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## Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) Meeting Minutes December 8, 2025

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**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.

### MW SOUTHWEST CEAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Beauchamp (KCC)<sup>v</sup>  
James Berry (SJC ISD/CTE)<sup>v</sup>  
Cindy Goss (KRESA/CTE)  
Lori Henrickson (MISTEM)  
Jerry Johnson (ISD-Calhoun)  
David Maurer (PS-Humphrey Products)

Sue Quiter (BACC)<sup>v</sup>  
Dustin Scharer (BACC/CTE)<sup>v</sup>  
Jim Sertic (PS-Sertic Consulting)<sup>v</sup>  
Tim Staffen (CISD/CTE)

<sup>v</sup> Attended virtually

### STAFF PRESENT

Debbie Horn (MWSW)  
Ashley Iovieno (MWSW)

### OTHERS PRESENT

Allecia Lamb-Ridge (MI LEO-WD)<sup>v</sup>  
Anita Lopez-Schlabach (GOCC)

David Prellwitz (Labor)<sup>v</sup>  
Kristine Stevens (GOCC)

### MW SOUTHWEST CEAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Lanre Ajayi (GOCC)  
James Callahan (Labor-Trades)  
Jonathon Current (Labor)  
Dr Mark Dunneback (KVCC)  
LaToy Green (Parent)

Sarah Mansberger (KRESA ISD)  
Rebecca Murphy (BC Public Schools)  
Windy Rea (Job Corps)  
Ken Willcutt (Labor-Plumbers & Pipefitters  
& HVACR Local Union 357)

### INTRODUCTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Individuals who attended in-person and virtually introduced themselves and the agency/company they represented.

### MINUTES *(Exhibit A)*

**Motion by Cindy Goss and supported by Jerry Johnson to approve May 12, 2025, CEAC meeting minutes. Motion carried.**

### 2026 Draft Calendar *(Exhibit B)*

**The CEAC meeting schedule for 2026 was approved by consensus of members present.  
CLNA & Perkins Updates**

- Tim Staffen has announced that this year there is a required reporting cycle for Michigan schools

operating State Approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) must be completed, as mandated by Perkins V. The CLNA supports the use of data to guide planning, funding, and accountability for Perkins funds, ensuring CTE programs are high-quality, equitable, and aligned with workforce needs. It also serves as the foundation for the local Perkins funding application.

- Perkins applications must align with the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), as well as other specific requirements. The process also involves collecting performance scores from the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) and an analysis of relevant data to yield constructive feedback. A focus is placed on core performance metrics, with any adjustments being strategic to ensure targeted improvements.

## BUSINESS UPDATES

*Humphrey Products*—Dave Maurer reported that Humphrey Products has successfully engaged with the new Career Connect Center (CCC) in Kalamazoo. They have onboarded interns and are in the process of expanding their team with additional new hires. Their recruitment efforts have been fruitful, and the overall outlook remains robust.

*MW Southwest Business Services* - Ashley Iovieno reported:

- *MiCareerQuest™ events* – Branch County’s career exploration event was held on October 16 and has now been recognized as an official MiCareerQuest™ event. Similarly, the MiCareerQuest™ in Kalamazoo, held on October 28 and 29, was a success. MWSW contributed to the event by providing virtual reality headsets for career exploration, a feature that consistently engages and excites students.
- *Layoffs* –In Mendon, International Automotive Components (IAC) has proactively organized events to support employees affected by the IAC layoff in securing new opportunities. A job fair was conducted on December 10, ahead of the scheduled layoffs on December 20. Meanwhile, Post in Battle Creek plans to close one of its production lines. The impact of the WARN notice is less severe than initially anticipated, as some employees have opted for early retirement, and others have transitioned to different roles within the company. Originally, 71 employees were expected to be affected, but this number has significantly decreased due to these changes.
- *Job Fairs* – MWSW organized a job fair in Kalamazoo on November 18, which saw an impressive turnout of 350 attendees. A comparable event was held in Battle Creek on December 12. In Coldwater, an English on Demand (EOD) session was held to accommodate the significant number of non-English-speaking participants. This event was well attended, and EOD sessions are increasingly popular.
- *Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF)* – The State budget for the GPTF was reduced from \$55 million to \$29 million, representing a significant decrease. This reduction has heightened the urgency of submitting applications promptly. The candidates for Cycle 1 of FY26 have been submitted to the state, with award announcements scheduled for mid-December. Preparations for Cycle 2 applications are currently underway. The program’s renewal, albeit with a reduced budget, was largely due to strong advocacy from employers.
- *Race to Talent* – MWSW hosted a Race to Talent event at the Michigan Works! Annual Conference in Kalamazoo on September 8, 2025. The event recognized local employers and organizations, including Bronson Healthcare Group, Better World Builders, and Ripple Effects, for their commitment to registered apprenticeship programs.

