

# ESC NEO Works Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2025



## Strengthening Career Development for the Northeast Ohio Workforce

**O**n September 9, Jeremy Varner, Deputy Director of the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce, addressed educators, business leaders, and community members on the topic of Strengthening Career Development in the Northeast Ohio Workforce. He discussed the importance of career-connected learning at a time when students have limited access to career-technical education (CTE), 60% of high school graduates are not earning associate or four-year degrees, and Ohio is in need of qualified technicians to fill hundreds of job openings. In particular, data show that Northeast Ohio has an acute shortage of students currently engaged in CTE.



With development of new regional Career Pathway Support Networks, the state intends to develop strong education-workforce systems to support CTE beginning at the middle school level. With 12.5 percent of youth ages 18-24 lacking a high school diploma, it is imperative to engage students' interests and aptitudes early and provide engaging hands-on applications of learning. Middle school students will engage initially with broad exposure to careers and general skills, such as through Junior Achievement, that then will narrow during high school as students focus on specific skill sets and technical training in CTE areas leading to shadowing, internships, work-based learning, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, industry-recognized credentials, and dual credit opportunities. The Career Pathway Support Network model calls for mentoring and counseling services for students, as well as professional development to increase the number of CTE educators and administrators. Deputy Varner highlighted flexibility and innovation as a positive response to the educational and workforce challenges in Northeast Ohio.

### ESC NEO Works Kicks Off 2025–26 with Programs, Partnerships, and Possibilities

I hope this fall is bringing positive change and new opportunities for you and your district. At ESC NEO Works, the 2025–26 academic year began with a wonderful array of programs, activities, and events—many of which are featured in this second edition of our newsletter. In addition to celebrating and highlighting the great work happening across Northeast Ohio, our goal is to provide timely and relevant information to keep you connected to what's occurring throughout the region. If you would like us to feature one of your district's programs or services in an upcoming issue—or if there is any way we can support you—please don't hesitate to reach out.

- Paula Kucinic, ESC NEO Director of Professional Learning & Workforce Development



### ESCNEO's BAC MISSION

The mission of the ESC of Northeast Ohio BAC is to provide opportunities where students, K-12 educators, and business and community leaders can network, collaborate and partner together in creating programs and opportunities that support and develop a stronger Northeast Ohio Workforce.

[Click here](#) to see NEO BAC member districts.



# GEAR UP FRC-31 Grants Boost College Access and Career Readiness Across 10 Cleveland-Area Districts with Summer Programs and Back-to-School Initiatives

Summer was a busy time for the ESC and its partners in GEAR UP! As part of the GEAR UP FRC-31 grant, Brooklyn, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Garfield Heights, Maple Heights City, Parma, South Euclid-Lyndhurst, Warrensville Heights, and Richmond Heights can leverage federal dollars to increase college access and attainment.

Over the summer six districts offered summer program that was supported by College Now Greater Cleveland. In addition to traditional math and ELA supports, GEAR UP FRC-31 was able to support 25 educational experiences across 6 school districts. Some of these trips included to the Girls Scouts of Northeast Ohio STEM Center of Excellence, the Great Lakes Science Center, McGregor Assisted Living Home, MAGNET and Rid-All-Farm. Prior to and after each trip there were college and career awareness lessons provided to students. These directly supported the grant's goal of increasing students' educational aspirations defined by documentation of their college and career plan.

GEAR UP FRC-31 was also part of back-to-school festivities! College Now Greater Cleveland participated in all 10 districts' back to school activities providing activities around college readiness and exploration. At Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Euclid, Garfield Heights, and Warrensville Heights, Junior Achievement shared strategies and supports for early career exploration with middle school students. These sessions focused on career exploration, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.





## BAC Awarded Grant from ODEW

The ESC's Business Advisory Council (BAC) was one of only seven BACs in the state to be awarded a 2025 Business Advisory Council Grant from the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce.

Our project grew out of a health careers pilot coordinated by the ESC with several districts interested in developing new health career pathways for their students. The pilot provided opportunities for students to explore their interest and aptitudes through the YouScience careers platform, as well as developing a print and digital Health Careers Journal for use by students and educators. The BAC Grant award supported the development of two videos highlighting information and data about Northeast Ohio's healthcare sector. Produced in collaboration with TeamNeo's Connections to Careers (C2C) Workshop

Series, [Biomedical & Healthcare Trends in Northeast Ohio](#) provides in-depth knowledge and demographics about the healthcare industry, job postings, leading companies, and the broad types of careers available within the biomedical sector in our region. The second video is an interview between TeamNeo's talent advisor Julie Szeltner and Katherine Gullett, the director of [Case Western Reserve School of Medicine Center for Imaging Research](#), discussing the education and skills necessary to prepare for and be successful in medical and healthcare careers.

The videos and healthcare resources produced as a result of the BAC 2025 Grant Award are available to any educators interested in supporting students interested in healthcare careers.



### Upcoming Events

#### E4Me Career Day

October 23, 2025

9 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Location: ESC of Northeast Ohio  
"Employment, Entrepreneurship, Enlistment & Education"

Individuals from a wide range of careers are presenters, panelists, and have tabletop hands-on discussions with high school students from Cleveland and the surrounding school districts.

