

Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development
Collaborative

Event 9 – Gila



The **Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development Collaborative** is the Arizona Department of Education's opportunity to strengthen communication and collaboration among employers and community partners, and to gather their feedback with a concentrated focus on developing a strategic talent pipeline with regional Career Technical Education (CTE) and Adult Education programs. The work of the regional collaboratives is an effort to address the regional CTE Superintendent's and CTE directors' challenges and connect CTE programs, and the post-secondary and adult education programs to align more closely with the regional and statewide industry workforce needs.

To facilitate these workforce goals, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) will plan and deliver twelve collaborative meetings throughout 2025 with every county in Arizona. These meetings will be held in partnership with District Superintendents, CTE Work-Based Learning Directors, CTE Directors, Arizona Adult Education Programs, Community Colleges, Workforce Agencies, Economic Development Partners, and Industry Leaders. The meetings include presentations from the venue host, ADE leadership staff, and members from regional economic development organizations. The meetings include roundtable discussions with attendees focused on current partnerships and recommendations to strengthen or to develop talent pipelines and to create Work-Based Learning activities between regional employers and CTE and Adult Education Programs.

Information will be collected from each of the regional roundtable discussions, and a follow-up survey will be sent to meeting attendees. The information received is compiled by ADE and included in this report.

The Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development Collaborative – Gila County

On December 12, 2025, ADE held the ninth of 12 scheduled events in Gila County and sponsored by Gila Community College – Gila Pueblo Campus.

Location:

Gila Community College
8274 S Six Shooter Canyon Rd
Globe, AZ 85501

Time:

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

184 people were invited to the meeting, 55 registered, and 33 people attended. The event was arranged to encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue and create an environment for innovative ideas and partnerships. The attendance make up was 13 individuals from business industry, nine from higher education or adult education, two from workforce development, three from economic development, one from CTE schools and five from ADE.

Attendees were from the following organizations:

Freeport-McMoRan	Miami USD No. 40
Berkshire Hathaway	City of Globe
Gila Community College – Gila Pueblo Campus	Coconino Community College
Education Forward AZ	Gila Community College – Payson Campus
Arizona@Work	Resolution Copper
Local First AZ	Phoenix Truck Driving
HDS Truck Driving Institute	Gila Community College Board
Cobre Valley Medical Center	AZ Department of Education
Arizona Science Center	AZ Department of Economic Security

Feedback from the Meeting

To encourage opportunities for improvement, ADE presented four questions. These questions will be the same at each of the 12 events to enable a comparison of responses received across the state. This will also be useful in providing information for other projects. The design of each question was predicated on inquiries ADE receives from community stakeholders, school leaders, and industries. The questions are:

1. What Work-Based Learning (WBL)/Apprenticeship opportunities are currently taking place in your organization/community?
2. Based on economic development information, what gaps in your school/college need to be addressed to develop a talent pipeline to meet employment needs?

3. Who else from this community needs to be involved in this discussion?

4. What are the next steps?

Question Number One:

What WBL/Apprenticeships opportunities are currently taking place in your organization/community? The responses were diversified as the respondents covered the spectrum of WBL and Apprenticeship experiences. The most mentioned activities are skilled trade internships and apprenticeships. Gila Community College (GCC) was also identified as having several opportunities available in a variety of fields.

Additional responses to other activities and WBL techniques were mentioned. Although some of the activity or program definitions provided may not be specifically WBL or apprenticeship programs, they did show the willingness to create meaningful programs that connect students with career development. The takeaway is that there are many opportunities for WBL and career development in addition to the recognized programs. Below are the types of programs and mention count as provided by the participants.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) internships – 3

