

Business Advisory Council 2019-2020 Highlight Report

Ohio is home to 123 designated hosts of business advisory councils. Each council is expected to submit a plan to the Ohio Department of Education no later than Sept. 30 of the reporting year.

Recognizing that beginning March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted Ohioans plans, the information included in this report reflects the great work that business advisory councils across the state planned to accomplish.

Of the plans received in 2019, 79 provided some explanation to at least one of the three legally required¹ roles of business advisory councils. For those 79 plans, an in-depth examination was conducted to evaluate what the hosts planned to do that year to fulfill the three roles business advisory councils serve.

The three roles for business advisory councils are:

- 1) **To advise local school districts on changes in the economy and job market and the area in which future jobs are most likely to be available.**
- 2) **To advocate for the employment skills most critical to business and industry and the development of curriculum to teach these skills.**
- 3) **To aid and support local school districts by offering suggestions for developing a working relationship among businesses, labor organizations and educators.**

Plan Activity Report

Based on a keyword search, the following is a breakdown of the activities from 79 plans that contained information about business advisory council operations. Additional keywords used are in parentheses.

- 1) **Advising** about the economy (economic trends, market's demands/projections): 45/79, 56.96%
- 2) **Advocating + informing** need for employment skills ("soft skills"/professionalism/employment skills in curriculum): 43/79, 54.43%
- 3) **Aid + support to programs that bring together businesses/labor/educators/students** (job fairs, staff training, student meetings, collaborating with existing economic entities in town/country): 41/79, 51.89%
 - a. Job fairs (job fairs, career fairs, internship/shadowing events): 17/41, 41.46%
 - b. Staff training (educators tour local businesses to learn workforce needs, local business leaders meet with educators to discuss priorities): 8/41, 19.51%
 - c. Student meetings (one-on-one meetings between students and local business leaders, small group meetings): 7/41, 17.07%

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

1) How have business advisory councils promoted job fairs, internship opportunities and in-demand jobs?

There was limited discussion about *how* business advisory councils promote their messages; however, a few interesting things to note include the following:

- a) Two schools built websites to connect employers and job openings with students and abilities
 - i. Galion City School District-
<https://communityopportunity.com/company/profile.php?id=60>

¹ Source: <https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Operating-Standards/Business-Advisory-Council-Operating-Standards.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>, page 2.

1. Galion City School District also has an app, making this resource mobile accessible.
 - ii. Auglaize County Educational Service Center - <https://hometownopportunity.com/careers/>
- b) Cuyahoga Falls City School District had radio spots to promote the business advisory council programs
 - i. It also distributed marketing materials/flyers, along with two other schools.
- c) Madison Champaign County Educational Service Center set up a social media channel for communication (specific platform(s) and account name(s) not provided).
- d) Brooklyn City School District set up a grant program for special teacher curriculum integrating business advisory council advice, student scholarships and grants for businesses to bring on students as interns

2) Who participates on the business advisory councils?

Seventy-eight schools listed members and their occupations in their plans. The members of those business advisory councils include the following:

- Local business leaders: 71/78, 91.02%
- Educators: 66/78, 84.61%
- Government (Department of Job and Family Services, city council, OhioMeansJobs staff, etc.): 22/78, 28.20%
- Other local economic entities (Economic development organizations, unions, etc.): 14/78, 17.94%

3) How often do business advisory councils meet, what do they discuss and how effectively is the process working?

The plans indicated the following about business advisory council meetings:

- Quarterly (four meetings annually): 77/93, (82.79%)
- Monthly (12 meetings annually): 5/93, (5.37%)
- Remainder of business advisory councils varied between holding meetings three-13 times per year.

The plans for 14 of the business advisory councils indicated the following about their leadership:

- Two of 14 presidents/co-presidents of the business advisory councils are superintendents, including:
 - The president of Olmstead Falls City School District's business advisory council is the superintendent.
 - Gallia Vinton Educational Service Center has two presidents — one is the superintendent, the other is a local business leader.
- The other 12 seem to be led by one of the local business leaders participating on the business advisory council.

