

Vision 2020

A Vision for Northeast Indiana

Topical Group Activities



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*21st Century Talent
Topical Group*

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Strategizing the Pillar: 21st Century Talent

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

At each regional outreach meeting, one table of participants received a form with a list of “must have” policies or initiatives related to 21st Century Talent. The list was developed using two main sources: 1) an extensive review of the region’s existing economic development studies; and 2) a series of stakeholder interviews with representatives of various interest groups and geographies.

Participants worked individually to read through the list of must haves, select the top three initiatives, and then rank those three initiatives in order of priority. Following the meetings, these forms were analyzed and the initiatives were given a weighted score (receiving 3 points for being ranked first, 2 points for being ranked second, 1 point for being ranked third).

Using an aggregate compilation of the input from all ten meetings, the initiatives for 21st Century Talent are listed in order of priority in the table below. The initiative ID number refers back to the original forms used at the outreach meetings. The table also indicates if an initiative was ranked as #1 for a particular county or counties.

Regional Initiatives for 21st Century Talent

ID	Initiative	Weighted Score	Top Priority for:
4	Enhance collaboration among schools, higher education institutions, and businesses. Develop more internship and on the job training opportunities.	77	Adams (tie with #2), Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange (tie with #10), Noble
10	Build community-wide appreciation for education, and a commitment of lifelong education and training.	76	LaGrange (tie with #4), Steuben (tie with #7), Wabash (tie with #6)
2	Invigorate students to excel in STEM – science, technology, engineering, math. Support engineering and technical talent to encourage growth in high tech businesses.	51	Adams (tie with #4)
1	Invest in Pre-K through 16 education and benchmark progress using internationally recognized standards.	47	Huntington, Whitley
7	Ensure a strong employment base and attractive jobs for future workers.	42	Steuben (tie with #10), Wells
3	Focus on teacher quality and accountability – train teachers in new instruction methods; remove consistently underperforming teachers.	21	
6	Instill a good work ethic in members of the workforce.	18	Wabash (tie with #10)
12	Link workforce development to target industry clusters (e.g. food, defense, etc.)	17	
8	Expand and improve the skills of manufacturing workers who have lost their jobs.	15	
11	Retain skilled workers and recruit talent from outside the region.	11	
9	Focus on higher education (e.g. Purdue University and extension offices.) Establish a research university in the region.	6	

ID	Initiative	Weighted Score	Top Priority for:
5	Identify requisite skill sets and focus on these – for example, finance, accounting, technology, etc.	3	

ADDITIONAL “MUST HAVES”

Participants were also encouraged to write-in additional initiatives that they would like to see added to the “must have” list. The following strategic priorities were suggested by participants at meetings throughout the region. Strategies are organized under several broad themes: Appreciation for Education, Collaboration, Curricula and Educational Opportunities, Funding/Investment, Marketing Assets, and Workforce Development. Certain broad themes are further divided into sub themes.

Many of these themes relate to one of the original “must-have” initiatives on the ranking form. Where appropriate, the relevant initiatives are indicated in parenthesis.

Appreciation for Education (Initiative 10)

- Appreciation for vocational training, more seats at 4 city for students
- Ensure that education is valued and available for ALL skill levels and job requirements (current and future).
- Need opportunities to promote/develop a culture of education appreciation and value.
- Creating a way to measure student accountability and create an environment to get kids engaged with the education.
- A shared vision related to #10
- Need pre-K. Nothing will change without changing the culture.
- County Library System - a tool to digital access. Building appreciation for education and life-long learning. Libraries are becoming less about books, more about information.
- Change perceptions about jobs that are hard to fill.

