employers?*

- a. The BAC continues to coordinate Middle School Manufacturing tours, creating awareness of employment opportunities of our most in-demand sector in our region. **Over 450 students, teachers and chaperones toured five industries over 2 days in 2022**, including groups from Coldwater, Fort Recovery, Marion Local, St. Henry and Versailles schools. Feedback collected by Google forms as mentioned in item 6 above included comments like “Because I didn’t know that much about manufacturing and now I know much more and might want to do it when I am older.” The news of the success of these tours continues to travel: For October 2023, 6 of the 7 ESC-aligned districts will participate, bringing almost 600 students to 7 company sites.

Our BAC Plan includes a strategy to implement a means to then track student career readiness planning from these events through graduation. As outlined in our plan, Initiative 1, Strategy 2, the ESC is coordinating a pilot program with “Find Your Grind”, a future-ready platform that provides classroom and curriculum tools at the middle and junior high school levels. Connecting the use of this classroom tool to the real-world experiences made visible by the tours will allow us to also pilot the tracking of career readiness/exploration from middle school through graduation.

- b. In its second year, the Career Coaching program in Mercer County had direct student impact in the career readiness planning process for Undecided seniors:
 - i. Increased participation in Year 2 by 105%

	2021-22	2022-23
Celina	1	23
Coldwater	6	8
Fort Recovery	4	7
Marion Local	7	16
Parkway	8	8
St. Henry	5	7
Versailles	6	5
	37	74
Alumni (By Request)		
Marion Local	-	1
Celina	-	1
TOTAL	37	76
Increased participation by	105.41%	Year 1 to Year 2

- ii. 82% completed a Career Plan by May of 2023, by working with the Career Navigator in career readiness preparation, including assessments, job shadows and career research
- iii. 37% (80% (20 of 26 of those responding) are following their Career Plan at 3-month check-in in August
- iv. End of the year feedback, collected via Google forms, was positive:
 - 1. “I found the individualized career coaching to be very helpful! At the beginning of senior year I had absolutely no idea if I was going to be able to college or not, but by the end of the year I knew my career along with where I am going to college”

2. “The individual career coaching helped the most because it showed me all my options for a future career.”
 - v. To gauge the success of the program, a data collection and analysis process has been established and will be maintained to assess short-term (yearly) and long-term (5-year) metrics, to help inform all stakeholders of the program’s successes and challenges.
 - vi. One sample data set that will be critical to program measurement includes a county-wide cumulative review of senior plans upon graduation. Per school data is totaled by county, and will establish baselines for future strategies and programs.
 1. [Mercer County ESC Schools Career Plan Summary \(Google Sheet\)](#)
- c. Last year, the Career Navigator identified barriers such as the connection between Undecided students who completed their senior year without a plan to not having a valid Ohio driver’s license and therefore, were unable to participate in job shadows, interviews and/or college visits. In March of 2023, the Mercer County Educational Service Center (ESC) was awarded a \$10,000 Drive to Succeed grant from the Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO), to provide scholarships for students to assist with the cost of Driver's Education classes. To date, 6 students have taken advantage of the grant with more applying as the schools refer them to the program.
 - i. [Drive to Succeed Website](#)

The Mercer County ESC BAC is proud of this grant award as well as the Good Jobs Challenge Grant, and sees seeking out and taking advantage of these funding opportunities as a critical service the BAC can provide to its partners.