

**INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT 917
IN DAKOTA COUNTY**

**Special School Board Meeting and Board
Member/Superintendent Workshop**

Thursday, October 23, 2014

AGENDA:

- I. **Call to Order - Chair Lewis**
- II. **Conduct Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Lewis**
- III. **New Business**
 - A. Board Consideration of Approval of Program Assistants Contract for 2014-2016 - John Christiansen 2
- IV. **Adjournment**
- V. **BOARD MEMBER/SUPERINTENDENT WORKSHOP AGENDA**
 - A. Overview of Education and Hiring Difficulties in Minnesota and Dakota/Scott Counties 40
Mark Jacobs - Director of the Dakota/Scott Workforce Investment Board/John Christiansen ISD 917
 - B. Update on ISD 917 program enhancements in the Career and Technical Programs and ALC's - Eric VanBrocklin
 - 1. Auto Technician Program
 - 2. Introduction to Apprenticeships
 - 3. Work experience/project learning
 - C. Discussion: What areas are most viable for creating partnerships with area employers and DCTC? (video Mike Rowe)
 - 1. Heavy Duty Truck Technology
 - 2. Railroad Conductor Technology
 - 3. Mechatronics
 - 4. Introduction to Industrial and Energy Plant Maintenance
 - 5. Introduction to Welding Technology
 - 6. IPC Soldering Certification
 - 7. Basic Forklift Operation and Safety Training
 - 8. Pharmacy Technician 70
 - D. Review Intermediate School Districts legislative priorities
 - E. Review of enrollment trends in ISD 917 programs and services
 - F. ISD 917 2013/14 Revenue and Expense Summary Review
 - G. Adjourn

SCHOOL BOARD CALENDAR INFORMATION SCHOOL BOARD CALENDAR INFORMATION

AGREEMENT

between

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 917

and

DISTRICT 917
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSISTANTS FEDERATION
LOCAL #4242 - AFT, NEA, EDUCATION MINNESOTA, AFL-CIO

~~Effective July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2014~~

Effective July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2016

Board Approved ~~January 8, 2013~~ _____

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ARTICLE I PURPOSE

Section 1. Parties: This Agreement is entered into between the School Board of Intermediate School District No. 917, Rosemount, Minnesota, (hereinafter referred to as the School Board or School District) and the District No. 917 Special Education Program Assistants' Federation, Local 4242 - AFT, NEA, Education Minnesota, AFL-CIO, (hereinafter referred to as the Union) pursuant to and in compliance with the Public Employment Labor Relations Act of 1971, as amended, (hereinafter referred to as the PELRA) to provide the terms and conditions of employment for employees represented by the District 917 Special Education Program Assistants' Federation (hereinafter referred to as employees) during the duration of this Agreement.

ARTICLE II RECOGNITION OF EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE

Section 1. Recognition: In accordance with the PELRA, the School District recognizes the District #917 Special Education Program Assistants' Federation Local #4242 - AFT, NEA, Education Minnesota, AFL-CIO as the exclusive representative of special education assistants employed by the School District, which exclusive representative shall have those rights and duties as prescribed by the PELRA and as described in the provisions of this Agreement.

Section 2. Appropriate Unit: The union shall represent all the special education assistants of the district as defined in this Agreement and in the PELRA.

Section 3. Exclusive Representative Leave Time

Subd. 1. When negotiating sessions are scheduled between the exclusive representative and the school district or with ~~the a~~ state mediator, **or arbitrator**, during school hours, two **(2)** members of the union's ~~negotiating~~ **negotiation** team will be released from their regular responsibilities for this purpose without any loss of pay. ~~The remainder of the~~ **An additional two (2) union's negotiating negotiation team members may will** be released from duty without loss of pay with reimbursement to the district by Local #4242 for the total amount of the cost of substitutes (including FICA) for the additional **team members**. ~~employees beyond the initial two.~~ **Union negotiation team members beyond four (4) may be approved by the Superintendent to be released from duty without loss of pay with reimbursement to the district by local #4242 for the total cost of substitutes (including FICA) for the additional union team members.**

Subd. 2. When an employee is being warned, reprimanded or disciplined for any infraction of rules or failure to make adequate progress on a performance improvement plan, leave for the union representation will be on an as needed basis at the expense of the school district for one member as union representative. No representation shall be allowed for normal counseling or performance evaluation situations. ~~The District shall make the sole determination as to the disciplinary nature of the situation.~~

Subd. 3. At the beginning of each school year, Local #4242 shall be credited with ~~24~~ **23** hours to be used at the discretion of the Local for the purpose of conducting its duties as exclusive representative. Local #4242 has the option of purchasing additional hours at the regular hourly rate (including FICA) for a substitute

employee. In all cases, Local #4242 shall have the responsibility to arrange for a substitute employee ~~from a list provided by the District or such other substitute as is mutually agreed to by the parties.~~ **following district procedures for reporting an absence and the need for a substitute employee.** It is ~~understood~~ **agreed** that if, for whatever reason, a substitute is not available on the day for which exclusive bargaining leave is requested, ~~the approval for that leave shall be automatically rescinded.~~ **Local #4242 will reimburse the district for all costs related to the absence.**

Subd. 4. The School District shall, upon written request by the union, afford reasonable time off without pay to elected officers or appointed representatives of the union for the purposes of conducting the duties of the union. **The three (3) days notice may be waived by the Superintendent.**

Subd. 5. In all cases, exclusive bargaining leave described in Subd. 3 must be approved by the superintendent at least three (3) days in advance of the proposed day of absence. The superintendent's decision will be based upon the availability of a substitute and the needs of the district.

ARTICLE III DEFINITIONS

Section 1. Special Education Assistants: Special education assistants shall mean all employees employed by the School District and assigned responsibilities of special education assistant, but excluding the following: superintendent, business manager, directors, and coordinators, who devote more than fifty percent (50%) of their time to administrative or supervisory duties, confidential employees, supervisory employees, nurses, essential employees, part-time employees whose services do not exceed the lesser of fourteen (14) hours per week or thirty-five percent (35%) of the normal work week in the employee's bargaining unit, employees who hold positions of a temporary or seasonal character for a period not in excess of 67 working days in any calendar year, and emergency employees.

Section 2. Assistants Assignment Descriptions:

Subd. 1. Program Assistant: Under the direction of licensed staff, a program assistant supports the daily functions of the assigned program and work site. The assignment may be a classroom or classrooms or other program support function.

Subd. 2. Student Assistant: (One to one) Under the direction of licensed staff, an SA supports the needs of a specific student as assigned throughout the work day.

Subd. 3. Classroom Assistant: A CA is assigned to a specific classroom and need is determined by rule or placement recommended staff to student ratio. Under the direction of licensed staff, a CA supports the various needs of students in a classroom as assigned throughout the day.

Section 3. Temporary Work Agreement: Student Assistants are hired as per a Temporary Work Agreement. All terms and conditions of employment described in this Agreement shall apply to Student Assistants hired on a Temporary Work Agreement, with the exception of Articles X, XI, and XII.

Section 4. Terms and Conditions of Employment: The term "terms and conditions of employment" means the hours of employment, the compensation therefor, including fringe benefits, except retirement contributions or benefits, and the employer's personnel policies affecting the working conditions of the employees, subject to the provisions of M.S. 179A.07 regarding the rights of public employers and the scope of negotiations.

Section 5. Other Terms: Terms not defined in this Agreement shall have those meanings as defined by the PELRA.

ARTICLE IV EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Section 1. Right to Views: Nothing contained in this Agreement shall be construed to limit, impair or affect the right of any employee or his/her representative to the expression or communication of a view, grievance, complaint or opinion on any matter related to the conditions or compensation of public employment or their betterment, as long as the same is not designed to and does not interfere with the full, faithful and proper performance of the duties of employment or circumvent the rights of the exclusive representative.

Section 2. Right to Join: Employees shall have the right to form and join labor or employee organizations and shall have the right not to form and join such organizations. Employees in an appropriate unit shall have the right by secret ballot to designate an exclusive representative for the purpose of negotiating grievance procedures and the terms and conditions of employment for such employees with the School District.

Section 3. Use of Communications Facilities: The union shall have the right to post notices of activities and matters of union concern on designated bulletin boards in each school building site, in areas not normally accessible to students or the public.

Section 4. Use of School Buildings, Facilities, Equipment, E-mail and Inter-School Mail: The union shall have the right to usage of such School District buildings, equipment, facilities, e-mail and inter-school mail as is permitted pursuant to School District policy, and under such conditions as set forth in School District policy.

Section 5. Disciplinary Meetings: The district will provide the employee notice prior to the meeting that it may or will lead to disciplinary action. All meetings will be scheduled during the employee's normal work day. Should it be necessary for a meeting to be scheduled outside a normal work day, a minimum of a 24-hour notice will be given and compensation for attendance at the meeting will be at the expense of the school district. There shall be no retribution for an employee's inability to attend a meeting scheduled outside the normal work day without a 24-hour notice.

Section 6. Right to Dues Check Off: ~~Each employee shall be eligible to request payroll deductions for the withholding of union dues.~~ **The union has the right under PELRA to request dues deductions be withheld for each eligible employee working during a given school year.** Such requests shall be in writing on a form provided by the Union and delivered to the payroll office no later than **ten (10) days prior to each payroll deduction date.** ~~October 15 of each school year.~~ Pursuant to such authorization, the School District shall deduct ~~one-seventeenth (1/17)~~ of such dues from each regular semi-monthly salary check for the employee, each month, ~~beginning on October 31 and ending on June 30th.~~ **An employee who begins employment in mid-year shall have thirty (30) days from employment date to request dues deduction.** Deductions

~~for employees employed after the commencement of the school year shall be specified on the form provided by the School District with the last payment to be on June 30th.~~ **Deductions of such dues requested on the Union form shall begin on the payroll following the submission of Union's request to payroll. The last payment deduction shall be on or before June 30 each fiscal year.** Request by the employee to cease dues deductions submitted in writing to the School District office shall be honored and dues deductions ceased as of such written notice. **The school district will notify the Union within three (3) days of receipt of such request.**

Section 7. Personnel Files:

Subd. 1. All evaluations and files generated with the School District relating to each employee shall be available during regular school business hours upon written request. The employee shall have the right to reproduce any contents of the file, at the employee's expense, and to submit for inclusion employee response to any material contained within. An employee may grieve a written document placed in the employee's file by the School District on the grounds that the material is false or substantially inaccurate. If it is found that the written document is false or substantially inaccurate, such false or inaccurate statements shall be deleted from the employee's file.