Freeport-McMoRan internships and apprenticeships – 1

CVIT/NAVIT dual enrollment – 1

Miami USD culinary and FFA opportunities - 1

GCC internship/clinical experiences – 5

Phoenix Truck Driving Academy – 1

ADOC Globe HVAC program – 3

Kearny & Hayden internships/apprenticeships – 3

Law enforcement programs – 1

AZ@Work Opportunities – 1

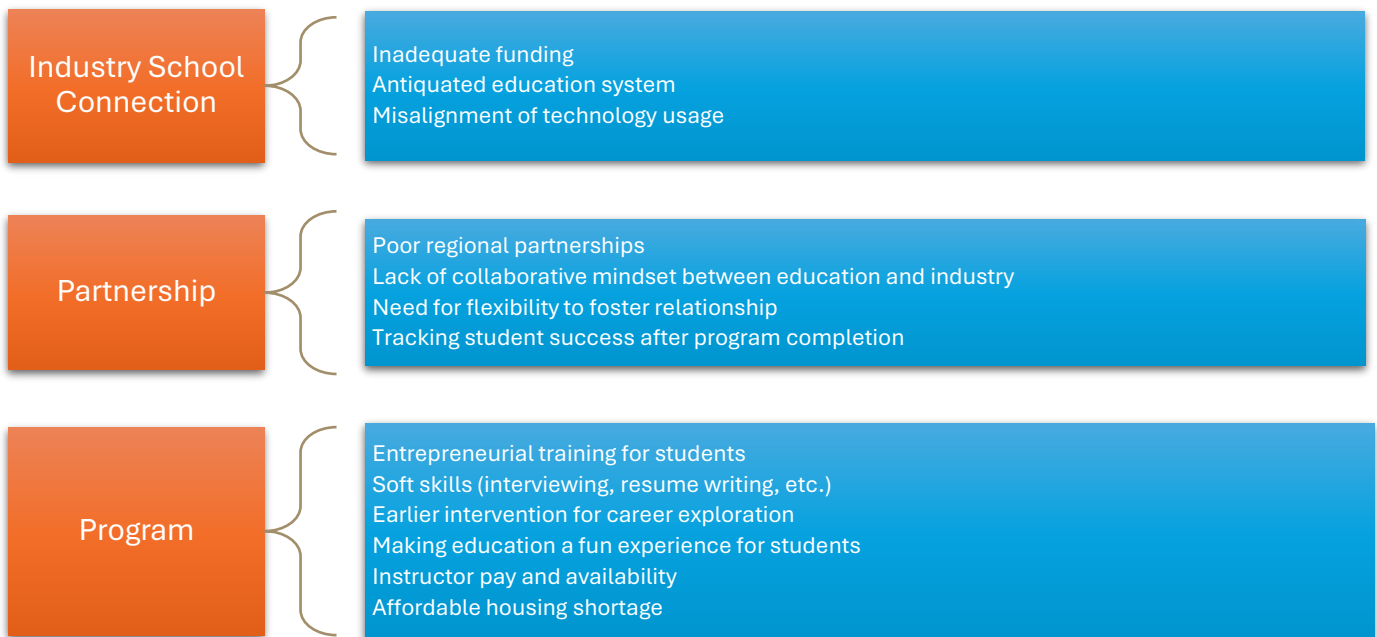
Question Number Two:

Based on economic development information, what are the gaps in your school / college that need to be addressed to develop a talent pipeline to meet employment needs? Responses from this question are annotated in three categories:

- Industry / School Connection
- Program Gaps
- Partnerships

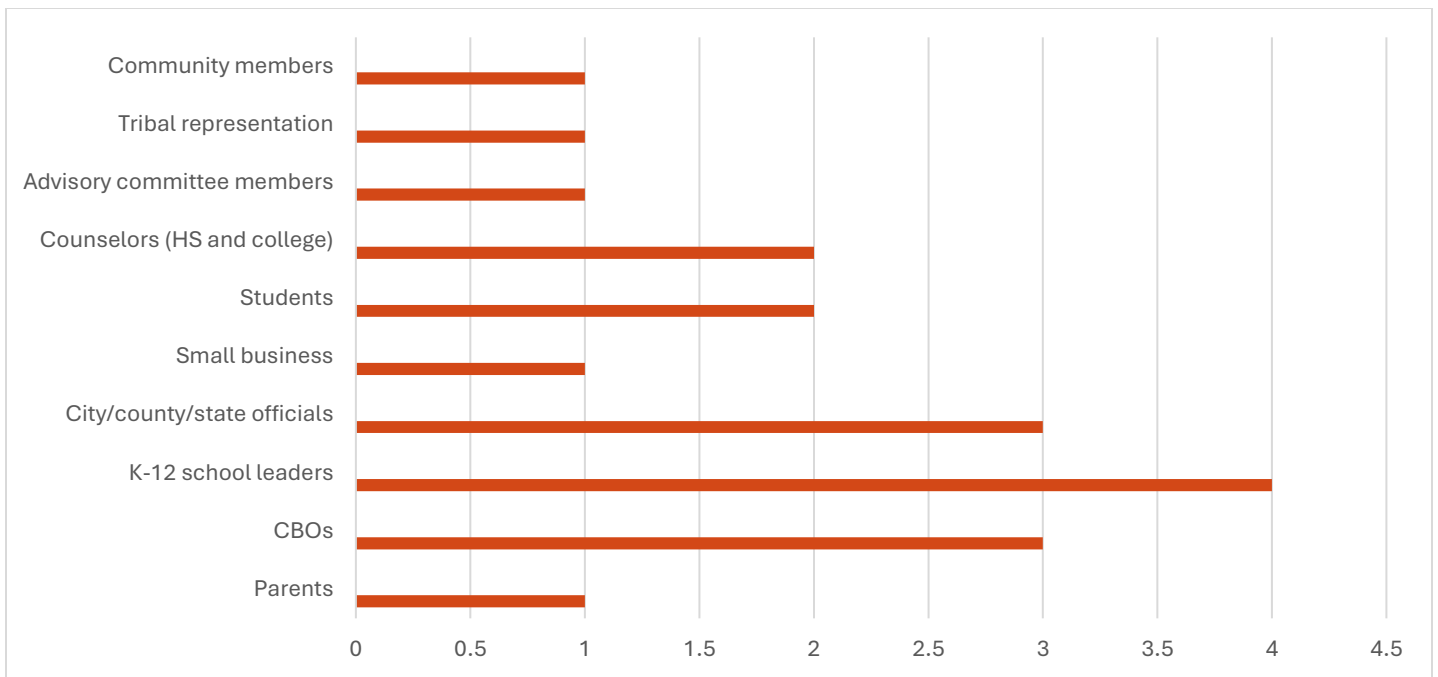
Industry / School Connection refers to program alignment between the CTE and/or adult education programs, community college, and industry/employers. The comments reflect the attendee's perceptions and experiences with CTE programs or CTE students or community colleges. **Program** gaps are perceived or experienced deficiencies, challenges, or feedback on the performance of CTE or community college programs, or the makeup of the students in these programs. **Partnerships** are proposed or perceived gaps in collaboration, communication, or awareness of CTE programs or post-secondary opportunities.

The purpose of incorporating the whole workforce development ecosystem in these round table conversations is to discover room for improvement or challenges experienced by these partners. The information provided was expressed by the participants. Participants expressed a lack of collaboration between education and industry and that there is room for improvement in the education system and its workforce development efforts. See comments below.



Question Number Three:

Who else from this community needs to be involved in this discussion? This question asks the attendees from their perspective, who, not in attendance, would benefit from attending the event. Although there were representatives present from many of these organizations and every organization mentioned was invited, the desire to have more representation was apparent. The populations most identified as critical to include in these discussions are K-12 school leaders. There was only one representative from the K-12 CTE system present at this event, and the absence of additional K-12 representation was noticed by participants. Others identified as needing to be included in the conversation were students, community-based organizations, and government officials. The table below displays all responses.



Question Number Four:

From the information collected, what should your next steps be? This question explores from the perspective of the attendees what they have learned and what they are experiencing, what the next steps can be or what they are interested in exploring. Participants from Gila CC and Miami USD shared that they have started the process of developing a countywide CTE Council to drive student opportunities forward. Below are the comments provided:

- Engage students early
- Increase networking opportunities
- Increase involvement with advisory committees
- Develop and maintain relationships with partners
- Integrate partner services as much as possible
- Communication with student services
- Connect with families
- Develop student organization opportunities
- Recruit students
- Develop county CTE council
- Create sense of urgency
- Personally invite county stakeholders
- Bottom-up framework
- Coordinate multi-disciplinary efforts
- Structured and purposeful convenings

- Identify, address and remove barriers

The Survey

As stated, the purpose of the meeting was to gather information from the region regarding CTE and Adult Education Programs. In addition to the roundtable discussion and presentations, ADE distributed a survey to all attendees. The survey was designed to capture more feedback on the programs and ideas and use the comments to develop an actionable plan. Another objective was to discover who the participants would prefer to continue the conversation to address barriers or enhancements to CTE, Adult Education programs. We sent the survey to every participant after the Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development Collaborative meeting. The survey asked the following seven questions.

