

Muskingum Valley Business Advisory Council
Joint Statement
March 1, 2019

In April 2018, the Muskingum Valley Business Advisory Council (MVBAC) was created to provide a forum to network and build relationships among education, business and community leaders. The MVBAC mission is to provide an opportunity for school districts, business and community leaders to discuss employer needs across five Ohio counties (Coshocton, Morgan, Muskingum, Perry, and Tuscarawas), identify strategies and skills to assist students in exploring their career paths and encourage collaboration and build relationships among council partners.

Also, in April 2018, the MVBAC Steering Committee convened and included representatives from local school districts, regional organizations and MVESC leadership and staff. They meet quarterly to plan, set MVBAC agendas, approve bylaws and recruit additional members to serve on the steering committee and council. The MVBAC Steering Committee met September 21, 2018, October 26, 2018, and January 25, 2019. Additional meetings are scheduled for April 26, 2019, and August 30, 2019.

The MVBAC consists of school district representatives, area agency partners, such as Job and Family Services, Ohio Means Jobs, and Chamber of Commerce, and business leaders representing a wide variety of industries, including small businesses and large national corporations. The MVBAC met September 11, 2018, November 5, 2018, and February 5, 2019. Additional meetings are scheduled for May 1, 2019, and September 4, 2019.

The MVBAC plan was developed with input from 17 districts and career centers aligned to the MVBAC to support and invest in the future of students by collaborating with education, business, and community leaders. School districts aligned to the MVBAC include: Coshocton City, Coshocton County Career Center, Ridgewood Local, River View Local, Morgan Local, East Muskingum Local, Franklin Local, Maysville Local, Mid-East Career and Technology Centers, Tri-Valley Local, West Muskingum Local, Crooksville Exempted Village, New Lexington, Northern Local, and Newcomerstown Exempted Village. The plan was finalized on September 1, 2018. Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center serves as the lead agency in the convening of the Business Advisory Council and Business Advisory Steering Committee.

The MVBAC plan goals align with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Each Child Our Future strategic plan, August 2018. Goal One of the plan, which is “Ohio will increase annually the percent of high school graduates who, one year after graduation, are enrolled in a post-high school experience, serving in the military, earning a living wage or engaged in meaningful vocation.” (ODE, 2018).

Complementing the ODE plan is the Ohio Attainment Goal 2025, (Lumina Foundation: A Stronger Nation, 2016), which states that by 2025, 65 percent of Ohioans, age 25-64, will have a degree, certificate, or other postsecondary workforce credentials of value in the workplace. Ohio is at 43 percent and ranks 33rd in the nation. The council will work to increase the percentage of high school graduates ready to pursue a vocation, the military or college. To work toward this goal, the MVBAC will assume these roles listed below.

The MVBAC will be the forum for examining the needs of students and the future workforce. Some of the key roles will include, but not be limited to:

- align education with the needs of business and gain an understanding of characteristics for student success.
- provide opportunities to share trends and forecasts in business and education.
- influence tomorrow's workforce skills and preparedness.
- build relationships with other business and educators responsible for preparing the future workforce.
- host quarterly meetings to promote learning from each other.
- provide opportunities to influence a student's career path and ultimately, impact the quality of their lives and contributions to a community.

Data was gathered at the first MVBAC meeting held September 11, 2018. Education and business representatives completed a 10-item survey to assess employer needs and identify ways the council could help them. Respondents to the survey indicated:

- the top soft skills needed in today's employees were dependability, responsibility, positive attitude, and good communication skills.
- the top academic skills needed in today's employees were verbal and written expression, math applications, and computer skills.
- 70 percent of respondents were willing to provide a tour of their facility or campus for the council.
- 25/26 respondents indicated it was somewhat to very difficult to find qualified employees for a 96 percent response rate supporting the need for soft skills training.

During the November 5, 2018, meeting, attendees expanded on the soft-skill and academic-skill data from the September meeting by developing supporting evidence and examples for each characteristic. Robust conversation and ideas around these characteristics will be used to support a video series created for a middle and high school student audience for use by MVBAC districts.

The videos will feature employers and employees from the five MVBAC counties discussing the "characteristics for success," the important soft skills and academic skills identified as critical by the MVBAC. Video interviews will emphasize the importance of finding success as an adult by demonstrating soft skills like a positive attitude, dependability, and responsibility, and the academic skills of written expression, verbal expression, math application, and communication skills. The videos will provide teachers and employers with a tool to help prepare students and adults for the workforce. Our goal is to have the videos ready to use by August 1, 2019.

Information related to Drug-Free Clubs of America and the Careers in my Community project were shared with attendees at the February 5, 2019, meeting. Drug-Free Clubs of America's goal is to help students understand what the world of work is really like, as drug-testing is a standard part of employment now. Mid-East Career and Technology Centers is implementing this program during the 2019-2020 school year. The Careers in my Community project and website were developed by

neighboring Ohio Valley ESC after seeing a need to educate students of job opportunities in their local communities. Schools can use the website as a tool to give students, parents, and educators a vision of hope and opportunity in their local community. Company profiles (career opportunities, benefits, customizable to the company) can link directly back to company websites with job opportunities/postings. A career pathways coordinator works with companies to develop profiles, partnerships, job shadowing, and mentoring opportunities for students. The MVBAC is interested in expanding the current Careers in my Community model to include the counties served by the MVBAC.

Additional plans for 2019-2020 include developing formal job shadowing, internship, and apprenticeship opportunities for students and businesses, as well as coordinating opportunities for teachers to tour local businesses and industries.