Contact:

[tippi.foley@escneo.org](mailto:tippi.foley@escneo.org)

#### Business Advisory Council Meeting

October 3, 2025

9:30 - 11 a.m.

Location: ESC of Northeast Ohio

"Unleash Passion, Purpose, and Performance in Younger Generations" - Presenter: Mark C. Perna, author, keynote speaker, and generational expert - In partnership with the Greater Cleveland School Superintendents' Association

Registration is required:

[www.escneo.org](http://www.escneo.org)

Professional Learning/  
Calendar of Events

Contact Hours: 1.5

#### Business Advisory Council Meeting

December 5, 2025

9:30 - 11 a.m.

Location: ESC of Northeast Ohio

"Emerging Career Opportunities in Advanced Mobility" - In partnership with DriveOhio - Panelists: Bob Tanner, Advanced Air Mobility Director, ODOT and Rich Granger, Managing Director of Workforce Development, DriveOhio

Registration is required:

[www.escneo.org](http://www.escneo.org)

Professional Learning/  
Calendar of Events

Contact Hours: 1.5

### Skills for Success: Building Your Career Toolkit

For success in school, college, technical training or on the job, both knowledge and career skills are essential. The ESC's Business Advisory Council (BAC) has developed a digital career toolkit that can be used by individuals, by small groups, or with classrooms of adults or students to learn about and practice specific "soft skills" (sometimes called "professional skills" or "life skills") that can lead to success.

An upcoming introductory workshop on **October 8, 2025**, will be led by Mary Lou Fasko, educational consultant and former school psychologist. In the [Skills for Success workshop](#), participants will explore modules highlighting topics like time management, planning and prioritizing, communication, and leadership with practical examples from "real life" context. [Register](#) for the workshop and learn more about these executive functioning skills and how they can impact your individual success and those of your students or colleagues.



# Cleveland Clinic's Connected Career Rounds Library Now Available On-Demand for Free, Offering Students and Educators Insight into Healthcare Careers

The Cleveland Clinic Center for Youth and College Education is pleased to announce that the full library of 11 Connected Career Rounds sessions from this school year is now available on-demand for free to all students and educators, as well as nine sessions from prior years.

In these one-hour lessons, Cleveland Clinic caregivers walk through care scenarios and describe their professional roles, as well as how they got to where they are. The Connected Career Rounds team provides additional information about the depicted careers such as expected income, 10-year expected job growth, education requirements and local education programs.

Students and school professionals can access these one-hour videos about careers in healthcare by going to [this link](#) and selecting "log in as a guest" in the bottom left corner. In addition to the sessions, you and your students can also access links to relevant educational programs and career resources, video features on in-demand jobs at Cleveland Clinic, and caregiver testimonials from healthcare professionals.

If you want to receive updates about Connected Career Rounds for next school year, please complete this [short form](#). If you have any questions about the Center for Youth and College Education, please check out our [website](#) or reach out to [cyce@ccf.org](mailto:cyce@ccf.org).

## 2025-2026 Northeast Ohio Business Advisory Council Members

- **Cuyahoga County:** Bay Village, Beachwood, Bedford, Berea, Brecksville-Broadview Heights, Brooklyn, Chagrin Falls, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Cleveland Metropolitan, Cuyahoga Heights, East Cleveland, Euclid, Fairview Park, Garfield Heights, Independence, Lake Erie International High School, Lakewood, Maple Heights, Mayfield, North Olmsted, North Royalton, Orange, Parma, Randall Park High School, Richmond Heights, Rocky River, Shaker Heights, Solon, South Euclid-Lyndhurst, Warrensville Heights, Westlake
- **Geauga County:** Berkshire, Chardon, Kenston
- **Lake County:** Kirtland, Wickliffe, Willoughby-Eastlake
- **Portage County:** Aurora, Crestwood, James A. Garfield, Ravenna, Streetsboro, Waterloo
- **Summit County:** Akron, Barberton, Revere, Twinsburg

## ESC of Northeast Ohio's Business Advisory Council (BAC) Steering Committee

The Northeast Ohio Business Advisory Council (BAC) is guided by a steering committee representative of K-12 education, career centers, community partners, health care, higher education, manufacturing, information and technology, and tech prep. Members include:

- Mike Andric, Barberton City Schools
- Karen Brown, Euclid City Schools
- Al DiFranco, Junior Achievement
- Khaz Finley, Federal Reserve Bank Cleveland
- Kimm Leininger, Geauga Growth Association
- Naima Lusane, Ohio Tech Prep
- Ted Lysiak, James A. Garfield Local Schools
- Dave Mangas, Cuyahoga Valley Career Center
- Doug Miller, Polaris Career Center
- Thomas Miller, Greater Cleveland Partnership
- Vicki Morley, Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools
- Rahim Nichols, MAGNET
- Ryan Pendleton, Connect ITC
- Crystal Reed, Greater Cleveland Works
- Teresa Simons, AWT
- John Stoddard, Berkshire Schools



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