Building Public-Private Partnerships for Workforce Development in Clermont County

Prepared for

Economic Development Corporation of Clermont County (ED3C)

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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

In August of 2007, the Economic Development Corporation of Clermont County (ED3C) initiated a comprehensive effort to better understand the fundamental drivers of economic development in Clermont County.

The results of several research projects over the past three years have pointed to the importance of having a strong/well-prepared/well-qualified workforce. This research has also suggested the need for greater attention to the gaps in both the skills and preparation of Clermont County citizens.

Further, Clermont County leaders in business, education, and government have come to understand that everyone has a role in/responsibility for addressing these issues. So has can cooperation and coordination of workforce development efforts be improved?

In light of its experience and the findings of these research projects, the Economics Center believes that Clermont County's workforce development strategy should include these objectives:

- Close the communication gap between stakeholders; highlight common goals and interests, in order to initiate discussions toward a public-private partnership.
- Invest in long-term workforce development, starting at an early age, that promotes applicable and adaptable 21st Century skills, so that the local workforce is better equipped for future with adaptable workforce skills.
- Build a flexible and responsive system that creates value for both businesses and schools, because either of these stakeholders will only partner if the current needs of each are addressed through joint activities.

With this project, the Economics Center aims to assist ED3C in aligning stakeholders’ roles to address the County’s workforce development strategies and needs within a public-private partnership.
Recommendations on Strategy & Implementation

The following recommendations draw on insights from previous research, along with an examination of existing workforce initiatives, identification of gaps in Clermont County’s workforce development efforts, and interviews with leaders from the county’s business and education communities.

Recommendation 1: Create opportunities for communication between schools in order to share experiences on building relationships, collaboration with businesses, teaching 21st century skills, and strengthen existing relationships.

Recommendation 2: Establish a dynamic model where an ongoing communication between schools and businesses occurs. Regular personal meetings between business officials and educators can help build relationships through which they will come to better understand one another’s goals, needs, and challenges.

Recommendation 3: Convene a business leaders meeting about how the business community can move this agenda forward. Engage them in dialogue about the possible courses of actions and identify the roles that can play in each scenario. Possible courses of action may include: problem/project based learning classes; countywide internship programs for teachers as well as students; class presentations; and capstone projects.

Recommendation 4: Consider a facilitator (a volunteer group of leaders or an existing organization) that will serve all participating county schools to orchestrate the joint activities once established.

Recommendation 5: Support and create initiatives that encourage high school achievement and development of adaptable workplace skills. Currently, the teaching of adaptable workplace skills does not have a place in federal or state assessment metrics. Community leaders must create local mechanisms to assess, recognize, and reward these efforts.
INTRODUCTION

In August of 2007 the Economic Development Corporation of Clermont County (ED3C) initiated a comprehensive effort to better understand the fundamental drivers of economic development in Clermont County.

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Further, Clermont County leaders in business, education, and government have come to understand that everyone has a role in addressing these issues. So how can cooperation and coordination of workforce development efforts be improved?

In light of its experience and the findings of these research projects, the Economics Center believes that Clermont County’s workforce development strategy should include these objectives:

- Close the communication gap between stakeholders in business, education, and government; highlight common goals and interests, in order to initiate discussions toward a public-private partnership.

- Invest in long-term workforce development, starting at an early age, that promotes appropriate 21st Century skills, so that the local workforce is better equipped for the future with adaptable workforce skills.

- Build a flexible and responsive system that creates value for both businesses and schools, because each of these stakeholders will only partner if their own needs are addressed through joint activities.

With this project, the Economics Center aims to assist ED3C in aligning stakeholders’ roles to address Clermont County’s workforce development strategies and needs through public-private partnership.
SECTION 1: Foundations for Clermont County Workforce Strategies

For the past three years, ED3C has been working to enhance the economic vitality of Clermont County through a multi-faceted approach that recognizes three foundational elements of this vitality: investment in transportation infrastructure, development of attractive communities with a full range of housing options, and business growth through a focus on targeted industries for which Clermont County possesses economic advantages. Together, these three elements constitute a comprehensive economic development vision for the County.

A. Toward a Unified Economic Development Strategy for Clermont County, 2008

As a part of this effort, the Economics Center worked with ED3C’s Advisory Committee to identify target industries for business attraction and retention. Relying on expert observations and data regarding the County’s positioning in the Greater Cincinnati economy the Economics Center recommended that Clermont County concentrate its business attraction efforts on prospects in: Computer Systems Design; Scientific Research & Development; Survey, Market Research and Related Professional Services; and Insurance (see Toward a Unified Economic Development Strategy for Clermont County, 2008). These target industries were selected based on high existing concentration, growth and high economic benefit. The Economics Center also noted that the manufacturing industry, which accounts for a large share of capital investment, is still a big strength of the County and recommended retention/expansion strategies for this industry sector.

Furthermore, each of the suggested target industry recommendations also aligns with regional economic development efforts. Because the Cincinnati USA Partnership also includes these clusters among their target industries, regional resources complement and leverage the County’s efforts. These industries may not be the most significant ones for Clermont County today, but they hold considerable promise for growth and economic benefit.

Clermont County’s economic development occurs in the context of the Cincinnati metropolitan region’s growth, and development strategies should take this context into consideration. Businesses purchase goods and services from other businesses in the region and they retrieve from the same workforce pool. The larger context of the metropolitan region helps in identifying new industries and also in identifying the labor resources that would be used by these businesses.
For this reason, the Economics Center gave special attention to the workforce needs of the target industries identified by the Cincinnati USA Partnership and noted that they rely on a more highly educated workforce, particularly workers with a bachelor’s or associate’s degree, those with other post-secondary training, or those with long- or moderate-term job training). Because the target industries are characterized by having a large proportion of their jobs in these high and moderate skill occupation groups they illustrate the emerging importance in economic development of growing a talented workforce. These middle-level occupations, which are found in several target industries, tend to have skills that are more transferable from one industry to another, and their knowledge and skills are more readily incorporated into a broad workforce foundation. Consequently, to successfully compete for these target industries, the 2008 study recommended that Clermont County embark on a workforce development strategy that will enhance the skills of their current and future workforce.

Another analysis focused on Clermont County’s attractiveness as a place of residence for this more talented, educated, and mobile workforce. This Marketplace Housing & Commercial Assessment by Property Advisors – which found too much economic flow out of the County and not enough flow of dollars and people into the county – emphasized the importance of quality, connected, sustainable communities where the people that comprise the workforce of these target industries want to live, and which will, in turn, help to attract employers and jobs in the target industries to Clermont County communities.

