

Marion Area Workforce Acceleration Collaborative (MAWAC)

Joint Statement

March 1, 2019

Overview

The Marion Area Workforce Acceleration Collaborative (MAWAC) serves as a joint business advisory council meeting obligations under state law for the Elgin Local School District, Marion City School District, Pleasant Local School District, Ridgedale Local School District, and River Valley Local School District. The Tri-Rivers Career Center and Center for Adult Education, Marion Technical College, and The Ohio State University Marion Campus are postsecondary education and training members. Regional business and industry partners include Marion CAN DO!, the economic development agency and the Marion Area Chamber of Commerce.

MAWAC provides an integrated opportunity for education and industry to interact to advance workforce preparedness and economic development in the Marion area. The MAWAC partnership represents Marion area educational, business and workforce development leaders committed to:

- Developing and executing a collaborative Marion area strategy for education designed to improve college preparatory and expand post-secondary participation;
- Increasing the attainment of postsecondary credentials, including achieving admission to the U.S. military, earning a degree at a 2-4 year higher education institution, achieving a high-paying, in-demand job, or earning acceptance into a professional apprenticeship program; and
- Creating a highly skilled and adaptive workforce, supporting the Marion area and its economic development focus as America's Workforce Development Capital.

MAWAC convenes at least quarterly to plan, monitor progress and collaborate to reach its objective that **65% percent of the citizens of Marion County hold a postsecondary credential by 2025**, ensuring that the Marion area is a regional and national leader in workforce development, and providing area businesses with qualified and credentialed workers that enable them to compete globally. Meeting have been held in September, December, January and February of the 2018 - 2019 school year. Additional meetings are planned for March and April of 2019.

MAWAC Charter, Adopted February 8, 2019

Activities

Key activities have included:

1. **Securing technical assistance.** MAWAC partners agreed in September 2018 to contract services from EnvisionEdPlus, LLC, to facilitate planning aligned to priorities in the MAWAC charter, to support implementation of MAWAC action plans, and to identify funding opportunities to accelerate MAWAC's initiatives. Costs for these services are shared among Marion Technical College, Tri-Rivers Career Center and the participating school districts.
2. **Evaluating partnerships.** MAWAC members completed a survey and discussion to determine the strengths and weaknesses of existing partnerships among regional agencies, school districts, higher education and businesses. Members discussed strategies to maintain and improve collaborative efforts, especially as pertains to MAWAC initiatives. A take-away from this analysis was the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders at each partner organization to ensure that partnerships are sustained despite eventual retirements and attrition of key individuals.
3. **Supporting partner efforts.** MAWAC members have prioritized involvement in related county organizations and initiatives by attending meetings and events of partner organizations, contributing to partner activities and aligning efforts of MAWAC to ensure that the business advisory council is an active contributor to efforts aligned to its priorities. Examples include:
 - a. Active representation on a task force to update Marion's economic development strategic plan;
 - b. Collaboration on summer manufacturing camps for high school students; and
 - c. MAWAC has agreed to present at a Marion CAN DO! investors meeting to share information with 300 stakeholders about the role of the business advisory council and potential to enhance the area's talent pipeline by focusing on career exploration, planning and experience for middle and high school students.
4. **Charter Revision.** MAWAC was established by charter in January 2018. Revisions to the charter, adopted in February 2019, reflected a consensus that the primary objective should be aligned to the Lumina Foundation's 'Big Goal,' which the State of Ohio has also endorsed. Additional changes also reflected closer alignment to the recommended roles for business advisory councils and to the specific opportunities for education and workforce development in Marion County.
5. **Identifying 'Low-Hanging Fruit'.** MAWAC identified several priority activities, aligned with Goals 1-4 of the MAWAC Charter, for schools that could be accomplished without outside investment. These activities further developed and incorporated into MAWAC's Plan of Action for 2019-20.
6. **Youth Apprenticeships.** MAWAC is preparing a funding proposal to build capacity for and establish apprenticeships that begin in high school in alignment

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with Charter Goal 6 and with the quality standards of the national Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeships. This project is designed to leverage the unique training programs in advanced machining and robotics available at the Tri-Rivers Career Center RAMTEC program. Additionally, MAWAC partners Tri-Rivers and Marion Tech are apprising the group of changes in guidelines for federal apprenticeship designations, including new flexibility that could remove seat time constraints in favor of industry-led quality metrics.

7. **Career Exploration, Planning and Experience.** Planning has begun to support activities aligned with the Ohio Career Connections framework and the MAWAC goals. Funding opportunities, such as the state's Expanding Opportunities for Each Child program, are being identified.