## EDUCATION UPDATES

### Secondary Education

*St. Joseph County ISD* – James Berry reported the following:

- The CTE Teacher Academy classes now participate in Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Recently, students attended the fall conference, where CTE teachers delivered presentations to all student attendees during a breakout session.

- The CTE Mobile Career Lab visited numerous middle school parking lots across St. Joseph County this fall, aiming to engage 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in advanced manufacturing careers through interactive, hands-on activities. These middle school visits are scheduled to continue in the spring of 2026.
- In the fall, the St. Joseph County CTE Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) program received a generous donation from American Axle, which included various pipe wrenches and related tools valued at approximately \$1,500. Mr. Berry extended his gratitude to Randall Page for his invaluable assistance with this donation prior to his retirement.
- In the fall of 2026, two alumni of the CTE Public Safety program will be sworn in as deputies for the St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department. We are proud to witness these successful transitions into fulfilling careers that align with the objectives of the CTE programs.
- For the upcoming school year, St. Joseph County is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Southwest Michigan Beauty School in Sturgis. This collaboration will provide eight student seats for the next CTE Cosmetology class.
- A recent graduate of the CTE Aviation program has successfully obtained his Private Pilot License and intends to further his aviation studies at Northwestern Michigan College.

*Branch County CTE* – Dustin Scharer reported the following:

- MiCareerQuest in Branch County took place on October 16 at the Coldwater Recreation Center. The event featured participation from 49 businesses, institutions, and organizations representing five distinct career pathways. Approximately 411 ninth-grade students from Branch County attended. The students engaged in hands-on activities and were organized into three groups, rotating through various sessions throughout the event.
- On Tuesday, November 4, the Branch Area Careers Center (BACC) welcomed approximately 470 tenth-grade students from Bronson, Coldwater, Colon, Pansophia, Quincy, and Reading. Each student had the opportunity to explore two BACC programs, allowing them to assess alignment with their career and academic aspirations.
- Ongoing projects include CLNA and follow-up surveys.
- BACC is currently hiring for Health Sciences, Auto Body Instruction, and Construction Trades Paraprofessional roles. Additionally, there is a strong likelihood of an upcoming Welding Instructor position.

*Kalamazoo RESA (KRESA)* – Cindy Goss reported the following:

- The Career Connect Campus is currently at two-thirds of its enrollment capacity.
- Discovery Lab presented an engaging educational experience titled “Mission to Space,” where students collaborated in small groups to navigate an escape room-style lesson. This initiative is conducted in partnership with Air Zoo, whose educators contribute by offering a class period dedicated to experiments that highlight careers in aerospace. This fall, approximately 1,500 students from grades four to eight were successfully engaged in this project. In the spring of 2026, the plan is to expand outreach to all KPS, Portage, and Comstock schools. Additionally, they participated in the Air Fair at AZO Airport, which attracted around 500 attendees. Recruiting has already begun for the 2026-27 academic year.
- All 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students have been invited to tour the CCC, with visits scheduled from now until February, including a presentation and building tour. Additionally, KPS is arranging for 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students to participate.
- An Open House is scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM for students and parents. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with instructors, teaching assistants, and current students to learn about all CTE programs, as well as Education for the Arts (EFA) and Early Middle College (EMC) opportunities. Additionally, there will be three evening Zoom Q&A sessions dedicated to CTE, EFA, and EMC.

- KRESA is enhancing student support through three Work-Based Learning (WBL) coordinators and three counselors who deliver in-class Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) assistance. Additionally, a Student Success Coordinator is responsible for overseeing accommodation for all students with an individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan.
- Lastly, KRESA has job openings for the positions of Electrical Technology Technical Assistant, HVAC Technical Assistant, and Aviation Technical Assistant that will be posted soon. Additionally, an Interim Principal has returned from retirement to support the first year. A permanent position for the principal will be advertised in late winter or early spring.

