THE CENTRAL OHIO COMPACT 2012

A regional strategy for college completion and career success.

November 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to Complete College America, 59 percent of Ohio's jobs will require a postsecondary credential by 2020. Thirty-six percent of Ohio's adults currently hold this qualification. The Lumina Foundation has proposed a national goal of having 60 percent of Americans holding a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025. The Central Ohio Compact is a regional strategy to achieve this goal through deep and planned collaboration between and among K-12 districts, higher education institutions, employers, and other stakeholders.

Central Ohio is home to a diverse array of K-12 districts and institutions of higher learning. Columbus State Community College hosted three regional summits between May 2011 and April 2012 that brought together public and private college presidents, school superintendents, college and K-12 faculty and staff, workforce and economic development professionals, and government officials.

The group concluded that by adopting a regional approach, they could create a national model of collaboration leading to a dramatic increase in college success for Central Ohio students and position the region as a leader in economic growth, per capita income, and quality of life. Work groups collaborated on the resulting strategy of the Central Ohio Compact, and a joint resolution that provides an opportunity for governing boards to demonstrate their commitment to these principles was developed.

Through a collective, integrated approach, partners in the Central Ohio Compact strive to:

- Dramatically increase the number of students earning a postsecondary credential.
- Ensure that all college-bound high school graduates are college ready.
- Increase the number of high school graduates with credit toward a college degree or certificate.
- Increase the number of community college graduates earning bachelor's degrees through guaranteed pathways to completion.
- Provide consistent, accurate, and timely communication with students and families to eliminate uncertainty and ensure success at the college level.
- Employ specific strategies for working adults, low-income and first-generation college students, and students of color.
- Advance the region's need for a highly skilled workforce, including an emphasis on STEM fields, by aligning with regional workforce and economic development efforts.
- Manage the costs of education for students, families, and taxpayers through dual enrollment, 2+2 and 3+1 bachelor's degree programs, shared facilities and services, and integrated planning.

Through these and other strategies, the Central Ohio Compact commits to the goal of ensuring that 60 percent of Central Ohioans hold a postsecondary credential by 2025.

The Central Ohio Compact is committed to a big goal: By 2025, 60 percent of the region's adults will have earned a postsecondary certificate or degree.

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EDUCATING OUR FUTURE TALENT

CENTRAL OHIO'S MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGE

The path to college completion has changed dramatically, but public perception and public policy have not kept up with this new reality. According to Complete College America, there is a new majority on America's college campuses, as only 25 percent of today's college students are "traditional," meaning full-time, residential students at a bachelor's degree-granting institution. Part-time students, students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students struggle the most to earn a college credential. Students who start their college experience taking remedial courses rarely graduate.

During the past quarter century, Ohio has experienced an unprecedented transformation. Once sustained by traditional labor-intensive industries, our economy is increasingly dependent on knowledge-based and service-related enterprises. In these early years of the 21st century, we are scrambling to compete in a global community in which knowledge and innovation are rewarded.

The competition is intense. The stakes are high. So it should not be a surprise that essential workforce skills are being redefined and that employer expectations are greater than ever before.

These changes have gigantic implications for Central Ohio's schools, colleges and universities—and for the diverse learners they serve. Across this new economic landscape, succeeding economically requires succeeding educationally, which means that more citizens need to earn postsecondary education credentials of value in the marketplace. As the Lumina Foundation for Education puts it, "Higher education is a prerequisite to succeed in a knowledge-based society and economy."[1] It is, in effect, today's "passport to the American Dream."[2]

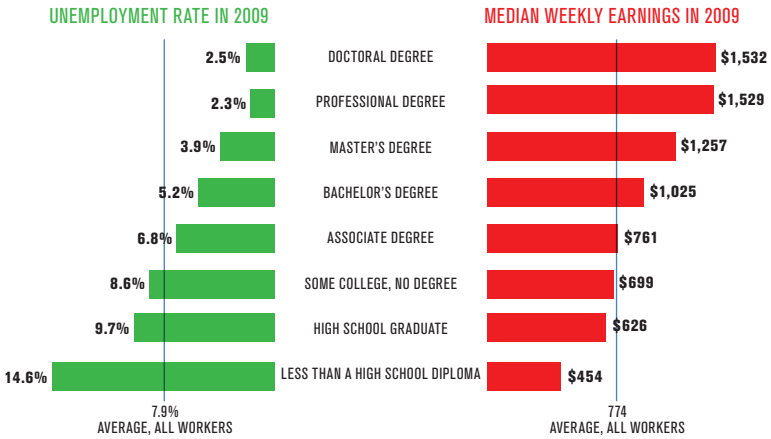
This connection suggests that today's "talent challenge" is in fact two interconnected imperatives: a personal imperative and an economic imperative. How the region comes together and responds to these dual imperatives will go a long way toward defining future opportunity, prosperity, and quality of life in Central Ohio.

