GAP ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHWEST OHIO

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Executive Summary
Gap Analysis of School-to-Work Professional Development in Southwest Ohio

Gap Analysis of School-to-Work Professional Development in Southwest Ohio is one product of a comprehensive statewide review of School-to-Work (STW) professional development needs and strengths in the state of Ohio. The purpose of this work is to provide professional development providers in Southwest Ohio with information that will allow them to more effectively train educators in their area to successfully integrate School-to-Work into their schools and classrooms.

This analysis is based on a School-to-Work (STW) Professional Development Needs Analysis survey that was mailed to 2,044 educators throughout the state of Ohio in the spring of 1997. A total of 1,081 surveys were returned, and of those returned surveys, a total of 291 were from the Southwest Ohio region. This study reports data collected from administrators, counselors, academic teachers, vocational teachers, and professional development providers in Southwest Ohio (see Table 1 for the distribution of surveys).

Table 1: Survey Responses from Southwest Ohio

	Responses
Educator Groups	
Administrators	74
Counselors	77
Academic Teachers	53
Vocational Teachers	22
Professional Development Providers	65
Community Types	
Urban	31
Rural	79
Non-Rural	116
Grade Levels	
Elementary Schools	63
Middle Schools	68
High Schools	95

School-to-Work Understanding

Survey results show that Southwest Ohio educators and professional development providers have positive opinions about preparing students for the world of work.

Overall, 89 percent of Southwest Ohio educators and professional development providers who responded to our survey agree or strongly agree that schools should be responsible for preparing students for the world of work, and only two percent disagree or strongly disagree.

With the exception of vocational teachers, all educator groups in Southwest Ohio have a higher percentage that agree or strongly agree that schools should be responsible for preparing students for work compared to the overall statewide average. Most notable are the differences in responses of academic teachers and counselors in Southwest Ohio compared to the average statewide responses (see Table 2).

It is also interesting to note that statewide vocational teachers have the second largest percentage that agree or strongly agree that schools should be responsible for preparing students for work. In Southwest Ohio, vocational teachers actually rank last in terms of the percentage that agree with this statement.

By community type, there is not a large difference in agreement levels on STW principles. For example, 93 percent of rural educators surveyed believe schools should be responsible for preparing students for the world of work, as did 90 percent of non-rural educators and 91 percent of urban.

Table 2: "Schools should be responsible for preparing students for the world of work"

	Agree to Strongly Agree	*Statewide Average*	Neutral	Disagree to Strongly Disagree
Administrators	86%	*81%*	10%	4%
Counselors	92%	*83%*	8%	0%
Academic Teachers	94%	*75%*	4%	2%
Vocational Teachers	82%	*88%*	14%	5%
Professional Development Providers	92%	*89%*	8%	0%

While educators agree schools should be responsive to the needs of employers, implementation of this concept faces potential barriers such as lack of awareness of employers' needs and lack of consensus on employers' role in the classroom.

All survey groups agree that schools should be responsive to the needs of employers -- 88 percent of all survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. When asked for their opinions about employers helping determine what students are taught in school, educators' level of agreement falls to 62 percent. Another barrier is that only 58 percent of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that they are aware of the needs of employers in the labor market (see Table 3).

A greater percentage of educators in rural areas report that they are aware of employers' needs than educators in non-rural and urban areas. On average, urban area educators report that they are not aware of employers' needs. See Table 4 for results by community type and educator group.

Table 3: Overall Responses to Educator and Employer Partnership Questions

	Survey Respondents Agree or Strongly Agree
Schools should be responsive to the needs of employers.	88%
Employers should help determine what students are taught.	62%
I am aware of the needs of employers in the labor market.	58%

Table 4: "I am aware of employers needs in the labor market" by educator group and community type[1]

	Rural	Non-Rural	Urban
Administrators	56%	50%	21%
Counselors	54%	33%	57%
Academic	33%	41%	25%

[1] Professional development providers and vocational teachers are not included in the analysis by community type because they tend to serve regions that go beyond one community type. Overall, 94 percent of vocational teachers and 71 percent of professional development providers are aware of employers' needs.

