

Southern Ohio Educational Service Center Business Advisory Council 2026 Joint Statement



The Southern Ohio Educational Service Center Business Advisory Council is proud to be recognized as a 3-Star Business Advisory Council by the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce through the Business-Education Leader Awards for Excellent Business Advisory Councils.

JOINT STATEMENTS MUST BE MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE BY MARCH 1, 2026.

Each business advisory council and its school board shall file a joint statement, not later than the first day of March of each school year, describing how the school district or service center and its business advisory council has fulfilled their responsibilities pursuant to this section and section [3313.82](#) of the Revised Code.

Business Advisory Council:

- Southern Ohio Educational Service Center Business Advisory Council (BAC)

Primary Contact:

- Curt Bradshaw, Superintendent, Southern Ohio Educational Service Center

Secondary Contact:

- Casey Enochs, Assistant Superintendent, Southern Ohio Educational Service Center

1. Are there any changes to your Business Advisory Councils' structure or leadership since you submitted your plan for this academic year?

The overall structure of the Southern Ohio ESC's Business Advisory Council has remained consistent. The Regional BAC continued to serve Clinton, Fayette, and Highland Counties, with county-level councils and collaboratives providing opportunities for local planning and implementation while the Regional BAC supported collaboration, resource sharing, and alignment across the three-county region. This structure reflects the BAC's ongoing commitment to bringing together K-12 and post-secondary education, business and industry, workforce and economic development organizations, government, and community partners.

The 2025-2026 BAC plan identified this regional and county-level structure as central to aligning education with local labor-market needs and expanding career exploration and work-based learning.

One important change was the expansion of workforce development staffing capacity in Fayette County. The Fayette County Workforce Development Coordinator position identified in the BAC plan was filled during the school year, providing Fayette County with additional capacity to coordinate employer relationships, career-readiness activities, internships, job shadowing, and workforce development efforts.

2. Of goals submitted in your 2025 Business Advisory Council Plan, on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being "goal accomplished," what goals were you able to accomplish? What challenges have you experienced implementing your goals?

The 2025–2026 BAC Plan organized its work around Ohio's three BAC Quality Practices: *Develop Professional Skills for Future Careers*, *Build Partnerships*, and *Coordinate Experiences*.

The following ratings reflect both accomplishments during the 2025-2026 school year and areas where work will continue into the 2026-2027 academic year.

Develop Professional Skills for Future Careers

Current Workforce Trends Needs Assessment — 6/10 (ongoing/continuous improvement). The BAC continued using employer voice and workforce information to identify the technical and professional skills needed throughout the region. The employer-needs work incorporated responses from 48 businesses plus data from 46 additional businesses based on current job postings, identifying needs such as forklift/manlift operation, CNC operation/programming, Microsoft Office certifications, CPR/First Aid, driver's licensure, RISE Up Customer Service and Sales, CDL credentials, welding, ServSafe, and STNA/Medical Assistant certification. The information was shared with educators, and conversations began regarding how students could gain access to training where local options were limited.

During the 2025-2026 school year, county-level BAC meetings and workforce development conversations continued to refresh employer needs rather than treating the original survey as a one-time activity. Employers provided ongoing input regarding hiring challenges, professional skills, credentials, internships, emerging occupations, and workforce barriers. This work has positioned the BAC to move during the 2026-2027 academic year from primarily identifying workforce needs toward more intentionally connecting those needs with credentials, instruction, professional skills, and career-connected experiences.

K-12 Career Exploration High-Quality Instructional Materials — 5/10 (some progress; implementation continuing).

The 2025-2026 plan intentionally established a multi-year development process: gathering district input, researching models, developing and piloting resources during the 2025-2026 school year, and scaling implementation during the 2026-2027 academic year.

Significant progress occurred in expanding the career development continuum throughout the region. Career awareness is increasingly beginning before high school through elementary career days and career exploration; middle-school students participate in career-interest activities, BizTown, Real World/Real Money, career fairs, and visits to Laurel Oaks Career Campus; and high-school students participate in career fairs, employer visits, job shadowing, internships, credential opportunities, and other career-connected experiences.

The work has not yet resulted in one fully implemented common K-12 curriculum across all eleven districts, which is why a 6/10 rating is appropriate. Instead, the 2025-2026 school year established a stronger foundation for regional implementation.