1. Based on what you have learned, how likely are you going to start (or change) a work-based learning opportunity?
2. What do you need to know more about to participate in a successful WBL program (select up to three)?
3. What are the main benefits of partnering with CTE programs?
4. Which partnerships would you like to expand or learn more about (select all that apply)?
5. Who should lead this conversation going forward? (Select Two).
6. What industry-education partnerships or initiatives are currently operating in your area?
7. How valuable was the event to you or your organization?

Of the 33 people who attended the event, 10 (30%) responded to the survey. It is common that survey participation ranges from 25-40%. 30% is an expected response rate to the survey.

Question Number One:

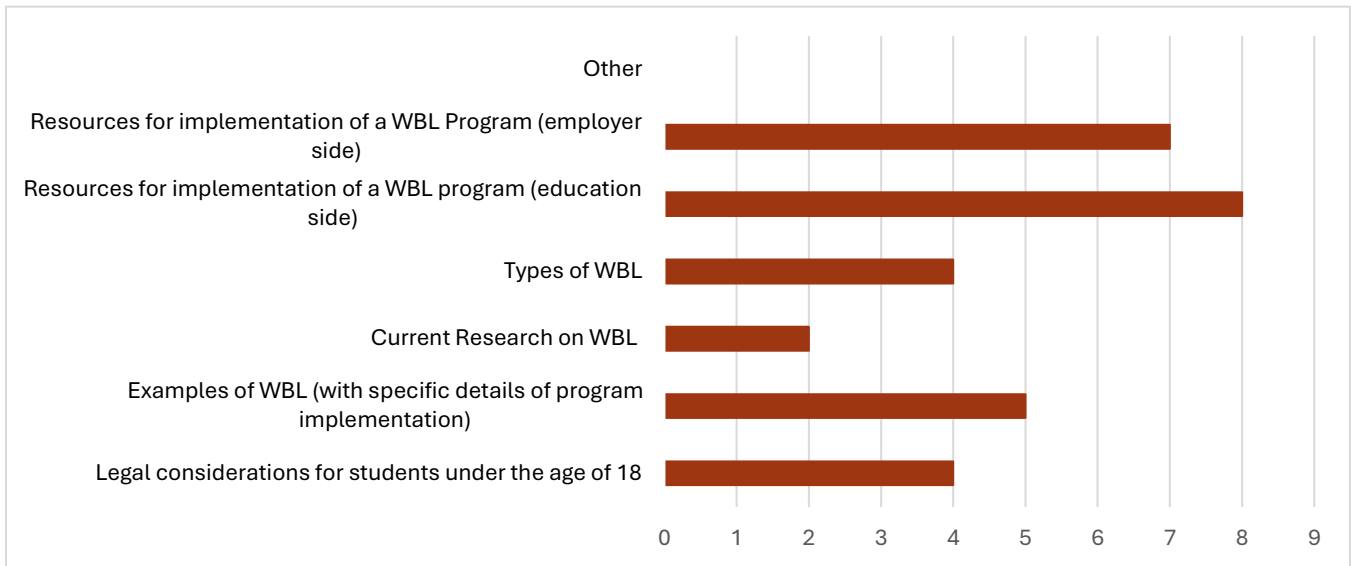
Based on what you have learned, how likely are you going to start (or change) a work-based learning opportunity?

The results were based on a 1-to-5 criteria, with one representing least likely and five representing most likely. The average rating of 4.1 (82%) indicates that most participants either plan to begin or continue engaging in work-based learning (WBL) programs or opportunities. 60% of respondents selected “5” indicating that there is a high interest and motivation to begin or adapt WBL opportunities in Gila County.