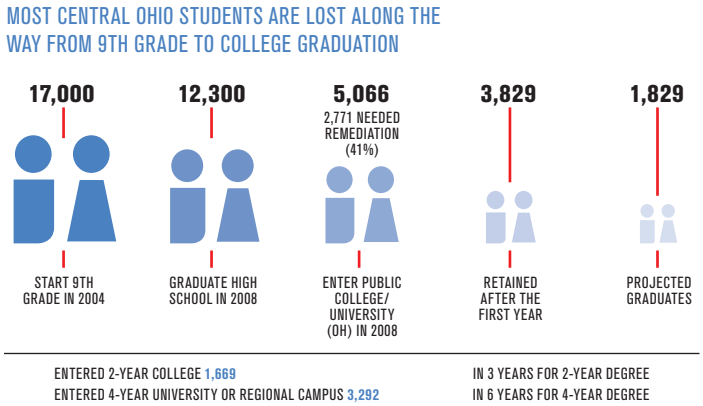
On the personal side, it's a matter of opportunity.

- A college degree or certificate pays off: Postsecondary education leads to more and better-paying job opportunities.[3]
- College graduates are far less likely to be unemployed than individuals who only have a high school diploma.[4]
- Individuals with postsecondary education credentials are more likely to vote, to volunteer, and to participate in philanthropic efforts.[5]
- Yet not enough students are prepared for college-level work, and too few students are earning a credential.

Consider the facts:

- Too many Ohio students—more than one out of every four—drop out of high school without earning a diploma.[6]
- Ohio's college-going rate for high school graduates (directly from high school to college) is slightly below the national rate: 62.7 percent for Ohio and 63.3 for the nation. According to the NCHEMS (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems) Information Center, Ohio ranks 26 out of 50 states.
- Of the 12,300 students who graduated from a Central Ohio high school in 2008, only 5,066 enrolled directly in an Ohio public two-year college or four-year university (including regional campuses). Of these students, about 2,771 (41 percent) were remedial, which means they are having a more difficult time progressing to a degree or certificate.
- A somewhat more positive picture is seen at the state's non-public or independent colleges and universities. The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio (AICUO) estimates that approximately 20 percent of the region's postsecondary enrollees enter independent institutions, where the first-to-second-year retention rate for full-time students is about 79 percent (compared to 76 percent for public institutions).
- In addition, the baccalaureate graduation rate for the cohort entering Ohio's four-year independents in the fall of 2005 was 65 percent (after six years), compared to 57 percent during the same period at Ohio's public main campuses. Also, it is worth noting that independent colleges and universities register 30 percent of all minority students enrolled in an Ohio four-year program, but award 34 percent of all degrees earned by minority students.[7]
- More than 1.3 million Ohioans, or nearly 22 percent of the state's adult population, have accumulated some college credits but lack a college degree or occupational certificate to show for their efforts.[8]





SOURCE: JONATHAN TAFEL AND DONALD VAN METER, "MAPPING CENTRAL OHIO'S COLLEGE READINESS ASSETS," A REPORT PREPARED FOR THE CENTRAL OHIO COLLEGE & CAREER SUCCESS NETWORK, APRIL 2012.

[1] Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan: Goal 2025, p. 1.
[2] Harvard Graduate School of Education, Pathways to Prosperity, February, 2011, p. 2.
[3] Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society (2010), College Board Advocacy & Policy Center; and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ohio Department of Education.
[7] National Center for Education Statistics.
[8] Ohio Board of Regents.

On the economic side, it all boils down to talent.

- Jobs will not be created without the skilled workers required to fill those jobs.
- The labor market is more demanding than ever before.
- In today's workplace, workers must be critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, and effective communicators and collaborators.
- For increasing numbers of jobs, education must go beyond high school.

Sizing up the talent pool gaps

Unfortunately, significant gaps exist between workplace requirements on one hand and worker capabilities on the other. Consider these compelling data points:[9]

- By 2020, about two-thirds of jobs nationwide and just under 60 percent of jobs in Ohio will require postsecondary education. In contrast, a little less than 36 percent of Ohio's working population (age 25–64) had attained at least an associate degree in 2010.[10]
- Between 2008 and 2018, new jobs in Ohio requiring postsecondary education and training will grow by 153,000, while jobs for high school graduates and dropouts will grow by just 29,000.
- Between 2008 and 2018, Ohio will create 1.7 million job vacancies from new jobs and job openings due to retirement. About 967,000 of those job vacancies will be for individuals with postsecondary education credentials.[11]

In light of these facts, the Lumina Foundation has established an audacious national goal:

TO INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS WITH A HIGH-QUALITY DEGREE OR POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL TO 60 PERCENT BY 2025.