Subd. 2. A written evaluation must be reviewed with the employee prior to placement in the employee's personnel file. The employee may include a written response to the evaluation which will also be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Subd. 3. Employees shall be evaluated according to School Board policy. The use and function of the evaluation form will be thoroughly explained to the employees and the supervisors.

Subd. 4. Formal observations shall be conducted openly with full knowledge of the employee. Formal observations, conferences and evaluations shall be conducted by supervisors. Formal evaluations shall be written on the district approved evaluation forms. Non-probationary employees shall receive a performance appraisal at a minimum of once per academic year and it will be reviewed with the employee prior to April 1.

Subd. 5. Additionally, the School District may include the School District's documentation of employee conduct that may be contrary to School District policies, rules or directions. Such conduct could be positive or negative. The School District maintains its right to comply with its obligations under all laws, rules or regulations pertaining to employee conduct and requirements.

Section 8. Fair Share Fee: In accordance with PELRA, any employee, as defined in Article III, who is not a member of the union may be required by the union to contribute a fair share fee for services rendered as exclusive representative. The employer shall deduct from said employee's wages such fair share fee as requested by the union, pursuant to PELRA, and remit such fair share fee as per payroll deduction. The employer recognizes that the determination of the fair share fee is solely the responsibility of the union, and the employer assumes no responsibility for the determination of any dispute which may result therefrom. It is also acknowledged that any dispute concerning the amount of the fair share fee shall be subject to the proceedings provided in PELRA and, therefore, such dispute shall not be subject to the grievance procedure.

Section 9. Meet and Confer. Upon written request by the Union, the School District shall meet and confer on items not covered by this agreement, pursuant to PELRA.

~~Section 10. Negotiation Meetings.~~ The School District shall permit two representatives of the union to be in attendance at negotiation, mediation and arbitration sessions without loss of pay. If more than two employees attend such meetings, such employee(s) will receive a deduction in wages for lost time.

ARTICLE V SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1. Management Responsibilities. The union recognizes the right and obligation of the School District to efficiently manage and conduct the operation of the School District within its legal limitations and with its primary obligations to provide vocational and special educational opportunities for students of the School District and the State of Minnesota.

Section 2. Effect of Law, Rules and Regulations. The union recognizes that all employees covered by this Agreement shall perform the non-teaching services prescribed by the School District and shall be governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota, and by School Board rules, policy, regulations, directives, and orders issued by properly designated officials of the School District. The union also recognizes the right, obligation, and duty of the School Board and its duly designated officials to promulgate rules, policy, regulations, directives, and orders from time to time as deemed necessary by the School Board insofar as such rules, policy, regulations, directives, and orders are not inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement and recognizes that the School Board, all employees covered by this Agreement, and all provisions of this agreement are subject to the laws of the State of Minnesota, Federal laws, rules and regulations and orders of the State and Federal governmental agencies. Any provisions of this Agreement found to be in violation of any such laws, rules, regulations, directives or orders shall be null and void and without force and effect.

Section 3. Inherent Managerial Rights. The parties recognize that the School District is not required to meet and negotiate on matters of inherent managerial policy, which include, but are not limited to, such areas of discretion or policy as the functions and programs of the employer, its overall budget, utilization of technology, the organizational structure and selection and direction and number of personnel, and that all management rights and management functions not expressly delegated in this Agreement are reserved to the School District.

Section 4. New Employee Placement. Initial placement on the salary schedule as recommended by the administration shall be disclosed in writing to the employee at the time of initial employment, along with a copy of the current master agreement.

ARTICLE VI HOURS OF SERVICE - LENGTH OF SCHOOL YEAR

Section 1. Basic Day: The basic day, exclusive of lunch, for a full-time employee, shall be six (6) to eight (8) hours per day as annually determined by the School District prior to July 1. However, the School District may employ such part-time employees as it deems appropriate. The hours indicated in the July 1 document shall not be changed during the contract year except as mutually agreed between the employee and the district. The notice of assignment document will be available on the district website and shall be mailed to each employee via U.S. mail to the address on file with the human resources office.

For employees employed after July 1, the "Employee Status Change Form" shall specify the number of hours per day that the employee is scheduled to work. No changes in this hourly work schedule shall be made without mutual agreement even when the work location or specific assignment change involves a change in hours. In the event that an employee is transferred to a position that requires fewer hours per day or week than the previous position, an additional assignment will be determined so that the employee is not reduced in hours for the remainder of the school year.

Subd. 1. Employees working six (6) or more hours per day shall receive a fifteen (15) minute break in the morning and a fifteen (15) minute break in the afternoon, or one 30-minute break at a time determined by the supervisor, with the morning break beginning no sooner than one-half hour after the start of the student contact day. Employees working at least four hours but less than 6 hours shall receive one 15-minute break, at a time determined by the supervisor with no break beginning sooner than one-half hour after the start of the student contact day.

Section 2. Duty Year: The duty year for full-time employees under this Agreement shall be as annually determined by the School District prior to July 1, but not less than the number of student days plus one additional day as described in Subd. 1, below. The School District may employ such part-time employees as it deems appropriate.

Subd. 1. The extra day will be scheduled in whole or in part by administration to provide any number of preparation, training, or team meeting opportunities. At least ½ (one-half) of the day must be scheduled prior to the start of the school year for the purpose of preparing for the upcoming year.

Section 3. Modifications in Calendar, Length of School Day:

Subd. 1. In the event of energy shortage, severe weather, or other exigency, the School District reserves the right to modify the duty year, and, if school is closed on a normal duty day(s), the employee shall perform duties on such other day(s) in lieu thereof as the School District or its designated representative shall determine, if any.

Subd. 2. In the event of energy shortage, severe weather, or other exigency, the School District further reserves the right to modify the length of the school day, as the School District shall determine, but with the understanding that the total number of hours shall not be increased, i.e., a four (4) day week with increased hours per day but the total weekly hours not more than the regular five (5) day week.

Subd. 3. Prior to modifying the scheduled length of the school day pursuant to Subd. 2 hereof, or scheduling more than two (2) makeup days pursuant to Subd. 1 hereof, the School District shall afford to the federation the opportunity to meet and confer on such matters.

Subd. 4. School closings and the payroll implications of such closings shall be determined by the provisions of District Policy 466 "Provisions for the Closing of Schools Due to Inclement Weather or Other Exigency."

Section 4. Certain Absences, Employees shall not be paid for any days on which they do not perform services in accordance with their contract and this Agreement except for absences authorized pursuant to their contracts and this Agreement, and the School Board will in each case make appropriate deductions from pay for any such absences.

Section 5. Employees sent home due to student attendance.

Program Assistant: A PA's anticipated hours of work are assigned by July 1st prior to the following school year or at time of hire. Daily student attendance in the PA's assigned classroom or area may affect the area a PA will be expected to work their assigned hours. A PA will not be sent home due to daily attendance of students. A PA would only work a reduced number of hours on a given day if they volunteer to do so.

Student Assistant: Daily attendance of an SA's assigned student may result in a decrease of the expected amount of hours an SA is assigned each day. SA's will not be sent home before ~~two~~ **three** hours of an unexpected student absence. An administrator or designee may make available to an SA a reassignment for the remainder of the day in an area of need throughout the district. When expected absences of a student assigned to an SA is substantiated, the SA may notify a District designee of their availability to be a substitute.

Classroom Assistant: Daily attendance of students in a CA's assigned classroom may result in a decrease of the expected amount of hours a CA is assigned each day. CA's will not be sent home before ~~two~~ **three** hours of an unexpected student absence. An administrator or designee may make available to a CA a reassignment for the remainder of the day in an area of need throughout the district. When expected absences of students from the CA's assigned classroom is substantiated, the CA may notify a District designee of their availability to be a substitute.

**ARTICLE VII
BASIC SALARIES**

Section 1. Basic Salaries: Employees shall be compensated during the two years of this agreement as provided herein.

Subd. 1. Effective July 1, ~~2012,~~ **2014**, all employees will advance one step on Salary Schedule A over their placement as of June 30, ~~2012,~~ **2014**.

Subd. 2. Effective July 1, ~~2013~~ **2015**, all employees will advance one step on Salary Schedule B over their placement as of June 30, ~~2013,~~ **2015**.

Subd. 3. In the event a successor agreement is not entered into prior to July 1, ~~2014,~~ **2016** an employee shall remain at the same step as compensated during the ~~2013-2014~~ **2015-2016** contract year until a successor agreement is reached, which agreement shall govern step advancement, if any. However, the School District reserves the right to withhold step advancement or other salary increase in individual cases for just cause, subject to the grievance procedure.

Subd. 4. Longevity: Effective July 1, ~~2012,~~ **2014**, employees shall receive a longevity salary increase beyond the rates delineated in Schedules A as follows:

In the 10 th through 11 th school year	.25/hour
In the 12 th through 14 th school year	.50/hour
In the 15 th – 17 th school year	\$1.00/hour
In the 18 th to 19 th school year	\$2.00/hour
In the 20 th to 22 nd school year	\$3.00/hour
In the 23 rd to 24 th school year	\$4.00/hour

In the 25 th to 26 th school year and beyond	\$5.00/hour
In the 27th school year and beyond	\$5.50/hour

Effective July 1, 2013, **2015**, employees shall receive a longevity salary increase beyond the rates delineated in Schedule B as follows:

In the 10 th through 11 th school year	.25/hour
In the 12 th through 14 th school year	.50/hour
In the 15 th – 17 th school year	\$1.00/hour
In the 18 th to 19 th school year	\$2.00/hour
In the 20 th to 22 nd school year	\$3.00/hour
In the 23 rd to 24 th school year	\$4.00/hour
In the 25 th to 26 th school year and beyond	\$5.00/hour
In the 27th school year and beyond	\$5.50/hour

The first year of employment shall be defined as any days of employment prior to the last student day of the regular school calendar in the first employment agreement. The next regular school calendar becomes the second year of employment with each successive school calendar year adding to the years of employment.

~~Subd. 5. Highly Qualified. Employees who have proven attainment of highly qualified status, as defined by the Minnesota Department of Education, shall advance to the highly qualified lane at the same step, effective the first of the month following receipt of proof provided by the employee to the human resource office of their highly qualified status.~~

Section 2. New Employees and Step Advancement: A new employee shall be placed on the salary schedule as agreed between the employer and the employee and shall be eligible for step advancement on the following July 1, if they work any days prior to the last day of the regular school calendar in their employment agreement.

