

Muskingum Valley Business Advisory Council  
Joint Statement  
March 1, 2021

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 2020-2021 school year, the MVBAC Steering Committee is scheduled to meet November 19, 2020, February 17, 2021, April 7, 2021, and June 15, 2021.

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 2020-2021 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 2020. 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.

In 2019, the MVBAC created and launched a video series, "Characteristics for Success", that highlights seven key essential skills through employee interviews and testimonials. These videos can be used in middle and high school career exploration courses and curriculums and were made available via YouTube in 2020. The MVBAC is working to develop a facilitator's guide to the videos and are encouraging districts throughout the state (and beyond) to utilize this free tool during this period of remote and hybrid instruction. The MVBAC will be relaunching and re-marketing the videos under a new tagline of "Talent Lives Here", encouraging employers and students to recognize the opportunities and workforce available within Southeastern Ohio.

Employability skills are taught and reinforced throughout our member school districts through a variety of curriculums and methods. Makerspaces, tech and STEM camps, student ambassador programs, and direct career-technical education provide opportunities for students K-12 to gain exposure to employment skills and pathways. Some districts offer a daily advisory session to focus on soft skills and character strengths, as well as supports for internships with local businesses. Curriculum supports include Number Talks, Making Student Thinking Visible, and the Grid Method.

New for 2020-2021, participating MVBAC districts will be implementing the "Real World Problem Scenario" funded by the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation and administered by Building Bridges 2 Careers in Marietta. This K-12 curriculum is free for districts and consists of

scenarios developed through collaboration between teachers and partnering business representatives. MVBAC districts will be undergoing teacher training on January 12, 2021 and meeting employers who have agreed to participate on January 14, 2021. The MVBAC is excited to see how this program will create stronger educator/business relationships and strengthen community and career connected learning in our region.

The “Characteristics for Success” video series continues to be utilized by the MVBAC-aligned school districts to complement their existing career exploration curriculums at the middle and high school grade levels. The videos can create classroom conversation opportunities focused on essential skills as well as local industry and job exposure.

The MVBAC Steering Committee has agreed on a new meeting format this year which allows for spotlights on innovative educator and business practices related to career connected learning, as well as an economic indicator spotlight. These updates will be provided by workforce and economic development partners. 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.

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 2020-2021 school year, the MVBAC will be working more closely with Building Bridges 2 Careers and joining a network of economic and workforce development collaborators through BB2C Summit and Workshop opportunities. Connections are already being made that are directly impacting MVBAC districts and employer access to students, including job shadowing, mentoring, field trips, and other community connected learning.

Additionally, the MVBAC Coordinator will be launching an outreach campaign with regional industry leaders to attract more large-scale employers to participate in meetings and student opportunities. Research through the Ohio Office of Research has been conducted to discover each county’s leading employers. Employers not already engaged with MVBAC will be targeted through a marketing campaign to join our efforts and recognize their role in “Talent Lives Here”.

Lastly, the MVBAC will create a directory of appropriate contacts within each participating industry/business for educators to make connections with to schedule community and career connected learning (i.e. scheduling guest speakers and field trips, coordinating mentoring and job shadowing opportunities, hosting mock