Collaboration (Initiative 4)

- Creation of mentor programs matching business leaders with students.
- Sharing resources - minimize duplication; one outstanding physics teacher, streamed into several classrooms.
- Develop cooperative higher education center similar to (?) that would bring together all higher education institutions in the region.
- Higher education collaboration that goes beyond "normal" collaboration - i.e. reduction of redundancy in programs (some institutions, sacrificing programs/short-term enrollment to a stronger neighbor and vice-versa, in order to build strong niche programs)
- Develop a collaborative research center to support private business emphasis in NE Indiana.
- Develop collaborative health services initiative - combine medical schools, pharmacy, nursing programs, etc.
- Business- education partnership - bring awareness and relativity to learning. Also, open the eyes to possibilities for entrepreneurship
- Business/education leadership level

- Venture capital fund - develop start-ups from educational institutions based in Allen County (like ND and others have done)
- Provide opportunities for collaboration between K-12 and higher education - both formal and informal hosted by businesses
- Business/foundation/public - collaboration and investment in doctoral programs or other demand/opportunity programs.
- Demonstrate ROI to business leaders when investments are made to workforce development.
- County-wide library service: for life-long educational opportunities; a tie between schools, universities, business, individual enhancement needs.
- Collaboration among the school corps to offer courses in i.e. CAD- gather students in all schools to make for full class
- One of the constant wishes we hear from teens is the lack of internships or hands-on work and career opportunities. This would help improve the relevance of education to youth who sometimes see school as having more inside the classroom.
- More coordination on connecting all county K-12 educational systems to the business community and work together with other 4-year tech training within Northeast Indiana.
- Regionalized, collaborative marketing approach to promote educational opportunity held by the region.
- Align local government entities with defined pillars (without taking over)
- Cap and share - capture "what works" in one areas of the 10-county region and ensure there is opportunity to share.
- Work as county to provide opportunities we can't do individually.

Curricula and Educational Opportunities

A global perspective

- Focus on preparing students/workers to have a more global focus/understanding of their world.
- India/China produce more individuals with the English language than we do. Begin a K-16 approach to foreign language such as Spanish/Chinese to provide opportunities to ALL graduates regardless of whether they continue their education or go directly to the workforce.
- Sister-city relationships in key internationally competitive parts of the world.
- Link Allen County students to their counterparts internationally to bridge gap in cultural/economic understanding.
- Stimulate global workforce and creative thinking in order to generate "seed" ideas for new business development.

Supporting non-traditional education

- Implementation of proven "non-traditional" educational environments for grade 9-16 students.
- Change State Requirements for schools and allow schools to innovate
- Flexibility in student programs. Not all students need the same 40 credits - let them focus on specialty areas.
- Voucher system for education - money follows the students to whatever types of education they want to seek.

- Continue to offer long-distance learning availability for upper-level students at the middle school and high school levels.
- Creation of a virtual school in a K-16 approach to capture students from across the country - create specialty education pods.

Expanding opportunities and accessibility

- Provide more opportunity for high schoolers and adults to expand their education more affordably and easily - offer training opportunities for jobs that are in high demand in the region.
- Broaden the vocational programs and have easier access to them (females).
- Collaborate with businesses to expand 4 County vocational to more students.
- Bring the educational opportunities into the site. Make it more accessible.
- Connectivity
- Need sites in county, higher education presence.

STEM initiatives (Initiative 2)

- Become math, science, technology, education, training, and development center of the world based upon pre-K through Ph.D. training and education. We have a wonderful history of innovation and product development. Create and implement a regional pride program through education and PR that we build the world (or something). Every student and parent and citizen learns we invented the TV, calculator, fax machine, washing machine, gas pump, etc. and we are the breeding ground for 21st advanced manufacturing technology, and production.
- County-wide STEM initiative - pre-engineering course. High-tech initiative.
- To create the 21st Century Talent needed to move the region forward, we need funding for programs in schools teaching the skills and habits wanted by business owners and HR personnel doing the hiring. How can we teach computer and software skills that are needed when schools have to go with free software that students will never use the rest of their lives?
- Local industries and business banding together to provide technology for schools to help turn out the product and future employee they want.
- Providing more high-tech infrastructure to provide more and more diverse educational opportunities to those in our community.
- Invest in the talents of students in high-tech, math and science.
- Need to engage youth into computer sciences.
- Strong, new-tech schools lead to strong employees.

