
Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) Meeting Minutes May 12, 2025

CALL TO ORDER – Committee Chair, Tim Staffen, called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

MW SOUTHWEST CEAC MEMBERS PRESENT

James Berry (SJC ISD/CTE)
Cindy Goss (KRESA/CTE)^V
Jerry Johnson (ISD-Calhoun)^V
Dustin Scharer (BACC/CTE)^V
Sue Quiter (BACC)

Jim Sertic (PS-Sertic Consulting)
Tim Staffen (CISD/CTE)
Brian O'Donnell (PS-Hi-Tech Electric)^V
Bobby Beauchamp (KCC)^V

^V Attended virtually

STAFF PRESENT

Ashley Iovieno (MWSW)
Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Debbie Horn (MWSW)

OTHERS PRESENT

Brenda Stewart (MEDC)^V
Lisa Smith (KRESA)

Ray Guzman (MI LEO-WD) ^V

MW SOUTHWEST CEAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Lanre Ajayi (GOCC)
James Callahan (Labor-Trades)
Dr Mark Dunneback (KVCC)
LaToy Green (Parent)
Kevin Lavender (KVCC)
Sarah Mansberger (KRESA ISD)

Dave Maurer (PS-Humphrey Products)
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*)

A correction was noted on page 3 of the March 17, 2025, meeting minutes. Under Kalamazoo RESA, the second bullet, 384, was changed to 1,017.

Motion by James Sertic and supported by Sue Quiter to approve the March 17, 2025, CEAC meeting minutes with the noted correction. Motion carried.

CLNA & Perkins Updates

- Tim Staffen has announced that the participating schools will engage in a data collection process

during the upcoming school year. They will submit forms to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) department, which will then relay the information to the state. This initiative is part of a broader school improvement strategy aimed at assessing and enhancing educational effectiveness across institutions.

- Key to this initiative is the alignment of the application for Perkins funding with the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) and specific requirements of schools, particularly as Michigan implements a plan to improve math and reading performance. The process will involve collecting performance scores from the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), followed by an analysis of relevant data to yield constructive feedback. The review will concentrate on core performance metrics, with any necessary adjustments being strategic rather than extensive, ensuring targeted improvements.
- Mr. Staffen highlighted the critical nature of this initiative due to the high demand for CTE programs amidst limited funding. While the initial deadline for data availability was set for April, it has since passed without clarity on the release. Feedback from schools is expected by January, with an online portal to access the data for analysis. The finalized information is anticipated by September, and the CLNA and Perkins will be agenda items and discussed at the CEAC meeting on September 15.

BUSINESS UPDATES

Sertic Consulting and Implementation—James Sertic reminded everyone that the grand opening of the new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center is scheduled for May 22, 2025. He emphasized the importance of a centralized location for attracting new businesses, suggesting that a focused site would be more appealing to potential investors and entrepreneurs. Mr. Sertic pointed out that while Kalamazoo County boasts an excellent CTE program, it's currently spread across various locations. By consolidating resources and facilities, he believes the CTE center can enhance visibility and accessibility, ultimately fostering a more robust business environment.

MW Southwest Business Services - Ashley Iovieno reported:

- *Going PRO Talent Fund* – The independent applications for the FY25 Cycle 2 are being reviewed and finalized. The application period for the GPTF Employer-Led Collaboratives (ELCs) is still open. So far, MWSW has submitted two ELC applications, and another is in process for submission.
- *Apprenticeships* – There have been major changes at the Department of Labor, with four out of five Apprenticeship Training Representatives (ATRs) opting for retirement, leaving only one ATR and the State Director covering the entire State of Michigan.
- *MiCareerQuest St. Joseph County* – The MiCareerQuest™ event was held at the Doyle Center last week and was very successful. The event featured over 50 employers and nearly 700 students.
- *Layoffs* – Some companies are experiencing lay-offs, one in Kalamazoo (The Michigan Immigrant Rights Center), due to federal funds being cut. The expectation is that more layoffs will occur in the coming months. JoAnn Fabrics is facing layoffs, while Heartland Recreational Vehicles is laying off approximately 120 employees. To assist those affected, an orientation session and a job fair will be held in May. Additionally, they are also providing training opportunities for staff in various locations to help them transition into new employment.

EDUCATION UPDATES

Secondary Education

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

- He thanked Michigan Works! Southwest for the generous grant received to support the MiCareerQuest™. Overall, the day was filled with productive discussions and valuable outcomes to benefit the community and educational initiatives.
- St. Joseph County HVAC students participated in the CTE Showcase event in Lansing and were invited to the House floor by Representative Steve Carra.

- A full-time consultant with expertise in special populations has been hired and will commence their role on July 1, 2025.
- The Michigan Occupational Special Populations Association (MOSPA) Conference was held in Boyne. Next year, it will be held in Muskegon.
- A signing ceremony for the students in the Teacher Academy was held. This significant event brought together educators and stakeholders to celebrate the commitment to advancing teacher development and excellence in education.
- The automotive program hosted the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) organization on-site, enriching the Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings.