Build Partnerships

Annual Membership Audit and Employer Engagement — 9/10 (annual/ongoing).

The BAC continued strengthening representation from employers, workforce organizations, higher education, economic development, and community partners. The 2025-2026 plan called for annual comparison of BAC participation with Critical and In-Demand Jobs and major regional employers, followed by targeted recruitment where gaps exist.

Evidence of continued growth can be seen throughout the county-level BACs. In Fayette County alone, the 2025-2026 Business Partnership Interest Survey resulted in five new employers being added to the business directory, with eight businesses indicating interest in providing internships. County-level and regional meetings also increasingly included partners representing health care, manufacturing, aviation and logistics, construction and skilled trades, finance, higher education, disability services, workforce development, economic development, public safety, and other important sectors.

The BAC also continued moving beyond measuring partnership success simply by the number of organizations represented. Increasingly, partners are being asked to advise, host, mentor, provide internships, participate in career events, identify skills and credentials, solve barriers, and co-develop opportunities for students.

Teacher Bootcamps/Teacher Tours — 5/10 (ongoing planning; additional scale needed). The BAC continued supporting the concept of teacher industry immersion and employer-educator learning. The 2025–2026 plan identified manufacturing, healthcare, construction, logistics/aviation, education/childcare, and social services/mental health as priority sectors and called for employers to help educators better understand current workplace practices, professional skills, and technical competencies.

The model has demonstrated value, but scaling educator participation across three counties continues to be challenging because of school calendars, substitute teacher availability, employer scheduling, and staff capacity. The BAC, therefore, views this as an initiative to continue expanding rather than a completed goal. Work underway for the 2026-2027 school year includes exploring additional educator bootcamp and industry-immersion opportunities with higher-education and business partners so educators can bring current industry knowledge back into classrooms.

Coordinate Experiences

Structured Internship Program — 9/10 (substantial expansion).

This initiative made significant progress during the 2025–2026 school year. The original plan called for continued implementation of Highland County's established internship structure, development of the newly launched Clinton County program, and exploration of an internship model in Fayette County.

Internships have continued throughout Highland County during the 2025-2026 school year. The BAC has partnered with OhioMeansJobs-Clinton County to help connect students with employers for hands-on career experience and mentorship. Fayette County moved from exploration towards implementation, with a growing pool of employers interested in hosting interns during the 2026-2027 school year.

Career Interest & Aptitude Assessments and WBL Tracking Dashboard — 6/10 (some progress made; common regional system still developing).

Member districts continued using tools such as Future Plans/GRIT, YouScience, and SchoolLinks to connect student strengths and interests with career pathways. The more difficult component has been creation of a common regional WBL tracking system. The plan correctly identified that data remained siloed within district-specific platforms and called for development of an independent regional tracking tool.

Progress has been made in exploring tools to collect data and in identifying inconsistencies across districts, but a fully implemented common data system was not achieved during the 2025-2026 school year. The BAC will continue this work in the

2026-2027 academic year, with a stronger emphasis on tracking student participation, experience type, employer, industry, hours, credentials, and outcomes consistently across member districts.

Annual Career Exploration Fair — 9/10 (successfully implemented and sustained). The Clinton County Career Exploration Fair remained an important anchor experience during the 2025-2026 school year. The October 22, 2025 event at Laurel Oaks Career Campus brought together approximately 500 students in grades 10 and 12 and 31 local employers and career-training organizations. Students participated in hands-on, interactive activities designed to expose them to local occupations and industries. Employer engagement was less than previous years, so the BAC will be working to increase participation for the event in Fall 2026.

Career and college fairs also continued in Fayette County, including major events at Miami Trace and Washington Court House, while Highland County districts provided career fairs, career-discovery events, and employer experiences locally. Collectively, these activities demonstrated significant student reach and employer participation throughout the region.

Student Immersion Tours — 6/10 (continued and expanding). Student Immersion Tours continued to provide middle and high school students with direct access to employers, workplace environments, employees, and hands-on activities. The original plan called for continued recruitment of host businesses and expansion of industries represented so student participation could increasingly be informed by interests and aptitudes.

Demand and employer support remained strong, but transportation, scheduling, geography, and inconsistent regionwide participation data continue to limit the ability to scale and quantify this initiative fully. Student Immersion Tours, therefore, remain an important area for continued expansion in the 2026-2027 academic year.