Question Number Two:

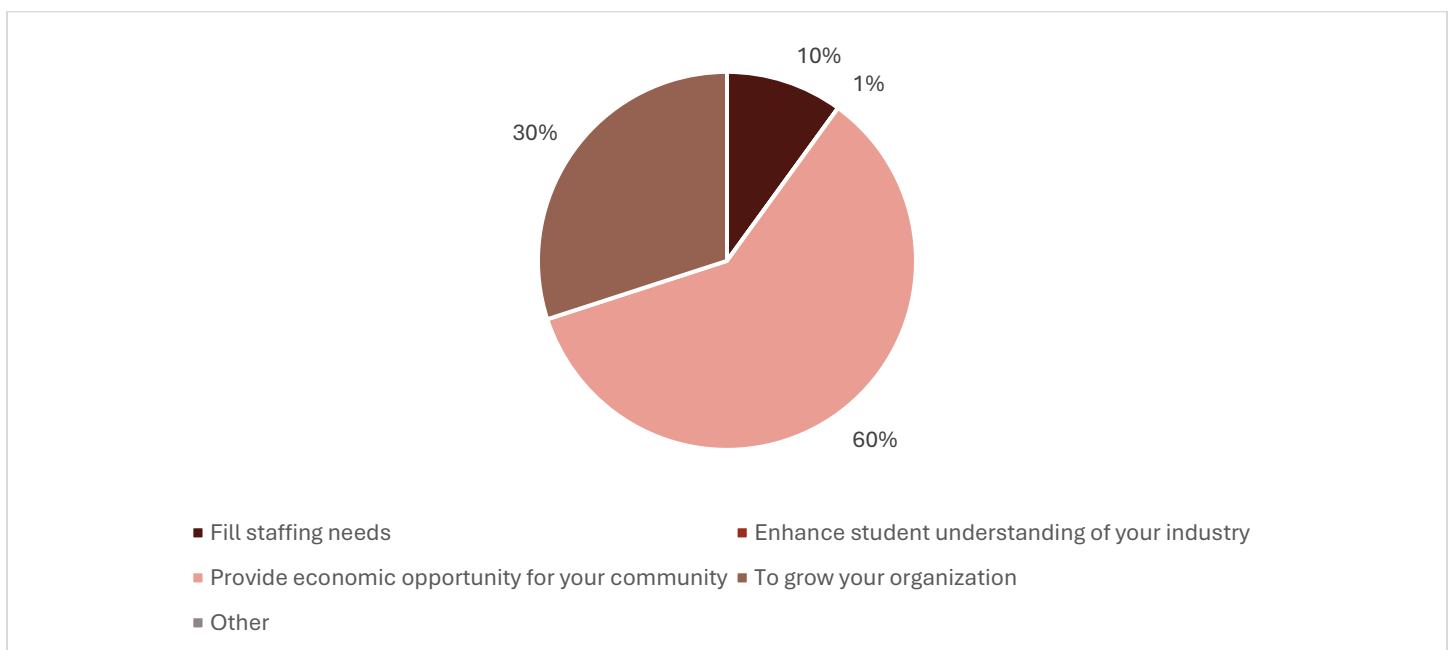
What do you need to know more about to participate in a successful WBL program (select up to three)? The findings indicate a clear need for more resources on both the education and business side. Resources for implementation on the education and business side were selected by 80% and 70% of respondents, respectively. The third most selected response, with 50% of participants selecting, was specific examples of WBL

implementation. This indicates that there is a good understanding of WBL, but assistance with implementation is in demand.



