
Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC)
Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: Committee Chair, Tim Staffen, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Beauchamp (KCC) [∨]	David Maurer (PS) [∨]	Tim Staffen (CISD/CTE)
James Berry (SJC ISD/CTE)	Rebecca Murph (BC PS) [∨]	
Cindy Goss (KRESA/CTE)	Sue Quiter (BACC) [∨]	
Lori Henrickson (MISTEM)	Dustin Scharer (BACC/CTE) [∨]	
Jerry Johnson (ISD-Cal) [∨]	Jim Sertic (PS) [∨]	[∨] Attended virtual
Sarah Mansberger (KRESA)		

STAFF PRESENT

Debbie Horn (MWSW)
Ashley Iovieno (MWSW)

OTHERS PRESENT

David Prellwitz (Labor)[∨]
Brandon Fuller (MCDA)[∨]

MWSW CEAC MEMBERS ABSENT

James Callahan (Labor)	LaToy Green (Parent)	Ken Willcut (Labor-Plumbers & Pipefitters & HVAC Local Union 357)
Jonathon Current (Labor)	Windy Rea (Job Corps)	
Dr. Mark Dunneback (KVCC)		

INTRODUCTIONS

All attendees present in person and online introduced themselves and the agency/company they represent.

MINUTES (*Exhibit A*)

Motion by Lori Henrickson and supported by Jerry Johnson to approve December 8, 2025, CEAC meeting minutes. Motion carried.

CLNA AND PERKINS UPDATES

Tim Staffen reported a CLNA Summary for Region 21 using Perkins V Core Performance Indicators and identified key Challenges and improvement strategies.

- Key challenges and barriers include:
 - Student Readiness and Socioeconomic Factors. – Many students enter CTE programs underprepared academically and face barriers such as poverty, trauma, limited resources, and social-emotional challenges.
 - Attendance and Transportation - Inconsistent attendance is a major issue, particularly due to rural transportation limitations that limit access to programs and work-based learning.

- System and Scheduling Constraints - Complex district schedules and limited flexibility with the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) requirements hinder program completion.
- Teacher Shortages - The difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified instructors has led to program waitlists. Contributing factors include lower salaries compared to the industry, workload, and burnout.
- Postsecondary & Industry Gaps - Limited alignment with colleges and barriers to dual enrollment, credentialing, and youth employment restrict student opportunities.
- Proposed strategies include:
 - Academic and Attendance Support – Provide targeted tutoring (via CTE consultants and paraprofessionals) and hire an Attendance Coordinator to address barriers and improve engagement.
 - Workforce Alignment and Soft Skills – Expand programs in high-demand fields (e.g., advanced manufacturing, EV technologies, skilled trades) while emphasizing employability skills like problem-solving and adaptability.
 - Equity & Special Populations – Increase support for underrepresented students through partnerships and targeted services, including ESL programming.
 - Professional Development – Offer differentiated training for instructors, including industry skill development, classroom management, and curriculum enhancement to improve retention and student outcomes.

Cindy Goss reported a CLNA Summary for Region 20 using Perkins V Core Performance Indicators and Identified key findings. Region 20 results show both similarities and differences compared to region 21.

- Shared challenges include:
 - Student readiness and socioeconomic factors impacting academic performance
 - Attendance concerns
 - Transportation barriers, particularly affecting participation in programming and work-based learning opportunities.
- A key difference is that the districts demonstrate greater flexibility with MMC credits. Students can apply CTE coursework toward requirements such as a fourth math credit, science, or world language, which has been beneficial.
- Staffing – Teacher recruitment and retention presented challenges over the past year; however, all intended programs are currently staffed and running.
- Ongoing Challenges – Math achievement and attendance remain the primary areas of concern.
- Grant Funded Activities
 - Career exploration support (Zello) in St. Joseph County
 - Regional Math Improvement Plan (serving both counties)
 - Attendance support initiatives
- Program Quality Efforts
 - Continued focus on improving program quality
 - Supporting students in earning industry credentials
 - Assisting teachers in preparing students for credential attainment

BUSINESS UPDATES

Dave Maurer reported that his company's industry remains strong, with solid growth in shipments and incoming orders. He noted that the business is benefiting from tariffs due to a shortage of U.S.-based valve manufacturers; however, the broader economy may not reflect this. On the workforce side, it is relatively easy to fill entry-level roles, but there is an ongoing shortage of skilled workers. To address this, his

company is looking to career and technical education programs and is encouraged by the developments in Kalamazoo.

Jim Sertic agreed with Dave Muarer that demand for highly skilled workers remains strong. He reported that this trend has been consistent over the years and highlighted that communication to youth pursuing CTE education can lead to solid job opportunities.

There was a brief discussion regarding the limited focus on AI in the workforce compared to the emphasis on soft skills. The employers agree that soft skills remain critical and note that AI is still evolving, and the impact varies by field. Overall, the group agreed that while AI is an emerging factor, soft skills and technical competencies are the primary focus.

Ashley Iovieno reported that the Going PRO Talent Fund Cycle 2 application was expected to open in early April; however, the state had not yet finalized the budget due to an ongoing review and reallocation of unused funds. Ms. Iovieno shared some upcoming Skills and Sync events, including an educator session on April 22 and an employer roundtable in Potterville on April 14. Hiring activity at Ford Blue Oval remains positive, with approximately 300-350 employees hired to date, and the continued focus is on the more technical roles. There was a significant layoff of 160 workers at Shiloh Industries in Galesburg. Local support provided job-search assistance and a job fair for the affected employees. National Apprenticeship Week, scheduled for April 27-May 1, will feature public information sessions and internal staff training to enhance support for apprenticeship pathways. Additional updates included upcoming job fairs in Kalamazoo and Battle Creek, outreach and partnership events, and participation in a recent event in Sturgis.