Given these research findings, ED3C recognized the need to improve communication and collaboration among all key community partners – leaders from education, business, and government, as well as county residents – to address Clermont County’s education and workforce development challenges. To serve this purpose two concurrent efforts were undertaken by ED3C and the Economics Center: framing workforce development strategies, and conducting an education survey.

B. Framing Clermont County Workforce Development Strategies, 2009

Adopting ED3C’s unified approach, the Economics Center was asked to further investigate the workforce needs of the Cincinnati region’s target industries and offer recommendations on how to address those needs in order to remain competitive as a region.

With this investigation, the Economics Center introduced a broader approach to economic development, where workforce development is an integral part of economic development practice. Especially in today’s rapidly transforming and highly competitive workplace, economic competitiveness is increasingly driven by talent. Across the nation, many regions’
development strategies focus on attracting a very highly skilled workforce. As a result, these professionals tend to be highly mobile due to the soaring competition. The high- and moderate-skilled components of the workforce, which are the middle-level occupations, have more transferable skills, and consequently are, both by choice and opportunity, considerably less mobile, and are therefore more likely to contribute to the well-being of the local community. Development of this talent is beneficial to all local partners, to the trained workforce through increased earnings, to employers through increased intangible assets and higher level of productivity, and to local governments through increased taxes paid by businesses and decreased costs of social programs.

Also a further examination of workforce characteristics of the target industries revealed that they rely heavily on high-and moderate-skilled employees. Their employment consists of professional with Bachelor’s degree and above (13 %), Bachelor’s degree (38%) and moderate skills (30%). Using national staffing patterns, the Economics Center identified the top ten percent of occupations (48 out of 445 total) that account for the largest share of employees in Clermont County’s target industries and identified their skill requirements.

A major implication of these research findings is that, in order to have more college graduates and a better equipped moderate-skilled workforce, Clermont County needs to increase the quality of its K-12 education system. The County can encourage K-12 students to have higher educational aspirations by better integrating career activities with the traditional curriculum.

Within the scope of this study, the Economics Center also identified general roles of workforce development partners – economic development organizations, local governments, industry leaders, universities, community career technical colleges, and schools districts – and recommended that Clermont County could better address its workforce development needs by:

- Recruiting partner organizations/companies to create public-private support for efforts by K-12 schools in preparing students for post-secondary education and life-long learning;
- Work to support expanding the region’s post-secondary education (career technical training, associate and college) system and number of graduates prepared for supporting the workforce needs of regional growth sectors; and
- Building a public-private partnership linking business, government and education to support the preceding recommendations.
C. Clermont County Education Survey, 2009

The 2009 Clermont County Education Survey was developed as a practical method for soliciting the perspectives of County residents so that their views and concerns can be included in the County’s strategic efforts.

A majority of respondents see a connection between a good education and quality of life. The survey responses indicated that:

- Roughly three in five voters believe that students are “not very likely” or “not likely at all” to get a good job and a comfortable lifestyle without getting a college degree.
- Over 95 percent of registered voters believe that the quality of education offered by public schools is “important” to the overall quality of life in their community, and nearly two thirds of those consider it “very important.”
- More than 87 percent of voters recognized that a quality public school district is one of the most important ways a community can attract new businesses and create jobs.

While survey respondents see career preparation as an important part of K-12 education, they believe that more needs to be done in this area.

- While nine in ten (90%) believe it is “very important” that their local schools do a good job of preparing students for a successful career, only 70 percent agree that their school district accomplishes this, including less than 16 percent who strongly agree.
- Overall, many voters (62%) think that their school district does a good job of preparing students for college, but almost half of voters 18-29 years of age and those with no children disagree.

Clermont County residents also recognize that teachers and students are not the only ones who have a role in the education process.

- While a large majority of voters rate teacher quality and student engagement among the factors having the greatest impact on student achievement, parental involvement was the most frequently-identified important factor.
- Almost 70 percent of voters strongly support the concept of partnerships between schools and businesses to teach students job skills.

Most voters do not have a strong attachment/connection to their school district, which can hamper the efforts of educators to make improvements in preparing students for their adult lives.

- Less than 40 percent choose their community of residence on the basis of school quality.
Most voters do not believe that school districts do a very good job of communicating with them, and 64 percent of residents with no children think their school district does a “fair,” “poor” or “very poor” job keeping them informed about the performance of district schools.

Two thirds of respondents do not have children attending or planning to attend public schools in Clermont County, and only 23 percent of those respondents say they know “quite a lot” about their school district, compared to 45 percent of those with children attending or planning to attend.

This suggests the need for improved communications, especially with County residents (many of whom are business owners) who do not have children in public schools.

Finally, for high school students to be prepared for a career, voters most frequently identified subjects related to Communication Skills, such as reading, and writing, and Mathematics.

In light of its experience and the findings of these previous projects, the Economics Center believes that Clermont County’s workforce development strategy should:

- address the communication gap between stakeholders, highlight common goals and interests, invest in long-term workforce development,
- starting at an early age that promotes applicable and adaptable 21st Century skills, and
- build a flexible and responsive system that creates value for both businesses and schools.

**With this project, the Economics Center aims to assist ED3C in aligning stakeholders’ roles to address County’s workforce needs as it relates to the development of workplace skills in demand through public-private partnerships.**

To serve this purpose, the Economics Center collected information on notable workforce skill/knowledge development efforts in Clermont County, an assessment of these efforts in developing changing skill needs of the workplace referred as 21st Century Skills, conducted personal interviews with educators and employers to identify common ground and initiate communication, and made recommendations for creating and sustaining such partnerships. The following sections of this document report the findings of these efforts.
SECTION 2:
An Inventory of Existing Workforce Institutions and Initiatives in Clermont County

This section presents brief descriptions of significant workforce development efforts currently being carried out in Clermont County. These organizations and programs provide a wide range of services for varying purposes in response to disparate target groups and needs. In addition to job training services offered for particular industry or sub-population needs, a number of school districts, both K-12 and vocational/technical, are engaged in activities that are designed to help prepare students for the demands of the rapidly changing 21st century workplace.

A. State and Federally Supported Organizations

Workforce One – Clermont County

Workforce One’s focus client group consists primarily of low income individuals and dislocated workers. The organization provides some training services to enhance employability and job retention skills along explicit skills for specific industries.

Workforce One is a regional organization made up of leaders from Butler, Clermont and Warren Counties from business, education, labor and government. A governing board, The Investment Board of Southwest Ohio, which is comprised mainly of business leaders, oversees policy and direction of the Workforce One centers located in all three counties.