Survey respondents believe that they have a better understanding of STW in general than they do of the Ohio STW initiative.

As of the spring of 1997 when this survey was conducted, a number of gaps existed in the level of understanding of Ohio's STW Initiative. According to our survey results, professional development providers understand STW significantly more than the other groups, and academic teachers understand it significantly less than the other groups. Compared to statewide findings, vocational teachers in Southwest Ohio have a better understanding of Ohio STW; 60 percent agree or strongly agree with this statement, compared to 46 percent statewide (see Table 5).

Table 5: "I have a good understanding of Ohio's STW initiative"

	Agree to Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree to Strongly Disagree
Administrators	33%	32%	35%
Counselors	31%	18%	51%
Academic Teachers	11%	17%	72%
Vocational Teachers	60%	27%	14%
Professional Development Providers	74%	12%	14%

Compared to statewide averages, more counselors and fewer professional development providers in Southwest Ohio believe they can implement STW fairly smoothly into what they are already doing.

When educators were asked if STW can be implemented fairly smoothly into what they are already doing, vocational teachers responded in a very positive manner. In addition, 52 percent of counselors agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, which was higher than the statewide average of 44 percent of counselors agreeing with this statement. Professional development providers in Southwest Ohio have a lower level of agreement compared to the statewide average: 37 percent of Southwest Ohio providers agree or strongly agree, compared to 48 percent of providers statewide (see Table 6).

Table 6: "STW can be implemented fairly smoothly into what I am already doing"

	Agree to Strongly Agree	**Neutral**	**Disagree to Strongly Disagree**
Administrators	34%	45%	21%
Counselors	52%	34%	14%
Academic Teachers	27%	55%	17%
Vocational Teachers	92%	4%	4%
Professional Development Providers	37%	33%	30%

School-to-Work Classroom Goals

Administrators, counselors, and academic teachers believe that the best way to prepare students for the future workforce is to teach them basic and social skills.

Thirty-six percent of counselors, 22 percent of administrators, and 20 percent of academic teachers believe that teaching students reading and writing skills is the most important experience to prepare students for the future workforce (see Table 7).

Table 7: The Most Important Experiences to Prepare Students for the Workforce

	Administrators	Counselors	Academic Teachers
Teaching Reading and Writing Skills	22%	36%	20%
Teaching Critical Thinking Skills	13%	9%	-
Instilling a Work Ethic in Students	12%	7%	12%
Teaching Leadership Skills	10%	6%	12%
Teaching Verbal Communication Skills	6%	6%	10%
Teaching Problem Solving Skills	3%	0%	10%

Professional development providers and vocational teachers have different responses than the other educators concerning what experiences are most important for schools to provide to students to prepare them for the workforce. The top two for professional development providers and vocational teachers are connecting the classroom and the workplace and class projects based on work situations. Similar to the other educators, the third most important is instilling a work ethic in students (see Table 8).

Table 8: The Most Important Experiences to prepare Students for Workforce (Vocational Teachers and PD Providers)

	Vocational Teachers	PD Providers
Connecting the Classroom and the Workplace	22%	13%
Class Projects based on work Situations	17%	12%
Instilling a Work Ethic in Students	11%	5%
Teaching Critical Thinking Skills	11%	15%
Providing Hands-on Job Experiences	11%	12%
Teaching Reading and Writing Skills	-	12%

School-to-Work Professional Development Topics

When we compare types of educator groups in Southwest Ohio, vocational teachers are more likely to be engaged in instructional activities relating to STW than are other types of educators.

In Southwest Ohio, 64 percent of vocational teachers who responded to our survey are involved in professional development related to facilitating the STW process, compared to 40 percent of counselors, 31 percent of administrators, and 10 percent of academic teachers. Professional development on topics relating to connecting the workplace and the classroom have similar trends; 73 percent of vocational teachers, 37 percent of counselors, 35 percent of administrators, and 19 percent of academic teachers participate in these professional development programs. See Table 9 for details.

By community type, we have found that on average, non-rural educators are more likely to be involved in "how-to" STW professional development than urban or rural educators are.