What does this mean for Ohio? Viewed through this lens:

- Ohio's challenge is even more daunting. If our current rate of degree production continues, about 44 percent of Ohio's adult population—2.5 million people—will hold a postsecondary degree or credential in 2025.
- To reach the 60 percent goal, Ohio would need to add nearly 919,000 degrees to that total.

According to the Lumina Foundation,[12] educational attainment rates are rising in almost every industrialized or postindustrial country in the world—except the United States, where attainment levels are holding relatively flat. Unfortunately, these diverging trend lines do not bode well for the nation's future competitiveness in a global economy.

CENTRAL OHIO BUSINESS AND CIVIC LEADERS SET DAUNTING CHALLENGE

The challenge is to carry out a regional strategy for igniting economic growth and building healthier, more sustainable communities. Central Ohio leaders are seeking to leverage the strength of the Columbus region's talented workforce, business enterprises, research and academic institutions, and international connections for the purpose of achieving four large-scale objectives:

- Add 150,000 net new jobs by 2020.
- Increase personal per capita income by 30 percent.
- Attract $8 billion of capital investment.
- Be recognized as a national economic development leader.

These objectives for the Columbus region are ambitious, but the magnitude of what's at stake if the region falls short can hardly be overstated.

The success of **COLUMBUS 2020**, a public-private partnership, in achieving these goals will rely in no small measure on the ability of area education systems to meet the unique academic needs of learners at all stages of the educational pipeline—from K–16 students to adult learners already in or trying to re-enter the workforce.

To thrive economically, communities throughout Central Ohio must have a talented workforce with the ability to support a bold economic growth strategy.

Coming together to close the gaps
Given the seriousness of this situation, educators and other stakeholders must come together to close the talent gaps. They must work to find creative solutions for overcoming shortages of aspiration and inspiration for higher education, inadequate academic preparation, insufficient alignment of educational content and workplace requirements, and a lack of flexible options for students—including working adults—to access and attain credentials of value in the workplace. And they must find ways to overcome these obstacles without increasing costs or compromising the quality of the educational credentials that people acquire.

The Central Ohio Compact is prepared to face this challenge. In developing the region's vast talent pool into the globally competitive workforce required for future economic growth and prosperity, its members are guided by an understanding that the region's school districts are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. In 2011, more than four out of 10 (42.8 percent) students in Franklin County school districts were children of color, and nearly half of those students (47.6 percent) attended a suburban school (up from 27.1 percent in 2001).[13]

Also in 2011, students of color comprised over 20 percent of the students in 13 of the 16 Franklin County school districts. Hispanic, Asian, and multiracial students comprised 15.3 percent of all Franklin County district students, up from 5.7 percent in 2001. Understanding this demographic shift, which reflects one of the region's growing strengths, is key to strengthen Central Ohio's educational and economic competitiveness.[14]

In addition, the Compact is guided by three priorities, which are reflected in the Strategic Principles set out on pages 16 through 21 of this document:

1. To make learning opportunities more broadly and easily accessible, particularly to low-income, minority, and first-generation students (see Strategic Principles #1, #3, and #4).
2. To achieve greater curricular alignment between our secondary schools and postsecondary institutions (see Strategic Principle #2).
3. To gather the data needed to measure progress over time toward achieving the goals outlined in this document (see the discussion of "What Matters Must Be Measured" on page 14).

All of this constitutes nothing less than a significant re-imagining and retooling of the region's education systems. It is the only way to ensure that the needs of the full span of learners who will be our region's future competitive advantage are met and that the Central Ohio region is the source of an abundant supply of credentialed, globally competent workers.

The New York Times' **David Leonhardt has written, "Education helps a society leverage every other investment it makes, be it in medicine, transportation, or alternative energy." And he continued, "Education–educating more people and educating them better–appears to be the best single bet that a society can make."**

Our big goal: 60 percent of Central Ohio's adults will have earned a postsecondary certificate or degree by 2025.

[9] Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl, HELP WANTED: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018, Center for Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University, 2010.
[10] Complete College America reports 59 percent of jobs will require some postsecondary education. Carnevale, et al., peg the number at 57 percent in 2018.
[11] Carnevale, et al.
[12] Lumina Foundation Strategic Plan: Goal 2025, p. 2.
[13] KidsOhio.org, "Franklin County's and Ohio's Public School Students Are More Diverse Than Ever," Winter 2012.
[14] Ibid.

OUR VISION

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Central Ohio will have the most productive education partnership in the nation, fully able to raise education attainment levels and support the region's economic growth strategies.

