



Career and Educational Advisory Council Agenda
215 Straight Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI

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Meeting ID: 284 278 951 805 31 Passcode: pJ3x8ic6

2/20/2026

- I. Introductions
- II. Purpose of the committee
To assist the WDB in facilitating and building a collaborative partnership between employers, labor, workforce development advocates, local school districts, postsecondary institutions, and training centers to identify and collectively develop and implement training strategies that effectively address Michigan employers' talent needs.
- III. Review Previous Meeting Notes & Action Items
September 2025 Meeting Minutes **Action Item**
- IV. Regional Grant Updates – new/potential/updates **Information Item**
- V. MiSTEM Update **Information Item**
- VI. Regional Adult Education Update **Information Item**
- VII. CTE Updates **Information Item**
- VIII. Michigan Works Updates **Information Item**
- IX. CEAC Metric Updates **Information Item**
- X. Any other Council Member Activities/Initiatives **Information Item**
- XI. Next Meeting Date:
 - May 15, 2026



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Meeting ID: 254 375 420 609 Passcode: K5aSew
9/26/2025

Minutes

CEAC Members Present: Tonia Castillo (Chairperson), Pat Walstra (Vice-Chairperson), Joe Matthews, Ginger Rohwer, Kim Call, Jacquie Rehkopf, Joe Tenbusch, Bernard Brown, Joe Lienesch, Dan TenHoopen, Mike O'Connor (Virtual)

CEAC Members Absent: Rich Franklin, Ted Paton, David Tebo, Shelbee Axom-Anderson, Lisa Hungerford, Chauncy Williams, Samantha Zentner

West Michigan Works! (WMW) Staff Present: Angie Barsksdale, Tasha Evans, Amy Lebednick, Chad Patton, Dane Sanders

Guests Present: Lisa Seigel (MiSTEM Region 7), Jessica Pierce, Chris Stafford, Carol Davis, Kandy Lazell

I. Call to order at 9:30am by Chairperson Tonia Castillo. Tonia requested introductions from those in attendance.

II. Purpose of the committee

To assist the WDB in facilitating and building a collaborative partnership between employers, labor, workforce development advocates, local school districts, postsecondary institutions, and training centers to identify and collectively develop and implement training strategies that effectively address Michigan employers' talent needs.

III. Review Previous Meeting Notes & Action Items

September 2024 Meeting Minutes

January 2025 Meeting Minutes

May 2025 Meeting Minutes

Action Item

Tonia requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes

Motion – Dan TenHoopen

Second – Ginger Rohwer

Meet minutes approved by vote – Motion carried

IV. Regional Grant Updates – new/potential/updates

Information Item

The council members did not discuss any regional grant updates.

V. MiSTEM Update

Information Item

Ginger Rohwer – The MiSTEM Network's Greater West Michigan Region launched the West Michigan Design Prize with around 200 students at the Student Tech Showcase during Tech Week GR. The competition is designed to provide students with a hands-on, real world learning experience that fosters creative problem solving and innovation. Student teams are matched with an industry mentor as they collaboratively develop solutions to a design challenge.

The Region partnered with Muskegon Area ISD and GVSU's College of Computing this past summer to implement one of seven statewide pilot Computer Science Teacher Externships with middle school educators. Participants visited four local businesses to see the world of computer science beyond the classroom and designed engaging student experiences that connect classroom learning with careers.

The Greater West Michigan Region has been working with the Mind Trekkers program from Michigan Tech University to recruit schools and exhibitors for their upcoming [Next Gen STEM Grand Rapids Festival](#) powered by Gentex, taking place at the GRCC Fieldhouse on October 17 and 18. Mind Trekkers is a high-energy, hands-on celebration of learning described as a “science fair meets carnival,” and the program showcases in-demand educational and career pathways to local youth. See the attached flier for information about being an exhibitor.

Lisa Seigel – Discussed problem, project, and place-based learning, there is a showcase event in May.

VI. Regional Adult Education Update

Information Item

Pat Walstra discussed funding as the State budget has not been finalized yet.

4,600 adults came through the doors for job training, basic skills, ESL, high school completion or high school equivalency. Over 57% were successful in completing their school year. In Region 4 there are about 90,000 who do not have a high school diploma or GED. There are 15 adult education providers in west Michigan, all are moving forward, some are moving forward with reduced schedules from deferred funds that were not fully expended. Overall numbers have increased from last year, so the need is still there, and people are coming into the doors of the providers.

There are three grants in Section 107, traditional 107 for operational needs. 107 special programs that partners with Michigan Works! and adult education in the career tech centers in Allegan, Muskegon, Ottawa and Kent counties. The 107A grant that came out two years ago, it is a three-year grant and in the final year of the grant focusing on research and development of curriculum, short term micro credentials, and bringing a contextualized GED curriculum together that can be shared with the State of Michigan. It is still in the development stage, and the intent is to kick it off and bring it into the classroom.

VII. CTE Updates

Information Item

Joe Lienesch spoke about reissuing Perkins Grant, focusing on credential attainment for students. Career Prep 2030 has about 5,000 seats in CTE and CTE like. Thinking about second campus in Kent County. Also looking at what are students actually interested in and what is the most demand in that region. MEERA regional training center is hosted at Kent ISD, there are other districts participating which include Ottawa and Muskegon. MEERA ribbon cutting event is October 30, 2025, at the Kent ISD.