The mission of the Workforce One system is to provide an educated and qualified workforce that meets the current and future needs of employers. It also is a partner in the “Ohio Means Jobs” workforce development network. Services provided include: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, County Probation, Rehab Services, Youth Services, Literacy Council, Adult Basic Literacy and Education, Mature Services, State Job and Family Services, Legal Aid, and Veterans’ Services.

As it pertains to training and skill enhancement, the organization’s focus areas include work behavior, work readiness, and interpersonal, motivation and job retention skills. Also they provide explicit skill training for defined occupations, mainly for dislocated workers. Its training services are funded through the Workforce Investment Act. In the past year, Workforce One trained almost 150 individuals. More than half of these individuals are trained for careers in the medical and advanced manufacturing fields. Currently the organization
allocated $705,000 in training funds to help low income individuals and dislocated workers train in an in-demand job field.

**Clermont County Educational Service Center (CCESC)**

CCESC provides educational services and resources for administrators, teachers and students in Clermont County. Education Service Centers, which are primarily funded by State education dollars, operate with limited cost to the schools. CCESC works with nine school districts and two career technical schools in Clermont County. Their services include curriculum activities that are updated according to State standards, teacher training and instructional services in the area of special education for grades Pre K-12. The organization provides a significant share of special education teachers and staff members for all Clermont school districts.

In the workforce training area, the CCESC provides ABLE (Adult Basic Literacy Education) classes and GED pre-testing and testing. The service center has over 350 employees, eight of which works on the ABLE and GED preparation programs serving 250 students on an annual basis. Furthermore the CCESC successfully collaborates with businesses through its “Get Real Program” where special students with needs are taught life and business skills.

**B. Area School Districts, K-12 Institutions**

Clermont County has nine school districts: Batavia, Bethel-Tate, Clermont Northeastern, Felicity-Franklin, Goshen, Milford, New Richmond, West Clermont and Williamsburg. Six out of the nine school districts either showed an interest in sharing their experiences on the development of 21st Century skills or were found to be participating in the High Schools That Work Initiative (HSTW) which aims to develop problem solving skills of students and encourages studies planned collectively by educators and employers.

Four school districts that we interviewed as a part of this project have initiated efforts to build workplace competencies of its students. A number of schools have extensive communication with businesses, including seeking advice and council from them. In some cases businesses are also actively engaged with schools by making presentations in the classrooms and meeting with teachers. These businesses have provided a variety of resources for schools and have engaged students through various business relationships such as internship programs, job shadowing, career days and project/problem based learning.
Performing such activities students develop a variety of skills that are increasingly valuable at the workplace today. While student internship programs and job shadowing presents students with opportunities to apply their basic knowledge to real time problems, they also help them develop behavioral, professional and ethical skills. Career days provide students with information on local businesses and their services and different occupations -- engaged students learn more about the steps they need to take to meet the educational requirements for the workplace. With project or problem based learning, students approach real life situations in the classroom. By applying knowledge to a particular problem, students develop critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration skills. Students often seek advice from the members of business community.

Two of the school districts whose supporters are interviewed by the Economics Center (Clermont Northeastern and Williamsburg), along with the Goshen and Bethel-Tate school districts, participate in the HSTW Initiative. This Initiative strongly emphasizes work based learning experiences and link academic content with career goals. Compared to other schools participating in this program, a HSTW assessment found that these Clermont County schools outperformed most of the other participants in meeting readiness goals in reading, mathematics, and science.

C. Career-Technical Schools and University

Great Oaks Institute

Great Oaks is a career and technical education district. Besides the career-technical education in their own campuses, Great Oaks provide services to other school districts in Clermont County. These schools include: Batavia, Clermont Northeastern, Goshen, Loveland, West Clermont, and Milford. Great Oaks’ services in these districts include class offerings in general business practices such as information technology, legal office management, marketing management and research. These satellite programs are only established when requested by the school district’s superintendent. The business classes typically run from one to two years in high schools that have enough demand to fill a classroom.

There is no direct cost to the school district, although a portion of the state funding allocated to the district for the students is reallocated to Great Oaks. Great Oaks operates through state, local, and federal funding.

Great Oaks also offers career training programs for adults, which are paid for by the adult student’s tuition. Some adult students receive financial aid. Great Oaks also offers free
ABLE/GED classes for adults, as well as Gateway to Success, a high school completion program for recent dropouts. Gateway to Success is housed at the UC-Clermont campus.

Great Oaks has a total of 1,200 employees, offers 36 programs for high schools students, and 11 for adults. It serves to almost 14,000 students (2,900 students on its campuses, 11,000 in affiliated schools) with its $73.4 million operating budget.

**US Grant Career Center**
Grant Career Center guides its students towards both preparation for work and academic preparation. Its goal is to prepare youth (11 and 12th graders) and adults with employability, academic and technical skills. Grant Career Center has 13 technical career-training program areas and accepts students from Bethel-Tate, Felicity, New Richmond, and Williamsburg school districts. The US Grant Career Center currently has 65 employees. Through its secondary student and adult student programs it serves almost 900 individuals (375 secondary students, 500 adults).

The teachers at the US Grant Career Center has established close ties with industries and they also work at building relationships with businesses. Students gain additional experience through industry-based internships and apprenticeship programs by actually spending time with mentors in the field of their choice. Its training and placement services are available to graduates throughout their working lives. Students can earn credits toward higher education through articulation agreements with local colleges and universities. The Center also provides individualized corporate training to the area businesses of Clermont, Brown, and Hamilton counties.

**University of Cincinnati, Clermont College**
University of Cincinnati’s Clermont College is located in Batavia Township serving residents of Adams, Brown, Clermont, Hamilton, Highland and Warren counties. The college offers more than 50 associate degree and certificate programs to its 3,700 full time students. Clermont College currently operates with 260 employees and a $23 million operating budget.

As it relates to the education of middle and high school students in the County, the college administers two federally funded programs: Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound (both described below). These programs are administered by two university staff members.
D. Other Initiatives and Programs

**Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) Program**
ABLE is a statewide program that aims to close the skill gaps of high school dropouts. Most of services provided by this program are content skill development and GED test preparation. The program operates through full and/or part time adult service, career, technical, and education centers. In Clermont County, in addition to CCESC, the ABLE program operates through Great Oaks Institute of Technology. The program is operated by 8 part time staff member from CCESC and serves more than 250 students annually.

