

Monongalia County Summary Report

Prepared by:



Introduction

This report will provide a summary of the Career Readiness West Virginia discussion and recommendations within Monongalia County. A considerable amount of research, meetings and breakout sessions have taken place in the past couple months to assess and evaluate the **Growth, Decline, and Opportunities** faced by both education and local industry.

Forge Business Solutions has conducted discussions with stakeholders throughout the county and region, including members of the house of delegates, the leaders within education, educators, students, parents, business leaders, non-profit organization representatives, and community members at large. We have analyzed economic data, reviewed current partnerships and collaborations, and investigated different relationships that can be created, developed or enhanced. Through this work, we have been able to analyze the Monongalia County economy to determine where collaboration can be fostered in order to develop a sustainable partnership model between area industry and K-12, including Career Technical Education.

In the pages that follow, we will summarize the results of the stakeholder engagement meeting and will include county-specific recommendations. With an overview of the Monongalia County education system that is as broad as it is specific, the foundation has been laid to launch the collaborative model that will arm education and industry with the necessary partnerships to forge ahead for a successful and sustainable future.

Our sincere appreciation goes to Superintendent Dr. Eddie Campbell and Chamber of Commerce President and Chief Executive Officer Russell Rogerson for their dedication to their community and support of Career Readiness West Virginia.



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Monongalia County Summary

Monongalia County is a growing community serving the small city of Morgantown with a population over 100,000. West Virginia University is located in Morgantown, creating the vibe of a bustling college town and attracting young people from all over the state, country and world. Home to a variety of industries, Monongalia County has top employers such as WVU Hospitals, West Virginia University, Mylan, and Mon General Hospitals. The strong presence of the healthcare and education industries have driven the growth of the Morgantown area which is increasingly attracting other industries and businesses to the community.

Monongalia County Schools serve over 11,000 of the community's youth with Morgantown High School, University High School, Clay-Battelle High School and the supporting middle and elementary schools. Two thousand three hundred thirty-seven employers employ the residents of Monongalia County, many of which are members of the Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce. Currently, there is little engagement between education and industry leaving significant opportunity for future collaboration. However, many community members communicated their support and dedication towards helping develop and implement the Career Readiness West Virginia partnership model.

Boasting a lower poverty rate and higher labor participation rate than the average county in West Virginia, Monongalia County is prepared to lead the way for the state. Educating its students with skills and expertise in demand by local industry and connecting them with local opportunities will allow the county to continue to grow and thrive in the future.

Forge has identified eight activities in which industry and education can collaborate to support workforce development utilizing newly formed relationships – [Internships](#), [Externships](#), [Speakers' Bureaus](#), [Job Shadowing](#), [Job Fairs](#), [Integrated Pathways](#), [Career Exploration](#), and [Workplace Tours](#).

In addition to these activities, Forge recommends that Monongalia County Schools and Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce work together to develop a local career readiness advisory committee. This committee will become the bridge that leads education to teaching desired skillsets as demanded by local industry. Together education and industry can lead West Virginia towards a stronger future.



Monongalia County Schools

13 High Street
Morgantown, WV 26501

Superintendent: Dr. Eddie Campbell

Enrollment: 11,595



Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce

1029 University Avenue # 101
Morgantown, WV 26505

Executive Director: Russell Rogerson

County Population: 106,420



Discovery

Top Employers

Name	Industry	Address
WVU Hospitals	Healthcare	1 Medical Center Dr, Morgantown, WV 26505
West Virginia University	Education	Morgantown, WV 26506
Mylan Pharmaceuticals	Pharmaceutical	781 Chestnut Ridge Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505
Monongalia County Board of Education	Education	13 High St, Morgantown, WV 26501
Monongalia General Hospital	Healthcare	1200 J D Anderson Dr, Morgantown, WV 26505
Wal-Mart	Retail	5605 University Town Centre Dr, Westover, WV 26501
Gabriel Brothers	Retail	55 Scott Ave, Morgantown, WV 26508
Kroger	Grocery	500 Suncrest Towne Centre Drive, Morgantown, WV 26505
West Virginia University Research Corporation	Research	886 Chestnut Ridge Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505
Teletch Services	Telecommunications	5000 Green Bag Road, Morgantown, WV 26501

Stakeholder Engagement Meeting Comments

Forge Business Solutions collaborated with Monongalia County Schools and the Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce to conduct a stakeholder engagement meeting. This meeting invited local educators, employers, parents, students and politicians to develop an initial discussion. The following subsections include comments collected from the stakeholders. They may contain opinionated statements that do not represent the research or thoughts of Forge.