Funding / Investment

- Eliminate unfunded mandates for schools; fully fund or eliminate
- Put an end to politically-driven federal control of education and take that initiative to regional efforts that will allow a productive relationship between education and global market forces and local assets.
- Money for support of public education is also needed.
- Invest education into the international education (worldwide)

- Significantly increase funding support for non-credit training especially as provided by colleges and universities.
- Make a commitment to funding/cutting programs that aren't effective
- Continue to pursue our version of Kalamazoo Promise.
- Encourage businesses to promote further education with paid his to attend/ education reimbursement
- Local business and higher education should sponsor scholarships for skilled students who are willing to give 3-5 years back to a community-based business.

Marketing Assets

- The business community and industry needs to market the variety of higher education institutions in the region. A dozen different institutions within 1-2 hours of each other, all different kinds and strengths - some nationally recognized. This should be a regional marketing strategy for attracting industry - not just individual institutions trying to attract students.
- Market/advertise programs that already exist to build familiarity and produce confidence in "local" life-preparation institutions (education and otherwise)
- Change the story about what we offer in Huntington County.
- Need to market as a region the post-secondary institutions that exist - their achievements and contribution to the region.
- Must promote the "arts and entertainment" aspects of the region to maintain competitive and culturally complete experience/quality of life.
- Develop strategic ways to promote and explain the positive talents and assets of our county.
- "Sell" our region to the people who will be shaping our future. Constantly ask ourselves the question "why would our kids choose to live here and work here after they have been educated? Actively work to make our region appealing to new talent entering the workforce.

Workforce Development / Skilled Workforce

Linking workforce development to target industry clusters (initiative 12)

- Need to put the "Fort" back into Fort Wayne. Need federally/nationally recognized programs in defense research, education, and product development.
- Formalize linkages between the classroom and the needs of businesses and industries.
- Recognize the talents and leadership abilities of millennial folks and put them to use.
- Develop a correlation matrix which relates: educational focus to occupational cluster requirements to industry cluster focus for NEI
- Focus on development of knowledge clusters which support existing and emerging industry clusters

Skilled Workforce (Initiatives 5, 8, 11)

- Train companies on how to recruit "top performers and draw them in, even when a position is currently not available.
- Incentives need to be given to have local talent live here (home purchase credit) with Major Moves money.
- Reverse trend of lower skill/pay jobs

- In order to have industry come, we must have qualified employees to do the work
- Promote "adaptability" in training for workforce skills.
- We should go to longer class days, longer school years, more adult re-training and education.
- Must address literacy problem in workforce/region
- Ensure personal communication and relationship building skills do not die with the "texting" generation.
- Entrepreneurial Training Program? How to start business?
- Skill training w/ ABE will be essential to mitigating unemployment
- Tie education into training and education based on local business industry.
- Training for entrepreneurs
- Career path ways in all schools within our region
- Reinvent the HS. Provide intensive support to students for career development; Change k-12 curriculum to teach 21st century skills
- Teach 21st century skills
- Entrepreneurial training programs
- Career pathways in all schools.
- Have the 3 high schools develop magnet school programs which specialize in career ladders.

Quality and Accountability (Initiative 3)

- Need to change how to evaluate instructors.
- Provide project-based training for teachers.

County Perspectives on 21st Century Talent

INTRODUCTION

During the regional outreach meetings, participants engaged in a discussion on two questions: Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?; and Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?

This document captures the discussion on 21st Century Talent for each of the ten counties. Results are listed below in alphabetical order by county.

1. ADAMS COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?	Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying into more technology. Regional development of technology. Accelerating opportunities to higher education/higher technology education, dual credit/new tech program. • Addressing "Brain Drain." • Strong schools/continued improvement of the educational system. • Quality educational system = quality of life. Complementing outdoor amphitheater, community center, libraries, parks. • Building a solid base of talent for businesses - new and existing. • Make it appealing and possible for emerging students to live here. • Recognize the talent of our young leaders and give them opportunities - leadership training, young leaders of northeast Indiana "YJNI". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School systems are into reform - lead the way. • Carry through with 4 community recommendations. • 4 Community recommendations could be the generation. • We have identified needs - "foundation is there" = "4 community strategic planning" • Visionaries/forward thinking.