Challenges Experienced During Implementation

Several recurring challenges affected implementation during the 2025-2026 school year. Data consistency remains a significant issue because eleven member districts use different platforms and processes to document career exploration, work-based learning, credentials, and other experiences. Transportation and rural geography continue to affect students' access to employers. Employer capacity, particularly among smaller businesses without dedicated human-resources staff, can limit internship and work-based learning participation. Educator time and substitute teacher availability affect industry-immersion opportunities. Funding remains important for paid internships, transportation, credentials, workforce development coordinator staffing, and student supports. Finally, staffing transitions and program capacity occasionally affected the pace at which county initiatives could be implemented.

The BAC continues responding to these challenges through shared regional planning, workforce development coordination, stronger OhioMeansJobs partnerships, employer intermediaries, grant and foundation resources, and development of more consistent tracking processes.

3. What new partnerships have your Business Advisory Council formed for the 2024-2025 school year?

The Southern Ohio ESC's BAC continued to expand both formal partnerships and the depth of existing relationships during the 2025-2026 school year.

A particularly noteworthy addition to regional discussions was the Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE). SOCHE presented to the Fayette County BAC regarding paid internships, pre-apprenticeships, co-ops, employer supports, intern payroll and workers' compensation, funding opportunities, and the transition of interns into full-time employment. The partnership provides another potential intermediary for expanding high-quality work-based learning across the region.

The BAC also strengthened its connection with the Career Pathway Support Network (CPSN), which brings additional resources related to middle school career-technical education, educator training, career connections, and regional career readiness support. Highland County BAC partners will specifically receive information regarding CPSN assistance with middle school career-technical education and teacher training.

Partnerships supporting students with disabilities also continued to deepen through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, county Boards of Development Disabilities, workforce partners, and transition-focused organizations. These relationships strengthen employer recruitment, transition planning, summer work experiences, and inclusive pathways to career exploration and employment.

Other partnerships were strengthened through Building Bridges to Careers (BB2C), OhioMeansJobs offices, Southern State Community College, Wilmington College, Great Oaks/Laurel Oaks Career Campus, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, and employers throughout all three counties.

4. Have you added or removed any goals submitted in your 2025-2026 Business Advisory Council Plans? If so, please provide details.

No formal goals were added to or removed from the 2025-2026 BAC Plan after its submission. Instead, the BAC refined and expanded work within the existing initiatives as new opportunities and needs emerged.

5. Have you received any media coverage or participated in any case studies as a Business Advisory Council? If so, please share.

Yes, the Southern Ohio ESC's BAC and its related county workforce initiatives received media and public communications coverage through the 2025-2026 school year. Coverage highlighted career exploration, internships, business-education partnerships, workforce development collaboration, scholarships, and BAC recognition.

Examples include the [Clinton County Workforce Collaborative and OhioMeansJobs Launch Internship Program to Build Tomorrow's Workforce](#), published September 25, 2025, which highlighted the launch of the Clinton County internship initiative.

The [Clinton County Career Exploration Fair Connects Students with Local Employers](#), published November 13, 2025, highlighted approximately 500 participating students, 31 employers and training organization, and the event's hands-on career-exploration model.

The Southern Ohio ESC also published communications regarding the [Fayette County BAC's 2025-2026 kickoff and career-readiness partnerships](#), as well as subsequent [BAC activities emphasizing business collaboration and support for local students](#).

The Clinton County Workforce Collaborative also maintains [ongoing communications and newsletters](#) documenting monthly industry-focused meetings, employer-school collaboration opportunities, student immersion experiences, internship development updates, and other workforce initiatives.

The BAC is not aware of participation in a formal case study during the 2025-2026 school year.

The 2025-2026 school year has represented an important progression for the Southern Ohio ESC's Business Advisory Council. The Council continued moving from individual career-readiness activities toward a more coordinated regional system in which employers, educators, workforce organizations, higher education, and community partners work together to help students progress from career awareness and exploration to preparation and authentic workplace participation. The work remains ongoing, particularly in the areas of data collection, equitable access, employer capacity, and regional scaling; however, the growth of internships, employer partnerships, career-connected learning, and cross-county collaboration demonstrates continued progress toward the BAC's mission of preparing students for meaningful futures while strengthening the regional workforce.