TODAY'S REALITIES, TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITIES

WHERE CENTRAL OHIO STANDS

- Just over one-third of Ohioans aged 25 to 64 have earned a college degree or some other postsecondary credential.
- The percentage of adults with at least an associate degree in Central Ohio counties is:

  Delaware 60.7%

  Franklin 33.2%

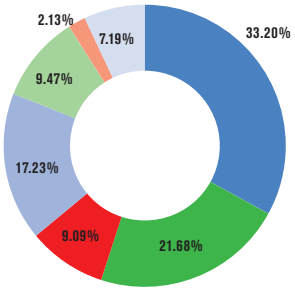
  Licking 32.2%

  Madison 25.6%

  Union 37.5%
- To reach the Big Goal, Ohio must increase college success among the fast-growing groups that will account for a growing proportion of the state's population, including working adults, low-income and first-generation students, and students of color.
- In Ohio and nationally, attainment rates must increase more rapidly to reach the Big Goal of 60 percent attainment by 2025. If the current rate of degree production continues, about 44 percent of Ohio's adult population—2.5 million people—will hold a college degree in 2025. To reach 60 percent, Ohio will need to add nearly 919,000 degrees to that total.
- There is broad acceptance that STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) workers are essential for innovation and economic growth. Yet the performance of our K–12 and higher education systems in this area is disappointing, as demand continues to outstrip supply. Documenting serious deficiencies among high school seniors nationally, the Business-Higher Education Forum reports that 69 percent of high school graduates are not interested in STEM. Thirty-one percent are interested, but only 17 percent are proficient.
- In 2010, Ohio's college seniors graduated with an average of $27,713 in student loan debt. More than two-thirds of the state's graduates left college with some debt. Pell Grant recipients, who generally had family incomes under $50,000, were more likely to borrow—and to borrow more. Meanwhile, unemployment for recent graduates climbed to 9.1 percent.

SOURCE: LUMINA EDUCATION FOUNDATION; OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS; COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA; BUSINESS-HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM; AND THE PROJECT ON STUDENT DEBT.

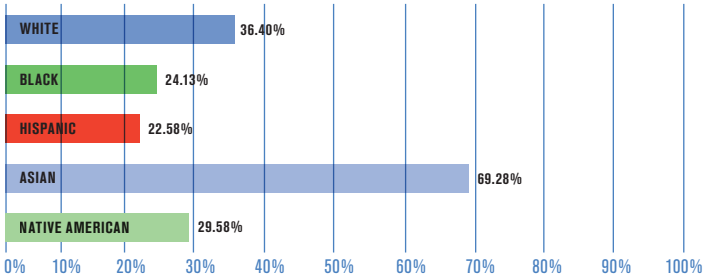
LEVELS OF EDUCATION FOR OHIO RESIDENTS, AGES 25–64



LESS THAN NINTH GRADE	130,077	2.13%
NINTH TO 12TH GRADE, NO DIPLOMA	438,532	7.19%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE (INCLUDING EQUIVALENCY)	2,023,731	33.20%
SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE	1,321,348	21.68%
ASSOCIATE DEGREE	553,785	9.09%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	1,050,246	17.23%
GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE	577,352	9.47%
TOTAL	**6,095,071**	**100%**

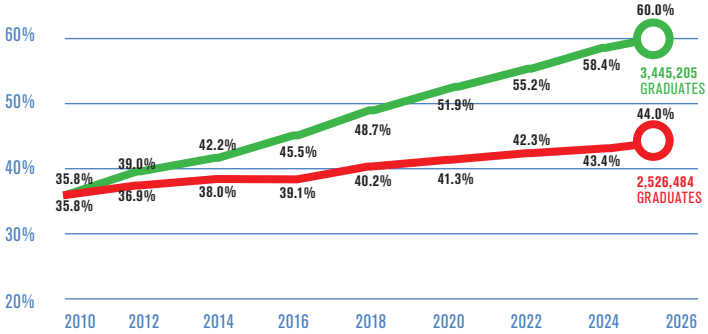
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2010 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

DEGREE ATTAINMENT RATES AMONG OHIO ADULTS (AGES 25–64), BY POPULATION GROUP



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2008–10 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY PUMS FILE

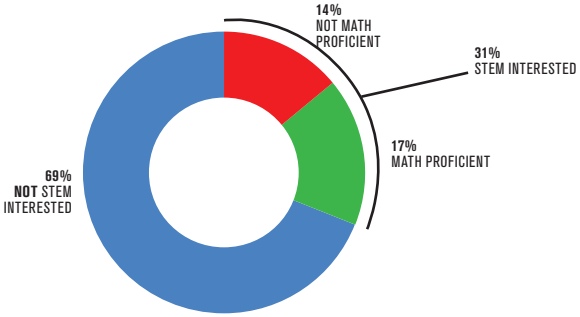
THE PATH TO 60% DEGREE ATTAINMENT IN OHIO



ANNUAL BENCHMARKS (TARGETS) FOR A STRAIGHT-LINE TRAJECTORY TO REACH 60% ATTAINMENT BY 2025

EXPECTED PERCENTAGES OF DEGREE HOLDERS AMONG 25-TO 64-YEAR-OLDS AT THE CURRENT RATE OF PRODUCTION

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, 2000 CENSUS AND 2012 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY



SOURCE: ANALYSIS OF PLAN AND ACT TEST SCORES IN BUSINESS HIGHER EDUCATION "THE STEM INTEREST AND PROFICIENCY CHALLENGE: CREATING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE"

CENTRAL OHIO'S ASSETS

FOUNDATION FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

Central Ohio is home to more than *50 college and university campuses,* with a total enrollment of more than 146,000 students.

The Ohio State University, one of the top public universities in the nation, ranks No. 2 in industry-sponsored research, according to the National Science Foundation.

Columbus State Community College is one of the largest and most comprehensive community colleges in America.

The region is home to numerous high-quality and prestigious *independent colleges and universities.*

Successful urban and suburban K–12 school districts include some of the highest-performing districts in the state of Ohio. High-quality *career and technology centers,* plus leading *community, private, parochial, and independent schools* provide a strong K–12 infrastructure.

Ohio's first accredited educational service center, the *Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO),* is leveraging resources and coordinating programs to help districts and schools meet the needs of their students–and to help those young learners achieve more. The agency supports school districts in Delaware, Franklin, and Union counties, serving more than 200,000 children in 25 school districts.

A large educated workforce, combined with superior research capabilities and a strong corporate foundation, has allowed Central Ohio to become one of the fastest-growing innovation and technology hubs in the United States.

Columbus 2020, a public-private partnership of Central Ohio business and civic leaders, has a strong commitment to the role education must play to sustain an economically healthy Central Ohio community.

Columbus was ranked No. 8 on *Creative Cities International's 2011 "Vitality Index,"* a cultural impact study that models cities' human experience (i.e., a vibrant downtown, an engaged populace, educational opportunity, economic sustainability, good transport, diversity of population and opportunity, and a citizenry that embraces its history and culture).

Complete College Ohio, an initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents, provides a statewide framework and strategic recommendations to advance the completion agenda throughout Ohio.

THE CASE FOR A REGIONAL STRATEGY

PROGRESS TO DATE

When it comes to improving college readiness and raising postsecondary success rates, no one can go it alone. Alliances that give P–12 educators and postsecondary institutions access to skills and resources that lie outside their boundaries are essential. So Compact members will form strategic partnerships that enhance their capacity to build students' learning aspirations, strengthen academic preparation, promote adult learning opportunities, and improve the productivity of educational institutions at all levels.

What's the value of a regional strategy?

- It facilitates a collective response to issues of curriculum alignment, access and communication, and data sharing.
- It enhances the education communities' potential economic impact.
- It expands the region's capacity to respond to state and national public policy priorities, especially in the areas of workforce development, STEM education, and college completion.

What will be needed for a regional strategy to be effective?

- A new college-going culture—an expectation of college success.
- A specific focus on working adults, low-income and first-generation students, and students of color.
- Agreement on data and definitions.
- Creativity, deep partnerships, and persistence—and a willingness to take risks.

What do we want a regional strategy to accomplish?

- Ensure that all college-bound high school graduates are college ready.
- Increase the number of high school students who earn college credits before graduation.
- Dramatically increase the number of students earning a college degree or certificate.
- Meet the region's need for a highly skilled workforce, especially in STEM fields.
- Ensure consistent, accurate and timely communication with students and families to ensure success at the college level.
- Reduce the cost of education for students, families, and taxpayers.

PROGRESS TO DATE IN CREATING A REGIONAL STRATEGY

2010

- Administrative teams from Columbus State and Ohio State initiated conversations about creating more intentional pathways by specific majors for students desiring a bachelor's degree within four years from Ohio State, but with initial plans to start their college careers at Columbus State.
- The Preferred Pathway Program was created specifically to link Columbus State and Ohio State, but it quickly generated interest from other four-year institutions that wished to partner with Columbus State and develop agreements to benefit even more students.
- Columbus State and Ohio State Marion partnered to offer Ohio State courses on Columbus State's Delaware campus to provide students with a seamless bridge to an Ohio State baccalaureate degree.
- In essence, these collaborative higher education partnerships provided indications of the possibilities for creating even more collaborative educational initiatives throughout the Central Ohio community.
- Discussions about a regional strategy were begun by college presidents and district superintendents.