**Educational Talent Search Program (ETS)**
The ETS program is affiliated the Federal TRIO programs and with Ohio TRIO. ETS is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to encourage students to complete high school and enroll in a postsecondary education program. The program assists 6th to 12th grade students who will be the first generation in their family to go to college. This assistance includes preparation and admission processes, scholarships, as well as scholastic testing and academic preparation.

**Upward Bound Program**
The programs is affiliated the Federal TRIO programs and funded by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of students who successfully enrolled in college after high school graduation. They seek to meet this goal by providing enrichment, information and direction to high school students from targeted schools. The program also provides 4 to 6 weeks of internship opportunities for job shadowing.

**Clermont 20/20 Inc. Workforce Development Programs**
Although Clermont 20/20 essentially serves as a catalyst to bring people together to improve the quality of life in Clermont County, Clermont 20/20 also administers several workforce development related programs: the Clermont educational opportunities, mentoring, GRASP, and LEAD Clermont leadership development programs.

With regards to partnering with high schools through these programs, Clermont 20/20 helps keep high school students motivated about staying in school and encourage them to continue their post-secondary education by providing career guidance, mentoring and scholarships.
Gateway to Technology (GTT) and Project Lead the Way (PLTW)
GTT and PLTW are inquiry/project-based pre-engineering programs that provide rich opportunities for students to develop communication, collaboration, and critical thinking and problem solving skills. The two programs are a part of 21st Century Readiness Initiatives of Ohio Department of Education. PLTW is a leading national program that offers activities, project, and problem-based learning for middle and high school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education. More than 300,000 students are currently engaged in PLTW classes. Nearly 3,500 schools and programs are established in all 50 states.

GTT and PLTW also provide extensive course-specific professional development for teachers and counselors and a teacher network that allows teachers to connect. Ohio currently has 263 middle and high school PLTW programs in both career-technical centers and associate schools. Among Clermont County schools Milford has participated in Biomedical Sciences, Engineering Technology programs of PLTW.

High Schools That Work Initiative (HSTW) Ohio
The HSTW initiative is a comprehensive approach to high performance schools that complements and supports the educational goals of Ohio. It incorporates numerous techniques to increase student readiness for 21st century careers. The initiative provides targeted professional development, networking with high performing sites, and regular feedback from expert professionals.

Key practice areas of HSTW align in many respects with 21st century initiatives as it aims to develop problem solving and team working skills of students; encourages studies planned collectively by educators, employers and employees; and uses assessment methods that recognize students who meet both curriculum and performance goals.

High AIMS Consortium
High Achievement in Math and Science (AIMS) Consortium’s goal is to attain world-class standards in math and science curricula through instructional strategies and assessment practices. The Consortium today has 22 district members which includes the Milford and West Clermont school districts in Clermont County. As it relates to the development of 21st Century skills and their assessment the Consortium provides a valuable resource for educators.
21st Century Teaching and Learning Program: Building a Regional Vision

In October 2009, Partnership for 21st Century Skills (a leading national advocacy organization) designated Ohio as a Leadership State. Ohio became the 14th state to join the Partnership for 21st Century Skills' State Leadership Initiative. In accordance with this State initiative, the 21st Century Teaching and Learning Program: Building a Regional Vision was formed.

Through the 21st Century Teaching and Learning Program, also referred as Vision 21, two sessions have taken place so far. The first session (in October 2009) kicked off the regional effort and provided mini-grants by corporate donors for more than two dozen school districts to launch or continue efforts to introduce 21st century skills to their students and community. The participating schools were encouraged to collaborate with other schools/districts/business partners on their projects.

Through this initiative, both Milford City Schools and West Clermont received grants. Milford City Schools received a grant for developing systems thinking and dialogic tools with the help of the Institute for Creative Collaboration at KnowledgeWorks, and West Clermont received a grant for creation of a virtual Professional Learning Community with the assistance of High Aims Initiative’s team members.

The second session (in April 2010) gathered about 300 K-12 educators, college administrators, business leaders, and school board members. The 21st century skills were further defined during this session. An emphasis was given to critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration skills in defining the 21st century skills. During this second session, more than 20 school districts gave presentations on their efforts. Among the Clermont county school districts, Milford and West Clermont presented their projects.

E. An Assessment of Existing Workforce Institutions and Initiatives and the Relationship to 21st Century Skills

The preceding inventory listed notable workforce development efforts in Clermont County. The County’s efforts range from providing training services for dislocated workers or high school dropouts to teaching high school students adaptable skills for the future workplace. As seen from the brief descriptions of the content and activities, each initiative has a different set of goals and a target audience. The work of the Economics Center corroborated one of the
findings from a 2007 inventory of Education and Training programs prepared for Workforce One,\(^1\) that the most frequent education services offered are industry specific technical training and more general basic job readiness training. While these efforts are important, other encouraging activities are also taking place in the County as it pertains to the development of 21\(^{st}\) century skills in high schools.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on practical and innovative education initiatives that enhance teaching and learning. The Economics Center found that most employers believe that competencies needed in the workplace – such as critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork – are an essential part of meeting the educational needs of our young people today. Many of Clermont County schools already have engaged in the development of such competencies by participating in initiatives such as Project Lead the Way, High AIMS Consortium, High Schools That Work, and the 21\(^{st}\) Century Teaching and Learning project. The Economics Center believes that these initiatives present valuable opportunities to further the development of the County’s workforce.

\(^1\)The Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio sponsored a vacancy, education and training analysis of the Greater Cincinnati region (10 counties: Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Dearborn, Hamilton, Clermont, Warren, Butler, Franklin, Montgomery). The University of Cincinnati Institute for Policy research (IPR) surveyed 366 local businesses and 64 training and education providers (8 post-secondary institutions and 56 various training and education providers) in November and December 2007.
SECTION 3: Gaps in Clermont County’s Workforce Development Efforts

The previous section of this document described some notable workforce development efforts in the Clermont County. It was noted that the most frequent training and education services offered are industry specific technical training and job readiness training which aims to develop adult basic skills. While development of these skills is important, the demand for workers with higher level skills will increase. In the next ten years, the total number of jobs in Clermont County is expected to increase by 20 percent, but the number requiring a bachelor’s degree or more is expected to increase by 25 percent, and the number requiring an associate degree or post-secondary vocational award will increase by 27 percent. As a result, the proportion of jobs needing only a high school diploma will decline. The evidence is unmistakable that Clermont County’s workplace is changing rapidly, and in this context, there is a growing need for a new set of skills in today’s workforce. For example, a 2006 Georgetown University study found that: a majority of firms cross-train employees to do a number of jobs, a large number of employers organize regular meetings with workers to discuss ways to improve practices, and many employers link pay to performance and compare their performance with that of other firms.