Joe Tenbusch relayed an all-time high for enrollment at Allegan tech center. Manufacturing week in Allegan, goal is to triple enrollment compared to last year.

Bernard Brown discussed launching 7 new programs in the high schools, revamped Perkins funds to cover instructional curriculum and instructional support. 19 programs in high school and 17 in the tech center.

Going to add an Airframe program, HVAC program and revamp electrical program.

Reese Puffer is going to be a new to CTE district and will do a programming to get them started. This will bring Muskegon up to 9 out of 11 districts housing CTE on site.

Up 100 students from last year in the tech center, almost to 1,000, capacity is 1,050.

Jacque Rehkopf mentioned the CNLA cycle this year, currently engaging stake holders.

MiFamily Engagement - Ottawa County is initiating efforts to improve family engagement at the secondary level, recognizing caregivers as key influencers in students' career choices. Initiatives aim to educate parents about local opportunities and increase employment connections.

HVAC starting next year for Careerline Tech Center.

Spring Lake is a brand-new district to offer CTE programs, they are doing finance and business.

Hamilton is starting a partnership with Critter Barn.

VIII. Michigan Works Updates

Information Item

Tasha Evans spoke about The National Farmworker Jobs Program provides career and training services to farmworkers and their dependents.

Chad Patton relayed that MiCareerQuest is officially on May 20th, 2026, at DeVos, planning to open tickets on November 7th at 9am. December 1st is multi-industry kick off and then exhibitors will be able to start registering.

Angie Barksdale discussed that West Michigan Works! has been actively engaging with legislators at state and federal levels to advocate for workforce program funding. While workforce development remains a priority, budget uncertainties persist, and contingency plans are in place for potential federal shutdowns.

We are celebrating our 10-year anniversary, marking the merger of four workforce boards. An event is scheduled at Frederick Meijer Gardens.

Discussions are underway regarding the impact of artificial intelligence on workforce needs. West Michigan Works! is aligning with federal and state AI workforce plans and emphasizing the importance of digital literacy, especially for underserved populations.

Amy Lebednick – West Michigan Tech Talent

- Hour of Code will be a shift in curriculum to Hour of AI. WMTT will look into how it can revise its Mi{CODE}Experience curriculum with the Hour of AI.
- Develop Workgroup will convene in October to focus on tech skills needed by employers in the training and development space.

Discover Manufacturing Week - registering schools through October 10.

Discover Manufacturing Week Scholarships open October 13.

Awarded scholarships for Agribusiness recently, will be rolling out our Discover Manufacturing scholarships October 13.

Asked for recommendations on how to broaden outreach about the opportunity in order to get more applicants.

Workplace Well-being conference - registration closes October 6.

Career Readiness Conference planning is underway.

Lunch and Learns Series for employers to learn about available resources to support job seekers and employees

Pre-apprenticeships - continuing to advance efforts in this space.

Apprenticeship team is working with Kent ISD and Ottawa ISD, looking to expand.

IX. CEAC Metric Updates

Information Item

Chad Patton discussed the Talent Tours from April through June 2025 had 44 students, with a total of 5 events and 3 employers.

Amy Lebednick mentioned there is talk about expansion of apprenticeships at the federal level.

X. Any other Council Member Activities/Initiatives

Information Item

Jessica Pierce relayed that the EPA Grant at GRCC has won an award for the Water to Works Internship Program.

Chris Stafford and Carol Davis discussed efforts to expand CTE offerings in Barry County, utilizing the 100-acre campus and partnerships with the local schools, manufacturers, and community foundations.

Joe Matthews discussed his experience at Gentex and how uncertainty influences manufacturing. The impact of the tariffs on business and the pursuits of internships and apprenticeships at Gentex to further the workforce.

Kandy Lazell discussed a virtual internship fair happening on October 1st and October 8th, this is a state-wide fair so employers from all over Michigan will be attending. Internship seekers/students can be anywhere as long as they are interested in internships with Michigan employers.

Tonia Castillo adjourned the meeting at 10:52am.

XI. Next Meeting Date:

- January 23, 2026

CEAC PERFORMANCE METRICS

2.20.2026

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

Number of WMW-Sponsored Registered Apprenticeship Occupations: 63

	Current as of 2/3/2026		
	Apprentices		Employers
	Completed	Current	Current
Construction	0	134	20
Healthcare	4	47	12
IT (Currently inactive)	0	0	0
Manufacturing	4	146	80
Professional Services	0	76	13
TOTAL	8	403	125

MICAREERQUEST 2025

Event was held March 20th, 2025

Total registered students	8,486
Total number of schools represented	89
Total number of participating employers	89
Total exhibits	104
Careers featured	293
Total number of volunteers	154

MANUFACTURING WEEK 2025

Event was held October 13 – November 25, 2025

Total number of teachers	89
Total number of students	3,310
Total number of employers	102
Unique schools	67

TALENT TOURS

October 2025 – December 2025

Total number of students	33
Total number of events	4
Total number of employers	6