Standouts

Below are some examples of notable practices the business advisory councils provided in their plans.

1. Clermont County Educational Service Center – Employment Program
 - Clermont County's Supply Chain Career Program
 - "High School students are involved in a supply chain career pathways experience through a partnership with United Way of Greater Cincinnati and Partnership for a Competitive Workforce. Each school is paired with a major regional business such as UPS or RTS (Reliable Transportation Solutions). Job shadowing began in September 2018 and is ongoing. A career expo at UC-Clermont College occurred. Lunch and Learn activities take place throughout the school year. Co-op students will be identified from each school with the experience scheduled for Fall, 2019"

2. Galion City School District – Promotion/Business-Student Infrastructure
 - Community Opportunity website to connect students and employers (<https://communityopportunity.com/company/profile.php?id=60>)
 - “Motivated by the workforce development challenges facing Crawford County, the Crawford Partnership initiated conversations with COMSTOR in 2017 to develop the Community Opportunity website. Before Community Opportunity could become a reality, we needed to develop a professional brand, an implementation strategy, and most critically -- we needed funding.

The first phase of Community Opportunity included meetings with local governments, the Community Foundation for Crawford County, and with the school boards of all area school districts (there are six in Crawford County alone). After building the community vision for this effort, we were ready for the next step: building the site -- and buy-in -- from ground-up. With \$5,000 commitments from area schools and \$40,000 from the Community Foundation, we made a total investment of \$80,000 to implement, introduce, and integrate Community Opportunity in Crawford and Wyandot Counties. Community Opportunity has been embraced by our local schools and we continue to build strategies to integrate it into career and college readiness development. The site continues to grow, with new jobs and business profiles added on a weekly basis. At the time of submission, Community Opportunity also had a total of 260 registered job seekers on the site. These profiles can be viewed by local businesses seeking individuals with specific skills or areas of expertise.

There is also a Community Opportunity app for Apple and Android users, which allows job seekers to browse local career opportunities on-the-go”
3. Auglaize County Educational Service Center – Promotion/Business-Student Infrastructure
 - Hometown Opportunity website to connect students and employers (www.HometownOpporutnity.com)
 - “Hometown Opportunity (www.HometownOpporutnity.com) is a site that was developed to connect businesses with their potential future workforce. Much effort is focused on making schools and students aware of the multitude of opportunities to be explored, right at their fingertips”
4. Cuyahoga Falls City School District – Promotion/Community Outreach
 - The school district implemented a uniquely engaging outreach program including radio spots to promote the business advisory council’s mission and marketing materials distributed in the community.
 - “September 6, 2019 - Marketing materials; radio station spots; website; flyer distribution
Weather - Bring awareness to the manufacturing industry in the Akron area”
5. Madison Champaign County Educational Service Center – Promotion/Community Outreach
 - The educational service center created a website and social media presence to engage with students about job opportunities and economic conditions (<https://mccesc.org/>; https://twitter.com/M_C_ESC; <https://www.facebook.com/madison.champaign.esc>)
 - “Market the internship program throughout local schools, through local media, electronic media and social media to increase awareness and participation”
6. Brooklyn City School District – Grant Program
 - The district’s business advisory council helped organize several grant programs to develop student-business relationships in the community (for example, internships, teacher curriculum, etc.).

- “High school graduate scholarships, Brooklyn CS teacher grants for innovative educational initiatives, and most recently “hire-an-intern” grants. The Brooklyn CS superintendent has surveyed area businesses for important workplace skills needed for his students to be successful immediately in their workplaces. The Hire-an-Intern program is providing rising Brooklyn CS seniors summer work opportunities to build those skills in an authentic setting while earning money. The Brooklyn Chamber has supported this program with money that helps subsidize these worker salaries, hence incentivizing businesses to take on a summer employee in their business.”

