

Regional Ecosystem for Workforce Development
Collaborative

Event 6 – Mohave / La Paz



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 eleven 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 with regional employers with 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 – Mohave and La Paz Counties

On August 19th, 2025, ADE held the sixth of 12 scheduled events in Mohave / La Paz Counties and sponsored by Mohave Community College.

Location:

Mohave Community College
 Advanced Manufacturing Training Center
 4415 N. Windrose Lane,
 Kingman, AZ 86401

192 people were invited to the meeting, 42 registered, and 33 people attended. The event was arranged to encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue and to create an environment for innovative ideas and partnerships. The attendance was made up of nine individuals from the business industry, six from higher education or adult education, four from workforce development, two from economic development, eight from CTE schools and four from ADE. Attendees were from the following organizations:

Lake Havasu USD	The GEO Group, Inc	Creative Care
Phoenix Truck Driving School Kingman	City of Kingman	Department of Economic Security
Kingman USD	Mohave Community College	Lake Havasu USD
La Paz Hospital	Parker USD	Air Control Home Services
Mohave County	WAVE	Center for the Future AZ
Air Duct Dynasty	Partnership for Economic Development City of Lake Havasu	Lincoln Electric
Arizona Department of Education	Arizona@Work	

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 activity is internship programs. An internship program is a structured training initiative within a company that helps current and new employees develop skills needed for specific roles. This type of program is identified mostly from the healthcare and construction industries.

Additional responses to other activities and work-based learning techniques were mentioned. Although a few 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 work-based learning and career development in addition to the recognized programs. The region is unique and often must be creative with the opportunities available that will provide the best outcomes for the students. Below are the types of programs and mention counts as provided by the participants.

