

Muskingum Valley Business Advisory Council  
Joint Statement  
March 1, 2020

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. During the 2019-2020 school year, the MVBAC Steering Committee met August 26, 2019, October 21, 2019, and January 13, 2020. An additional meeting is scheduled for March 23, 2020.

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 4, 2019, October 23, 2019 and February 12, 2020. An additional meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2020. A student career pathways fair was scheduled for November 26, 2019 but was cancelled.

The 2019-2020 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 in July 2019. 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.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the MVBAC met and identified the importance of essential skills in gaining employment. 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>.

OhioMeansJobs representatives from all MVBAC counties (Muskingum, Perry, Morgan, Coshocton, and Tuscarawas) will meet with school district career readiness contacts to foster connections between the groups. OhioMeansJobs has numerous local career connections and

support tools designed for students that many of our local school districts are unaware of. The MVBAC is committed to leveraging existing resources, like OhioMeansJobs, in supporting educators with career readiness activities.

Through an Appalachian Regional Commission OMEGA grant, three MVBAC school districts are piloting an advanced manufacturing pathway in their high-schools during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Students in this course can earn the Certified Production Technician (CPT) credential and gain work-based learning experience through the use of in-class robotic technology (SkillBoss). The MVBAC will invite students from this pilot to share their experiences using the technology and engaging in the curriculum at future MVBAC meetings. Also, through this grant, the school districts have access to transportation stipends to support field trips to local manufacturing facilities. We anticipate at least two field trips and/or classroom guest speakers with each district during each year of the grant.

The MVBAC uses state and local data to identify trends and changes in our regional economy and job market. Ohio Labor Market reports, Workforce Development and Job and Family Service reports provide state data. We also use local county data from chambers of commerce and economic development boards to understand in-demand jobs and future areas of employment possibility and economic growth. Data analysis is shared with the MVBAC steering committee to guide and shape meeting and activities during the school year.

The working relationship among business, labor and education is critical to “moving the needle” on the percentage of graduates ready for the workforce in 2025. The MVBAC provides a venue for moving forward in addressing the needs and concerns of our districts and employers and the goals in the BAC plan. Communication among all council partners will happen through steering committee and BAC members, who represent education, business and labor, as well as economic development groups (Ohio Means Jobs, Chambers of Commerce) and collaborative councils (AOP-20). In the 2019-2020 school year, the MVBAC Steering Committee will grow to include representatives from industry (manufacturing and healthcare) and workforce development (Ohio Means Jobs). We believe this will build stronger relationships between education and business by including industry partners as stakeholders in the planning and design activities of the MVBAC.