Local Industry Trends

Growth

- Entrepreneurial opportunities
- Healthcare jobs, RN, LPN, MA, nutrition and environment
- Population growing
- Aging healthcare, oil & gas, WVU, housing, population, technology
- Nonprofit and industrial contracting
- Technology
- Medicine and service
- Bank deposits
- Increase in enrollment in higher education
- Positive experiences with simulated workplace and CTE opportunities
- Growth in Mon County
- Growth on edges of town: WesMon, MonFayette Junction, etc
- WVU help spouses get jobs
- Work at home opportunities
- WVU Hospitals
- Mon County Schools decrease in enrollment (change in PK age)

Decline

- People not staying in Morgantown
- Transcription due to technology
- Technology taking over bank transactions, health status
- Coal
- Daily transactions
- Education obstacles such as opioid crisis, substance abuse, mental health, poverty
- Talent pool
- Less employment at Mylan- technology



Opportunities

- Educational programs
- Education work with Mon Health and other companies to develop programs
- Keep graduates in Morgantown
- Partner with middle school on learning opportunities
- Community collaboration to take advantage of growth in population
- Remove 5-, 10-year min experience requirements; allow to be 1st year experience
- Retain students/grads
- Diversity in the workplace
- Partnerships with tech certificate schools
- Collaboration
- Tech, health, childcare, eldercare
- Cybersecurity and nonprofit
- Morgantown, WV
- Exist in online education, executive education
- Promoting family engagement initiatives, CTE education expansion
- Grow talent pool
- Take a more collaborative approach to engagement between business and education
- Make people aware of options, opportunities
- Put tech centers in high schools
- Present a program for kids to build on career exploration taking coursework led by future career with easy options to change plans
- WVU collaborate with other universities to extend reach and increase talent pool
- Build relationships with industry
- Increased awareness to students of secondary education opportunities and financial programs available
- On campus recruitment for nurses
- App or other technical way to collaborate



Job Market Outlook

4-Year Degree

- Most will move away to pursue career; some may come back in 20-30 years
- Valued by degree; STEM is stronger
- Jobs exist statewide- lots of vacancies

2-Year Degree

- Sometimes required for the job
- Solid pathway to a job
- Entry-level degree (get bachelor's while working)
- Very specific area of work
- Healthcare/maintenance
- Increased value is being recognized
- Gee has been supportive
- Free 2-year program= feeder program
- Much interest in junior/senior high students being able to participate in associate's degree program while in high school



Tech Certificates

- Not as many opportunities as 2-year degree
- Strong outlook for cosmetology, phlebotomy, massage therapy, medical assisting
- Healthcare
- Increasing in many industries
- \$70k-100k with no student debt in many service/technical jobs

H.S. Grads

- Not many opportunities except Walmart, Gabe's, Sheetz or other food service
- Manual jobs
- Placeholder jobs
- Retail, restaurant
- Labor jobs
- Less opportunities
- Entry level
- Tech companies start training programs
- High school education doesn't get you through life anymore



Current Engagement

- DOE Simulated Work Program
- “See Me Lead” high school program
- WVUH- CAN educational programs in high school
- Visiting high schools
- On campus recruitment for higher education
- West Virginia Family Engagement Center Program
- WVDE Simulated Workplace
- CMI-lead training
- Set up pathways, internships, etc. for students
- Discuss the needs of industry
- Bank visit
- “Get a Life” program
- JR Achievement
- WVPEC annual Legislator’s Forum for Education and the Economy
- Strong focus and engagement in education, with industry and economic development
- Utilize students to volunteer with organization
- Creating a workforce development committee
- Partnering with schools- clinical education experience
- Getting out in the community to network and explore needs for program growth and expansion
- Attending meetings



Top Characteristics

- Soft skills
- Adaptability
- Communication
- Can be learned on YouTube
- Active learning, “kinetic”
- Collaboration
- Team skills
- Hard skills
- Clinical increases
- Required certification
- Growth mindset
- Self-driven
- Writing skills
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Energy
- Leadership
- Diversity
- Drive
- Customer service
- Dependability
- Motivation to grow and learn



Barriers for Collaboration

- Resources
- Regulation
- Getting to rural areas
- Coordinating transportation
- Needs to be comprehensive
- Needs coordination
- Finding the mechanism to connect businesses with education
- Time
- Finding time to access students
- Creating a cohesive network of business/industry leaders, economic development, and educational entities to bring all voices to the table to create a unified network with a key goal in mind
- Internal resource availability
- PHI concerns for onsite visits
- Brick and mortar schools closing; more online
- Kids don't know
- Loans in rural areas
- Connectivity in rural areas
- Legality of collaboration with minors
- Scheduling events and lack of personnel to man the event
- Safety/patient privacy



Recommendations

The Career Readiness WV model is student-centered. In an effort to increase workforce participation and improve job growth in the Monongalia County area, collaboration between education providers at all levels and the business community is imperative. The following activities and organization are recommended.