In person Internships Paid / Not Paid - 6

Virtual Internships Paid – 2

WEX Transition Work Internships – 3

Fire Department Apprenticeships – 3

Fire / Police Academies - 3

WBL Culinary – 1

Mohave College Adult Ed HVAC OJT – 1

WAVE Hospital / Healthcare Intern OJT - 1

Clinicals – 1

Phoenix Truck Driving simulation labs – 1

Site Visit and Training – 1

Virtual Internship Paid / Non-Paid – 2

Apprenticeship Paid / Not Paid – 3

DOT foods job shadowing warehousing – 1

Creative Care School partnership - 1

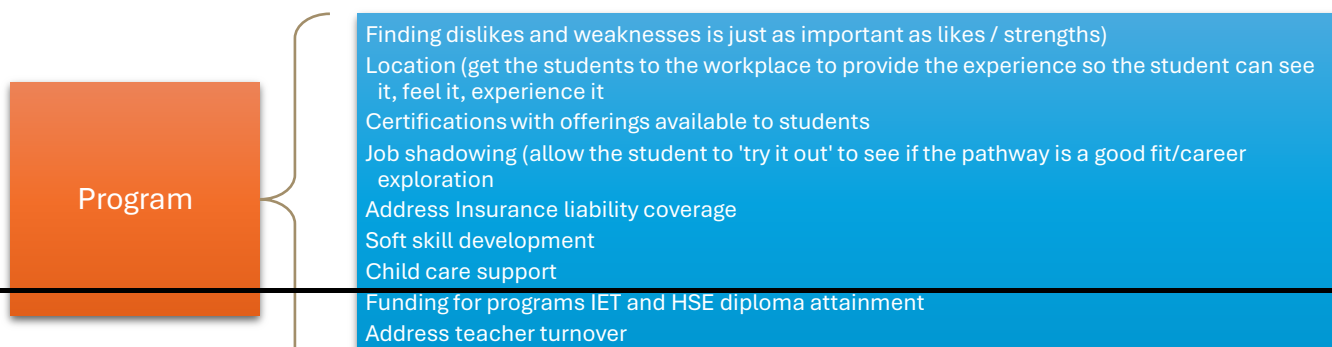
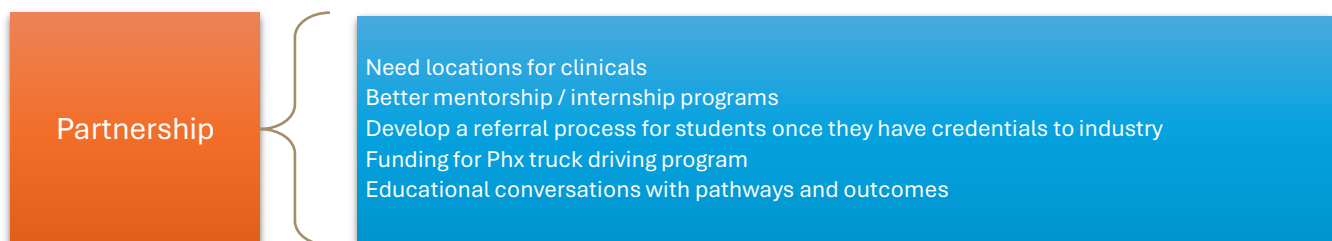
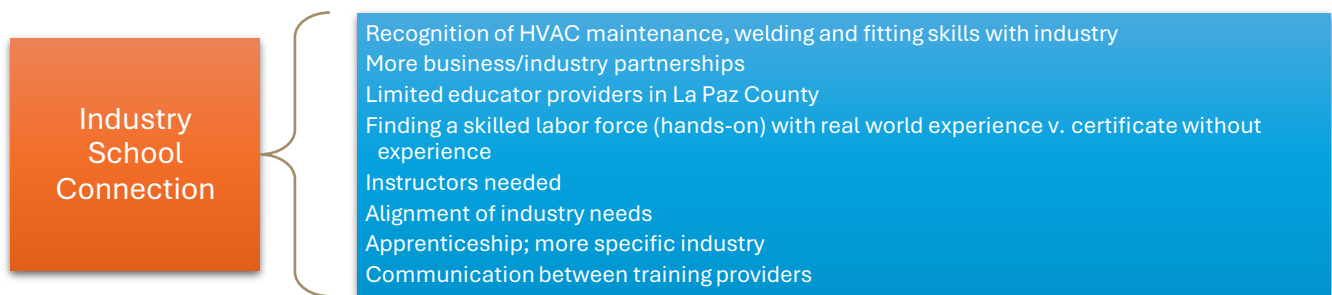
Question Number Two:

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

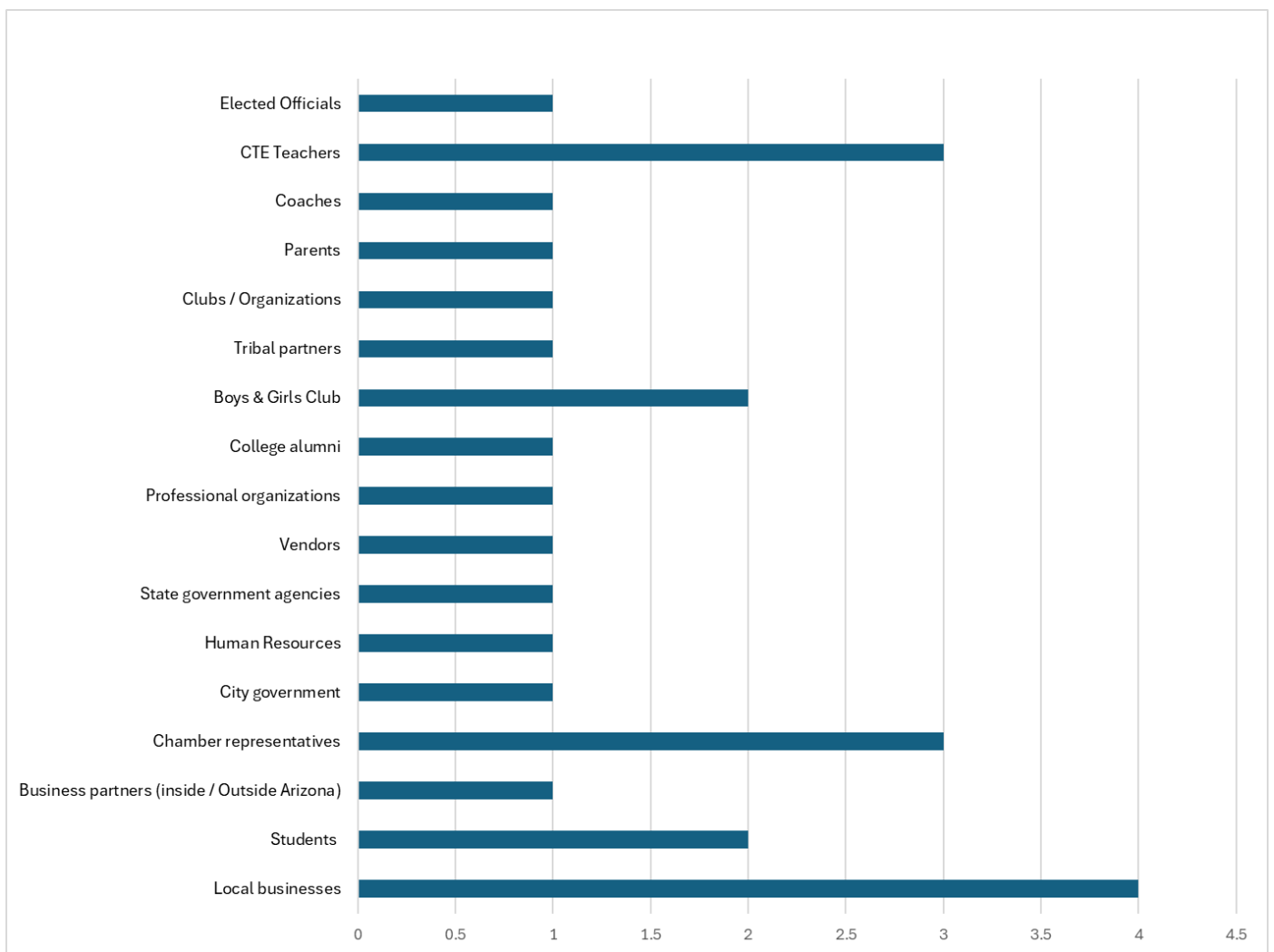
Industry / School Connection refers to program alignment between the CTE and/or adult education programs, community college, and industry/employers. The comments reflect the attendee's perceptions and experiences with CTE programs or CTE students or community colleges. **Program** gaps are perceived 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. (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 most of these organizations, and many organizations mentioned were, the desire to have more representation was apparent. The categories with the most interest that was identified to be critical for these types of discussions are workforce service providers and non-profits. Others include school administrators, political leaders, and post-secondary education partners. The table below displays the responses.



Question Number Four

“What are the next steps?” 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. Below are the comments provided:

- Engagement (identify needs at companies and connect students)
- Advertising available programs
- Localized in-person meetings
- Job placement “how-to” guide
- Analytics (assess students’ employability)
- Increased participation from AZ Western College
- Support employers for workplace learning
- Develop more Integrated Education and Training (IET)
- Prepare K-8 students with early career exploration
- Present CTE at Chamber meetings
- Determine high impact career pathways

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 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, 9 (27%) responded to the survey. It is common that survey participation can range from 25-40%. A 27% response rate is a positive indicator.