Section 3. Absence of Regularly Assigned Teacher: In the event the regularly assigned classroom teacher is absent from the classroom one and one-half or more clock hours per day during student contact time, one School District designated program assistant or classroom assistant or student assistant shall receive his/her current rate of pay plus an additional \$1.00 per hour for student contact hours. When the teacher's absence is for one and a half or more hours, all consecutive hours will qualify for the additional \$1.00 dollar per hour.

Subd. 1. On a community outing/field trip when the regular classroom teacher or a substitute teacher is not in attendance for two and one-half consecutive hours or more, one School District designated employee shall receive his/her current rate of pay plus an additional \$4 per hour for student contact hours.

Subd. 2. The \$4 per hour increase does not refer to or include the time employees are out of the classroom or in the community in a job coaching assignment (Ex: Cub foods/bagging groceries, school office sorting mail).

Section 4. Extracurricular Pay

Subd. 1. Definition. For purposes of this Section, an extracurricular assignment is a work assignment outside of the regularly scheduled work day that is assigned in writing by the employee's assistant director or the director.

Subd. 2. Applicability. Extracurricular work assignments under this section may be for a variety of purposes, but do not include summer school, staff development activities or extended work year. The exception would be enrichment activities that entail overnights.

Subd. 3. Rate of Pay. Extracurricular work assignments shall be at the employee's normal hourly rate of pay for any hours worked **except** when the accumulated weekly work hours including regularly assigned work hours plus **the extracurricular** ~~and accumulated weekly~~ work hours exceed forty (40) hours per week. If the accumulated weekly work hours exceed forty (40), any time worked beyond forty (40) hours per week shall be paid at the rate of 1-1/2 times the normal rate of pay, in accordance with current district overtime procedures for non-exempt employees.

Subd. 4. Volunteer Participation. In the event an employee who is not assigned to work at an extracurricular event attends the extracurricular event and chooses to participate as a volunteer, such participation must be limited to activities that are not the same as or closely related to the employee's normal work activities. For example: selling tickets, food or other items would not be closely related to the work assignment of an employee who assists teachers in the classroom. However, supervising students, officiating at a sports event involving students, or driving district vehicles to transport students or district equipment would be closely related and would not be permitted activities for these employee volunteers.

Section 5: Train the Trainer Pay: An employee who agrees to attend training, for the purpose of meeting the requirements to be qualified to be a trainer of employees, on a regular duty day or on a non-duty day or days shall be paid at their hourly rate of pay for the time spent in the training sessions. If the location of the training sessions requires travel, expense reimbursement is regulated by Board Policy 412. All such training agreements must be approved in writing by the program administrator and the Director of Special Education.

Section 6: Trainer Pay: An employee who agrees to conduct training for other staff members shall be compensated at their hourly rate of pay. For each hour of training, one hour of preparation shall also be compensated. (Example: conducting a three-hour training session will be compensated at six hours.) Subsequent training of the same content within three (3) months shall be compensated for the actual hours of training with no additional time allowed for preparation. All such training agreements must be approved in writing by the program administrator and the Director of Special Education.

ARTICLE VIII GROUP INSURANCE

Section 1. Selection of Carrier: The selection of the insurance carrier and policy shall be made by the School District.

Section 2. Health and Hospitalization Insurance:

Subd. 1. Individual Coverage: Effective ~~February 1, 2013,~~ **July 1, 2014**, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed ~~\$460~~ **\$465** per month for each eligible employee employed by the School District who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District group health and hospitalization plan. Effective ~~December 1, 2013,~~ **January 1, 2015**, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed ~~\$465~~ **\$520** per month for each eligible employee employed by the School District who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District group health and hospitalization plan. **Effective January 1, 2016, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed \$570 per month for each eligible employee employed by the School District who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District group health and hospitalization plan.** The cost of the premium not contributed by the School District shall be borne by the employee and paid by payroll deduction. This subdivision shall not apply to those eligible employees who select coverage under the high deductible health plan described in Subdivision 3.

Subd. 2. Dependent Coverage: Effective ~~February 1, 2013,~~ **July 1, 2014**, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed ~~\$850.00~~ **\$885** per month for dependent coverage for each eligible employee employed by the School District who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District group health and hospitalization plan and who qualifies for dependent coverage. Effective ~~December 1, 2013,~~ **January 1, 2015**, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed ~~\$885~~ **\$910** per month for dependent coverage for each eligible employee employed by the School District who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District group health and hospitalization plan and who qualifies for dependent coverage. The cost of the premium not contributed by the School District shall be borne by the employee and paid by payroll deduction. In the event that the School District's contribution for family coverage is discriminatory or illegal, the union will hold the School District harmless and indemnify the School District from any and all action, suits, claims, damages, judgments and other forms of liability which any person may have or claim to have arising out of or by reason of the School District's contribution toward family coverage. This subdivision shall not apply to those eligible employees who select coverage under the high deductible health plan described in Subdivision 4.

Subd. 3. Individual High Deductible Coverage:

Eligible employees shall have the option of enrolling in a high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan. The high deductible coverage shall be a qualified high deductible health plan within the meaning of Section 223 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended from time to time. Each eligible employee enrolled in the high deductible coverage shall be eligible for a contribution to a health savings account ("HSA") of such employee in accordance with the Intermediate School District No. 917 Flex Choice Plan (the "Flex Choice Plan"). Effective ~~February 1, 2013,~~ **July 1, 2014**, the total monthly contribution by the school district toward the cost of the premium of the high deductible coverage, the HSA contribution, and the HSA administrative fees attributable to such eligible employee shall not exceed ~~\$460.~~ **\$465.** **Effective January 1, 2016, the total monthly contribution by the School District shall not exceed \$490.** Effective ~~December 1, 2013,~~ the total monthly contribution by the school district shall not exceed ~~\$465.~~

The school district shall contribute toward the cost of the premium for each eligible employee employed by the school district who qualifies for and is enrolled in individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan a monthly amount equal to the total monthly contribution identified in

subsection (a) minus the monthly HSA contribution identified in subsection (c) and the monthly HSA administrative fees.

The school district shall contribute an amount equal to one-half of the applicable deductible to the HSA of each eligible employee employed by the school district who qualifies for and is enrolled in individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan. Such contributions shall be made monthly on a pro rata basis. Such employees shall also be eligible, through the Flex Choice Plan, to make pre-tax contributions to the HSA via salary reduction. The school district shall select the vendor of the HSA to which such contributions shall be made. Once deposited in an employee's HSA, such contributions, whether made by the school district or via salary reduction, shall not be subject to restriction by the school district and the employee may access and/or transfer such funds to a different HSA to the fullest extent permitted by law. Such employees also shall be eligible to participate in a Limited Scope Health Care Reimbursement Plan through the Flex Choice Plan, which shall allow reimbursement of medical expenses to the fullest extent permitted by law for an individual receiving contributions to an HSA.

Subd. 4. Family High Deductible Coverage:

(a) Eligible employees shall have the option of enrolling in a high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan. The high deductible coverage shall be a qualified high deductible health plan within the meaning of Section 223 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended from time to time. Each eligible employee enrolled in the high deductible coverage shall be eligible for a contribution to a health savings account ("HSA") of such employee in accordance with the Intermediate School District No. 917 Flex Choice Plan (the "Flex Choice Plan"). ~~Effective February 1, 2013,~~ **July 1, 2014**, the total monthly contribution by the school district toward the cost of the premium of the high deductible coverage, the HSA contribution, and the HSA administrative fees attributable to such eligible employee shall not exceed ~~\$850.~~ **\$885.** ~~Effective December 1, 2013, the total monthly contribution by the school district shall not exceed \$885.~~

(b) The school district shall contribute toward the cost of the premium for each eligible employee employed by the school district who qualifies for and is enrolled in individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan a monthly amount equal to the total monthly contribution identified in subsection (a) minus the monthly HSA contribution identified in subsection (c) and the monthly HSA administrative fees.

(c) The school district shall contribute an amount equal to one-half of the applicable deductible to the HSA of each eligible employee employed by the school district who qualifies for and is enrolled in individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan. Such contributions shall be made monthly on a pro rata basis. Such employees shall also be eligible, through the Flex Choice Plan, to make pre-tax contributions to the HSA via salary reduction. The school district shall select the vendor of the HSA to which such contributions shall be made. Once deposited in an employee's HSA, such contributions, whether made by the school district or via salary reduction, shall not be subject to restriction by the school district and the employee may access and/or transfer such funds to a different HSA to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Such employees also shall be eligible to participate in a Limited Scope Health Care Reimbursement Plan through the Flex Choice Plan, which shall allow reimbursement of medical expenses to the fullest extent permitted by law for an individual receiving contributions to an HSA.

Subd. 5. Changes in Coverage under High Deductible Coverage. If an eligible employee who qualifies for and is enrolled in coverage under the high deductible coverage option of the school district's health and hospitalization plan changes the type of coverage during a calendar year (e.g., from individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option to family coverage under the high deductible coverage option; from family coverage under the high deductible coverage option to individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option; from family or individual coverage under the high deductible coverage option to no coverage under the high deductible coverage option), the school district's contribution to the employee's HSA shall change accordingly. The change in the amount of HSA contributions shall be effective coincident with the change in the type of coverage under the high deductible coverage option.

Section 3. Dental Insurance:

Subd. 1. Individual Coverage: Effective July 1, ~~2012~~, **2014**, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed \$75 per month toward the cost of the premium for individual coverage for each eligible employee employed by the School District who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District's dental insurance plan. Additional cost of the premium, if any, shall be borne by the employee and paid by payroll deduction.

Subd. 2. Dependent Coverage: Effective July 1, ~~2012~~, **2014**, the School District shall contribute a sum not to exceed \$135 per month toward the cost of the premium for individual coverage for each eligible employee employed by the School district who qualifies for and is enrolled in the School District's dental insurance plan. Any additional cost of the premium shall be borne by the employee and paid by payroll deduction.

Section 4. Group Income Protection: The School District will pay each month 100 percent of the current premium for income protection insurance for each full-time employee. The income protection plan shall include the following:

Subd. 1. Benefits begin after ninety (90) calendar days of total disability.

Subd. 2. The monthly income benefit shall be 66-2/3 percent of basic monthly earnings (exclusive of any additional compensation from this district or any other source).

Section 5. Life Insurance: The School District will pay each month 100 percent of the life insurance premium for a \$60,000 term-life insurance policy for each full-time employee with the individual employee effective July 1, ~~2012~~-**2014**.