MAY 2011

SUMMIT I: THE CASE FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- Virtually all participants agreed that there was an opportunity to improve results in the regional college-going rate by working together as a team.
- Participants identified a finite list of issues to work on: (1) curricular alignment, (2) alignment with business needs, (3) high school graduation rates, (4) college completion, (5) removing barriers to dual enrollment, (6) aligning high school curriculum with college expectations, and (7) ensuring all schools and students have access to college access support programs.

NOVEMBER 2011

SUMMIT II: REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS

- Participants established three working groups most relevant to developing the missions and recommendations for regional collaboration: (1) Access, (2) Curricular Alignment, and (3) Data.

DECEMBER 2011

- Compact organizers and members of the Central Ohio College & Career Success Network's Advisory Committee met and agreed to work collaboratively. The Network is a member of the Compact.

APRIL 2012

SUMMIT III: "THE 60% IDEA"– CONSENSUS ON OVERARCHING REGIONAL GOAL

- Participants explored the educational and economic opportunities and the value of a "compact" to achieve the "60% Idea."
- Participants agreed on the importance of focusing their efforts on working adults, low-income and first-generation students, and students of color.
- Participants acknowledged the need for greater creativity and innovation, for the deepening of partnerships, and for the willingness to take risks.

APRIL TO AUGUST 2012

COMPACT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- Work was completed on the Compact's case statement and action agenda, which includes a series of action steps that reflect members' commitment to the Compact's four strategic principles.
- A "dashboard" was developed to measure Central Ohio's progress toward achieving critical outcomes.

THE DATA

WHAT MATTERS MUST BE MEASURED

The Central Ohio Compact's goal is bold: *60 percent of the region's adults will have postsecondary certificates or degrees by 2025.*

Research and experience tell us that critical outcomes are needed to achieve this goal, and the region's success in producing those outcomes must be measured and reported over time. For this purpose, the following "dashboard" will be used to measure Central Ohio's continual progress, with variations in the initial baseline numbers based on the availability of data.

- Increase the percentage of 9th graders who graduate from high school on time.
- Improve the performance of high school students on assessments designed to measure college and career readiness, including PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers, which is scheduled to be introduced in 2014).
- Increase the percentage of high school students who have earned college credit before graduation, e.g., Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) or dual enrollment courses.
- Increase the percentage of high school students who enroll in a postsecondary program immediately after graduation.
- Reduce significantly the percentage of postsecondary students who must enroll in remedial courses.
- Dramatically increase the percentage of postsecondary enrollees who complete degree or certificate programs, or who transfer to the next level.
- Increase the number of adults ages 25 to 64 who enroll in a postsecondary program, including courses at adult career-technical centers.
- Increase the number of 25- to 64-year-old Central Ohioans who have a postsecondary degree or certificate.

In addition to these eight critical outcomes, the Compact is committed to measuring the region's success in closing documented opportunity gaps and in improving the productivity of both secondary schools and postsecondary institutions. Specifically, it will focus on the region's success in achieving two targeted objectives:

Disaggregated Data Analysis (Closing Performance Gaps)
In developing Central Ohio's regional dashboard, data will be disaggregated to identify changes in performance gaps among different student groups. Analyses will include a specific focus on first-generation college students, students of color, and low-income students. Gender and age differences also will be noted. With knowledge of these performance gaps, Compact partners can develop specific success strategies for all students.

Economic Impact
Over time, the Central Ohio Compact's work should have significant positive economic impact for students, families, and taxpayers. The collective impact of the work of the Compact will be monitored and documented.

Students and Families

- With specific strategies to reduce and, in some cases, eliminate postsecondary remedial coursework, students and families can focus their resources on college-level coursework leading to a credential.
- Through dual enrollment and other acceleration mechanisms, students can earn college credit at substantial savings while still in high school. The cost of a bachelor's degree is dramatically reduced when students take the first two years at a community college.
- Planning around these "2+2" pathways enables families to take advantage of low community college tuition rates the freshman and sophomore year, reducing or eliminating the need to take on debt.
- Some Compact partners have already designed "3+1" programs, enabling students to attend the community college for a full 75 percent of their bachelor's degree coursework. The cumulative effect of these pathways can be dramatic over time.

Taxpayers

- As the collaboration among Compact partners deepens, strategic cost savings and cost-sharing opportunities will emerge. There are already examples of Compact partners sharing space, pursuing opportunities for shared staffing, and collaborating on technology initiatives.
- As the connections between high schools and higher education become deeper and more purposeful, institutional planners and public policy makers can build synergy into new projects while minimizing costs.
- Technological advances in learning systems, course delivery, and administrative processes open the door to deep collaboration and substantial savings on public investment.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

THE FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This is a time for *action*. Talk and paralyzing debate cannot take the place of action. Central Ohio can afford nothing less than to grow the nation's leading 21st century-educated workforce. But to improve their performance, our schools, adult career-technical centers, colleges, and universities need a change strategy that embraces a set of integrated policies and practices that together aim to increase substantially the number of area citizens who earn a postsecondary certificate or degree.