7. East Guernsey Local School District – Senior Capstone Program

- East Guernsey Local integrates a business advisory council-informed curriculum about “soft skills” into the senior year project, including encouragement to meet the OhioMeansJobs Readiness Seal.
 - “[Goal:] Increase the percentage of students who are “skill ready” for college and/or careers. This will be accomplished by establishing relationships with business and industry through internships, job shadowing, and mentoring. A tangible way to see progress and address this is through the implementation of a capstone project for 12th-grade students. Part of this capstone project will be to introduce the Readiness Seal that has been established by OhioMeansJobs. As part of the capstone, students will receive mentoring on “soft” or professional skills to better prepare them for their futures.”

8. Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center – Promotion/Community Engagement

- The business advisory council helped identify key “soft skills” to integrate into students’ curriculum. This resulted in seven videos and a website to serve as a guide and resource for students, educators and families (<https://www.mvesc.org/587>).
 - “Many regional businesses and industry representatives stressed the lack of “soft skills” in job candidates. From a list of more than thirty skills, the MVBAC landed on seven key essential skills to focus on during the 2019-2020 school year. The seven skills were used to inform videos that can be used in middle and high schools career exploration courses and curriculums. Businesses partnered with MVBAC to provide employee interviews and testimonials on the importance of each skill. Each video also features a local business that provides an overview of the field and career opportunities available to students. Through this video series, we will expose approx. 30,000 students to importance of essential skills from an employer perspective as well as exposure to local industry and job opportunities. The video series can be viewed at <https://www.mvesc.org/587>... the “Characteristics for Success” video series will be utilized by the MVBAC-aligned school districts to complement their existing career exploration curriculums at the middle and high school grade levels”

9. Dublin City Schools – Career Exploration Program

- The Emerald Campus allows students to explore one of six “academies” relating to different fields of work, and three more will be added next year (<https://www.dublinschools.net/ProgramsHome.aspx>).
 - “BAC members have consistently stated it is important that our students have as much exposure to potential careers so they can make informed decisions regarding college and the workforce after graduation. These discussions led the District to acquire the former Verizon building located in the center of our community. We have now transformed this building into an experiential learning academy offering in depth career exploration possibilities. More than 1,500 high school students are expected to spend part of their day at we now call the Emerald Campus. Students explore careers in one of six academies, with three more academies set to be added next school year”

10. ESC of Lake Erie West – Economic Analysis Strategy

- The ESC of Lake Erie West’s business advisory council is participating in the Toledo Lucas County Chamber of Commerce Talent Alignment Strategy Regional Initiative. It has a step-by-step framework to identify the economy of the community, identify divergences between worker skills and employer needs, and develop strategies to mitigate these discrepancies.
 - “Report 1: Talent Analysis - has identified the makeup of the region’s labor force and identifies the industries and occupations that are thriving. This report serves to construct a baseline analysis of the Toledo region’s demographics and an analysis of the trends in the workforce and education infrastructure pipeline, including the supply of graduates in the Toledo region.
 - Report 2: Supply-Demand Gap Analysis - has identified what skills the workforce currently has, what skills employers need, and how to fill in gaps in the workforce pipeline. This report will review the growing industry and occupation clusters and provide a comprehensive inventory of all education and training assets in the region. Using this inventory this report will include a supply, demand and program gap analysis as it relates to gaps in humans and educational programs.
 - Report 3: Talent Alignment Strategy – will provide recommendations on how to align and improve the region’s talent pipeline. The strategy will include high level goals for developing, retaining, and attracting talent within the region. These goals will include several strategy recommendations for action, tactics to be deployed across the region and talent development systems, as well as a high-level implementation plan to guide strategic activity.
 - This Talent Alignment Initiative is research based and designed to inform and provide workforce development guidance and collaboration in the NW Ohio Region”