

**BERRIEN, CASS, & VAN BUREN  
CAREER & EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 14, 2024  
Michigan Works! Hybrid Meeting**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Members Present: Chris Newland, Robert Smith, Chris Machiniak, Barbara Craig, Dr. David Kruger, Allie Knapp, Mikki Spagnoli, Dr. Karen Reilly

Members Absent: John Fonash, Jay Bauer, Sarah Workman, Bob Kara, David Colp

Others Present:

Suzanne Eman-Jachnig, LEO

Brandon Fuller, LEO

Michigan Works! Staff Present:

Mindy Watson

Mark O'Reilly

Meeting Called to order at 9:02 am.

**Introduction:** Round the Table

Approval of meeting minutes from 3.14.24 meeting. Motioned for approval by Chris Newland and second by Chris Machiniak all were in favor.

**Board Vacancies:**

Members to be replaced:

- Jay Baur; Manufacturing Employer
- John Fonash; Adult Education Representative
- Sarah Workman; Parent Representative
- Diane Owen-Rogers; MISTEM Representative\*
  - This position is not filled by MW! BCVB

**Presentations:** Chris Machiniak, Mikki Spagnoli, Robert Smith

School CTE Directors presented a comprehensive summary of the current state and future directions of Career and technical education programs, district programming, and student movement. It highlights the financial models, enrollment strategies, community engagement efforts, and industry partnerships that support these educational initiatives.

## **Overview of CTE Councils and Regional Differences:**

- **CTE Councils in the State**
  - There are 53 CTE councils throughout the state, each with unique characteristics and regional differences.
  - The presentation highlighted the number of CFITs (Career and Technical Education Facilities) across the state and their locations.
- **Regional Involvement and Demographics**
  - Discussion on the involvement of different districts and the impact of demographics, such as eligibility for free or reduced lunch.

## **Structure and Components of CTE Programs**

- **Essential Components**
  - CTE programs must include group instruction, lab introduction, and work-based learning.
  - Advisory support is crucial for the success of these programs.
- **Program Clusters**
  - There are twenty-six different clusters, including construction, cybersecurity, and human services are enrolled through local districts, which prioritize and provide enrollment information.

## **Financial and Enrollment Models**

- **Tuition-Based Model**
  - Districts that send students to CTE programs retain state allowances, operating on a tuition-based model.
  - One district pays approximately \$5,900 per student for half-day CTE programs.
- **Shared Time Students**
  - Last year was the first year for shared time students, with two students participating.
  - The program aims to expand, providing more access to CTE programs for students without a community college system or career center in their county.

## **Future Needs and Development**

- **Focus Groups and Feedback**
  - Focus groups were held to discuss the current state and future of CTE in Cass County.
  - There is a consensus on the need for financial resources to expand programming without additional millage.
- **Career Development and Work-Based Learning**
  - A forum is planned to discuss career development and work-based learning opportunities for Cass County Students.
  - The forum aims to facilitate seamless transitions for students into the workforce or further education.

## **Engagement and Opportunities**

- **Community Engagement**
  - Jenni, business solutions manager, is enthusiastic about youth engagement and plans to attend the upcoming forum.
  - The team is involved in planning an event for 2025, with a focus on engaging young people.

## **Overview of District Programming and Student Movement**

- **Shared Time and Student Movement**
  - The Berrien and Cass districts lack a village and tax center, operating on a shared time basis.
  - Approximately 400 students leave the district for programs elsewhere with 700 slots signed up, indicating a gap between desire and availability.
  - Intentional programming is initiated at accessible locations to avoid duplicating opportunities for students.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs**
  - Annually around 2,700 students participate in CTE, a significant increase from 2,300, attributed to recovery post-COVID.
  - Focus on ensuring students gain industry-recognized certifications and facilitating transitions from CTE courses and industry roles.
  - Emphasis on apprenticeships and internships to enhance the handoff from education to employment.

## **Funding and Transportation**

- **Transportation Costs**
  - Transportation costs are currently assumed by students or local entities.
  - As student numbers increase, transportation runs become more feasible, with efforts underway for North County.
- **Funding for CTE**
  - CTE courses are expensive, but state grants provide additional funding to support these programs.

## **Early Middle College Program**

- **Program Overview**
  - The program has averaged 70 students per cohort, with recent expansions into CTE pathways.
  - Students engage in CTE courses during junior and senior years, transitioning to full-time college students in the fifth year.
  - Successful transitions noted, such as students enrolling directly into nursing programs.

## **Industry Partnerships and Student Preparedness**

- **Industry Collaboration**
  - Collaboration with local businesses to provide real-world experiences and facilitate student transitions into the workforce.
  - Programs focus on employability skills, including punctuality, teamwork, and professional conduct.
- **Advisory and Appreciation**
  - Industry partners are engaged in advisory roles, with appreciation events held to acknowledge their contributions.
  - Students are encouraged to develop resumes and portfolios, preparing them for industry expectations.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

- **Space and Logistics**
  - The lack of centralized expo centers poses challenges for hosting large events.

- Discussions are ongoing to identify potential industry spaces that could accommodate such events.
- **Collaboration Across Counties**
  - **Combining events across multiple counties is logistically challenging, necessitating separate events for each county.**

### **Employer Updates:**

Chris Newland from TRU by Hilton provided updates on adult training and employment. There were challenges in utilizing individuals from adult training programs due to logistical issues, particularly related to transportation and parental work schedules. The industry is looking to the summer months to ramp up employment.

**Secondary School Updates:** Allie Knapp, director of The Bridge Academy of Southwest Michigan provided updates around students being back in the building after the environmental assessment and clean up actions had taken place. She highlighted the various initiatives that are taking place in Berrien County and how to connect Bridge Academy students to these programs and initiatives, for example, building the relationship with The Berrien Talent Collaborative.

**Community College Updates:** Dr. David Kruger provided an for Lake Michigan College around Financial Aid and Apprenticeships. The state of Michigan provided tuition support, which was beneficial but also created challenges with national financial aid processes. A significant focus remains on apprenticeship programs, providing students with practical work opportunities. Soft skills development was also noted. Employers have noted a lack of soft skills in new hires. Efforts are being made to address this through partnerships and training programs.

Dr. Karen Reilly provided updates for Southwestern Michigan College. Dr. Reilly stated that they have been working towards the State's 60 by 30 initiative. The college is passionate about building certificate programs that meet students' and employer's needs while working with high schools in and out of Cass County. There was also discussion around free community college for all and what SMC is doing to make it affordable, likely at no cost to students. Experimenting more and more with programs entirely online for three different programs offered.

Meeting adjourned at 10:08

The scheduled dates for the 2025 CEAC Meetings are:

- March 13, 2025
- June 19, 2025
- August 21, 2025
- November 13, 2025

The next CEAC meeting will be held March 13, 2025, in the Great Lakes Room at Michigan Works! 499 W. Main Street. There will also be a virtual link for those who are unable to make it in person. Just a reminder that we need three committee members present on site at Michigan Works.

The Zoom Link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86588821997?pwd=bHBmd2N2K3h1b21Hem4veWpuTFBCZz09>

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