Today’s work environment is becoming increasingly competitive. The adoption of high-performance work practices results in increased skill requirements for today’s workforce. These requirements and practices have created an increased demand for a new set of skills in the workplace. The following discussion highlights the changes in workforce requirements, as well as deficiencies in these skills, requirements for target industries and the gaps in skill development efforts in Clermont County.

A. Changes in Workforce Requirements

A number of the national, regional and local employer surveys confirm a shift in skills in demand. While some call these skills “soft skills”, some use “21st century skills”, and some prefer “applied skills or competencies”, the findings agree on a fairly similar set of skills that are increasingly demanded by employers. A 2006 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) details the applied skills that new entrants must have; among those are

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2The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world’s largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, the Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States.
professionalism and a work ethic, oral and written communications skills, teamwork and collaboration skills, and the ability to think critically and solve problems. While another 2006 survey focused on the skills that the current employees and the new entrants need to have, a 2008 survey investigated recent changes in the importance of these skills. The 2008 survey results show that while professionalism, work ethic, information technology application, teamwork, and collaboration skills are still important for new entrants to the workforce; adaptability, flexibility critical thinking and problem-solving skills are of greater importance compared with two years ago.

B. Deficiencies in Workforce Skills

Now the question arises: how effectively are these skill needs being addressed, both nationally and locally? Many authorities agree that at a national level the U.S. Educational system is not producing the quantity and quality of graduates needed. Based on an employer survey in Washington State, more employers reported difficulty in 2005 than did so during 2003. Among firms attempting to hire, 51 percent reported difficulty finding qualified job applicants in 2005, compared with 45 percent two years prior. While firms had the most difficulty finding applicants with occupation-specific skills, about 20 percent had difficulty finding applicants with problem-solving skills, positive work habits and attitudes, communication skills, or teamwork skills. Fewer employers had difficulty finding applicants with basic math, writing, or reading skills.

Not surprisingly skill deficiencies will differ among graduates from different education levels. SHRM’s 2006 national survey found that college graduates were deficient in writing and leadership skills. High school graduates, however, were deficient in: the basic skills of writing, mathematics, and reading comprehension; the competencies of critical thinking and problem solving; and the applied skills of information technology, teamwork and collaboration.

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5 The Washington State Workforce Board conducted a statewide survey in the summer and fall of 2005 to identify workforce needs, practices, and satisfaction with workforce programs. The response rate of the survey was 17 percent, 2,095 employers are surveyed. The sample was comprised of businesses in Washington State. Sample weights were used to represent all the employers in the state.

Similar difficulties are confirmed with regional survey findings. The Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network (GCWN)’s 2010 Employer Survey\(^7\) found that the half of surveyed employers expected difficulty in finding qualified workers in the next 3 to 5 years. The employers identified deficiencies in: problem solving, professional behavior, and decision making, as well as writing and mathematics.

The results of two other recent regional employer surveys: Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio Employer Survey\(^8\) and Job Vacancy, Education, and Training Analysis for Southwest Ohio,\(^9\) both conducted for Workforce One found that the greatest deficiency was “poor attitude towards work” (lack of attendance, dependability, work ethics, safety).

The findings from the national and regional surveys collectively pointed out the skill deficiencies in the areas of critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and teamwork, and professional attitude and work ethic. Through its discussions with local employers, the Economics Center confirmed that the same deficiencies exist locally. Business leaders emphasized that employers, educators, community leaders and policymakers must work together to ensure that young people have the opportunities and training they need to develop these important workplace skills. While increasing employee participation in skills training or professional development may be organizations’ own responsibility, increasing the employability of the local workforce is an economic development concern. Faced with a shortage of qualified applicants, firms hire less qualified workers, increase recruiting, add overtime, and/or leave openings unfilled, all of which hurt businesses by increasing costs, limiting output or sales, lowering productivity, and reducing product quality.

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\(^7\) Employer survey conducted in May and June of 2010 by the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network (GCWN) to better understand the current and future workforce expectations and needs of employers within the Tri-State area. There were a total of 122 employers (11 from Clermont County), representing various industry sectors.

\(^8\) The Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio Employer Survey was conducted in October-November 2006 by the Applied Research Center of Miami University to assess the needs and experiences of employers in Southwest Ohio located in Butler, Clermont, and Warren Counties. Overall, 1,245 telephone surveys were completed and analyzed.

\(^9\) The Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio sponsored a vacancy, education and training analysis of the Greater Cincinnati region (10 counties: Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Dearborn, Hamilton, Clermont, Warren, Butler, Franklin, Montgomery). The University of Cincinnati Institute for Policy research (IPR) surveyed 366 local businesses and 64 training and education providers (8 post-secondary institutions and 56 various training and education providers) in November and December 2007.
C. Workforce Requirements for Target Industries

Today a large share of employers in our region requires employees who have some post-secondary education for even entry-level jobs (GCWN, 2010). The Economics Center’s 2009 study, *Framing Clermont County Workforce Development Strategies*, identified the most prevalent occupations in regional target industries. A particular emphasis was put on the importance of key occupations with high and moderate skill levels, and most prevalent occupations in targeted industries were identified. These prevalent occupations are employed not by one target industry but a majority of target industries. Based on the national occupational skill database O*NET, for the top (most prevalent) 10 occupations of the Clermont’s target industries, the skills of critical thinking, complex problem solving, judgment and decision-making, writing, and mathematics are all found to be either “very important” or “important”. The table below shows which skills appear to be “very important” or “important” for these top 10 occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills in need</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Problem Solving</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and Decision Making</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: O*NET, and EMSI.

The O*NET data show that critical thinking is an important skill for all of the top occupations, and in six of them the skill’s existence is very important. Similarly, complex problem solving and writing skills are regarded as very important or important in 90 percent of the top occupations. Writing and judgment and decision making skills are also valuable in almost all

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10 High skilled occupations are defined as those that require bachelor degree and moderate skilled occupations are defined as those that require an associate degree, work experience or significant job training.

11 The Occupational Information Network (O*NET) program is the nation’s primary source of occupational information. The program is being developed under the sponsorship of the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration.
(90% and 80% total) of occupations, although for most of the occupations (60% for writing and 50% for judgment and decision making) they are now important instead of being very important. Mathematics is very important for 10 percent, and important for 60 percent of the occupations. Since all these are skills that will likely be in the greatest demand from employers in Clermont’s targeted industries, failure to develop them will have a negative effect on Clermont County’s economic development.