2. ALLEN COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?	Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development business climate • Lower crime, better the education the lower the crime. • Impact on quality of life. • It will help to be more entrepreneurial • Does traditional K-12 education address issues in our pillar? We have pockets of it but it is not universal. • Compared to Canadians and Japanese, we are lagging. • Giving children more experience can help then and also alleviate educational costs on parents for children undecided in what to study. • If we are to be globally competitive the students need to see competition (Japan) first-hand. The curriculum has to reflect this - it is a cultural choice if we want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership between education and economic development in Allen County is a real strength. • Internships • Foundations • The Midwest work ethic • Lakes, Parkview Field • Religious community strengths.

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- Raising the expectations of peer group pressure.
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3. DEKALB COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?

- Better appreciation of education system/appreciate education, culture change.
- Life-long learning, continuous learning.
- Support other pillars - skill level increases, perception improves, competitive climate, entrepreneurial training.
- Better claim to their future, more control over destination.
- Can draw people into region if have good education.
- Infrastructure is important.
- Reduce unemployment rate - retraining.
- Increase per capita income.
- Higher skill for tomorrow.
- Critical thinking skills.
- Do career pathway in schools.
- Define the vision
- Have business person tell kids how important skills are - not just a teacher (school-business collaboration)
- Entrepreneurial spirit in the schools.
- Funding could come from business - "what is in it for me?"

Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?

- 4-county vocational
- Freedom Academy
- Chamber
- Business leaders already involved
- Foundation
- Learning Links
- Work ethic program
- DeKalb EDC
- School systems collaborate very well
- K-12 and private schools - lots of choices
- Music program at DeKalb
- Lakewood Park
- Library
- Alternative school
- Have great resources - just need to focus; very fragmented.
- Work One
- Numerous higher education

4. HUNTINGTON COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?

- Workforce development - that can adapt.
- Strong leadership to prosper.
- Workforce matches business opportunities for county.
- Collaboration on shared resources.
- Retaining talent from college - i.e. internship programs etc.
- Develop businesses
- Increase population
- Gain per capita income - increase quality of life.
- Broader industry focus (i.e. autos)
- Cyclical benefit of education as is linked to workforce.
- Using certain factors as a magnet.

Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?

- Building on current internships and initiatives.
- NE Indiana has broad diversity in educational institutions; currently under-sold/utilized education corridor.
- Lots of opportunities to collaborate and form a cooperative effort.
- Three 4-star schools.
- Regionally and nationally ranked institutions - great opportunity to market more strategically/effectively.
- Strong community partnerships to build on: Decko, etc.; NE Indiana group already networked.
- Must sell it as best education opportunities "in world".

5. LAGRANGE COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?

- A culture change - value and appreciation for education.
- Base of talent available to accomplish rest of pillars available.
- Foundation to keep young talent here in LaGrange.
- Very difficult for us to have employees who have education go outside of community. When business was good, we were always short of labor.
- In recession, still companies who can't fill positions due to unqualified workers.
- No pipeline after high school to get through college, get placed. Need to follow-up after graduation.
- Value for education is important. Not sure enough people believe "enough is enough." We have disconnect - not everyone needs to go through college - they need proper training. Value of education needs to be promoted and connected with local businesses.
- To prepare young children for future - prepare them for what that is. No good connection between what jobs there are and what training there needs to be. Work ethic is driven by depressive-type conditions.
- Metro areas will continue to attract kids if the perception remains that it is where the jobs are.
- We need to get to life-long learning initiative. Need incentives for that.

Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?

- Amish, honest, hard-working people, diverse community.
- People who are eager to learn and have tremendous work ethic.
- New Lakeland tech school.
- School collaboration with businesses to ensure proper training is given.
- Wind turbine industries.
- Engineering industries.
- Four-county vocational training/Purdue education/Freedom Academy Community Foundation.

6. NOBLE COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?

- Strong educational system attracts businesses.
- Have pre-K through adult - more complete education.
- More educated workforce.
- Higher-paying jobs.
- Known for a particular type of industry and specialization.
- Good education system will attract people to area.
- School system work together so students have more of an advantage.
- Need regional training facility - more and diversified.

Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?

