



## Champion Report

Theme Area: Education and Workforce Development

Dr. Larry Lundblad, Craig Nathan, Dr. Chad Coquette, Cheryal Lee Hills,  
and Monty Johnson

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Goals/Strategies or Action Steps:	What NEW success have you had in moving your theme goals forward over the reporting period?
EW2G	<b>NJPA hosted a College and Career Summit in December.</b> Over 25 career educators attended and a broad array of topics were presented. Our overall goal is to help coordinate the efforts of schools, colleges, and other institutions to improve the career opportunities for students. Promotion of this and many other events has been through NJPA’s new eNewsletter that is published twice monthly.
EW4D	<b>Project Lead the Way.</b> NJPA hosted Sonya McNamara of PLTW to present the Elementary Launch Program for K-5 students, over 20 educators attended. This is an engineering-based program providing problem solving activities. We will move forward in assisting five schools in implementing the program next year and will provide shared equipment, regional coaching, and support.
EW2G	<b>Ramp Up to Readiness.</b> NJPA hosted a presentation by U of M staff to promote the Ramp Up to Readiness Program. This is a teacher advisory-based comprehensive 6-12 career preparation program. Three regional schools have already implemented this program and four more will be implementing the next year. NJPA will provide coaching and support.
EW2	<b>Cradle to Career.</b> Multiple agencies began meeting this past year to seek how to work together to serve students from Pre-Kindergarten through college and to develop a comprehensive plan for Region V. This includes initiatives that will help to coordinate the efforts of agencies working with each population group. We are working with MNSCU to pilot a program to coordinate college programming from grade 10 and above.
EW4I	<b>Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities.</b> The CEO program is a class that seeks to prepare students to start their own businesses and connects them with local business leaders through business tours and mentoring. One program was implemented this fall and a program in the Brainerd Area will begin next year.
EW2B	CLC Career Exploration Initiative moving into phase 2, beyond discovery and into implementation
EW2A	Bridges is moving into 2.0 and is more of a true career pathway model – including rigorous programs of study
EW2	CLC engaged in “Collaborative Colleges approach”. Leverage all institutions to meet educational market demands.
EW2	AgCentric formalized 2-3 new higher Ed partners – working on Avian Flu issues through their Farm Business Management Services – Extension of pilot project for ground water saturation – Gleaning program starting soon
EW4C	Advanced Manufacturing Education are going really well. Providing great services that recruit dollars to reinvest here in Region Five. RITA is doing well and we will be looking to replicate the AME as well.
EW1A	RMCEP developed commitments from additional schools in the 5 county are for inclusion into the RMCEP Career Advising Consortium. Expand from 13 schools in 2014/15 to 18 schools in 2015/16.
EW1A	RMCEP Submitted a proposal to NJPA Innovative Funding for Career Advising Consortium. Preliminary approval obtained to serve 18 schools. NJPA Innovative Grant - \$354,042

**What future activities has your team prioritized for the coming year?**

NJPA seeks to provide more collaboration among schools, colleges, and other organizations. This includes developing communication networks and coordinating efforts in career programming to build stronger career preparation programs for students. The Cradle to Career Initiative will move forward in bringing educational partners together to develop plans for specific age groups. Rural MN CEP Career Advisors will be trained in Ramp Up to Readiness and will help to implement this program in the Ramp Up schools that they serve. **Through Initiative funding we will assist the Technology Mobile program that will bring high technology equipment to schools in a pilot program with three schools.** We are also seeking to coordinate more with the very successful Bridges Academy Program at Central Lakes College to help it to reach more students. NJPA will seek to continue to build relationships with the focus on helping students to be successful and prepared as they enter adult life.

CLC strategically thinking about technology usage and needs of NextGen of students. How do we Segway high school student's technology usage to workforce and higher Ed needs and usage? Some students have ample access and expectations, some have little. How do we educate employers on realistic expectations of technology usage as an employee satisfaction/retention strategy?

We all agree that Incumbent workforce development strategies need to move into our current activities.

NJPA will provide continued coaching and support for Project Lead the Way – Launch and Ramp Up to Readiness. We will seek to continue to add four schools each year to each program. We will continue to support existing program and to increase participation as schools are ready to adopt new programs that meet their needs as they seek to implement Personal Learning Plans for students.

# Education and Workforce Development

## Education and Workforce Development Issue I (EWI)

**Educating and retaining workforce:** Facets of this issue include; understanding the demographic and skill make-up of the people in the region's major employment sectors. Other key components of this issue include lifelong learning aspects: how to keep young workers in the region, how to attract & retain talent, and how to best utilize an older workforce. Collaboration between private/public/non-profit sectors is of paramount importance for recommendations and actions to be successful under this theme.

## Education and Workforce Development Issue I Goal

**Educated workforce:** Our region provides affordable and multiple educational opportunities to effectively employ the current and future workforce, and to improve our knowledge of how to live a sustainable life as individuals and as a community at large.

### Recommendation EW1

**Lifelong learning:** Prioritize and promote lifelong learning for all residents of the region.

#### Action Step EW1A

**Workforce training:** Create a WPA-like (aka transitional jobs) workforce training effort.

#### Action Step EW1B

**Early childhood education:** Prioritize early childhood education and maintain consistent educational pathway options.

#### Action Step EW1C

**Education resource center:** Consider developing a one-stop shop and education center site where people can learn about resources and how they can be a part of the solution.

