



Skills in Sync: A Partnership Playbook for K-12 Educators and Manufacturers

January 26, 2026

Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity
Employment & Training



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**

**EMPLOYMENT
& TRAINING**



Agenda

- Introductions & Background on the Skills in Sync Initiative (10 min)
- Highlighting the Value of School-Employer Partnerships (10 min)
- Group Discussion (20 min)
- Thank You & Next Steps (5 min)



Introductions



Amanda Lawrence
Director, MI Auto
Workforce Hub



Megan Schrauben
Executive Director,
MiSTEM



Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO)



- Governor's Council
- Statewide STEM Strategy
 - LEO & MDE grants, other state agency alignment
- Regional Network
- Perkins Post Secondary
- Community & Worker Economic Transition Office
- MI Auto Workforce Hub



MI Auto Workforce Hub – Training, Curriculum, & Career Readiness

Mission

- Convene Michigan automotive workforce stakeholders to identify shared problems and develop stakeholder-informed, consensus-based solutions that build and sustain a robust automotive workforce in Michigan.

Vision

- Every Michigander has equitable access to high-quality training, education, and services that lead to fulfilling automotive industry careers in their own community.

Purpose

- Identify and implement activities related to curriculum development and pre-apprenticeship programs.





Skills in Sync: **A Partnership** **Playbook for K-** **12 Educators &** **Manufacturers**



Bridging the gap between employers and schools



Challenge

- Schools often struggle to engage with their local manufacturing ecosystem, and vice versa



Solution

- *Skills in Sync: A Partnership Playbook for K-12 Educators & Manufacturers*
- Menu of manufacturing programs
- Step-by-step guide to build partnerships
- Templates



Goal

- Increase local collaboration and expand employer-informed manufacturing programs in schools, resulting in clearer pathways for students' employment upon graduation



Deliverables

- New manufacturing programs in up to 3 schools
- Hiring commitments from partner employers
- Effective models that local partners can implement



Skills in Sync Action Plan



- Employers & Educators
- Detailed summary of challenges and collaborative solutions to inform partnership playbook

- Strengthen local network coordination to address shared challenges
- Tailored action plan for local level partnership

- Model programs that will inform playbook and be scalable or replicable across the state

- Playbook identifies and addresses the real-world challenges that schools face



Highlighting the Value of School-Employer Partnerships – MiSTEM Example





STEM jobs are projected to grow **7.8%**

from 2025-2032, compared with 0.6% for all jobs statewide.

There are more than **23,200 openings**

annually across STEM occupations, led by software developers, mechanical engineers and industrial engineers.



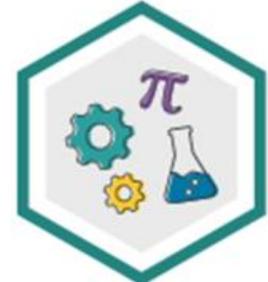
Student readiness lags.

Of 111,500 graduating seniors in Michigan each year, only 82.8% finish on time and just 30% meet college- and career-readiness benchmarks. If every one of Michigan's 33,450 college- and career-ready graduates in a year filled a STEM job, we could meet the 23,200 annual openings — but only if they all stayed in Michigan, all wanted STEM careers, all were trained for those exact jobs and all went straight into the workforce.

Educator shortages are at a **critical juncture**

STEM teacher certifications have fallen from 2,086 in 2012 to just 675 in 2025.

Math, science and special education have the most persistent vacancies.



Mobility and Semiconductors

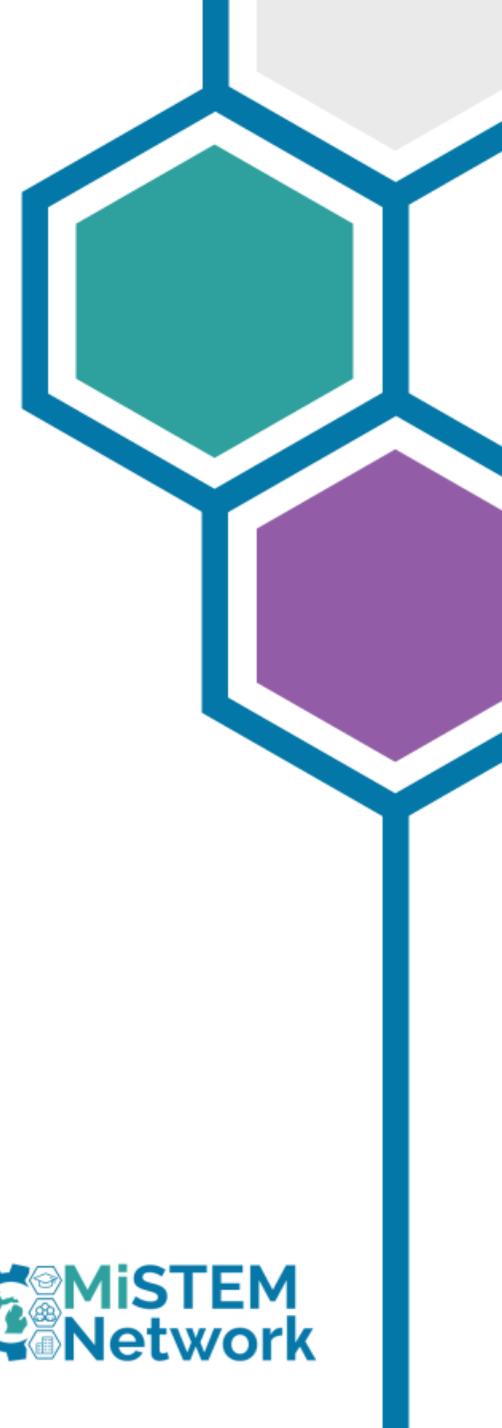
Middle Vision Design Thinking – industry-generated problems, collaboratively solved