Workplace Tours

The Monongalia County School District would benefit from preparing an annual calendar scheduling workplace tours with area employers for elementary, middle and high school students that is most convenient for the participating company or place of business. The calendar will create a centrally organized master calendar.

Identifying key employers that represent a broad spectrum of jobs and careers to engage in an interactive manner provides opportunities for students to see careers at work and to gain a better understanding of the key skillsets needed for various careers by industry sector. The workplace tours should be appropriate for the schools' respective grade levels. Schools and employers should develop sustainable relationships for annual exchange of ideas and collaboration that benefits both the student and the employer.

All are best served when educators ensure that students are learning about occupations that require a variety of degrees of education from high school diplomas to certificates to 2-year degrees and higher education. Employers and educators need to emphasize the importance of a knowledge-based drug-free workforce. An emphasis should be placed on jobs in STEM-related areas.

Speakers' Bureau

In a centrally organized manner, speakers should be scheduled to present various occupations to students all throughout K-12 education. These occupations should represent varying skillsets and levels of education. Career and technical education should be the emphasis of the speakers' bureau. Relationships should be built with related employers so that both the education provider and the employer/business have a common understanding of the skillsets and education needed for successful job placement.



When available, involving parents who are subject-matter experts in their field of practice should be utilized. For areas where parents don't have the expertise, other speakers should be sought out to ensure students are getting a wide range of occupational exposure.

Job Shadowing

Each school should have an opportunity to engage in job shadowing for a wide range of occupations where safety can be ensured, and job scenarios are presented in a manner that is appropriate for the student. Job shadowing should not be limited to parents and their occupations. Many students may not have parents that are employed and making sure that everyone has a fair opportunity is essential.

Job Fairs

All middle schools and high schools should participate in at least one annual job fair and/or reverse job fair. Job fairs should be age-appropriate and, when possible, on school premises. The idea behind job fairs is not only to offer jobs to high school graduates but to expose students to as many occupations and industries as possible.

Additionally, relationships between employers and future employees can be established at an earlier level thus allowing students to focus on career opportunities with unfiltered knowledge and a clear understanding of what it takes to get a specific job and excel in a specific occupational area.

Interview skills with an emphasis on communication should be established as soon as possible. Elementary schools should offer career day opportunities where subject matter experts visit the classrooms to discuss a variety of occupations and industries. Feedback from participating employers should be collected at all points of engagement and utilized by educators to develop student understanding and success.

Internships and Externships

Area employers should be invited to participate in and offer internships/externships (paid or unpaid) as long as safety is ensured and tasks are age appropriate. All internships and externships shall be approved by the school district. Feedback should be collected and evaluated from both the employer and student perspective. Such feedback should be considered and utilized to drive student understanding and success.



Internships/externships should represent a wide range of occupations and varying degrees of education required. Special attention should be paid to ensure that students with fewer resources have an equal opportunity to be considered. A recognition program should be established to recognize participating students for their work and success.

Integrated Pathways

K-12 public education, community and technical colleges, and higher education should collaborate to ensure that students have an efficient and secure way to obtain varying levels of qualified education necessary to secure a job and to advance within their career field. All education providers should be embedded in all levels of workforce development and career readiness. This will ensure their awareness of the skillsets, knowledge, and degrees required by industry and employer thus closing the loop on wasteful spending.

Additional Recommendations

Monongalia County should consider its top employers as a primary resource for career readiness. Those employers are:

- WVU Hospitals
- West Virginia University
- Mylan
- Monongalia County Board of Education
- Mon General Hospitals

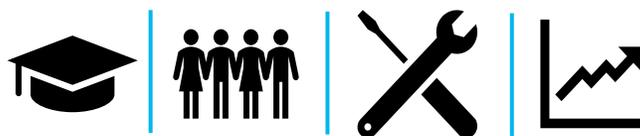
Monongalia County Schools and the Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce should apply the Career Readiness WV model and provide leadership to the local career readiness advisory committee that is established from its local stakeholders. Strategic partnerships should be developed with existing businesses but also with emerging industry leaders. Given the strong presence of the healthcare industry in the Morgantown area, key partnerships with healthcare providers in the area should be established. The small business community should be engaged as well as the larger employers.

The career and technical education centers should offer open houses to employers of the Morgantown area and surrounding counties. This showcases the programs and skillsets being developed and deployed. An annual employer-sponsored professional etiquette workshop should be offered to students and parents.



As part of the district’s professional development program for teachers and administrators, Monongalia County should include employers and occupational specialists as speakers for its professional development program. This will assist educators with a better understanding of the demand for skillsets and key employee characteristics of the local economy.

All participants in the collaborative should be surveyed on an annual basis for input and ideas. This will allow for continued growth and development of the model. The success of West Virginia’s economy greatly depends on diversification. Local districts should not limit themselves to the current industry landscape and should ensure that students are being exposed to careers from a global perspective.



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