### Recommendation EW2

**Educational system improvements:** Improve the educational system to provide a well-qualified future workforce.

#### Action Step EW2A

**Experiential learning:** Foster advanced placement opportunities, promote entrepreneurial skills, and involve students in hands-on work experience, on-the-job training and paid internships. Expand upon the "Bridges Academy" initiative administered by the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce.

#### Action Step EW2E

**4-year degrees:** Seek to have four-year college degrees delivered from within the region.

#### Action Step EW2F

**Various types of degrees:** Create areas of excellence but allow for a broad range of learning opportunities (liberal arts as well as engineering). Allow for flexibility of learning when needed.

#### Action Step EW2B

**Assessment:** Create a technical assessment of interests and skills.

#### Action Step EW2G

**Teacher engagement and accountability:** Teachers often have excellent ideas of how to improve performance, allow for 180-degree evaluations that come from colleagues, students and parents. Let performance be evaluated, not length of employment. Set higher standards and give higher pay for exceptional performance. Keep practices and ideas that are working.

#### Action Step EW2C

**Connect students and employers:** Promote the skills that employers are looking for and where the jobs opportunities are to high school and college-aged students.

#### Action Step EW2D

**Critical thinking skills:** Teach critical thinking skills.

#### Action Step EW2H

**Home schooling:** Expand upon and grow homeschooling and social networks of homeschooling locations.

### Action Step EW2I

**Charter schools:** Expand charter school options as an additional option to delivery of education.

### Recommendation EW3

**Non-college pathways:** Promote options in addition to college for pursuing education, job advancement, and higher pay. This may include additional workplace training, achieving advanced certifications and licenses, or seeking other non-traditional pathways to climb the ladder of success.

### Action Step EW3A

**Senior workforce:** Retool and engage the senior workforce. Access retired talent as educators. Encourage seniors to maintain competency with emerging technologies.

Capitalize on experienced professionals to mentor others. Encourage employers to recruit across the experience spectrum. Create distance at-home learning opportunities while allowing experienced workers to “test out” of training modules.

### Recommendation EW4

**Role of business in workforce development:** The business sector should be proactive in preparing the region’s future workforce.

### Action Step EW4A

**Hire locally:** Encourage employers to hire locally.

### Action Step EW4B

**Welcome teachers:** Create open doors to teachers in the workplace.

### Action Step EW4G

**Employer/worker correlation study:** A survey should be sent out to all employers in the region to find out where job opportunities may be as a result of people retiring, future business expansion, etc. and this information should be shared with citizens seeking employment.

### Action Step EW4C

**Engineering and agricultural careers:** Develop more educational opportunities for engineering and agriculture careers.

### Action Step EW4H

**Educational pathways:** Develop an educational pathway for varied stages of business development with associated resources.

### Action Step EW4D

**STEM:** Focus on Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) training.

### Action Step EW4I

**Training and technical assistance for businesses and entrepreneurs:** Expand business training and technical assistance. Offer workshops and other technical assistance to educate prospective and current entrepreneurs on how to locate and apply for loans for new or expanding businesses. Assist in educating people in finding capital.

### Action Step EW4E

**Focus economic effort:** Concentrate on a specific economic cluster for the region such as creating a hub for agriculture or a green job training center.

### Action Step EW4F

**Employer/student correlation study:** Complete a study on which employers are hiring and correlate the findings with information on students taking classes, going to college, or graduating from high school in the state. Consider instituting programs where employers pay for relevant certifications.

## Recommendation EW5

**Affordable workforce education:** Reform our education and workforce development systems by making education affordable for all learners.

### Action Step EW5A

**Build on current efforts:** Build on existing education and workforce development collaborations such as the Public Work Force Development System, MnSCU, and Adult Basic Education.

### Action Step EW5B

**Agricultural workforce:** Emphasize and promote agricultural education along with gardening.

### Action Step EW5C

**Training:** Combine the concepts of on-the-job training (training at the work site) and lateral training (career path – next level of training). Institute additional apprenticeships that will enhance job creation and enhance skills.

### Action Step EW5D

**Skills assessment:** Conduct an assessment of the demographic and skills makeup/aptitudes in the region's major employment sectors, including incumbent workforce sectors and the unemployed and underemployed workforce. Use this information to identify gaps and gain a better understanding of what education is needed to fill these gaps. Assess and improve soft skills.

## Recommendation EW6

**Coordination of economic development efforts:** Businesses and government should work closely with local economic development and community development agencies to attract new employers and small businesses to the area.

### Action Step EW6A

**Livable wage jobs:** Focus efforts on attracting employers that will provide a variety of jobs that pay livable wages.

### Action Step EW6B

**Minimum wage jobs:** Discuss minimum wage standards and area jobs in our community with state government and public office.

### Action Step EW5E

**Skills assessment connected to education:** Inventory existing skills, compare these to needed skills in key industries, and address the gaps. Focus on evaluating skill sets of high growth industries to determine which incumbent workforce sectors may be transitioned into higher growth industries. Develop core educational disciplines at basic levels to provide greater flexibility for workers throughout their career.

### Action Step EW5F

**Distance learning:** Promote community-based distance learning via global interconnectivity. For example, integrate home-based learners at the community level for social activity along with an advanced online learning experience.

### Action Step EW5G

**Work-at-home:** Provide more work-at-home employment opportunities. This can be accomplished through the expansion of telework and home-based services and businesses.

### Action Step EW5H

**Affordable, accessible training:** Provide affordable and accessible training in promising fields. For example, online courses are more accessible for people without transportation options.