D. Addressing the Workforce Skills Gaps

These skill shortages can be addressed at many levels on the career path of an individual either through employer-provided training or by post-secondary educational institutions or at the high school level as a part of K-12 education. Each of these paths will generate solutions for differing terms: short, medium, and long term. For instance employers’ cross training helps employees apply skills to several tasks that can be used in several positions. While these training functions are critical, they develop the skills of the existing workforce for today’s positions rather than equipping them for the future workplace. Like many other organizations in workforce development field, the Economics Center found that there is widespread agreement that the fundamental behavioral skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving can best be developed at an early age in an individual’s development. Furthermore, the voters of Clermont County believe that it is local schools’ job to prepare students for a successful career. Related views are discovered throughout the 2009 Clermont County Education Survey. According to the survey, 90 percent of the voters expressed that it is “very important” that their local schools do a good job of preparing students for a successful career. Only a little more than one in five (22%) strongly agree that they do a good job of preparing students for college, and most supported the concept of partnerships between schools and businesses to teach students job skills.

To produce graduates who are well equipped for the workplace, ongoing communication between local employers and schools will be necessary. As underlined by the 2009 Education Survey, Clermont County voters have recognized the need for further collaboration among these entities. Moreover as it pertains to current workforce initiatives, there are encouraging efforts in Clermont County schools as it pertains to the development of 21st century skills and the employer-school relationships. However not all the school districts have the same level of engagement with businesses, and the ones that have developed relationships could improve their effectiveness by turning these connections into mutually beneficial partnerships.

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12This is only a measure of mathematics as a skill, not as knowledge. O*NET also collects and releases information on importance levels of knowledge in mathematics for occupations.
Although many individual from local businesses are willing to volunteer for classroom presentations, mentoring, or sponsoring interns, some districts do not take full advantage of this opportunity. Disparities in resource availability among school districts result in schools’ varying levels of engagement with the business community. The absence of “partnership” reduces the effectiveness of these workforce development efforts.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a nationally recognized advocacy group for improving learning & education, identifies three stages of sustainable community partnerships: “early stage, transitional stage and 21st century.” Although business-community-school relationships vary from district to district in Clermont County, in general, they appear to fit somewhere between the early and transitional stages.

The following list summarizes some of Economics Center’s observations on Clermont County’s status towards building partnerships:

- Clermont County businesses collaborate with K-12 partners to address student workforce preparedness and college readiness issues but not yet in a regular, organized manner.

- Community employers have expressed interest in establishing a regional education and workforce strategy but haven’t yet established partnerships among community groups to begin addressing skill needs.

- Only some districts and schools seem to have developed consensus around a vision and measurable goals for student mastery and track measurable goals related to student mastery.

- Some educational associations and professional organizations have expressed interest in developing collaborative community work around 21st century skills, but have not yet implemented a collaborative regional project.

- K-12 and higher education leaders occasionally work together to enhance student readiness for college, but do not place sufficient emphasis on those skills that are increasingly in demand by employers.

To make progress towards establishing sustainable partnerships, Clermont County can begin by first increasing the level of communication between businesses and schools. Clermont County should then develop ways in which it can reach out to parents to communicate their
ongoing efforts. As the 2009 Clermont County Education Survey revealed, schools' communication with stakeholders, both parents and others such as business owners, is an area for the County to channel its efforts.

Within the scope of this project the Economics Center initiated this communication through in-person open-ended-question interviews with a number of leading employers and educators in Clermont County. The following section explains more in detail the Economics Center’s most significant insights gained through these interviews.
SECTION 4:  
Synthesis of Clermont County Educator and Employer Interviews

To identify common ground and initiate partnership communications, the Economics Center conducted personal interviews with interested leaders from both business and education communities. Appendix 1 contains the interview guides. The interviews were conducted to better understand current efforts of collaboration, the expectations each side has of the other and the plans in place for future collaboration. A total of 18 interviews were conducted with school district superintendents and business executives listed in Appendix 2. The two parts of this section summarize the insights from these discussions.

A. Synthesis of Educator Discussions

To better understand schools’ approach to 21st century skill development and partnerships with businesses, the Economics Center conducted open-ended interviews with nine participants including superintendents, principals and teachers. While all nine school superintendents were invited to participate, four school districts (Clermont Northeastern, Milford, West Clermont and Williamsburg) were available to share their viewpoints and experiences. These interviews focused on the schools’ current affiliations with the business community and challenges of building future partnerships. They generated valuable observations on relative levels of engagements and schools’ expectations from collaboration with businesses.

Schools’ current efforts to connect businesses and students consist primarily of career day events, internships and class projects aimed towards developing the necessary skills for a changing workplace. Among those interviewed, all schools have taken advantage of career days where representatives from businesses present their operations and career pathways to students. Internships were the other common method through which students interacted with businesses to develop mainly professional behavioral skills. Internships are generally aimed towards upperclassmen; these opportunities are not always paid. Overall the program suffers from limitations of human capital resources, especially in Clermont Northeastern and Williamsburg school districts. Finally, the use of class projects was found to be another means to bring real time practices into the classroom in Clermont County. With this method, a teacher presents a real problem to students and guides them through solving the problem by encouraging them to work in teams, to use technology, and think critically. Where possible, teachers invite industry experts to the classroom to engage students and to help them evaluate students’ work. Although only the Milford Schools emphasized classroom projects
as a highly-formalized effort, other Clermont County schools (Bethel-Tate, Williamsburg, Goshen, and Great Oaks) adopted similar practices through High Schools That Work Initiative.

Common challenges faced by most of the schools are capital and content related. Almost all participating districts are facing heavy financial burdens and human capital limitations. As building relationships is a fairly time consuming effort most schools cannot devote time and money to keep their business relations alive with their limited staff members. Furthermore most teachers are concerned about fulfilling basic teaching requirements, and many may not feel comfortable teaching how to address real time problems. This also relates to the issue of school evaluation system. The Department of Education’s required assessment is not well equipped to capture schools progress in teaching 21st century skills, therefore schools do not have any legitimate incentive to update their curricula or any guidance in how to advance their student assessments.

Through the discussions with educators, the Economics Center observed that schools’ level engagement with local businesses varied dramatically. The relationship between schools and businesses appears to be largely dependent on which district the businesses are located. Localization issues are common since businesses may often choose to only partner with schools that are within their district. School-business affiliations seem to result in differing levels of success as some schools have been able to partner with almost 200 businesses whereas other schools are struggling because they have few employers in their districts. This can affect all efforts: business partnerships, internships, and career-day oriented events, and result in possible inefficiencies for Clermont County’s collective workforce development efforts.

