

This will serve as a letter of support for Mahoning County Career & Technical Center's Straight A application titled "Manufacturing/Shale Lab."

As administrators in the county, we realize that Ohio is still a manufacturing state—and many local manufacturers are looking to our schools to prepare students to enter manufacturing careers. Manufacturing careers provide for a livable wage, but these careers require high skill levels.

As members of the Mahoning County Career & Technical Center Career Technical Planning District, we support the plan of the career center to establish a modern manufacturing laboratory that would cross multiple career paths to further develop and enhance skills in the manufacturing and shale arena. In addition, the career center has committed to allow associate schools the opportunity to reserve the lab *and the teacher* to create learning opportunities for as many classes as possible in the associate schools. These include but are not limited to STEM students and Project Lead the Way students. The goal is for as many students as possible to gain hands-on experiences in high-level manufacturing and oil/gas/shale related activities.

We also support the concept that this laboratory can be used for teacher professional development in manufacturing and shale careers. This will allow teachers to bring real-world experiences and relevance into their lessons.

In Northeast Ohio and in Mahoning County, there is a documented shortage of manufacturing workers. Given the history of the steel industry, manufacturing is not always viewed as a desirable career path. We hope that the construction of this modern manufacturing laboratory that will be accessible to so many will contribute to an increase in manufacturing as a career choice.

We are pleased to support this application.

Sincerely,



Kirk W. Baker
Superintendent
Jackson-Milton Local Schools
October 21, 2013

KWB/lfc