Section 6. Claims Against the School District: The parties agree that any description of insurance benefits contained in this Article is intended to be informational only and the eligibility of any employee for benefits shall be governed by the terms of the insurance policy purchased by the School District pursuant to this Article. It is further understood that the School District's only obligation is to purchase an insurance policy and pay such amounts as agreed herein and no claims shall be made against the School District as a result of a denial of insurance benefits by an insurance carrier.

Section 7. Duration of Insurance Contribution: An employee is eligible for contributions as provided in this Article as long as he/she is a full-time employee of District No. 917. Upon termination of employment, all district contribution shall cease, effective on the last working day, except as specified in Subdivisions 1 and 2 hereof.

Subd. 1. The School District shall continue its contribution to health and dental insurance costs for disabled employees until long-term disability coverage becomes effective to a maximum of three (3) calendar months following the employee's last day of work.

Subd. 2. The School District shall continue its contribution to health and dental insurance costs for employees who retire pursuant to Article XVI of this agreement for three (3) calendar months following the employee's last day of work.

Section 8. Eligibility:

Subd. 1. To be eligible for the full benefits of this Article, employees must be a regular full-time employee employed at least 1020 hours per year. Employees employed for less than 1,020 hours per year but at least 510 hours per year shall be eligible for the benefits of this Article on a pro rata basis. Employees whose start of work date would preclude compliance with the hour requirement during the remainder of the regular academic year shall, nevertheless, be deemed to meet the hour requirement provided that their work schedule is such that hours of employment would have been attained had the employee begun work at the beginning of the academic year. Short-term or intermittent employees shall not be eligible for the benefits of this Article.

Subd. 2. Employees shall be eligible during the summer months insurance benefits coverage at district expense defined in Article VIII provided they have met the 1020 hour requirement defined in Subd. 1.

**ARTICLE IX
LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

Section 1. Sick Leave:

Subd. 1. All full-time employees in their first and second year of employment shall earn sick leave at the rate of one day for each month of service in the employment of the School District, which is equivalent to nine (9) days for each school year and beginning with their third year of employment shall earn sick leave at the rate of one and one-ninth (1-1/9) days for each month of service in the employ of the School District, which is equivalent to ten (10) days for each school year. All full-time employees shall be given a credit of nine (9) or ten (10) sick days at the beginning of each school year. Additional sick leave hours shall be awarded to employees working extended duty day assignments (exceeding 177 days/year), proportional to the number of additional days worked, rounded to the nearest hour. For purposes of this Subd. 1, summer school assignments are not considered extended duty day assignments.

Subd. 2. Unused sick leave days may accumulate without limit.

Subd. 3. The School Board may require an employee to furnish a medical certificate from a qualified physician as evidence of illness, indicating such absence was due to illness, in

order to qualify for sick leave pay. However, the final determination as to the eligibility of an employee for sick leave is reserved to the School Board.

Subd. 4. In the event that a medical certificate will be required, the employee will be so advised.

Subd. 5. Sick leave allowed shall be deducted from the accrued sick leave days earned by the employee.

Subd. 6. Sick leave pay shall be approved only upon submission of a signed request.

Subd. 7. An employee who is entitled to sick leave pay, who is then receiving Worker's Compensation, may not be paid sick leave pay in an amount greater than the difference between such Worker's Compensation and his/her basic salary.

Subd. 8. Each year it shall be the option of each bargaining unit member to contribute in (1) one hour increments up to (7) seven hours of personal leave to a student related workers' compensation sick leave bank. On or before June 1 of each year, the business office will electronically notify bargaining unit members to indicate whether or not they wish to contribute to the student related injury workers compensation sick leave bank. The leave bank shall be administered by the President of the Association and the Superintendent. The student related injury workers' compensation sick leave bank shall be used for requests from unit members for up to three (3) days of pay if the injury is of such duration that it does not provide for a Minnesota Workers' compensation wage loss benefit. The school district will contribute 67.5 hours to the student related injury worker compensation sick leave bank for the 2012-2013 school year and 33.75 hours in the 2013-2014 school year to help establish the bank. Eligibility decisions are not subject to the grievance procedures.

Subd. 9. Employees who use two or less sick leave days during the regular student school year will receive a \$100 stipend in their June 30 pay check. An employee must have been employed prior to October 1 to be eligible for this stipend.

Section 2. Child Care Leave:

~~Subd. 1. An employee shall be afforded a child care leave of absence of no more than twelve (12) months in duration, according to the procedures as outlined in this section, to one (1) parent of a newborn child or an adopted infant child, provided such parent is caring for the child on a full-time basis.~~

~~Subd. 2. An employee shall make a written request for child care leave not less than sixty (60) days in advance of usage and shall submit a written request to the superintendent for child care leave, including commencement date and return date. Such request in the case of a pregnant employee shall include a physician's statement indicating the estimated date of delivery. A pregnant employee may also use sick leave pursuant to Section 1 hereof for any period of disability, except for the period covered by an unpaid child care leave. The time periods provided herein shall be adjusted in cases of emergency.~~

~~Subd. 3. The superintendent, after consultation with the employee, shall notify the employee in writing of the effective beginning date of such leave and its duration.~~

~~Subd. 4. An employee returning from a child care leave shall be reemployed in a position for which the employee is qualified provided that the employee returns on the date as provided in the leave of absence.~~

~~Subd. 5. A child care leave of absence granted pursuant to this section shall be a leave without pay.~~

Section 2. Parental Leave:

Subd. 1. An employee shall be afforded a parental leave of absence of no more than twelve (12) months in duration, according to the procedures as outlined in this section, to one parent of a newborn child or an adopted child, provided such parent is caring for the child on a full-time basis.

Subd. 2. The employee shall submit a written request to the superintendent for a parental leave including commencement date and return date.

Subd. 3. The effective beginning date of such leave and its duration shall be submitted by the superintendent to the School Board for approval. The superintendent will notify the employee in writing of the Board's decision.

Subd. 4. The parties agree that periods of time for which the employee is on parental leave shall not be counted in determining the completion of the probationary or trial period.

Subd. 5. An employee who returns from parental leave within the provisions of this section shall retain all previous work experience credit and any unused leave time earned under the provisions of this Agreement prior to the beginning of the leave. The employee shall not accrue any additional work experience credit for leave time during the period of child care leave.

Subd. 6. An employee on parental leave is eligible to participate in group insurance programs if permitted under the insurance policy provisions. The employee shall be responsible for the full cost of the premium of the insurance programs selected and will begin paying the district at the beginning of the leave. The right to continue participation in such group insurance programs, however, will terminate if the employee does not return to the School District pursuant to this section.

Subd. 7. The parties further agree that any child care leave of absence granted under this section shall be a leave without pay.

Section 3. Maternity/Adoption Leave:

Subd. 1. The start of a physical disability absence for pregnancy, delivery, and recovery from childbirth shall be determined by the employee's physician. The end of the physical disability absence for childbirth shall be determined by the employee's physician at the time of the child's birth.

Subd. 2. A pregnant employee shall notify the superintendent in writing, not later than the end of the sixth month of pregnancy, and, also at such time provide a physician's

statement indicating the estimated date of delivery of the child. The employee shall submit a written request to the superintendent for the use of paid sick leave, including commencement date and return date. The time periods provided herein can be modified by the employee's physician.

Subd. 3. An employee's maternity absence may encompass school holidays and/or school vacations. Holidays and/or vacations that fall during the period of disability to not cause the disability period to be extended. These days would not be deducted from sick leave.

Subd. 4. Subd. 2 and 3 of this section shall also apply to one parent for the adoption of a child in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act.

Section 3. 4. Death and Illness:

Subd. 1. Upon approval of the superintendent or his/her designee, an employee may be granted up to five (5) days absence with pay due to the death of the employee's spouse, child or parent. Up to three (3) days absence may be granted with pay for the death of the employee's sister, brother, grandparent, grandchild, parent-in-law, son or daughter-in-law, brother or sister-in-law, or significant person. The leave set forth in this section is non-accumulative and shall not be deducted from sick leave.

Subd. 2. Upon approval of the superintendent or his/her designee, an employee may use ~~one day~~ **up to 160 hours per calendar year** of accumulated sick leave ~~for each day of~~ **for illness or injury, severe illness or disability** for the following: an employee's spouse, child, child over 18, step-child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, **step-parent, sibling** or significant person for which care is required for such reasonable period as the employee's attendance may be necessary. This leave will be granted under the same terms the employee is able to use sick leave benefits for their own illness. **Days Time** will be deducted from sick leave.

Subd. 3. Additional absence for severe illness or death for persons identified in Subd. 1 and Subd. 2 may be granted at the sole discretion of the superintendent whose decision is final and binding and is not subject to the grievance procedure.

Subd. 4. Absence for the severe illness or death of persons not designated in Subd. 1 or Subd. 2 may be granted at the sole discretion of the Superintendent, whose decision is final and binding and is not subject to the grievance procedure. **Days Time** used in this subdivision will be deducted from the employee's sick leave.

Section 4. 5. Jury Duty Leave: An employee summoned for jury duty shall receive his/her regular salary but shall remit to the school district any jury duty fees received. The employee shall retain any expenses or mileage allowances paid by the court.

Section 5. 6. Personal Leave.

Subd. 1. Eligibility.

(a) Effective July 1, 2012, **2014**, employees will receive personal leave days per the following schedule:

In School Year 1-3	1 day
In School Year 4-7	2 days
In School Year 8+	3 days

Personal leave shall be allowed to accumulate to a total of five (5) days.

The first year of employment shall be defined as any days of employment prior to the last student day of the regular school calendar in the first employment agreement. The next regular school calendar becomes the second year of employment with each successive school calendar year adding to the years of employment.

(b) Denial of requests for the use of personal leave by the immediate supervisor may be appealed to the Superintendent.

(c) An employee may be granted leave without pay at the sole discretion of the superintendent, in accordance with school board policy.

Subd. 2. The use of a personal leave day is subject to the approval of the School District to ensure a minimum of disruption for the educational program. Accordingly, the following limitations shall apply:

(a) A personal leave day normally shall not be granted for the day preceding or the day following holidays or vacation periods and the first and last ten (10) duty days of the school year. **(When the licensed staff duty day calendar includes a professional day or a holiday, the day preceding or the day following the holiday are eligible for use of personal leave.)**

(b) Personal leave requests may be denied on a particular day, if other employees in the same bargaining unit have already been granted personal or emergency leave which would be disruptive of the functioning of the particular program. In addition, personal leave requests will not be approved on any day which would exceed five percent (5%) of the total bargaining unit.