- Muskegon ISD, Career Tech Center, Shape Corporation, Muskegon Public Schools, Orchard View Schools, Muskegon Heights Public School Academy, and more
- 6th, 7th, and 8th grade focus, community and family industry engagement, MEDC support



A Model to Consider — Connect These Silos

ADULT Engagement With Industry [AWARENESS, EXPLORATION]	ADULT Pedagogical Learning [PREPARATION]	YOUTH In or Out of School — 3P Experiences [AWARENESS, EXPLORATION]	YOUTH Career/ Postsecondary Experiences [PREPARATION]
Externships Career Tours Guest Speakers Family Nights	3P Pedagogies Discipline specific work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer science / Data Science • Family coaching 	Guest Speakers Career Quests Career Tours Summer Camps 3P / Work-based learning	CREDENTIAL- EARNING, PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRAINING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3P / Work-based learning • Dual Enrollment • Internships • Apprenticeships
<p style="text-align: center;">EXAMPLE Geometry in Construction, AMPED on Algebra</p>			



Discussion: Implementation

What would you need to know if you were to build or strengthen employer partnerships at your school?

- Where are the current opportunities and gaps?
- How would you reach out to employers?
- Who would join the planning team?
- Where would you convene?



Skills in Sync Implementation Timeline

Roundtable Series

- *Winter 2026*

Local-Level Convenings

- *Spring 2026*

Implement Local Partnership Programs

- *Fall 2026*

Refined Partnership Playbook

- *December 2026*



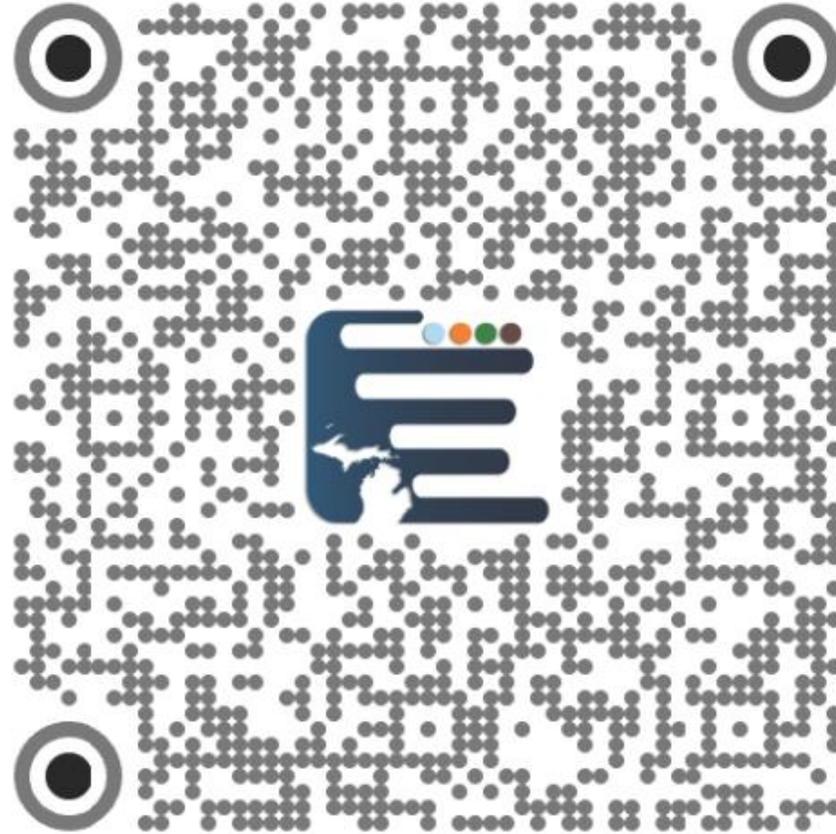
Get Involved!

- Educator Roundtables in SE or SW Michigan
 - *Anticipated March 2026*
- Provide additional feedback via email or interview
 - LEO-MI-Auto-Workforce-Hub@michigan.gov



Skills in Sync: Strengthening K-12 and Manufacturing Partnerships

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