



**NorthEast Ohio Business Advisory Council
Friday, December 3, 2021 – Virtual Meeting
9:00-10:30 a.m.
Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio**

Agenda - Minutes

- 9:00-9:10 Welcome and Introductions
Nadine Grimm, Coordinator of 21st Century Learning
24 BAC members participated in the meeting
- 9:10-10:00 **Developmental Disabilities and Employability Skills and Opportunities**
Learn about organizations in our region that facilitate and provide job training and community-based programs for individuals with disabilities, at-risk youth, students in transition, and for individuals facing challenges to finding employment.

Presenters:

Jack Friend, Business Relations Manager, Goodwill Industries of Akron

Mr. Friend has worked at Goodwill of Akron for 20 years in workforce development and talent acquisition. He is responsible for staffing 15 retail stores, eCommerce, warehouse, assembly, industrial sewing and professional corporate roles. He works with adults and dislocated workers to help them prepare for, find, and retain employment in a five county area.

Programs on which Mr. Friend reported included Project Search, which provides job readiness training within the six-district compact for Summa Health Services workers. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) is for students in transition who are eligible for OOD services. Staff members teach five curricular modules of 8 hours each that include Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning, Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities, Workplace Readiness training, and Instruction on Self Advocacy. Modules are taught virtually or in the classroom. Goodwill's Work Experience Program, provided via a contract with schools, offers training for transition students in the retail stores. The program helps students improve soft skills and prepares them for independent employment. Students work during the school day and are paid for their work. The Summer Youth Work Experience offers 20 paid hours per week for students during the summertime. Goodwill provides a job coach to assist students as they work at jobs in the community. The Assessments, Adjustments, and Job Development Program provides employment services at Goodwill or at other employers within the community to help while employees are on the

job, to assess their skills, and to provide job coaching to improve employment outcomes for the employed individuals and for their employers.

Tiffany Jones, Community Employment Coordinator, Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Ms. Jones has worked in the Developmental Disabilities field since 1999. Currently, she focuses on community employment. She has worked in residential services and as a supervisor for Leeda Northeast running their day program.

Ms. Jones reported about the mission of the Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities to assist and support individuals in developing their abilities through advocacy, inclusion, and empowerment. Guided by Ohio's Path to Employment First implemented since Governor Kasich signed an executive order in March 2012, Portage County DD supports community employment that is competitive employment and which takes place in an integrated setting. Every individual of working age has a person-centered planning process to identify their desired employment outcome and their path toward community employment. Employment providers participating are required to submit progress reports annually to ensure that each individual is moving along their path to community employment. The board collects data on individuals served, and provides services and supports to help the individuals move along their pathways. The Portage County Board educates the community about transforming to a systemic culture that creates opportunities and pathways for integration, independence, and full community participation for all individuals. They ensure that young people with developmental disabilities learn about options and plan during their school years. Transition-aged youth are age 14-21. Adults receive supports to assist them in learning about their abilities and matching interests to workplaces. Employers and co-workers benefit through more diversity and a broader range of capable employees. The 88 county boards of developmental disabilities in Ohio partner with schools and other community agencies to share information, support individuals and families, and collect employment data. Individuals present with different employment scenarios: 1) have a job but want to move up; 2) want a job and need help finding one; 3) not sure about working and need help to learn more; 4) don't want to work or may not know enough about it.

A multi-system approach considers the many agencies and services offered to those seeking employment and services. Transition Explorers is for transition-aged students providing informal career exploration and skill building. The Portage Employment Collaborative is a network of employers, agencies, workforce development and service providers working to match qualified individuals with job opportunities. They help businesses meet hiring needs at no cost, build long term relationships, and offer recruitment support. Businesses hiring individuals with disabilities have increased insights on how to serve disabled customers, gain greater diversity at work, have higher productivity and problem solving, higher retention rates, tax incentives, and benefit from media and public relations.

10:00-10:10 Q & A

Questions for Mr. Friend included how to strengthen customer service skills. Mr. Friend offered strategies for developing social skills, making eye contact, wearing a smile, being friendly, etc.

For Ms. Jones, several district administrators indicated they would be interested in talking about services to better prepare their students in transition for employment opportunities.

10:10-10:25 Business Advisory Council Updates
Paula Kucinic, ESC NEO Director of Professional Development
and Workforce Development

Paula Kucinic updates the BAC members on the development of the ESC's Business & Industry Leadership Teams (BILTs) in August and an upcoming meeting on Dec. 14th on the topic of *Workforce Ethics: Past, Present, Future*.

On Feb. 4, 2022, a joint BAC and BILTs meeting will bring together educators and business leaders. The topic for the meeting will be the 2022 Economic Outlook and Trends presented by Jim Trutko.

The ESC and ESC BAC will submit a proposal to the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation for NEO WORKS, a systemic approach to regional workforce development to deepen relationships between the education and business sectors. NEO WORKS will include a web-based platform to provide communications and a connector for posting jobs, shadowing and internship and externships opportunities for students and educators.

[ODE/Johns Hopkins University High School Redesign](#)

Informational Meeting for Interested Districts – **Jan. 13, 2022, 2:30 p.m.** Zoom
IT Pathways – ESC Ohio Online Program Update

Spring cohort application deadline **Dec. 6, 2021**; Fall cohort

Nadine Grimm, ESC Coordinator of 21st Century Learning

Nadine Grimm updated the BAC members about a new opportunity to collaborate with the ESC and ODE for the High School Redesign Pilot. The initiative is the result of a collaboration between Johns Hopkins' Everyone Graduates Center and ODE and was piloted with 5 districts initially. The ESC will provide supports and facilitation for districts interested in pursuing the framework in their high school redesign. The information meeting for interested districts will be Jan. 13, 2022, 2:30 p.m. Graham Wood from ODE will be present to answer questions.

The Early IT initiative between University of Cincinnati and the ESC's Ohio Online Program will have its first cohort of students begin with the Fundamentals of IT course in January. A second cohort of students will begin in Fall, 2022. The ESC is in discussion with Cuyahoga Community College for offering college credit plus for the Ohio Online cohort of students. The deadline for student applications for the first cohort is Dec. 6th.

10:30 Thanks and Adjournment

Paula Kucinic and Nadine Grimm offered thanks to the presenters and to BAC participants. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Next Meeting: February 4, 2022