Finally regarding future steps, the participants all expressed openness for business collaboration. Although visions and ideas for how they would move forward may be slightly different, they all look for meaningful mutually beneficial partnerships. Clermont Northeastern and Williamsburg, specifically, mentioned that moving forward with an internship program would best meet their goals for educating students with real-life behavioral training and complex problem solving in a dynamic setting. Other projects mentioned primarily stem from furthering relationships between business partners to have a better bank of problem-based learning projects.
B. Synthesis of Employer Discussions

To better understand local businesses’ expectations from new hires and experiences with school districts, personal open ended interviews were conducted with participants from nine local businesses. The participants ranged from vice presidents and directors of human resources departments, public relations officers, senior technical project managers, and directors of operations. The size of the businesses varied; however, most of the participants were from regional offices of national or multi-national corporations. The focus of employer interviews was to examine the skills needed at the workplace. Participants were also asked to explain their current affiliations with schools and reflect on possible recommendations for teachers and schools to better equip students with the skills of interest.

Almost all participants confirmed that their industry has been changing rapidly. Skills that were in demand by the employers were mathematical competence, critical thinking, problem solving, technical knowledge, and general professional attitude. A majority of companies noted that incoming entrants are often deficient in mathematical competence. Some entrants possess underdeveloped mathematical and analytical skills passed surface level computation. Critical thinking/problem solving skills were also commonly stated. One participant noted that entrants were unable to understand the deeper-level logical connections in analytical problem solving. Additionally, technical knowledge in mechanics and/or mechanics and general professional skills such as dependability— showing up to work on time or wearing proper attire— were among the stated skill sets.

Many of the interviewed companies stated that they actively seek opportunities to work with K-12 educators in order to engage in activities of mutual benefit between the students and their businesses. All mentioned they often partner with universities, technical and vocational schools, and high schools students. The most common types of activities were presentations about the employer’s operations, and career days where students get introduced to different careers and associated learning requirements. Also some interviewees mentioned attending mentoring activities, although in some cases these engagements appeared to be the individuals’ own efforts rather than a company’s endeavor.

When asked for recommendations for teachers and schools, most of the companies mentioned that in order to ensure a balanced education, the teachers should attend activities outside the classroom to familiarize themselves with local business operations and to explore what is being asked of new entrants in the job market. By doing this, the teachers will be able
to offer a fresh perspective to their students and give them a better guidance for their career development.

The participants were generally open-minded and willing to collaborate with teachers and schools in a more meaningful way. Companies see this opportunity as a part of their recruitment efforts, and/or social responsibility. Two of the employers that have a greater number of employees with associate degrees were more interested in building partnerships with career-technical schools. These businesses’ impression on career services provided at local schools is very poor. Only one of the participants did not think that his/her organization would be willing to participate in high school collaboration unless the value-added through collaboration was very obvious.

To continue collecting information on these issues, the Economics Center developed a closed-ended survey tool, found in Appendix 3, which will allow community leaders to gain additional insights from a larger pool of employers.

Moving forward, it is Economics Center’s observation that Clermont County has considerable potential for business-school collaboration; for the County and its schools, the benefit is in having an innovative set of businesses, and keeping good relations with them. Further communications with these businesses should specify possible expectations, a thorough understanding of their willingness to participate, and their commitments on a specific model of engagement.
SECTION 5: Recommendations on Strategy & Implementation

Recommendation 1: Create opportunities for communication between schools in order to share experiences on building relationships, collaboration with businesses and teaching 21st century skills and strengthen existing relationships.

The Economics Center observed that every school district that has participated in this project has an interest in more meaningful collaboration with businesses. As each school district has their own experiences and success stories, they should first share their experiences among each other to create a collective learning environment. Furthermore, even though all school districts have established some relationships with businesses, they all face barriers in improving the level of engagement. One of the barriers that the schools face is the limitation of human capital. Because sustaining relationships with businesses require a considerable amount of effort and resources many fail to sustain their relationships. There are potential benefits in addressing this challenge collectively through the creation of a consortium.

Recommendation 2: Establish a dynamic model where an ongoing communication between schools & businesses occurs.

Accurately identifying the need is the key to the correct solution. The challenge for community leaders is not only to develop problem solving, critical learning, teamwork, and professional skills of Clermont County’s workforce, but also to equip them with the necessary skills for a rapidly transforming workplace. Such skills can best be developed at an early age, and K-12 education is one of the arenas where this learning can occur in accordance with the existing curriculum. In this sense, the aim should be to create a dynamic partnership model that is based on an ongoing communication between schools and businesses. It is the Economics Center’s recommendation that regular personal meetings between business officials and educators are organized to facilitate this communication. The idea is that, through such relationships, educators in Clermont County schools will be better informed about current industry needs as well expectations for the future workforce, and find the opportunity to articulate their own expectations from area businesses. Just as important is the benefit to businesses of better understanding the goals and challenges that the schools face.

Recommendation 3: Convene a business leaders meeting about how the business community can move this agenda forward. Engage them in dialogue about the possible
courses of actions and identify the roles that can play in each scenario. Possible courses of action may include:

- **Problem/Project based learning classes** – Through these classes students apply their knowledge to the real life situation. Where possible these cases can be presented to or evaluated by industry professionals. Ideally teachers encourage students to seek for advice from the community.

- **Countywide internship programs for teachers and/or students** – Through short internships at local businesses teachers can learn more about industries, as well operations of local businesses. The experience gained would help them relate some curricular activities to real time situations. The program can be treated as an in service activity and UC Clermont College can provide credit for teacher internships.

Students on the other hand can find opportunities to apply their knowledge in the workplace, and develop their professional skills. Internship programs also allow students to familiarize themselves with local employers, they also provide businesses with an opportunity to identify and recruit top talent in the region.

- **Class presentations** – During class presentations industry professionals come to classroom to discuss a particular topic. Classroom presentations can easily be integrated with existing curricula.

- **Cap-stone project** – These project are usually geared towards senior students and they take up to an academic year to complete. In such exercises, students approach a real problem, they are tasked to identify, research, analyze, and propose a solution to the problem. Where possible these projects can be presented to or evaluated by a group of industry experts.

