



West Muskingum Local Schools

College- and Career-Readiness Strategic Plan

Situation Analysis

All students deserve access to a high-quality education that maximizes their potential for future success. Responding to this and other challenges, **West Muskingum Local Schools** has joined forces with Battelle for Kids (BFK) and 20 other Appalachian Ohio school districts to form the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative (OAC), and create and implement a comprehensive approach to transform rural education and improve student outcomes. At the conclusion of this multi-year initiative, the ultimate goal is to implement a successful rural education improvement collaborative that can be scaled across rural Ohio and the country.

The mission of the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative is to strengthen and leverage educator effectiveness to accelerate college- and career-readiness (CCR) for every student and ensure they have access to future opportunities to enhance their quality of life.

All school districts, regardless of geography or demographics, are faced with the need to adapt the way education is designed and delivered to meet the needs of a rapidly-changing global economy. At the same time, there are unique challenges facing rural communities and school districts. Information highlighting educational opportunities and attainment for the Appalachian Ohio region underscores the need for transformational reform to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to be future ready upon high school graduation. Such information includes:

Educational attainment: According to the Appalachian Regional Commission (2010) Ohio's Appalachian region has historically lower college-going, college completion, and educational attainment rates than the rest of the state and the nation. Less than 12 percent of the adult population in most Ohio Appalachian counties has completed college, which is well below the overall national Appalachian rate of 17.6 percent and the U.S. rate of 24.4 percent.



Access to rigorous curriculum: The average percentage of high school graduates in Appalachian Ohio participating in the 2008-09 Advanced Placement (AP) test was 16 percent compared to 34 percent for non-Appalachian Ohio. Five of the 21 districts in the OAC report that no 2009 graduating seniors participated in an AP exam. (Battelle for Kids, 2011).

College-going and readiness rates: According to five-year trend data from the Ohio Board of Regents (2003-2007):

- College remediation rates for reading or mathematics on average were approximately 46 percent for Appalachian Ohio districts, compared to the state average of 39 percent.
- Fifty-nine percent of Appalachian Ohio students are exposed to a less than minimum college preparatory curriculum, compared to a state average of 48 percent.
- The average college-entrance rate for OAC districts is nearly 40 percent, compared to the state average of 45 percent.
- ACT profiles of graduating seniors show the average (by district) percentage of graduates participating in 2008-09 ACT college entrance exams in Appalachian Ohio was 56.7 percent, compared to 63.7 percent in non-Appalachian Ohio districts.
- The mean ACT score (2008-2009) for Appalachian Ohio districts was 20.6, and for non-Appalachian Ohio districts was 21.6.

Based upon the most current labor market information from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (November 2011), eight of 11 OAC counties have unemployment rates exceeding Ohio's statewide unemployment rate of 8.5 percent. Additionally, five OAC counties have unemployment rates above 10 percent. All OAC counties have per capita personal income levels below the state and national levels (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2011b).

On the job front: In 2011, the state of Ohio published the "Buckeye Top 50: 2008-2018: Ohio's High-Wage Occupations in Demand." This list of the 50 high-wage occupations in Ohio that are in demand, and projected to stay in demand, includes the educational requirements for each job. Sixty percent of the top 50 jobs required a postsecondary vocational award or better. Thirty-nine require an associate's degree or better (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2011a).

Brain drain: While rural schools can be a source of unity in many communities, there is also a distinct tension between schools and the Appalachian community because of a phenomenon known as "brain drain." Schools often inadvertently feed the brain drain of rural areas, as many talented rural students leave their respective Appalachian communities in search of better opportunities. This can lead to hostility and even a class distinction within these rural areas. As Courrege (2011) notes, those at one end of this hierarchy feel "a sense of alienation from and hostility toward schools, while those on the other end see education as the only path to success."

Focus on 9-14 education: In his book, *College and Career Ready in the 21st Century: Making High School Matter*, Stone (2012) notes that more than half of ninth grade students in the United States will never complete a college degree. Thus, schools as well as state and federal policymakers are discussing the need for high schools to do more than just prepare some students for college. Schools must prepare all American

youth for productive lives as well as continued learning beyond high school. Therefore, schools are asked now to shift the focus of high school reform efforts from “college for all” to “careers for all.” This includes developing a framework for career and technical education, stemming dropout rates, and making the transition to higher education institutions more seamless. The framework for high school education has become a 9-14 framework and not simply a 9-12 framework, with a specific eye to helping students transition to postsecondary lives.