- 3 school systems - very strong.
- 4-county vocational cooperative - diverse opportunities.
- Libraries.
- Freedom Academy.
- LEAP.
- Campus Connection
- Special-Ed Co-op
- Access to work one.
- Local Ft. Wayne universities come to this county.
- Manufacturing training facility.
- State training funds.
- Schools and libraries are working together even more.
- Collaboration is starting to form.
- Thrive.

7. STEUBEN COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

<p>Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect Education with business; what can education do to better align with business needs • Create culture that values education • Get parents to understand that it is their responsibility to be supportive of education/lifelong learning • Many low-skill jobs in Steuben; if had higher education and skill attainment, county would attract better jobs • Training/education for entrepreneurs • Find niche to build on; become known in region/Midwest • Increase interest in pursuing continuing education • Attract major medical specialty to region 	<p>Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many assets in region-wide education; must have jobs • Trine- Typical 1st generation student, majority from tri-state region • Lowest school taxes rate in Indiana • Close-knit community • Catch-22 on state standards k-12 • 4- county voiced • Freedom academy
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8. WABASH COUNTY: 21st CENTURY TALENT

<p>Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce students ready to step into the job market. • Get people to adapt to having a job, care about what they're doing, show up on time and ready to go. How do you teach work ethic? Organizational skills? • Collaboration among business and higher education will be improved. (can develop seminars about real-world workplace experiences) • "School-to-Work" programs - internship opportunities for high school students. • Get talented people to come back to the region. • More economically-equitable community. (not just upper and lower class) • More people contributing to the community. • Funding available from the state for education. 	<p>Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivy Tech retraining programs helping people keep jobs - good collaboration with business and industries, could expand role and introduce training opportunities for high school students. • Can-do attitude. If you dream it, it will happen. • People are open to new ideas. • Recent infrastructure improvements. • 21st Century Scholars program - economically disadvantaged students get a free ride. • Tremendous number of scholarships available. • Schools are dedicated to turning out good students. Keep raising the bar. • 2 universities. • Learnmore center - focus on adult education, literacy, GED programs.
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9. WELLS COUNTY: 21ST CENTURY TALENT

<p>Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would make community more marketable, people would want to move here if there are good schools • We're trying to improve school- econ development partnership • Convince people to bring more training, more college classes • If you can offer the best technology in the schools and library • Need more vocational • Already have a significant vocational program- was recently honored • School system is partnering with higher ed for classes 	<p>Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure of schools- actual buildings • drastically increase the technology available to teachers/ students • Budget issues aren't hitting us as much as they are elsewhere because it is a county library, Tax \$ is consolidated • Quality library- not hit as much as other libraries financially • Our core is financially sound • Easy access to IPFW, Ivy Tech, Huntington University • Infrastructure: online • Continuing ed
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- Indiana workforce development, has opportunities
 - Need awareness of workforce development
 - Tax benefit for companies who let kids intern- pay them to keep them around
 - A lot of NFPs don't have money to pay interns
 - Keep employees who have been educated here, grow our own talent
 - Work on lowering average age; need the young people out of college
 - Businesses will have to be able to pay higher wages to students out of school
- intend to have shovel ready sites in industrial parks
 - Advanced placement and dual credit classes, vocational
 - Need adult literacy program
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10. WHITLEY COUNTY: 21ST CENTURY TALENT

Q1. What will your county gain through the regional implementation of this pillar?

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- Bring people into community- young people
 - New tech HS critical- innovation in educational strategies
 - Adult ed- helping people to start second career opportunities
 - Workforce retraining
 - Population as a whole becomes higher educated
 - Importance of technical training
 - A well educated community helps keep values, keep democracy alive
 - Well educated community is more likely to own homes, improve quality of life
 - High social return on investment
 - Importance of sharing resources- working together as a region
 - Industry working with education- need help in private industry
 - Schools are a big factor in relocation decisions
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Q2. What are the assets in your county that can help ensure the success of this pillar?

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- Work based internship and co-op programs
 - Businesses are very open to working with kids, schools
 - Everyone is in this together- we've changed our way of thinking
 - Leadership at the county- very open door policy
 - Schools working together- superintendents collaborating, undertaking joint programs
 - Huntington U.- utilize business leaders, community leaders as adjunct faculty
 - Business incubation program
 - Excellent schools, dedicated staff
-