Subd. 3. At the beginning of each contract year, employees will be credited with the number of days of personal leave specified in Subd. 1, herein. Those employees who have accumulated three (3) days of personal leave or more prior to the beginning of any contract year shall receive a lump sum payment of \$75.00 for each day beyond five for which they become eligible in lieu of being granted additional days beyond five. Part-time employees as defined in Section 11 of this Article IX shall be paid a pro rata portion of the \$75.00 per day based upon the number of hours worked per year with 1020 hours per year constituting full-time.

Subd. 4. Employees who are assigned to extended duty days as defined in Section 1, Subd. 1, of this Article IX, shall earn additional personal leave days on a pro rata basis consistent with the number of additional days of assignment. The calculation of additional days will be based upon the actual days worked in the preceding school year (July 1 through June 30) and the number of years of service. The additional personal leave days earned will accrue to the employee in the following year. Additional time will be calculated to the nearest hour.

Subd. 5. Personal leave must normally be requested ~~five (5)~~ **three (3)** business days in advance or as soon as known. All requests with less than a ~~five (5)~~ **three (3)** business day notice will need to include the reason for the request of personal leave. Personal leave may be granted in increments of less than one full work day if approved by District designee.

Subd. 6 Personal leave accrued on the books at the time of an employee's separation from the district due to a reduction in force that is caused by an elimination of programs or reduction in enrollment shall be reimbursed to the employee at the current substitute program assistant rate of pay.

Section 6- 7. Insurance Application:

Subd. 1 An employee shall be eligible for insurance contributions as provided in Article VIII of this agreement during any month that the employee provides regular service at least one (1) day during the month, or during any month that such employee is continuously on paid sick leave pursuant to Section 1 of this Article, and including the non-duty summer months continuous with otherwise eligible service.

Subd. 2. An employee shall not be eligible for School District contributions for insurance programs as outlined in Article VIII of this Agreement during any of the following:

- (a) Any month in which the employee does not receive either pay for actual service rendered or during any month in which the employee is absent but not entitled to sick leave pursuant to Section 1 of this Article.
- (b) Any month after an employee has been absent for (40) forty consecutive student calendar days due to an injury qualified for a Minnesota workers' compensation wage loss benefit and the employee receives workers' compensation for the entire month, whether or not supplemented by sick leave.
- (c) Any month in which the employee is receiving long-term disability insurance benefits for the entire month.

Subd. 3. An employee being compensated pursuant to Subd. 2, hereof, may, however, continue to participate in group insurance plans if permitted under the insurance policy provisions, but shall pay the entire premium for such program as he/she wishes to retain during such period of employment relationship. It is the responsibility of the employee to make arrangements with the school business office to pay to the School District the monthly premium amounts in advance and on such date as determined by the School District. The right to continue participation in such group insurance programs, however, will discontinue upon termination of employment, except as otherwise provided by law.

Section 7- 8. Accrued Benefits - Unpaid Leaves: An employee on an unpaid leave pursuant to this Article shall retain such amounts of experience credit for pay purposes and other accrued benefits, if any, which he/she had accrued at the time he/she went on leave for use upon his/her return. No additional experience credit for pay purposes or other benefits shall accrue for the period of time that an employee is on leave under this Section 7.

Section 8- 9. Accrued Benefits - Paid Leaves: An employee on an extended leave where compensation is involved, including sick leave and worker's compensation, shall be eligible for and

shall be entitled to normal accruals for sick leave during any month in which the employee actually performs services. However, an employee shall not be eligible for accrual of sick leave during any month in which the employee does not perform services because of absence on paid sick leave or during the entire month the employee is being compensated by worker's compensation or long-term disability insurance.

Section 9-10. The parties agree that periods of time for which the employee is on unpaid leave shall not be counted in determining the completion of the probationary period.

Section 10-11. Failure of the employee to return to work from a leave of absence pursuant to this Article shall constitute grounds for termination by the School District.

Section 11-12. Eligibility: To be eligible for the benefits of this Article, an employee must be a full-time employee employed at least 1,020 hours per year. Bargaining unit employees employed for less than 1,020 hours per year shall receive leave benefits on a pro rata basis.

ARTICLE X PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Section 1. Probationary Period: An employee, under the provisions of this Agreement, shall serve a probationary period of two (2) calendar years from the date of (continuous) hire during which time the School District shall have the unqualified right to suspend without pay, discharge or otherwise discipline such an employee. **In the event the School District terminates a probationary employee at the end of a school year and rehires the employee within four (4) months of the termination, the employee's previous probationary employment period shall be credited toward their probationary period of two (2) calendar years from the date of (continuous) hire.** During the probationary period, the employee will receive two performance appraisals during each calendar year using the procedures of Board Policy 459. The first appraisal shall occur prior to December 15 and the second will occur prior to April 15.

Section 2. Completion of Probationary Period: An employee who has completed the probationary period may be suspended without pay, discharged or disciplined only for just cause by the School District subject to the grievance procedure.

ARTICLE XI EMPLOYEE SUPERVISION

Section 1. Employee Improvement Plans

Subd. 1. Prior to formal or informal disciplinary procedures being employed in cases of minor misconduct or in cases where the behavior or poor performance does not constitute a serious infraction of the contract, district policies, rules or directives of superiors, the school district may, in its discretion, attempt to improve an employee's performance and/or correct an employee's behavior by implementing an "employee improvement plan."

Subd. 2. The purpose of an employee improvement plan is to improve the employee's performance up to the standards and expectations of the school district. Should the employee fail to raise his/her level of performance to the school district's expectations, or the behavior issues continue the school district may resort to the disciplinary measures delineated in Section 2 of this Article.

Subd. 3. All employee improvement plans will be placed in the employee's personnel file along with any notations as to the employee's progress in improving performance.

Section 2. Employee Discipline

Subd. 1. Employee discipline is the school district's process for assuring compliance with the terms and conditions of the collective bargaining agreement, Board policies and rules, directives issued by the employee's supervisors or other administrators, and generally accepted norms of behavior. Discipline is intended to correct unacceptable behavior and improve performance. The school district shall render disciplinary measures only for just cause and shall ensure that employee rights to "due process" are protected.

Subd. 2. Oral or Written Reprimands. The school district shall typically follow a progressive discipline approach as outlined in this Article depending upon the gravity of the misconduct or the level of performance issues. The school district may, at its sole discretion, move immediately to a higher level of discipline, depending upon the severity of the misconduct or lack of performance.

Oral Reprimand. Oral reprimands may be issued to employees in the event of relatively minor infractions. Oral reprimands shall not be grievable under Article XIV of this Agreement. Oral reprimands shall not be documented in the employee's official personnel file.

Written Reprimand. Written reprimands (Notices of Deficiency) may be issued by the school district for more serious misconduct or when oral warnings have not corrected the employee's behavior or performance. Written reprimands will be placed in the employee's official personnel file. Employees may respond in writing to written reprimands and such responses shall be placed in the employee's official personnel file. ~~Written reprimands are grievable~~ **may be grieved** under Article XIV of this Agreement. The standards of review are whether or not any material in the employee's official personnel file is false or inaccurate or is without just cause. Any material found through the grievance procedure to be false or inaccurate or without just cause shall be expunged from the employee's official personnel file.

Subd. 3. Suspension. An employee may be suspended without pay for grounds as described in Minn. Stat. Section 122A.40, Subd. 9(a) through (e) or Minn. Stat. Section 122A.40, Subd. 13(1) through (6). Any suspension is subject to the grievance procedure under Article XIV of this Agreement. Additionally, an employee may be suspended without pay when other disciplinary measures have been applied without sufficient positive result, or for other willful violations of District policies or directives.

Suspension shall take effect upon written notification from the Superintendent of Schools to the employee stating the grounds for suspension. The employee shall have the right to invoke the grievance procedures set forth in Article XIV of this Agreement at the arbitration level provided written notification requesting arbitration is received by the superintendent within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the written notice of suspension.

The suspension shall take effect upon receipt by the employee of the written notice of suspension or shall take effect as otherwise indicated in the written notice of suspension. The suspension shall continue in effect for the time period provided in the written notice or

as otherwise decided by the school board, but not to exceed a period of thirty (30) work days.

An employee may be put on a paid leave during an investigation of concern for the District. If the investigation results in an unpaid leave, the employee's unpaid leave time will not be retroactive without mutual agreement.

Subd. 4. Termination for Cause. An employee who has passed the probationary period may be terminated for cause at the end of a school year for any of the following reasons:

- Inefficiency;
- Neglect of duty, or persistent violation of school laws, rules, regulations, or directives;
- Conduct unbecoming a employee which materially impairs the employee's educational effectiveness;
- Other good and sufficient grounds rendering the employee unfit to perform the employee's duties.

An employee will not be terminated upon one of the grounds specified in clause (1), (2), (3), or (4), unless the employee fails to correct the deficiency after being given written notice of the specific items of complaint and reasonable time within which to remedy them.

Immediate discharge. The board may discharge a non-probationary employee, effective immediately, upon any of the following grounds:

- Immoral conduct, insubordination, or conviction of a felony;
- Conduct unbecoming a employee which requires the immediate removal of the employee from classroom or other duties;
- Failure without justifiable cause to be present at assigned work place without first securing the written release of the school board;
- Gross inefficiency which the employee has failed to correct after reasonable written notice;
- Willful neglect of duty; or
- Continuing physical or mental disability subsequent to a 12 months leave of absence and inability to qualify for reinstatement.

ARTICLE XII SENIORITY

Section 1. Seniority: The parties recognize the principle of seniority within classification in the application of this Agreement concerning reduction or increase in force, and reduction of working time, within qualification areas as defined by the School District. For purposes of this Article, the School District reserves the right to define reasonable qualifications within respective program areas and program skills. The exercise of seniority, therefore, shall be subject to the employee's qualifications within said areas. The parties agree that Program Assistants, and Classroom Assistants constitute separate seniority classifications and accordingly, a separate seniority list will be provided for each individual classification. An employee will have rights only within their particular seniority classification under the provisions of this Article.

Section 2. Seniority Date: For purposes of this article, an employee's seniority date shall be the first date of paid and continuous employment with the School District. An employee shall

acquire a seniority date upon completion of the probationary period as defined in this Agreement and upon acquiring seniority the seniority date shall relate back to the first date of continuous ~~service~~ **employment** with the School District. If more than one employee commences paid employment on the same date, the tie in seniority shall be broken by lot. If an employee changes their assignment from Student Assistant or Classroom Assistant to Program Assistant or Program Assistant to, Student Assistant to Classroom Assistant their seniority date remains the first date of paid continuous employment with the School District.