Good things are already happening in the region's school districts and institutions of higher education. But they are not enough. Therefore, Compact members are ready to act—to take on this challenge with an earnest commitment to four strategic principles.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLE #1: ASPIRATION AND ACCESS

Raise students' college and career aspirations, readiness, and success by offering well-designed services and support, particularly for low-income, first-generation, and students of color; encourage and facilitate students' thinking about and planning for learning beyond high school; educate families and communities about the value of postsecondary learning; and develop a common approach, language, and understanding regarding the options available to students and families in Central Ohio.

WHAT WE KNOW

Deciding whether to go to college, choosing the right school, and finding the resources to pay for it are critical decisions in any student's life. In most families, parents help their children make good choices. But too often, young people lack these family supports, particularly when their parents have themselves not had the benefit of higher education. Also, research shows that most of the young people who seek advice from their high school guidance counselors don't find the information they get to be particularly helpful.[15]

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Expand school counseling to intentionally focus on college and career planning as early as the middle school years and continuing through high school graduation.

Involve parents and guardians in the "aspiration process" as early as elementary and middle school so that they become knowledgeable and continuing partners in understanding student achievement and planning for postsecondary enrollment.

Develop a set of common metrics to track improved student access and success from high school through post-secondary education, specifically noting low-income, first-generation, and students of color.

Conduct district-level and regional public education campaigns to show students, families, and communities the value of pursuing college degrees and certificates.

[15] Public Agenda, Can I Get a Little Advice Here, 2010.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLE #2: ALIGNMENT AND ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Provide all students with the essential knowledge and skills needed for a successful transition into postsecondary learning by (a) improving curricular alignment from middle school to higher education, (b) giving students more opportunities to accelerate their learning, (c) eliminating the need for postsecondary remediation, (d) guaranteeing pathways to associate degrees and bachelor's degrees, (e) strengthening career-technical programs to ensure that every high school graduate is college- and career-ready, and (f) aligning learning outcomes with the 21st-century workplace.

WHAT WE KNOW

While three-quarters of high school graduates eventually go on to higher education, many discover they are not academically ready for postsecondary work. The painful truth is that high school completion does not equal college readiness, which means having the content and skills that enable a student to succeed at the next level, as reflected on placement assessments. At the same time that Compact members address remediation issues, they will focus on giving students more opportunities to accelerate their learning.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Improve the alignment of high school and higher education courses.

Substantially reduce the need for college remediation by urging all students to complete a rigorous, college-prep curriculum and by offering developmental programs such as the College Prep-Math pilots, which are high school-college partnerships that involve placement testing and the delivery of pre-college math to prepare students for the college experience.

Assess all high school students' college readiness earlier, no later than the end of the junior year, using such standardized assessments as the ACT, COMPASS, PSAT, and SAT, and make the senior year more productive by offering remedial courses to those students who are not on a trajectory for postsecondary learning.

Start the college experience earlier by making the senior year more productive through dual enrollment, PSEO, IB, and AP courses.

Develop and deploy new approaches to teaching and learning that emphasize content mastery, STEM education, and digital learning.

Ensure that all career-technical programs meet College Tech Prep standards, offering students a seamless, rigorous sequence of academic and technical coursework culminating in postsecondary degrees and/or industry-recognized credentials.

Develop guaranteed pathways for students transferring from community colleges to universities.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLE #3: ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

Remove obstacles facing adults who need more postsecondary credentials to succeed in the economy, workers who want to transition to new careers, and veterans by opening and expanding alternative pathways to degrees and certificates, and by developing innovative programming design and delivery.

WHAT WE KNOW

Changes in the world economy have put a premium on an educated workforce, which explains why more than half of today's postsecondary students nationally attend school part time, and almost 40 percent work full time. More and more adults are looking for ways to upgrade and expand their skills in an effort to improve or protect their economic position. Yet adults face significant obstacles to coming back, staying in school, and then earning their postsecondary credentials. Too often, they find themselves blocked by the traditional structure and organization of higher education. In addition, given their years away from the classroom, they often need help through innovative academic programming, increased and creative financial aid opportunities, and support services that may include remediation.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Raise community awareness of the availability of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit for veterans and adult workers at all area postsecondary campuses, and work with state policymakers to develop and implement a consistent PLA policy that creates veteran- and worker-friendly environments on all postsecondary campuses by leveraging the state's current articulation and transfer process, e.g., consistent transfer policies for PLA credits, consistent fee setting, etc.

Develop more flexible and accelerated program schedules and designs that make postsecondary education more accessible, and make greater use of adult-friendly instructional approaches.