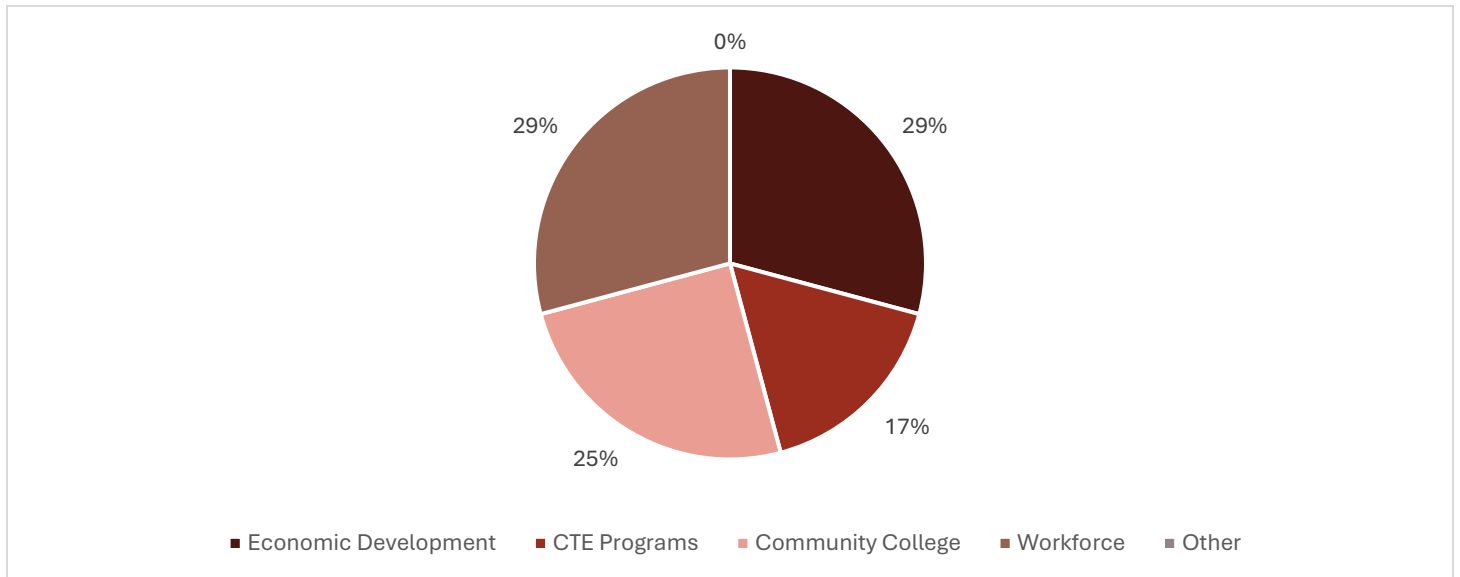
Question Number Three:

What are the main benefits of partnering with CTE programs? The purpose of this question is to discover from the participant's perspective the benefit of working with a CTE program. The majority responses (60%) said "to provide an economic opportunity for your community." This indicates the local investment perspective on how the participants value CTE programs and an understanding that CTE programs add value to workforce and economic development.



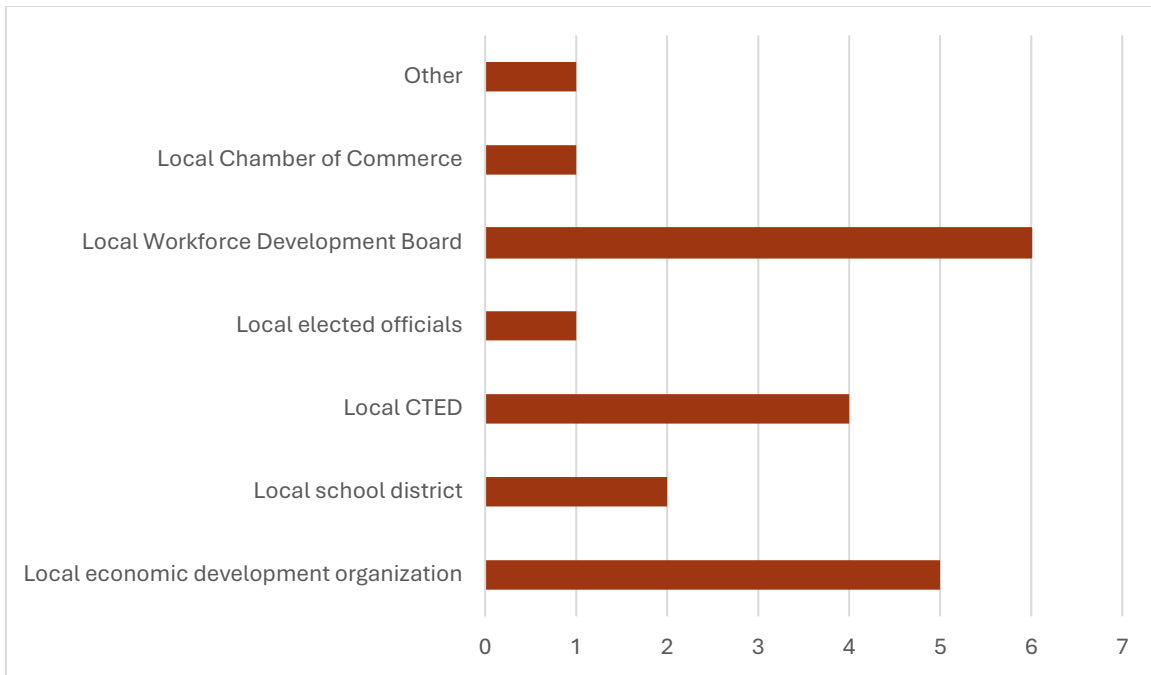
Question Number Four:

Which partnerships would you like to expand or learn more about? This question had four options: economic development, CTE programs, Community College, and workforce. Workforce and Economic Development were selected by 7 respondents, with Community College being selected 6 times. This is consistent with the other regions, as CTE and adult education programs feed directly into the workforce and economic development of a region.



Question Number Five:

Who should lead this conversation going forward? This question aimed to gather participants' insights on who should lead the ongoing ecosystem collaboration discussions, manage the detailed efforts to enhance student employment opportunities, and support workforce talent pipeline development. Respondents favored local Workforce Development Board to lead these conversations moving forward, followed closely by the local economic development organizations. The local CTED was also selected as best options to lead future conversations. Local elected officials and Chamber of Commerce were identified the least favorable options (see the graph below). This is consistent with the responses to question four, as participants are interested in learning more about economic and workforce development, and view those organizations as the best to lead the conversation moving forward.



Question Number Six:

What industry-education partnerships or initiatives are currently operating in your area? This question asks the attendees to name the current partnerships in their local region. The importance of this information is to identify existing local partnerships that are already working well. Partnerships with CTEDs and Gila Community College were identified most frequently. Freeport-McMoRan was also identified twice. Other comments and current partnership methods are listed below.

Education Forward Copper Corridor Attainment	First Things First early childhood initiatives	ARIZONA@WORK Title 1 and Title 1B	IBEW in Globe	Gila County UA Cooperative Extension
----------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---------------	-----------------------------------------

Question Number Seven:

How valuable was the event to you or your organization? This question sought to determine the value of the meeting. Was the meeting meaningful to the attendees or did they feel it was an effective use of their time? Respondents were to answer the question using a 1-to-5 criteria, with one representing least valuable and five representing most valuable).

The average rating was 4.6, indicating that the meeting was valuable for participants. Six participants (60%) selected five, with the remaining 40% selecting four. There were no selections of one, two or three.

Question Number Eight:

Please explain your answer to number 7. To better understand the ratings given in question 7, respondents were given an opportunity to explain their rating. All nine respondents offered clear feedback. Participants appreciated the time to connect and to learn more about the efforts of other organizations in the region. Seven responses indicate that they will be able to use the information they gathered to better align their efforts with the needs of the CTE community. The meeting served the intended purpose of bridging connections between education and industry with one attendee stating, “[this meeting] gets the ball rolling in the direction of having these conversations and making these game plans to get the program going.”

Conclusion

Local schools and businesses have shared interest and shared responsibility to the community they serve. Both entities are affected by the outcomes of schooling, which provide students with learning experience that supports their ability to make a measurable contribution to and receive meaningful benefits from the society they will join and lead in the future. There are WBL and job training opportunities available throughout Gila County, and this meeting created an opportunity for all parties to brainstorm best ways to expand and better align industry and education needs. The good news is that business, economic development, and local workforce leaders show eagerness to work together to support the career development of students via CTE education.