*Calhoun Intermediate School District (CISD)* – Tim Staffen reported the following:

- In October, CISD participated in the MiCareerQuest™ event in Kalamazoo and the event was highly successful.
- CACC actively promotes pre-apprenticeship programs, establishing a partnership with Geislinger to recruit candidates from mechatronics and welding programs. The vetting process is underway, and they plan to offer two students a summer position. From these candidates, one will be selected for an ongoing apprenticeship. CACC is seeking to collaborate with additional employers to expand this program.

### **Post-Secondary Education**

*Kellogg Community College (KCC)* – Bobby Beauchamp reported the following:

- KCC successfully hosted Articulation Day in Calhoun, Barry, and Branch County schools.
- They participated in MiCareerQuest™ in Kalamazoo, emphasizing trades, business, and public safety.
- The institution is expanding its trades and Hospitality certificate programs, incorporating field trips and introducing event planning into the Business Management Curriculum next year.
- In partnership with Ford Blue Oval, KCC will launch a training program in the spring, featuring two cohorts with an EV curriculum to maintain a robust employee pipeline.
- Additionally, they conduct Trade Center Tours and continue to engage youth through the “Crayons to Careers” program.

*Glen Oaks Community College (GOCC)* – Kristine Stevens reported the following:

- GOCC is dedicated to providing customized training programs to establish a pipeline for careers in CDLA and floor covering installation.
- They are actively supporting IAC and similar companies in assisting dislocated workers.
- They are coordinating with KRESA to arrange tours of the new Career Center in Kalamazoo, fostering greater connectivity and involvement.
- Workshops on Excel and QuickBooks are currently being scheduled.
- GOCC is contributing to the EV Jobs Academy Grant in collaboration with Michigan Works! Southwest.
- Looking ahead, they are developing training programs in personal finance, leadership, and sales.

### **Adult Education**

Jerry Johnson reported the following:

- The State Budget resulted in an 18% reduction in funding for Adult Education in the region, amounting to a decrease of \$500,000. Despite these financial constraints, adjustments have been implemented, and several notable success stories have resulted.
- One of the 15 approved providers will cease operations after this year. In the spring of 2027, a Request for Proposal (RFP) process will be initiated to solicit bids for this opportunity.

### MI Job Corps

No reports, as no representatives from this sector were present.

### MiSTEM

Lori Henrickson reported the following:

- A short introduction, including her experience as a classroom teacher in Las Vegas. Originally from Michigan, she applied for her current position over the summer and returned to Michigan in the fall.
- Despite the defunding of MiSTEM due to state budget constraints, her salary is secured through September 2026, although the outlook beyond that remains uncertain. Efforts are underway to secure philanthropic funding, and a grant has been received from General Motors, which could significantly impact the fiscal years 2026 and 2027
- Each region will benefit from the GM grant to sustain innovative STEM learning initiatives using the 3 P's approach.
- Lori is committed to contributing in any capacity and is eager to facilitate connections among individuals across various sectors.

### OTHER UPDATES

*“Crayons to Careers”* – Tim Staffen presented a PowerPoint highlighting the program's success. The Crayons to Careers (C2C) is a K-5 initiative focused on early and equitable STEM and career development, in alignment with Michigan's K-12 Career Development Model. The program introduces elementary students to diverse career pathways through classroom lessons, hands-on activities, employer partnerships, and educational field trips, while actively engaging parents and the broader community.

Through collaboration with teachers and local industries, C2C integrates STEM concepts into the curriculum and builds teacher capacity to connect learning to real-world careers. The project emphasizes that career development should begin early and involve strong partnerships between educators and employers, leading to increased student awareness, stronger community engagement, and meaningful real-world learning experiences.

Calhoun County ISD – a video was shown highlighting the achievements of Chef Ella from Calhoun County.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jim Berry announced that Tim Staffen is being recognized with an ACTE Administrator of the Year award. He will be accepting this in front of approximately 1200 people. Tim responded if is very humbled and grateful for the recognition.

### NEXT CEAC MEETING

The next CEAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2026, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

### ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Debbie Horn, CEAC staff support

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Tim Staffen, Chair CEAC