Develop a regional "back to school" initiative through which all area adult career-technical centers, colleges, and universities work collaboratively to bring back those adult workers who have previously completed one or more college-level courses to complete a degree or certificate.

Give adult learners better access to Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) services for preparation to acquire the skills required to achieve a score on the GED equivalent to college readiness, and focus college remedial efforts on the transition between the GED and successful placement in the first college-level course.

Partner with employers to ensure that the incumbent workforce is globally competitive.

These are the principles that will lead to the 60 percent goal. District-level and institutional practices will vary based on the local educational environment and unique needs of students, although proven and promising practices will be shared and collaborative action will be taken, where appropriate. All Compact members are committed to leveraging the strengths of their institutions to focus on completion with connection—and to aligning their policies and practices with regional workforce and economic development priorities. This collective regional strategy will propel Central Ohio into national prominence for postsecondary completion.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

FOR STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND THE COMMUNITY

In addition to the actions previously identified, Compact members are committed to six actions designed to save students and families money—and to lessen higher education's burden for taxpayers.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLE #4: AFFORDABILITY

Make college more affordable for students, families, and communities by developing and executing programs and practices that reduce costs without sacrificing quality and accessibility, facilitate earlier completion of a degree or certificate program, eliminate redundancy, and promote the use of shared services.

WHAT WE KNOW

In its most recent survey of college pricing, the College Board reported that a "moderate" college budget for an in-state public four-year college or university for the 2011–2012 academic year averaged $21,447. This included tuition and fees, as well as the other expenses associated with going to college, such as housing, meals, books, and school supplies. For a growing number of students and families, costs like these are alarming. For many more, they are prohibitive.

Yet students and families are not alone. The cost of higher education also is a serious challenge for public policymakers. In fact, their belt-tightening often has shifted costs to the consumer—that is, students and families. So today, from the White House to the Statehouse, and from the campus to the consumer, cutting the cost of higher education has become a priority.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Expand opportunities for students to earn college credits while still in high school, which will allow colleges and universities to serve more students more efficiently, e.g., dual enrollment, AP, IB and PSEO.

Promote greater understanding and use of Ohio's 2+2 and 3+1 pathways from the associate degree to the bachelor's degree, which allow students to begin on one campus and then transfer to another with guaranteed credit transfer.

Expand distance-learning opportunities.

Make greater use of shared services, including facilities, technology, and staff.

Look for ways to expand financial support for postsecondary students, particularly adult learners.

Leverage all assets, including facilities, personnel, and technology, to create an integrated learning system.

NEXT STEPS

GETTING TO WORK

The Central Ohio Compact's distinctiveness, its strength, is found in a sharp focus on college readiness and on learners' transitions from both high school and the workplace to postsecondary experiences that can make a difference in their lives. Compact members understand that tackling the talent challenge—trying to build a competitive, sustainable economy by grasping the simplicity of human aspiration and by making postsecondary attainment possible for all citizens—involves a number of complex issues. They recognize that the actions outlined in this document add up to a big job. A job that won't be easy. A job that won't get done overnight.

So where should the work begin? What are the critical first steps? Here are four steps for setting in motion the Compact's action agenda.

1 **Confirm Our Members' Commitment**
All summit participants and other prospective members will be urged to sign a Joint Resolution confirming their support for the Compact's objectives and the strategic initiatives designed to achieve them. The Joint Resolution will acknowledge that district-level and institutional practices may vary based on the local environment and unique needs of students, but that signatories have agreed to share proven and promising practices and engage in collaborative action, where appropriate.

2 **Form Strategic Partnerships to Accelerate Change**
When it comes to improving college readiness and raising postsecondary success rates, no one can go it alone. Alliances that give P-12 educators and postsecondary institutions access to skills and resources that lie outside their boundaries are essential. So Compact members will form strategic partnerships that enhance their capacity to build students' learning aspirations, strengthen academic preparation, promote adult learning opportunities, and improve the productivity of educational institutions at all levels.

3 **Build Our Knowledge Base**
A process for identifying and sharing information about proven and promising practices in all four of the Compact's strategic initiative areas will be established. All Compact members will have access to this information on a continuing basis, and it will be used by members interested in "going to scale," that is, replicating these practices in different settings and contexts.

4 **Report on Our Progress**
Through a common website and periodic meetings, Compact members will track progress toward our 60 percent goal and the enabling objectives, share best practices, and create a culture of collaborative innovation as we bring the best ideas to scale, learn from our mistakes, and persist as a region.

The Compact's success will require *persistence, innovation, and collaboration*. It also will require political will. There is substantial evidence that the necessary political will exists in Central Ohio to invest what is required in education. But the Compact must strengthen people's confidence that additional investment will produce the results that are needed.

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