Section 3. Loss of Seniority: An employee shall lose his/her seniority standing upon written resignation of employment, discharge for cause, or after a twelve (12) month continuous lay off.

Section 4. Seniority Lists. Seniority lists shall be published no later than February 15 each year. The list shall indicate the employees' seniority date. The list shall be posted at each school facility and the Union shall be provided with three copies of such list.

ARTICLE XIII OTHER BENEFITS

Section 1. The School District agrees to reimburse for tuitions, fees, membership and association fees which are approved in accordance with District Policy 486.

Subd. 1 Three hours or more of training, per school year, will be provided by the District. The training will be outside of opening workshops, team meetings, and classroom preparations, etc. Both the Union and School District designees will have input into the content of the job skills training. Compensation for the hours of training will be at School District expense.

Section 2. Travel Expense: Employees required by the School District to use their own vehicles in the performance of their duties shall be reimbursed for such travel at the rate as prescribed by School Board policy.

ARTICLE XIV GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Section 1. Grievance Definition: A "grievance" shall mean an allegation by an employee(s) resulting in a dispute or disagreement between the employee(s) and the School District as to the interpretation or application of terms and conditions of employment insofar as such matters are contained in this Agreement.

Section 2. Representative: The employee, administrator or School District may be represented during any step of the procedure by any person or agent designated by such parties to this Agreement to act in their behalf.

Section 3. Definitions and Interpretations:

Subd. 1. Extension: Time limits specified in this Agreement may be extended by mutual agreement.

Subd. 2. Days: Reference to days regarding time periods in this procedure shall refer to calendar days.

Subd. 3. Filing and Postmark: The filing or service of any notice or document herein shall be timely if it is personally served or if it bears a certified postmark of the United States Postal Service within the time period.

Section 4. Time Limitation and Waiver: Grievances shall not be valid for consideration unless the grievance is submitted in writing to the School District's designee, setting forth the facts and specific provision of the Agreement allegedly violated and the particular relief sought within ~~twenty (20) days~~ **twenty-five (25) days** after the date the event giving rise to the grievance occurred. Failure to file any grievance within such period shall be deemed a waiver thereof. Failure to appeal a grievance from one level to another within the time periods hereinafter provided shall constitute a waiver of the grievance. An effort shall first be made to adjust an alleged grievance informally between the employee and the School District's designee.

Section 5. Adjustments of Grievance: The School District and the employee shall attempt to adjust all grievances which may arise during the course of employment of any employee within the School District in the following manner:

Subd. 1. Level 1: If the grievance is not resolved through informal discussions, the School District designee shall give a written decision on the grievance to the parties involved within ten (10) days after receipt of the written grievance.

Subd. 2. Level II: In the event the grievance is not resolved in Level I, the decision rendered may be appealed to the superintendent of schools, provided such appeal is made in writing within ~~ten (10)~~ **fifteen (15)** days after receipt of the decision in Level I. If a grievance is properly appealed to the superintendent, the superintendent or his/her designee shall set a time to meet regarding the grievance within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the appeal. Within ten (10) days after the meeting the superintendent or his/her designee shall issue a decision in writing to the parties involved.

Section 6. School Board Review: The School Board reserves the right to review any decision issued under Level I or Level II of this procedure provided the School Board or its representative notifies the parties of its intention to review within ten (10) days after the decision has been rendered. In the event the School Board reviews a grievance under this section, the School Board reserves the right to reverse or modify such decision.

Section 7. Denial of Grievance: Failure by the School District or its representative to issue a decision within the time periods provided herein shall constitute a denial of the grievance and the employee may appeal it to the next level.

Section 8. Arbitration Procedures: In the event that the employee and the School District are unable to resolve any grievance, the grievance may be submitted to arbitration as defined herein.

Subd. 1. Request: A request to submit a grievance to arbitration must be in writing signed by the aggrieved party, and such request must be filed in the office of the superintendent within ten (10) days following the decision in Level II or School Board review, whichever is applicable, of the grievance procedure.

Subd. 2. Prior Procedure Required: No grievance shall be considered by the arbitrator which has not been first duly processed in accordance with the grievance procedure and appeal provisions.

Subd. 3. Selection of Arbitrator: Upon the proper submission of a grievance under the terms of this procedure, the parties shall, within ten (10) days after the request to arbitrate, attempt to agree upon the selection of an arbitrator. If no agreement on an arbitrator is reached, either party may request the Bureau of Mediation Services to appoint an arbitrator pursuant to M.S. § 179.70, Subd. 4, providing such request is made within twenty (20) days after the request for arbitration. The request shall ask that the appointment be made within thirty (30) days after the receipt of said request. Failure to agree upon an arbitrator or the failure to request an arbitrator from the Bureau of Mediation Services within the time periods provided herein shall constitute a waiver of the grievance.

Subd. 4. Hearing: The grievance shall be heard by a single arbitrator and both parties may be represented by such a person or persons as they may choose and designate, and the parties shall have the right to a hearing at which time both parties will have the opportunity to submit evidence, offer testimony, and make oral or written arguments relating to the issues before the arbitrator. The proceeding before the arbitrator shall be a hearing de novo.

Subd. 5. Decision: The decision by the arbitrator shall be rendered within thirty (30) days after the close of the hearing. Decisions by the arbitrator in cases properly before him/her shall be final and binding upon the parties; subject, however, to the limitations of arbitration decisions as provided in the PELRA. The arbitrator shall issue a written decision and order including findings of fact which shall be based upon substantial and competent evidence presented at the hearing. All witnesses shall be sworn upon oath by the arbitrator.

Subd. 6. Expenses: Each party shall bear its own expenses in connection with arbitration including expenses relating to the party's representatives, witnesses, and any other expenses which the party incurs in connection with presenting its case in arbitration. A transcript or recording shall be made of the hearing at the request of either party or if the request is mutual, the cost shall be shared. The parties shall share equally fees and expenses of the arbitrator and any other expenses which the parties mutually agree are necessary for the conduct of the arbitration.

Subd. 7. Jurisdiction: The arbitrator shall have jurisdiction over disputes or disagreements relating to grievances properly before the arbitrator pursuant to the terms of this procedure. The jurisdiction of the arbitrator shall not extend to proposed changes in terms and conditions of employment as defined herein and contained in this written Agreement; nor shall an arbitrator have jurisdiction over any grievance which has not been submitted to arbitration in compliance with the terms of the grievance and arbitration procedure as outlined herein; nor shall the jurisdiction of the arbitrator extend to matters limited or excluded by PELRA of 1971.

Section 9. Grievance Form: A form which must be used for filing grievances shall be provided by the School District (Attachment D). Such form shall be readily accessible in all school buildings.

Section 10. Election of Remedies and Waiver: A party instituting any action, proceeding or complaint in a federal or state court of law, or before an administrative tribunal, federal agency, state agency, or seeking relief through any statutory process for which relief may be granted, the

subject matter of which may constitute a grievance under this Agreement, shall immediately thereupon waive any and all rights to pursue a grievance under this Article. Upon instituting a proceeding in another forum as outlined herein, the employee shall waive his/her right to initiate a grievance pursuant to this Article, or, if the grievance is pending in the grievance procedure, the right to pursue it further shall be immediately waived. This section shall not apply to actions to compel arbitration as provided in this Agreement or to enforce the award of an arbitrator.

ARTICLE XV TRANSFERS, VACANCIES AND JOB POSTING

Transfer, in the context of this article, means the change in work location within Intermediate School District #917's various program sites. All transfers shall be documented in writing. A change in work assignment at the same work location is not considered a transfer under this article and is a management prerogative.

Section 1. Daily Job Site Transfer Request: For purposes of this section, a daily job site transfer request of an employee is one that is made by an administrator when there is a need on a particular day or days due to employee absences or other extenuating needs in a classroom outside of the building normally assigned. An employee may be requested to provide job coverage at a site other than their regular assigned building. When possible, an employee will be notified the day before a transfer is needed. A change of work assignment at the regular assigned building is not considered a daily job site transfer request.

Subd. 1. The employee's regular assignment work times will remain the same unless the employee and administrator mutually agree to a change in times. Hours worked that exceed the regular assignment work times will be submitted on an employee time sheet.

Subd. 2. In the event the employee's drive time from the temporary job site will exceed the normal end of day drive time and this creates a hardship for the employee, by mutual agreement with the administrator, the employee may be allowed to leave the temporary job site before the temporary job sites normal work day end time.

Subd. 3. Employee's accepting a daily job site transfer request will be reimbursed for mileage based on the round trip miles from their regular assignment job site to the temporary job site in accordance with District Policy 412 and submission on the District Mileage Request Form. If an employee's personal vehicle is not available for travel and alternative transportation options are not possible, there will be no retribution given to the employee.

Subd. 4. Job duties at a temporary job site that require specialized training will not be expected to be performed by an employee who has not received such training. When an employee has concerns regarding their ability to meet the program needs of a temporary job site assignment, these concerns should be shared with the administrator making the request. There will be no retribution given to an employee who is not trained for the duties of other sites.

Subd. 5. When an employee decides to decline a request for a daily job site transfer, they must discuss their decision with the administrator before the daily job site transfer is finalized.

Section 2: Involuntary Transfers: Notice of involuntary transfer shall be given to the employees of the department involved as soon as practicable. A list of open bargaining unit positions in the school district shall be made available to all employees being involuntarily transferred or reassigned. Such employees may apply for positions in order of preference to which they desire to be transferred.

Section 3: Decision:

Subd. 1. The involuntary transfer will be given to the least senior employee in the site/program, whenever possible subject to the provisions of Subdivisions 2 through 4, below.

Subd. 2. Programmatic considerations, employee qualifications, and employee preference shall be used by the school district when filling vacancies, and rotating or transferring staff.

Subd. 3. Staff not selected for vacant or open positions or staff being involuntarily reassigned shall, upon written request, be afforded an opportunity to meet with the Superintendent regarding such decision.

Subd. 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Article, it is understood and agreed that the final choice relating to staffing decisions remains in the discretion of the School District.

Section 4: Voluntary Transfers: Voluntary transfers shall be available to all employees based on the qualifications of the individual and the needs of the district.