EDUCATION UPDATES

- *St. Joseph County* – James Berry reported that preparations for the fourth annual MiCareerQuest™ event, May 5 at the Doyle Center, are underway, with approximately 60 employers expected to participate. Mr. Berry recognized the Work-Based Learning Coordinator for being featured in a Race to Talent article, reflecting progress in expanding the U.S. Department of Labor's registered apprenticeships in the county. Recent student engagement events included career exploration days at Glen Oaks Community College for all 10th graders, with interest in new programs such as Cosmetology. Mr. Berry noted participation in DECA and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) events, featuring the recognition of a longtime DECA advisor, and continued growth in Career and Technical organizations. Additionally, St. Joe County hired a Special Populations consultant, enhancing support to approximately 160 CTE students.
- *Battle Creek Public Schools* – Rebecca Murphy reported that BCPS has a strong student and teacher engagement. A recent job fair drew over 60 employers, providing valuable interview experience for students. The employer feedback indicated that students were better prepared than in previous years. Additionally, Ms. Murphy reported that BCPS is preparing to launch a Ford Future Builders Lab in the fall, which will provide new hands-on learning opportunities. Grant applications for CTE expansion funding are ongoing, and a student-led mini-grant project has been developed through business classes. Upcoming activities include senior capstone “passion project” presentations, industry tours for sophomores, and planned externships with community partners.
- *KRESA* – Cindy Goss reported that there is a continued process in expanding CTE opportunities and student access to industry-recognized credentials. The efforts to improve testing access have been successful, with aviation students now able to complete FAA certification locally in Battle Creek, and the Career Connect campus (CCC) newly approved as a Pearson VUE testing center for IT credentials, with pharmacy technician certification pending approval. The CCC is also launching summer camps for middle school students in areas such as culinary, healthcare, design, and mechatronics to increase early exposure to career pathways. There has been strong community engagement, with over 1500 attendees at the recent open house and ongoing student tours in preparation for upcoming mock

interviews and job fairs. Program expansion is moving forward with new CTE opportunities at both the middle and high school levels, including robotics, hospitality, and engineering, along with plans to collaborate more closely with regional instructors on professional development. Students are also continuing to excel, with several earning recognition at a state vet science competition. On the staffing side, a new principal has been hired, and a few open positions remain in instructional leadership and technical program areas. Sarah Mansberger added an update that the CCC was recently featured by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) for effective CTE strategies, recognizing the success of the new building and overall approach. Capacity is approximately 85%.

- *Branch Area Career Center (BACC)* – Dustin Scharer reported that BACC has hired two health science teachers for next year, an auto body instructor has been hired to relaunch the program, and ongoing interviews are happening for an agriculture science position. Student engagement efforts are ongoing, including a completed 8th-grade tour to promote CTE enrollment. Mr. Scharer highlighted that Cheryl Covell, a health science teacher, is retiring and was recognized as Branch County Educator of the Year, honoring her contributions to expanding student opportunities and community partnerships in healthcare.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

- *Kellogg Community College (KCC)* – Bobby Beauchamp reported that KCC launched a hospitality certificate program in partnership with local CTE programs, with plans to create stacked credential pathways in collaboration with Grand Valley State University. Through an MEDC grant, KCC is providing significant onboarding and workforce training for Ford employees, including a new six-week Electrical Production Operator Boot Camp and a proposed certificate program designed to align with industry needs and support student access through financial aid. Expansion efforts are underway in Barry County, with increased enrollment in welding and machining programs and ongoing collaboration with local partners to grow industrial trades. Other student engagement initiatives include summer career exposure camps, Manufacturing Day events, and exploration of new programming to increase female participation in the trades. The college is also pursuing grant funding to expand facilities, including the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTC) and other campus locations, to help meet workforce demand and modernize equipment and programming.

ADULT EDUCATION

- *Calhoun County ISD* – Jerry Johnson reported that the 107A funding stream has been extended, moving the deadline from June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2027. Progress is being made in implementing the navigator roles and coaches successfully supporting programs across the region.

MISTEM

- *Western Michigan University* – Lori Henrickson reported that the MiSTEM network was initially included in the governor's proposed budget for reinstatement next fiscal year. Current operations are limited due to staffing shortages, with only 12 of 16 regional director positions filled and reduced capacity at the state level. Funding is secured through September 2026, allowing programs to continue in the short term, but long-term sustainability remains uncertain. Reductions in funding have hit statewide programs hard, making it tougher to access what used to be free teacher training in computer science and STEM. Now, fewer teachers are joining due to the costs involved. Grant funding has helped support several regional efforts, including career events, teacher workshops, and outdoor learning opportunities in partnership with local schools and organizations. The region also secured competitive funding for two local districts to expand their science programming. Advocacy efforts are ongoing, and stakeholders are encouraged to submit letters of support to help ensure continued funding for the MISTEM program.

OTHER UPDATES

Michigan Center for Data and Analytics (MCDA) – Brandon Fuller updated that several reports will be released in the coming months, including an updated registered apprenticeship report and dashboard, as well as annual planning and workforce analysis reports expected in early May. These resources will provide comprehensive labor market, demographic, and workforce alignment data for each Michigan Works! region to support planning and decision-making. Additional communication will be shared once the reports are available.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

NEXT MEETING

The next CEAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2026, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S.Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Horn, CEAC staff support

Tim Staffen, Chair CEAC