However, urban educators are significantly more involved in topics relating to partnerships with educators than their rural and non-rural counterparts; 64 percent of urban educators are involved in this type of professional development, compared to 32 percent of rural and 49 percent of non-rural (see Table 10).

When we analyze the data by grade level, we find that high school educators are significantly more involved in STW-related professional development than elementary and middle school educators.

Fifty percent of high school educators responding to our survey are engaged in professional development on topics relating to partnerships with education, 45 percent on programs about connecting the workplace and classroom, and 42 percent on programs about facilitating the STW process. See Table 11 for details.

When educators were asked if they would like more information about STW professional development topics, most responded with "positive" or "strongly positive" answers.

For each professional development topic cluster, over 60 percent of each educator group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they would like more information about the topics within that cluster. Examples of strong interest include 81 percent of vocational teachers wanting more information on connecting the workplace and classroom,

and 78 percent of counselors wanting more information on facilitating the STW process (see Table 12).

By community type, urban educators are most interested in information on STW professional development topics, and rural educators are the least interested.

For example, 89 percent of urban educators would like more information on facilitating the STW process, while only 62 percent of rural educators would like more information on these topics. Similarly, 85 percent of urban educators would like more information on topics relating to partnerships with education, while only 52 percent of rural educators would like additional information. See Table 13 for details.

By grade level, high school educators are more interested than elementary and middle school educators in "how-to" topics about STW.

Elementary and middle school educators are most interested in information about professional development topics related to collaborative activities (75 and 73 percent, respectively). High school educators are most interested in more information about professional development topics related to facilitating the STW process (76 percent) and connecting the workplace and the classroom (70 percent). See Table 14 for details.

Approximately half of the professional development providers surveyed in Southwest Ohio report that they are very prepared to offer professional development on "how to" STW topics.

This is relatively low compared to 68 percent of professional development providers reporting that they are very prepared to offer professional development on collaborative activities. Sixty-one percent of professional development providers report that they are very prepared to offer courses on partnerships with education (see Table 15).

Table 9: "I am currently engaged in instructional activities on this topic" by educator group

Professional Development Topic Clusters	Admin.	Counselors	Academic Teachers	Vocational Teachers
Facilitating the STW Process	31%	40%	10%	64%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	35%	37%	19%	73%
Collaborative Activities	72%	68%	60%	71%
Partnerships with Education	51%	50%	22%	64%

Table 10: "I am currently engaged in instructional activities on this topic" by community types

Professional Development Topic Clusters	Urban	Rural	Non-Rural
Facilitating the STW Process	33%	30%	37%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	35%	41%	43%
Collaborative Activities	80%	63%	68%
Partnerships with Education	64%	32%	49%

Table 11: "I am currently engaged in instructional activities on this topic" by grade level

Professional Development Topic Clusters	Elementary School	Middle school	High school
Facilitating the STW Process	19%	30%	40%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	23%	35%	45%
Collaborative Activities	66%	72%	64%
Partnerships with Education	35%	40%	50%

Table 12: "This is a topic I would like more information about" by educator group

Professional Development Topic Clusters	Admin.	Counselors	Academic Teachers	Vocational Teachers
Facilitating the STW Process	74%	78%	73%	73%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	65%	61%	67%	81%
Collaborative Activities	73%	69%	79%	74%
Partnerships with Education	71%	68%	71%	69%

Table 13: "This is a topic I would like more information about" by community type

Professional Development Topic Clusters	Urban	Rural	Non-Rural
Facilitating the STW Process	89%	62%	70%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	71%	66%	64%
Collaborative Activities	87%	62%	70%
Partnerships with Education	85%	52%	67%

Table 14: "This is a topic I would like more information about" by grade level

Professional Development Topic Clusters	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Facilitating the STW Process	69%	72%	76%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	60%	60%	70%
Collaborative Activities	75%	73%	68%
Partnerships with Education	69%	68%	68%

Table 15: "This organization is very prepared to offer Professional development on this topic"

Professional Development Topic Clusters	% of PD Providers Agree or Strongly Agree	% of PD Providers Currently Offering
Facilitating the STW Process	54%	51%
Connecting Work and the Classroom	50%	49%
Collaborative Activities	68%	71%
Partnerships with Education	61%	55%

School-to-Work Professional Development Delivery Methods

The most common types of professional development activities educators are currently involved in are seminar or workshop formats, field trips to various job sites, and joint curriculum development activities.