College education costs and payoff: According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, America’s higher education system enterprise has become a \$375 billion industry (Blumenstyk, 2008). The higher education industry and college affordability is becoming a greater issue with regard to national policy and legislation. In fact, a poll conducted by the National Education Association showed that 70 percent of parents and 65 percent of students said making college affordable was an important issue for them during election time. Therefore, with the rising costs of college, the question looming large in the Appalachian community is, “what is the payoff?” Parents, students, and communities must weigh the cost (and subsequent debt) of college versus the potential for lifetime earnings that comes with attending college. While the National Center for Education Statistics notes that the average lifetime earnings of a college graduate is \$1 million more than those without a degree, prospective students cannot ignore the question of short term affordability and debt. This question can create a barrier to students attending both 2-year and 4-year institutions.

(the Situation Analysis above reprinted with permission from the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative College- and Career-Readiness Strategic Plan, ©2012, Battelle for Kids)

A Research Definition of College- and Career-Readiness

In order to fully understand such challenges and needs, the OAC must focus on defining an overall vision of college- and career-readiness. In *Something in Common*, a book that outlines the in-depth development of the Common Core State Standards, Robert Rothman defines college- and career-readiness as “the ability to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in workforce training programs...For college, that meant enrolling in either a two-year or four-year institution; for workforce training, that meant enrolling in programs that prepare students for careers that offer competitive, livable salaries, that offer opportunities for career advancement, and that are in growing or sustainable industry” (Rothman, 2011, p. 80).

For the purposes of this initiative, the OAC will frame its definition of college- and career-readiness as outlined by Rothman. Further, the OAC will build upon this definition by defining the Three Pillars of College- and Career-Readiness.

Three Pillars of College- and Career-Readiness

There is significant research dedicated to college- and career- readiness. For the purposes of the OAC, we have organized our review of college- and career-readiness under three pillars to provide a framework for further review and development in district-based initiatives. These pillars include:

Academic Preparation • Accessibility • Aspiration

Academic Preparation: identifies the academic knowledge and preparation students need for success in college and careers. This involves a rigorous PreK-12 curriculum that incorporates college- and career-readiness opportunities in academic offerings.

Accessibility: includes many logistical aspects around college- and career-readiness, which include preparation, financial considerations, and degree/career attainment. Even if students are academically prepared, they also must know how to access educational and career opportunities beyond high school.

Aspiration: addresses how postsecondary education and workforce training opportunities are presented to students to ensure they are making appropriate and informed choices for opportunities beyond high school.

(the Research Definition of College- and Career-Readiness and Three Pillars of College- and Career-Readiness above reprinted with permission from the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative College- and Career-Readiness Strategic Plan, ©2012, Battelle for Kids)

The following Strategic Plan was developed by members of the West Muskingum Local school District College and Career Readiness Network.

Pillar 1:

Academic Preparation

This pillar seeks to identify the key components of academic preparation for college- and career-readiness. The Common Core State Standards initiative and research regarding the gap in student preparation for postsecondary success fit in the discussion around this pillar. **Key questions to answer around this pillar include:**

- How are districts promoting alignment and transition to the Common Core State Standards?
- What other K-12 academic and curriculum components should be included with regard to academic preparation for college- and career-readiness (i.e. STEMM [science, technology, engineering, math, and medicine], math, science, service-learning, internships, entrepreneurship, etc.)?

Strategy 1

Offer rigorous PreK-12 curriculum that involves college- and career-readiness opportunities, along with academic requirements, to meet student goals.

Indicator 1.1 Promote understanding of the Common Core State Standards Curriculum that allows for successful implementation in the school district.

- 1.1.1 The districts Curriculum Director will work with administrators and teachers to understand and implement the Common Core.
- 1.1.2 Teachers will provide evidence of implementation of Common Core in their grade level/content area.
- 1.1.3 In 2013-2014 social studies teachers in grades 5-12 will receive training and will implement the Literacy Design Collaborative.