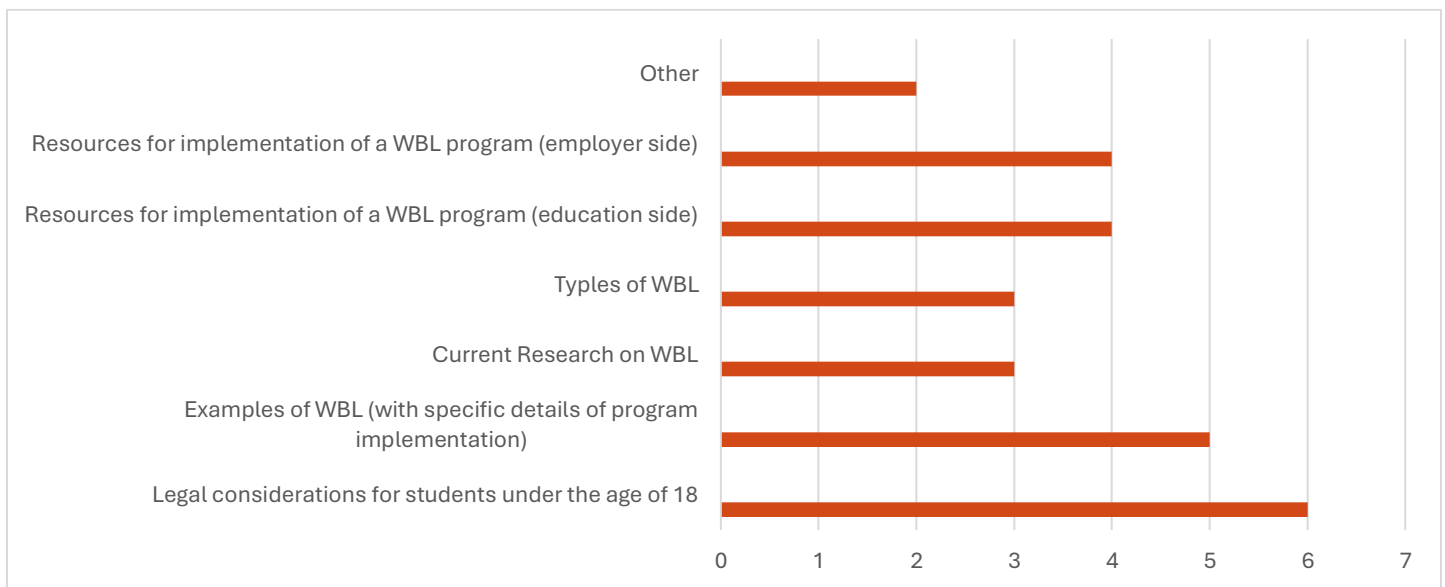
Question Number One:

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 5-point scale (1 = least likely, 5 = most likely). The average rating of 3.78 indicates that most participants either plan to begin or continue engaging in work-based learning (WBL) programs or opportunities. However, the survey comments and feedback suggest that legal considerations for students under 18 may undermine participants' confidence in the concept.

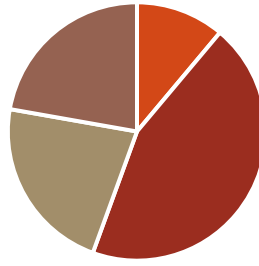
Question Number Two:

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 understanding of the legal considerations for students under 18 participating in WBL experiences. Respondents also expressed a need for more examples of successful WBL experiences as well as a need for more resources for implementation on the education and business side. One of the "other" responses expressed a need for viable business partners. Efforts are currently underway to improve business and school connections and statewide communication of program guidelines and success stories. Additional insights are presented in the chart below.



Question Number Three:

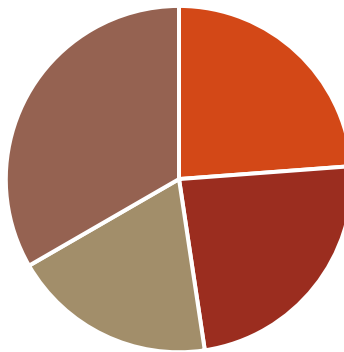
What are the main benefits of partnering with CTE programs? The purpose of this question is to discover from the participant's perspective the benefit of working with a CTE program. The majority responses (44%) said to "enhance student understanding of your industry." This indicates that the attendees view CTE programs as a tool to prepare students to join the workforce through career exploration and preparation (see the graph below).