This is similar across community types and grade levels with a few exceptions. In addition, 48 percent of urban educators report involvement in distance learning, which makes this activity the most popular for urban educators. Distance learning is also a popular professional development delivery method for middle school educators (see Tables 16 – 18).

For most professional development activities listed in the survey, over 60 percent of each educator group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they would like to receive professional development in that way.

There is not a large gap in the rankings of how educators would like to receive professional development and how they currently do receive professional development. However, there is a gap between the number of educators that report interest in an activity and the number of educators that receive professional development that way. See Tables 19 to 21 for details.

The largest gaps in professional development activities for educators are workplace internships, faculty exchanges, job shadowing, and action research/study groups.

These gaps are the same whether we look at educator groups, community type, or grade level. In addition, academic and vocational teachers also report significant gaps in distance learning delivery methods (Tables 22 to 24).

A relatively lower percentage of professional development providers offer the professional development activities that educators would most like to receive.

The percentage of professional development providers that offer activities such as workplace internships, action research/study groups, distance learning, and job shadowing, is lower relative to activities like field trips, seminars, and joint curriculum development. Importantly, these are the same activities in which educators report gaps between actually receiving professional development in this way and wanting to receiving professional development in this way. See Table 25 for details.

Table 16: "I am (My school is) currently doing this"
By educator group

	Administrator	Counselors	Academic Teachers	Vocational Teachers
Job shadowing	24%	25%	14%	38%
Workplace internships	12%	14%	10%	14%
Seminar or workshop format	49%	41%	28%	52%
Faculty exchanges	15%	22%	8%	14%
Joint curriculum development	46%	46%	24%	43%
Distance learning	27%	52%	10%	20%
Field trips to various job sites	47%	48%	22%	86%
Action research/study groups	17%	23%	8%	24%

Table 17: "I am (My school is) currently doing this"
By community type

	Urban	Rural	Non-Rural
Job shadowing	17%	18%	24%
Workplace internships	21%	6%	12%
Seminar or workshop format	45%	32%	36%
Faculty exchanges	31%	12%	18%
Joint curriculum development	34%	29%	39%
Distance learning	48%	19%	34%
Field trips to various job sites	31%	40%	41%
Action research/study groups	17%	10%	20%

Table 18: "I am (My school is) currently doing this"
By grade level

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Job shadowing	13%	22%	25%
Workplace internships	13%	10%	11%
Seminar or workshop format	38%	38%	35%
Faculty exchanges	17%	15%	11%
Joint curriculum development	33%	32%	38%
Distance learning	22%	32%	25%
Field trips to various job sites	29%	28%	57%
Action research/study groups	17%	6%	20%

Table 19: "This is a way I would like to receive professional development" By educator group

	Administrator	Counselors	Academic Teachers	Vocational Teachers
Job shadowing	67%	74%	61%	70%
Workplace internships	59%	59%	65%	80%
Seminar or workshop format	70%	67%	69%	90%
Faculty exchanges	60%	62%	63%	55%
Joint curriculum development	79%	60%	69%	75%
Distance learning	73%	66%	61%	70%
Field trips to various job sites	64%	77%	69%	75%
Action research/study groups	64%	54%	55%	70%

Table 20: "This is a way I would like to receive professional development" By community type

	Urban	Rural	Non-Rural
Job shadowing	55%	52%	59%
Workplace internships for teachers	62%	43%	55%
Seminar or workshop format	52%	55%	59%
Faculty exchanges	52%	47%	53%
Joint curriculum development	66%	52%	59%
Distance learning	62%	47%	57%
Field trips to various job sites	41%	60%	61%
Action research/study groups	59%	45%	47%

Table 21: "This is a way I would like to receive professional development" By grade level