Branch County CTE – Dustin Scharer reported the following:

- On April 1, eighth graders participated in an exploration visit to the Career Center building.
- On April 23, a job readiness fair took place where students had the opportunity to engage with local employers from Branch County. During the event, students practiced their communication skills, dressed professionally, and participated in mock interviews to enhance their job-seeking abilities.
- In late April, the welding program created a large tree sculpture, which has been installed in downtown Coldwater. This event was covered by Channel 3 news, highlighting the program's achievement and contribution to the community.
- A Career Signing Day was held on May 1 to celebrate students securing jobs in their chosen fields. The event was a success, with more than 30 students officially committing to opportunities within their career paths.
- The CTE building is undergoing upgrades, including the installation of new signage.
- On May 9, the annual Senior recognition event celebrated 271 students who completed their programs. During the event, approximately \$80,000 worth of scholarships and employment tools were distributed to support these graduates in their future endeavors.
- On May 13, sixth graders will visit the Career Center to explore available opportunities.

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

- The Career Connect grand opening for the public is scheduled for May 22, 2025, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at 3500 Vanrick Drive, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The instructors are currently preparing the classrooms for this event, which aims to showcase the new facility.
- The Culinary Arts program's Chef Kharen Shelton was honored at the 2025 American Culinary Federation (ACF) as Culinary Educator of the Year.
- Two students achieved third place in Central's Pro Start marketing program.
- Three students were finalists in the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) competition.
- During credentialing season, numerous students have successfully obtained their credentials, showcasing their skills and competencies.
- Two students successfully obtained certificates in unmanned aircraft, demonstrating their expertise and knowledge in this growing field.

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

- On May 12, Pennfield High School hosted a Senior Recognition Night for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. This event, initiated last year, was moved to the evening based on family feedback for better participation due to work commitments. The location may vary each year depending on available space, and participants received yard signs to take home.
- The week of May 5, the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) interviewed and filmed a remarkable culinary student at the Career Center, highlighting her journey of overcoming challenges. Initially shy, the student has transformed into a student leader, notably taking charge during the pro-star competition. The students' achievements, stemming from her participation in a special populations

group, led to her recognition and a positive experience, which included receiving a commendatory letter. The goal of the visit was to create a video showcasing the student's story and to use it for recruitment efforts for the program. It was requested that the video be shared with the group once it is available.

- Delta Dental has identified a shortage of dental healthcare professionals in Michigan. They plan to collaborate on new programs under the 51.00 Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) Code. They may provide funding to support the training efforts of students, working with CTE and Kellogg Community College (KCC), despite KCC's limited capacity for student licensing. This initiative aims to give students a better understanding of the dental field, addressing the need for more professionals while acknowledging the constraints faced by community colleges in scaling programs.
- A "Crayons to Careers" event was held, featuring one employer. The event was highly successful, prompting organizers to seek 12 additional employers for future participation. They are collaborating with KCC and utilizing available grant funds to enhance the initiative. A PowerPoint presentation has been prepared to share more about the program, which is aimed at third graders. This can be shared at the next CEAC meeting.
- A "Crayons to Careers" kindergarten initiative is seeking 5-10 additional employers to collaborate on creating lesson plans that will culminate in a mini career fair featuring hands-on activities for students. In the past, the program garnered enthusiasm from both children and teachers, with many employers outside of the manufacturing sector expressing interest in participating in and expanding the initiative to include more classes.

Post-Secondary Education

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

Adult Education

Jerry Johnson reported the following:

- Adult Education providers recently met. The emphasis for a new grant for Adult Education is on enhancing career navigation and coaching services, with a budget of \$1.6 million allocated from Section 107(a) funds for this purpose.
- Enrollments in adult education are increasing, and early performance indicators show improvement.
- As Mr. Johnson transitions to a new position as superintendent of the Calhoun ISD, he will continue to oversee Adult Education reporting for the region.

MI Job Corps

There was no official report provided. However, it was noted that there was an Executive Order issued to cut the Job Corps programs nationwide. There are efforts underway to have the order rescinded.

MiSTEM

It was mentioned that WMU is the official fiscal agent for the region's MiSTEM, and efforts are underway to hire a MiSTEM Regional Director. There is a temporary individual at the State of Michigan who is available to assist with these responsibilities until a Regional Director has been established.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kathy Olsen reported that Kris Jenkins is retiring. Additionally, Ms. Olsen also declared her own retirement, effective August 1.

WDB RENEWALS/NOMINATIONS FOR WDB EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

Kathy Olsen reported that the individual selected as the Branch County ISD Superintendent to replace Kris Jenkins and Dr. Paul Watson, President of KCC continue as the education representatives on the Workforce Development Board. It was also recommended that Dustin Scharer continue as the alternate appointment

for the Branch County ISD Superintendent and Bobby Beauchamp continue as the alternate appointment for Dr. Watson. Jim Berry and Tim Staffen voiced their support for this recommendation.

The consensus of members present was to support this recommendation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEXT CEAC MEETING

The next CEAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 15, 2025, from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007. Members were encouraged to attend in person; however, if needed, a virtual link will also be available.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Olsen, CEAC staff support

Tim Staffen, Chair CEAC