Subd. 1. Employees shall have the right to apply for open positions within the District for which they are qualified. Qualification shall be determined by the skills, experience, performance of the individual applying and the requirements of the position applied for. The District shall determine the qualifications required. When qualifications are equal, seniority shall be the deciding factor between several applicants. The District shall inform the union president by email as soon as the position is filled, stating employee name, program assignment, site location, hours and salary.

Subd. 2. Any employee who wishes to be considered for a transfer to a location or program when an opening becomes available may make their request to their Assistant Director in writing with a copy to the Director. Consideration will be given to these requests based upon criteria described in Subd. 1 above and the needs of the district. When qualifications are equal, seniority may be considered.

Subd. 3. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Article, it is understood and agreed that the final choice relating to staffing decisions remains in the discretion of the school district.

Section 5: Definition, Vacancies and Job Posting: For purposes of this section, a regular vacancy is defined as one anticipated to last for more than one school year when an employee is to be added in the bargaining unit, the allocation of additional employees, or a regular position becomes available due to an employee leaving. The posting requirement shall not apply when the district is making administrative transfers or reassignments within the bargaining unit.

Vacancies for bargaining unit positions shall be posted on the district website and a notice will be sent to each employee's school e-mail. Positions will be posted for a minimum of five working days before the position is permanently filled. Each posting will include the position, hours, site assignment if known, and program assignment. Employee access to district

computers will be provided during the normal work day and conditions for use are set forth in School District Policy.

Section 6: New positions or extended day/hour positions. In instances where positions providing additional hours or additional days of work or continuous employment are to be filled, preference for these positions shall be given first to the most senior qualified person applying within the program area of their normal assignment (ex: TESA within TESA) and then to the most senior qualified person applying within 917.)

Section 7. Application for Vacancies: To be considered for a vacancy posted under this Agreement, an employee must submit an application in writing.

Section 8. Mailed Notice: Employees of the unit desiring to be personally notified of any vacancies occurring within the unit must provide the personnel office with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If such an envelope is on file when a vacancy is posted, the School District will forward the vacancy notice to the employee.

ARTICLE XVI SEVERANCE/EARLY RETIREMENT

Section 1. Eligibility: Employees who have completed at least fifteen (15) years of continuous (to be defined as including any leave approved under other sections of this contract) **service employment** with the School District, and who are at least fifty-five (55) years of age, **or have completed thirty (30) years of continuous employment** shall be eligible for severance pay pursuant to the provisions of this Article upon submission of a written resignation accepted by the School Board. Severance pay shall not be granted to any employee who is discharged for cause by the School District. This Article shall apply only to employees who retire after the execution of this contract and shall not be retroactive to any employee who retired prior to said execution date.

Section 2. Amount of Severance: Eligible employees, upon retirement, shall receive as severance pay unused sick leave days, not to exceed thirty-five (35) days.

Section 3. Notice: To be eligible for the benefits of this section, unless waived by the School District, an employee must notify the School District not less than 45 calendar days prior to the proposed retirement date.

Section 4. Method of Pay-Out:

- A. Subject to the limitations listed below, the school district will contribute an amount equal to the value of the employee's severance pay directly into the School board approved 403 (b) vendor account. The retiree will not receive any direct payment from the school district for the severance pay.
- B. The school district's annual contribution into the School Board approved 403 (b) vendor account must not exceed the IRS contribution limit. If the amount calculated in "A" exceeds the available limits in the year of separation, the excess amount will be paid out in cash and not be tax sheltered.
- C. The school district contribution(s) into the approved 403 (b) vendor account will be made according to the same timeline as was provided for the direct payment of the severance pay.

- D. The school district will make the severance pay contributions to the School Board approved 403 (b) vendor. For purposes of calculating the maximum deferral limit, the school district will provide the retiree of approved vendor with contribution information for the previous twelve (12) months of employment. The vendor had agreed to calculate the maximum deferral limit.
- E. **If an employee eligible for this benefit dies before terminating employment, the benefit will be paid to the estate of the deceased.**

Section 5. Cut-off Date: The benefits of this article shall not apply to a member of this group employed after July 1, 2005.

**ARTICLE XVII
403(b) MATCHING CONTRIBUTION PLAN**

Section 1. Eligibility. To be eligible for this contribution, an employee must be regularly employed at least 1,020 hours during the contract year, and such benefits shall not apply to employee's employed for a lesser time or substitute employees. An employee must be in their second school year and thus will be eligible for an employer contribution in the employee's second year of service. The first year of employment shall be defined as any days of employment prior to the last student day of the regular school calendar in the first employment agreement. The next regular school calendar becomes the second year of employment with each successive school calendar year adding to the years of employment.

Section 2. Contribution. Effective July 1, ~~2013~~, **2014**, the school district will contribute up to a maximum as listed in the following schedule, according to year of service.

School Year	Employee Matching Contribution	School District Matching Contribution	Maximum School District Contribution	Total Contribution School District and Employee
In School Year 2-3	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$200
In School Year 4-6	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$700
In School Year 7-9	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$900
In School Year 10-12	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$1,200
In School Year 13-14	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$1,400
In School Year 15+	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000

Section 3. Authorization Agreement. A salary reduction authorization agreement must be completed by the eligible employee by October 15 of the current year, for the employee to participate in the 403b matching contribution plan.

Section 4. Unpaid Leaves. Employees on unpaid leaves may not participate in the matching program while on leave.

Section 5. Matching Requirement. The School District's contribution, for the matching portion of Section 2, shall not exceed the employee's matching contribution.

**ARTICLE XVIII
DURATION**

Section 1. Term and Reopening Negotiations: This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect for a period commencing July 1, 2012, **2014**, through June 30, 2014, **2016**, and thereafter pursuant to PELRA. If either party desires to modify or amend this Agreement commencing on July 1, 2014, **2016** it shall give written notice of such intent no later than May 1, 2014. **2016**. Unless otherwise mutually agreed, the parties shall not commence negotiations more than ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of this Agreement.

Section 2. Effect: This Agreement constitutes the full and complete agreement between the School District and the Union. The provisions herein relating to terms and conditions of employment supersede any and all prior agreements, resolutions, practices, School District policies, rules or regulations concerning terms and conditions of employment inconsistent with these provisions.

Section 3. Finality: Any matters relating to the current contract term, whether or not referred to in this Agreement, shall not be open for negotiation during the term of this Agreement.

Section 4. Severability: The provisions of this Agreement shall be severable, and if any provision thereof or the application of any such provision under any circumstances is held invalid, it shall not affect any other provision of this Agreement or the application of any provision thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as follows:

DISTRICT #917 SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM ASSISTANTS FEDERATION,
LOCAL 4242

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT 917

Dian Erickson
President, Local 4242

Jill Lewis
Chair

Teresa Stiff
Vice-President, Local 4242

Vanda Pressnall
Clerk

Ann Staples
Treasurer, Local 4242

Dated: _____, 2014

Dated: _____, 2014

SCHEDULE A
SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTANTS
2012-2013 SALARY SCHEDULE

STEP	Office use only	B22-Q	B22-HQ
F	10	15.02	15.79
G	11	15.40	16.17
H	12	15.76	16.54
I	13	16.14	16.92
J	14	16.52	17.30
K	15	16.90	17.67
L	16	17.27	18.04
M	17	17.65	18.42
N	18	18.02	18.80
O	19	18.39	19.17
P	20	18.77	19.54
Q	21	19.15	19.92
R	22	19.58	20.35

SCHEDULE B

SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTANTS

2013-2014 SALARY SCHEDULE

STEP	(office use only)		
F	10	15.99	
G	11	16.37	
H	12	16.74	
I	13	17.12	
J	14	17.50	
K	15	17.87	
L	16	18.24	
M	17	18.62	
N	18	19.00	
O	19	19.37	
P	20	19.74	
Q	21	20.12	
	R	22	20.55

SCHEDULE A
SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTANTS
2014-2015 SALARY SCHEDULE

STEP	Office use only	B22-HQ
F	10	16.19
G	11	16.57
H	12	16.95
I	13	17.33
J	14	17.72
K	15	18.09
L	16	18.47
M	17	18.85
N	18	19.24
O	19	19.61
P	20	19.99
Q	21	20.37
R	22	20.81

SCHEDULE B
SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSISTANTS
2015-2016 SALARY SCHEDULE

STEP	(office use only)	
F	10	16.37
G	11	16.76
H	12	17.14
I	13	17.52
J	14	17.91
K	15	18.29
L	16	18.67
M	17	19.06
N	18	19.45
O	19	19.83
P	20	20.21
Q	21	20.60
R	22	21.04

ATTACHMENT C
GRIEVANCE REPORT FORM
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT 917

Name _____

Building _____

Date Grievance Occurred _____

Statement of Facts:

Specific Provisions of Agreement Allegedly Violated:

Particular Relief Sought:

Date: _____

Signature of Greivant

Memorandum of Understanding

~~As a result of contract negotiations, the parties hereby agree to the following transition plan to have all program assistants, classroom assistants, and student assistants Highly Qualified as defined by the Minnesota Department of Education.~~

~~The School District, beginning in May of 2011, afforded the opportunity for all employees not meeting the Highly Qualified criteria to take the ParaPro Assessment with the fee paid by the school district. The Union, Local #4242, also paid the fee for an employee taking the ParaPro Assessment a second time. At this time approximately 96% of the employees meet the Highly Qualified standards.~~

~~The transition plan requires that all program assistants, classroom assistants, and student assistants will be required to meet the Highly Qualified standards by July 1, 2013. After this date, individuals not meeting the Highly Qualified standards will be released from their employment with Intermediate School District 917.~~

~~Beginning on July 1, 2013, the salary schedule column for employees not meeting the Highly Qualified standard will be eliminated.~~

~~IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as follows:~~

~~District 917 Special Education _____ Intermediate School District 917
Program Assistants; Federation Local #4242~~

~~_____
President _____ Chair~~

~~Dated: January 8, 2013 _____ Dated: January 8, 2013~~

TO: Board Members
FROM: John Christiansen
DATE: October 22, 2014
RE: Information on Program Assistants' Contract

The following are the basic details for the Program Assistants tentative contract agreement for consideration at our October 23, meeting.