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Job shadowing	51%	51%	58%
Workplace internships for teachers	51%	49%	53%
Seminar or workshop format	60%	51%	55%
Faculty exchanges	54%	46%	49%
Joint curriculum development	57%	53%	58%
Distance learning	52%	56%	52%
Field trips to various job sites	52%	57%	60%
Action research/study groups	48%	37%	55%

Table 22: Gaps in how educators currently receive and would like to receive professional development by educator group

	Administrator	Counselors	Academic Teachers	Vocational Teachers
Job shadowing	43%	49%	47%	32%
Workplace internships	47%	45%	55%	66%
Seminar or workshop format	21%	26%	41%	38%
Faculty exchanges	45%	40%	55%	41%
Joint curriculum development	33%	14%	45%	32%
Distance learning	46%	14%	51%	50%
Field trips to various job sites	17%	29%	47%	-11%
Action research/study groups	47%	31%	47%	46%

Table 23: Gaps in how educators currently receive and would like to receive professional development by community type

	Urban	Rural	Non-Rural
Job shadowing	38%	34%	35%
Workplace internships	41%	36%	43%
Seminar or workshop format	7%	22%	22%
Faculty exchanges	21%	35%	34%
Joint curriculum development	31%	23%	20%
Distance learning	14%	27%	23%
Field trips to various job sites	10%	19%	21%
Action research/study groups	41%	35%	28%

Table 24: Gaps in how educators currently receive and would like to receive professional development by grade level

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Job shadowing	38%	29%	33%
Workplace internships	38%	38%	42%
Seminar or workshop format	22%	13%	20%
Faculty exchanges	37%	31%	39%
Joint curriculum development	24%	21%	20%
Distance learning	30%	24%	26%
Field trips to various job sites	24%	29%	3%
Action research/study groups	30%	31%	35%

Table 25: "This organization is currently offering this type of PD activity" and "This organization is very prepared to offer this type of PD activity"

	Currently offering	Very prepared
Field trips to various job sites	69%	74%
Seminar or workshop format	67%	79%
Joint curriculum development	67%	68%
Job shadowing	53%	63%
Distance learning	48%	56%
Action research/study groups	43%	57%
Workplace internships	36%	53%
Faculty exchanges	28%	43%

The main barriers educators in Southwest Ohio face in participating in professional development activities for STW are not enough time, lack of funding for professional development, and lack of knowledge about STW professional development courses available.

Compared to statewide results, educators in Southwest Ohio rank lack of knowledge about STW professional development courses higher. In Southwest Ohio this barrier is ranked the third most important, and statewide it is ranked fifth.

Table 26 lists the overall rankings of all Southwest Ohio groups with the exception of professional development providers. Table 27 lists the rankings of Southwest Ohio professional development providers. Rank 1 is the most significant barrier, and rank 11 is the least significant.

Table 26: Barriers to STW Professional Development as Seen by Educators

Ranking	Barrier
1	Not enough time
2	Lack of funding for programs (cost)
3	Lack of knowledge about STW professional development courses available
4	Reluctance to leave my classroom/school building during the day
5	STW training is an additional demand on teachers that cannot be met
6	Lack of coverage for my classroom
7	Structure of PD program – day of the week, number of hours/week, etc.
8	Too far to travel for PD offerings
9	Lack of district support
10	Ideological differences with STW
11	STW is a temporary "fad" that I would rather not invest my time in

Table 27: Barriers to STW Professional Development as Seen by Professional Development Providers

Ranking	Barrier
1	Lack of coverage for my classroom
2	Not enough time
3	Reluctance to leave my classroom/school building during the day
4	Lack of funding for programs (cost)
5	STW training is an additional demand on teachers that cannot be met
6	Lack of knowledge about STW professional development courses available
7	STW is a temporary "fad" that I would rather not invest my time in
8	Structure of PD program – day of the week, number of hours/week, etc.
9	Lack of district support
10	Ideological differences with STW
11	Too far to travel for PD offerings

For additional information contact the Economics Center for Education & Research, email Econeduc@uc.edu.
Please reference report: 1998-EN-1007 ES Southwest Ohio