**Recommendation 4: Consider a facilitator (a volunteer group of leaders or an existing organization) that will serve all participating county schools to orchestrate the joint activities once established.**

Maybe two of the most challenging tasks in building partnerships are to keep the conversations between educators and businesses alive and to coordinate joint activities successfully. While it is absolutely critical, they require a lot of effort and dedication. The Economics Center recommends that consideration be given to identifying a facilitator (a
volunteer group of leaders like a countywide Blue Ribbon Group or an existing organization) that can undertake such tasks. The facilitator should be equipped to serve ED3C in organizing joint activities and sustaining ongoing conversations for all participating county schools. Additionally, it would be helpful if this facilitator has expertise in professional development to be able to assist teachers on how to integrate real life content to their curricula.

**Recommendation 5: Support and create initiatives that encourage high school achievement and development of adaptable workplace skills.**

Currently there are no federal or state incentives for schools to teach adaptable workplace skills. Because such efforts are neither specified in Federal requirements nor measured and rewarded by the Ohio Department of Education’s existing assessment system, there is no existing institutional framework for encouraging the development of these skills. Consequently teachers face the daunting task of not only following their basic curricula but also applying real life content and teaching workplace skills, all without benefit of an assessment or reward mechanism. The County should commit to working with school districts to place a priority on fostering teachers’ continuing education and encouraging incentives for teaching these skills. This is why pioneer local school districts and economic development corporations like ED3C should consistently endorse initiatives that encourage high school achievement and development of adaptable workplace skills and recognize the positive examples set by those businesses and school districts that are taking the lead in these partnerships.
APPENDIX 1:
Clermont County Employer & Educator Interview Guides

Questions for Employers

1. What are your expectations for high school, two-year and four-year college graduates?

2. How do your expectations differ for high school and college graduates?

3. When it comes to the workforce readiness of new entrants, what are some skills you seek the most?

4. What do you think the role of K-12 education be in building these skills? Do you see any way in which your company might be able to add to the effectiveness of the schools in building these skills?

5. Is your organization currently pursuing any efforts to work with educators at the K-12 level? If so, how would you assess the effectiveness of this engagement? How would you be most willing to be involved? What types of involvement would be most beneficial to your company?

Questions for Educators

1. How would you assess your schools’ collaboration with local businesses?

2. What are the current initiatives at your schools to build skills that are needed at the workplace?

3. What are the challenges/opportunities of connecting business professionals with students in a learning environment? What works what doesn’t?

4. What are your thoughts on “project/performance/problem based learning”?

5. How would your teachers respond in such initiative?
## Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06.11.2010</td>
<td>Ms. Lesha Spahr</td>
<td>Vice President of Human Resources</td>
<td>Multicolor Corp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.11.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Cyril Puthoff</td>
<td>Director of Human Resources</td>
<td>L3 Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.15.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Warren Walker</td>
<td>Government &amp; Public Relations District Manager</td>
<td>Duke Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.15.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Neil Dougherty</td>
<td>Recruiting Manager</td>
<td>AMIG/Midland Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.15.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Eric Grothaus</td>
<td>Vice President of Human Resources</td>
<td>TQL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.16.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Tom Rocklin</td>
<td>Senior Technical Project Manager</td>
<td>Siemens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.18.2010</td>
<td>Ms. Lois Volk</td>
<td>Director of Operations</td>
<td>Alliance Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.2010</td>
<td>Ms. Karen Brandenburg</td>
<td>Director of Human Resources</td>
<td>American Micro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.2010</td>
<td>Ms. Gayle Heintzelman</td>
<td>President &amp; CEO</td>
<td>Mercy Hospitals Clermont</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Educators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Role</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05.25.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Robert Farrell</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Milford Exempt SD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.25.2010</td>
<td>Ms. Nancy House</td>
<td>High School Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.25.2010</td>
<td>Ms. Lynn Ochs</td>
<td>Technology Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Neil Leist</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Clermont North Eastern SD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.2010</td>
<td>Mrs. Heather Powell</td>
<td>Middle School Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.07.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Matt Ritchey</td>
<td>Teacher &amp; Administrator</td>
<td>Batavia Local SD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.15.2010</td>
<td>Mrs. Barbara Bradley</td>
<td>Former Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.15.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Ashmore</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.01.2010</td>
<td>Mr. Jeffery Weir</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>Williamsburg SD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3:
Employer Survey Tool with Close Ended Questions - Clermont 20/20

Name of Company ______________________________
Industry _____________________________________
NAICS Code __________
Number of Employees __________

1. What percent of your company’s jobs require:
   - 4 year college degree ______
   - 2 year degree/other post-secondary training ______
   - High school diploma or equivalent ______

2. For high school graduates, what are the most important skills to have at the workplace? (Rank each group 1 through 5)

   Basic Knowledge/Skills       Applied Skills
   □ Reading Comprehension      □ Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
   □ Writing                   □ Written & Oral Communication
   □ Mathematics               □ Teamwork/Collaboration
   □ Government/Economics      □ Information Technology Application
   □ Foreign Languages         □ Professionalism/Work Ethic

   Name any other skill you consider very important ______________________

3. For college graduates, what are the most important skills to have at the workplace? (Rank each group 1 through 5)

   Basic Knowledge/Skills       Applied Skills
   □ Reading Comprehension      □ Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
   □ Writing                   □ Written & Oral Communication
   □ Mathematics               □ Teamwork/Collaboration
   □ Government/Economics      □ Information Technology Application
   □ Foreign Languages         □ Professionalism/Work Ethic

   Name any other skill you consider very important ______________________
4. How well prepared for the workplace are new entrants who are:
   a. high school graduates
      - Very well prepared
      - Somewhat well prepared
      - Somewhat poorly prepared
      - Very poorly prepared
   b. college graduates
      - Very well prepared
      - Somewhat well prepared
      - Somewhat poorly prepared
      - Very poorly prepared

5. What are the top 5 skills that the new entrants lack the most?
   (Select 5 total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Graduates</th>
<th>College Graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/Economics</td>
<td>Government/Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving</td>
<td>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written &amp; Oral Communication</td>
<td>Written &amp; Oral Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology Application</td>
<td>Information Technology Application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism/Work Ethic</td>
<td>Professionalism/Work Ethic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Is your organization currently working with schools/educators at the K-12 level?
   - Yes
   - No

7. If yes, which of the followings?
   - Attending career days
   - Giving classroom presentations
   - Participation in classroom projects
   - Hosting internship positions
   - Mentoring
   - Other ______________
8. How much impact do you believe these engagements have on the followings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Substantial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workforce development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business &amp; School relations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>None of the above</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What other types of involvement would your company be interested in participating?

- [ ] Attending career days
- [ ] Giving classroom presentations
- [ ] Participation in classroom projects
- [ ] Hosting internship positions
- [ ] Mentoring
- [ ] Other ______________