Indicator 1.2 Embed formative instructional practices and assessment tools in district practice to accommodate students in their learning and self-assessment.

- 1.2.1 Based on teacher needs at the school level the teacher development network will continue to provide training and coaching in Formative Instructional Level.
- 1.2.2 The district will participate in assessment literacy training provided by the Leadership and Learning Center.

Academic Preparation: identifies the academic knowledge and preparation students need for success in college and careers. This involves a rigorous PreK-12 curriculum that incorporates college- and career-readiness opportunities in academic offerings.

Outcome Data for Pillar 1 By the 2014-2015 School year

- 100% understanding and implementation of Common Core by 2014-2015 school year.
- 100% of teachers understand and implement FIP.
- Teachers will have an operational understanding of personalized learning.
- Establish a district and school culture of student learning and achievement.

Indicator 1.3 The district will research and develop an implementation plan for personalized learning, in order to address the specific learning needs of students.

1.3.1 The district will participate in the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative's Personalized Learning Network.

1.3.2 Principals will participate in a professional study of personalized learning.

1.3.3 In 2013-2014 grades K-4 will implement a non-graded team structure to allow for flexible grouping based on a learning progression and students learning needs.

1.3.4 The district will continue in grades K-8 to use online learning programs to compliment and personalize learning in English Language Arts and Math.

1.3.5 Teachers in grades K-8 will use the data from online learning programs and other formative assessments to develop instructional programs for individuals, and small and large groups.

Indicator 1.4 Establish a district and school culture of student learning and achievement.

1.4.1 Administrators and teachers will be provided further instruction in the understanding of student growth and Value-Added.

1.4.2 The district will place a greater emphasis on student learning-student growth.

Pillar 2:

Accessibility

In an increasingly competitive global economy, yet struggling economic climate, access to viable college and career choices for students is crucial. **Key questions around this pillar include:**

- How do we increase awareness and culture of college and career access from grades K-12?
- What are the barriers to college and career access for all students? How do we eliminate such barriers?

Strategy 2

Leverage community assets to help students and families access college and career preparation programs.

Indicator 2.1 Collect and monitor the number of students in Advanced Placement.

2.1.1 Throughout 2013-2014 collect data to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of courses offered.

Indicator 2.2 Increase the number of Dual Enrollment courses offered at the high school.

2.1.2 Continue to work with ROCS and post secondary institutions to increase dual enrollment opportunities.

Indicator 2.3 Research and develop effective ways to engage parents in information meetings about post secondary opportunities and financing higher education.

2.3.1 Through surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews with parents of students in grades K-12, identify the most effective way to connect parents to college and career information and financial resources.

Indicator 2.4 Research and develop a “District CCR User Manual” – Tornado Playbook.

2.4.1 Identify the targeted skill set for CCR that comprise personal development, college-readiness, and workforce skills.

2.4.2 Develop “Tornado Playbook” at various levels that align to identified skills.

2.4.2.1 Develop a playbook for primary grades.

2.4.2.2 Develop a playbook for intermediate grades.

Accessibility: includes many logistical aspects around college- and career-readiness, which include preparation, financial considerations, and degree/career attainment. Even if students are academically prepared, they also must know how to access educational and career opportunities beyond high school.

Outcome Data for Pillar 2

- Collect and monitor the number of students in Advanced Placement.
- Increase the number of Dual Enrollment courses offered at the high school.
- Research and determine the feasibility of providing internship programs for high school students in 2014-2015.
- Research and develop effective ways to engage parents in information meetings about post secondary opportunities and financing higher education.
- Research and develop a “District CCR User Manual” – Tornado Playbook.

2.4.2.3 Develop a playbook for middle school grades.

2.4.2.3 Develop a playbook for high school grades.

Pillar 3:

Aspiration

The topic of college and career aspiration often surfaces when discussing rural or Appalachian schools. The issues include addressing the challenges of “brain drain” and leaping economic hurdles, as well as, changing long-standing community cultures with regard to college attendance and perception. **Key questions around this pillar include:**

- What are the barriers to students’ college and career aspirations?
- What resources are available to increase student awareness of postsecondary options?
- Self-efficacy and self-esteem are also variables linked to college attendance. How do we build such efficacy in students in the K-12 setting so that they develop appropriate college and career aspirations?