- Fill staffing needs
- Enhance student understanding of your industry
- Provide economic opportunity for your community
- To grow your organization
- Other

Question Number Four:

Which partnerships would you like to expand or learn more about? The participant was asked to select all that applied, in addition to four options: economic development, CTE programs, Community College, and workforce. Most of the participants selected Workforce (77%), CTE Programs and Economic Development received 71%, and Community College received 44%. This is consistent with the other regions as workforce, economic development, and CTE Programs are woven into the very fabric of workforce development. This also states that administrators and community partners would like more frequent information on local businesses and business staffing needs and community partnerships.

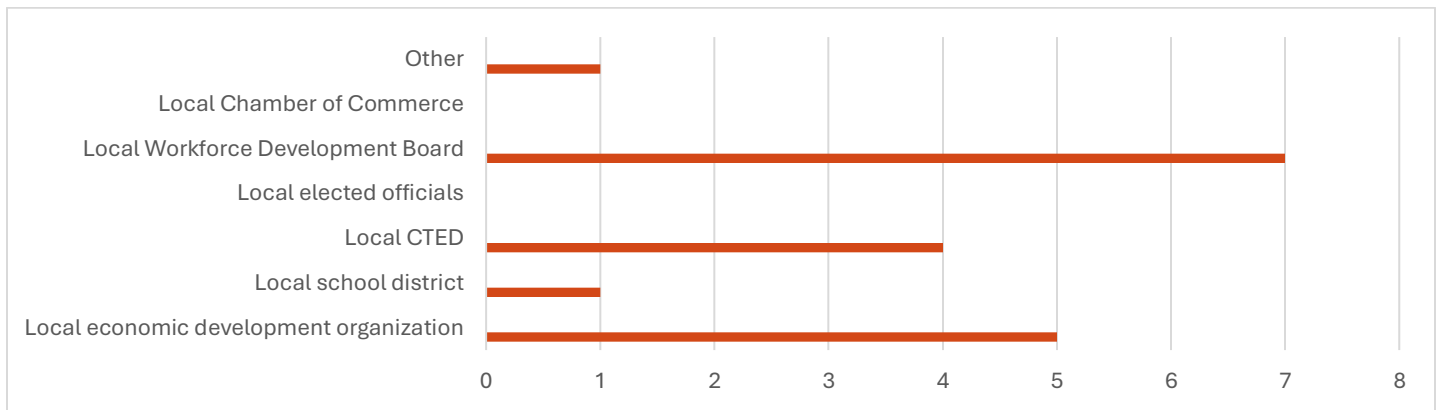


- Economic Development
- CTE Programs
- Community College
- Workforce
- Other

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 detailed efforts to enhance student employment opportunities, and support workforce talent pipeline development. The Local Workforce Development Board was identified as the most favorable to lead conversations going forward, followed by local

economic development organizations and the local CTED. Local school districts, elected officials, and Chamber of Commerce were identified the least favorable option. (See the graph below.)



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. There were a few comments that indicated challenges in establishing partnerships; however, many of the comments indicated that internships are the preferred method of an industry-education partnership. Other comments and current partnership methods are below.

Corporate Training at Mohave College	HVAC, fire academy, culinary academy, and healthcare partnerships with WAVE CTED	Creative Care campus presentations and opportunities for students	Arizona@Work WBL lessons and hiring events	Professional development trainings
501 c3 between Chamber and Arizona@Work for internships	Corrections and Rehabilitation partnerships with WAVE & Pima JTED.	Kingman Regional Medical Center CNA program		

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 5-point scale (1 = not valuable, 5 = most valuable).

The average rating was 4.22, indicating that respondents did find the meeting valuable. Four respondents selected 5 (44%), three selected 4 (33%), and two selected 3 (22%). No one selected 2 or 1, indicating that all respondents found value in the meeting.

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. Seven of the nine respondents offered feedback. Participants appreciated the time to connect, build new relationships, and strengthen existing relationships. One respondent expressed that the local Workforce Development Board should have had a more integral role. The meeting served the intended purpose of bridging connections between education and industry with one attendee stating, “the insight is extremely valuable as we recognize statistically... the economic and career opportunities and educational needs to our population.”

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. The good news is that business, economic development, and local workforce leaders perceive a shared responsibility for and show eagerness to support the work of educating students.