Strategy 3

Facilitate the development of students’ realistic visions for their futures.

Indicator 3.1 Research and develop an intentional and systematic exposure to career opportunities by K-8th grade

3.1.1 Close the gap between goals and pathways. Align students’ career goals and academic programs.

3.1.2 Research and develop opportunities for career exposure:

- guest speakers
- Reality Days
- Visit the Mid-East Career Mobile Lab
- ACT Explore
- Visit Mid-East Career and Technology Center
- Visit local colleges

Indicator 3.2 Research, develop and train teachers to incorporate Career Education into their Parent Teacher Conferences.

3.2.1 Promote self-advocacy of students by:

- student led conferences
- student initiated projects
- speech projects

Aspiration: addresses how postsecondary education and workforce training opportunities are presented to students to ensure they are making appropriate and informed choices for opportunities beyond high school.

Outcome Data for Pillar 3

- Research and develop an intentional and systematic exposure to career opportunities by K-8th grade.
- Research, develop and train teachers to incorporate Career Education into their Parent Teacher Conferences.
- Analyze the results of the community perception survey and gather feedback from the SAN group (Student Advisory Network)

- encouraging self-reliance
- helping them feel able and willing to approach help when needed (self-advocacy)

Strategy 4

Engage stakeholders around college- and career-readiness standards.

4.1 Develop a trusting relationship with parents and the community.

4.1.1 Use the results of community perception survey to guide district level decisions.

4.1.2 Engage the parents and community in the development of the “Tornado Playbook”.

4.1.3 Utilize the Superintendent’s Advisory Network in understanding and promoting the College and Career Readiness standards.

4.1.4 Convene a community stakeholder organization, or a “core team” with K-12 schools to develop a community analysis to understand community assets for college and career paths.

Appendix A: Works Cited

- Appalachian Regional Commission. (2010). Education: High school and college completion rates. Retrieved from <http://www.arc.gov/reports>.
- Battelle for Kids. (2011). OAC college- and career-readiness survey. *Unpublished survey data*.
- Bedsworth, W., Colby, S., & Doctor, J. (2006). Reclaiming the American dream. *The Bridgespan Group*, 1-15.
- Blumenstyk, G. (2008). The \$375-billion dollar question: Why does college cost so much? *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55(6).
- Courrege, D. (2011, September 12). Rural schools, brain drain, and community survival. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rural_education/2011/09/sending_off_all_your_good.html
- Hart Research Associates. (2011). One year out: Survey among the high school class of 2010. *The College Board*.
- EdWeek. (2011). *College access*. (July ed., Vol. 2011, p. 3). Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/college-access/>.
- National Center for Education Statistics, (2012). The condition of education 2012. Retrieved from website: <http://nces.ed.gov>.
- Ohio Board of Regents. (2009). Making the transition from high school to college in Ohio, fall 2003 to fall 2007 results. Retrieved from <http://www.ohiohighered.org/node/225>.
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development. (2011a). *The Buckeye Top Fifty: 2008-2018*. Retrieved from <http://ohiolmi.com/PROJ/projections/ohio/Buckeye50.pdf>.
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development. (2011b). *Ohio not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates: November 2011*. Retrieved from <http://ohiolmi.com/laus/ColorRateMap.pdf>.
- Provasnik, S., Kewai Ramani, A., Coleman, M. M., Gilbertson, L., Herring, W., & Xie, Q. (2007). *Status of Education in Rural America*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Rothman, R. (2011). *Something in common*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education.
- Saunders, M., & Chrisman, C. (2011). Linking learning to the 21st century: Preparing all students for college, career, and civic participation. *National Education Policy Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.greatlakescenter.org>.
- Shireman, R. (2009). College affordability and student success. *Change*, March/April, 54-56.
- Stone, J. (2012). *College and career ready in the 21st century: Making high school matter*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. (2012). *CareerOneStop: Pathways to Career Success*. Retrieved from www.careeronestop.org