Language Modifications:

1. Clarification of Union Leave
2. Dues check off procedures
3. Training and Trainer procedures
4. New language for Parental, Maternity/Adoption, and Death and Illness to comply with statutes
5. Timelines for Grievance Procedures
6. Eligibility requirements for severance benefit

Financial Adjustments:

1. Salary schedule step advancement (4.057% cost to total package)
2. Staff sent home due to student absence extended from 2 hours to 3 hours (.426% to total package)
3. Add longevity tier for 27 years and beyond (\$.50 increase over previous top tier (.041% to total package)
4. Health insurance contribution increase: (1.35% to total package)
 - \$55 to single Plan 1 – January 1, 2015
 - \$25 to family Plan 1 – January 1, 2015
 - \$50 to single Plan 1 – January 1, 2016
 - \$25 to HSA plan – January 1, 2016
5. Salary schedule increase 1.25% year 1 and 1.1% year 2 (1.929% to total package)

The total package increase is 7.803% which is .013 over our target of 7.79%.

The negotiation teams met for nine (9) two to three hour sessions beginning on June 27, 2014, and finalized a tentative agreement on September 9. The membership meeting to vote on the proposal was held on October 22, 2014. The members present at the meeting voted to approve the proposed agreement.

JC:ljb

Are skilled workers scarce?

Evidence from employer surveys in Minnesota

Alessia Leibert, May 6, 2013

The skills gap debate and its pitfalls

A skills gap is the difference between the *skill levels of the available workforce* and the *skills necessary to meet job requirements*. Skills gaps have often been used as a simple narrative to explain the contradiction between the current high level of unemployment in the United States and the alleged inability of employers to fill open positions. This over-simplified narrative, however, has suffered from two main flawed assumptions:

1. ***It assumes skills gaps are synonymous with hiring difficulties.*** Hiring difficulties often manifest themselves as a lack of qualified candidates who apply for a job. This can create the impression of a widespread lack of occupational workforce skills and, perhaps, of educational credentials. But, aside from lacking skills, there could be many other reasons why qualified candidates do not apply for a job or are not considered to be a good match for the job. For instance, mismatches can result from recruiting strategies that do not properly identify the desired skill set, unattractive job characteristics that discourage qualified candidates from applying, or an over-qualified candidate pool as opposed to an under-qualified candidate pool.
2. ***It assumes that skills mismatches prevent employers from hiring, which in turn is assumed to hurt firm competitiveness.*** However, skills-related hiring difficulties are not necessarily barriers that prevent hiring for a particular position. Additionally, sometimes firms set stringent qualification requirements because they are not in a hurry to hire.

To investigate the existence and causes of hiring difficulties in Minnesota and determine how many are specifically attributable to skills gaps relative to other factors, the Minnesota Labor Market Information Office rolled out a Hiring Difficulties Survey based on its existing semi-annual Job Vacancy Survey.

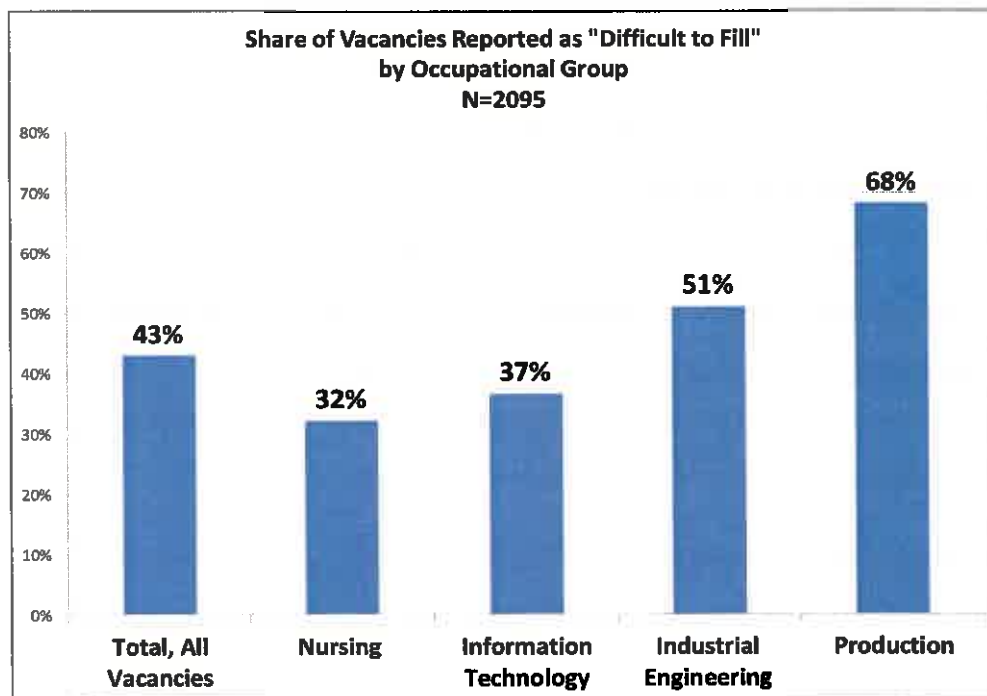
Hiring Difficulties Survey: Quick Facts

- Period: Based on vacancies open during Spring and Fall of 2012
- Response rate: 73 percent; 335 establishments with 2,095 estimated vacancies responded to the phone survey.
- Occupations surveyed: Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Anesthetists, Industrial Engineers, Industrial Engineering Technicians, Materials Engineers, Machinists, Numerical Tool and Process Control Programmers, CNC Machine Tool Operators, Software Developers - Systems Software, Software Developers - Applications, Computer User Support Specialists, Computer Network Support Specialists

The extent of hiring difficulties in Minnesota

Figure 1 displays the main survey findings. Less than a half (43 percent) of all vacancies reported in Spring and Fall of 2012 were hard-to-fill. Hiring difficulties varied widely by occupation, with Nursing having the lowest incidence (32 percent) and Production having the highest incidence (68 percent).

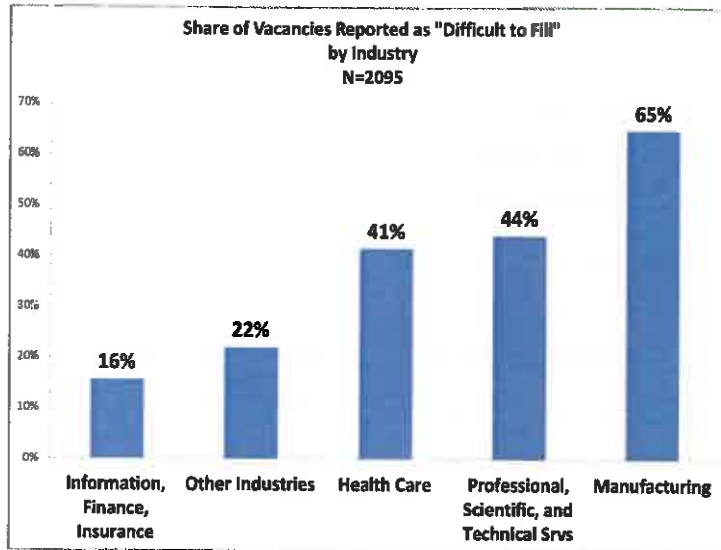
Figure 1



When vacancies are broken down by industry (see Figure 2), the same high concentration—above 50 percent—of hiring difficulties exist in the Manufacturing sector as in Industrial Engineering and Production, occupations almost exclusively found in Manufacturing industries.

Both results point at Manufacturing as the segment of Minnesota’s economy where employers are struggling the most to fill available openings.

Figure 2



Hiring difficulties also varied by region. One out of two or 52 percent of vacancies in Greater Minnesota was hard to fill compared to the Twin Cities Metro Area with 36 percent.

These overall findings about the *magnitude* and *distribution* of hiring difficulties serve as a background to the next section of the article that takes a closer look at the *nature* and *potential causes* of hiring difficulties and, specifically, at the incidence of skills gaps.

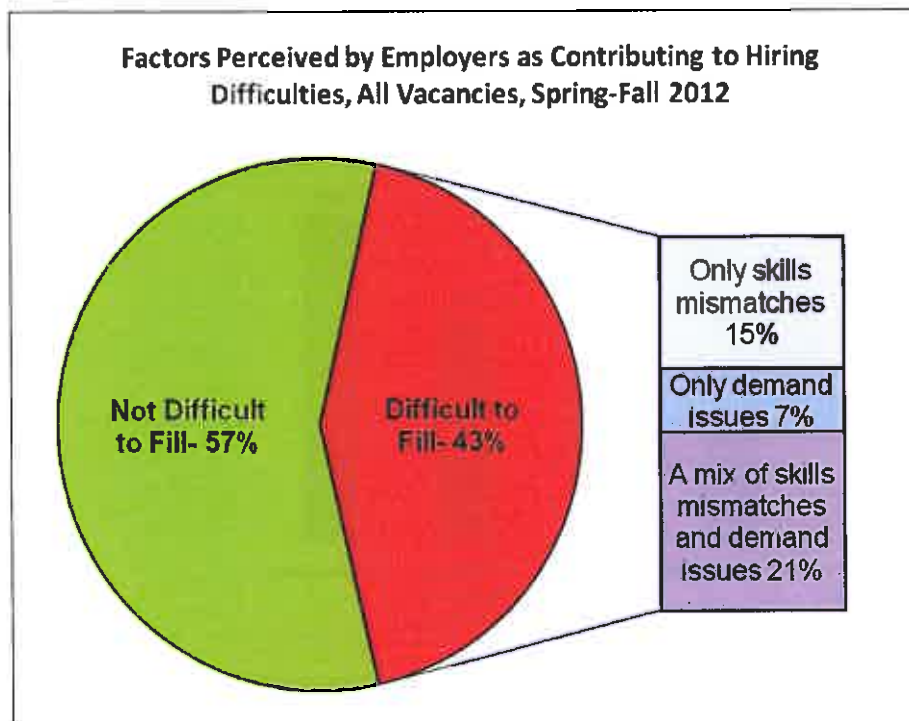
Measuring the skills gap: Employers’ perspectives about potential causes of hiring difficulties

In order to identify hiring difficulties, employers were first asked “Did you have—or are you having—difficulties filling the position?” Next, they were given an opportunity to share their perspectives about why some positions are hard to fill, choosing from two main areas: supply-side factors or demand-side factors.

1. **Supply-Side Factors:** Hiring difficulties caused by a mismatch between job requirements and the *training, skills, and experience* of applicants (true skills mismatches).
2. **Demand-Side Factors:** Hiring difficulties caused by problems that are unrelated to candidates’ qualifications, such as *unattractive work hours, inadequate compensation, geographic location of position, poor image of the firm or industry sector, ineffective recruiting, and so forth*.

While employers reported general hiring difficulties in 43 percent of vacancies, only 15 percent of all vacancies were hard-to-fill exclusively because of skills mismatches (see Figure 3).

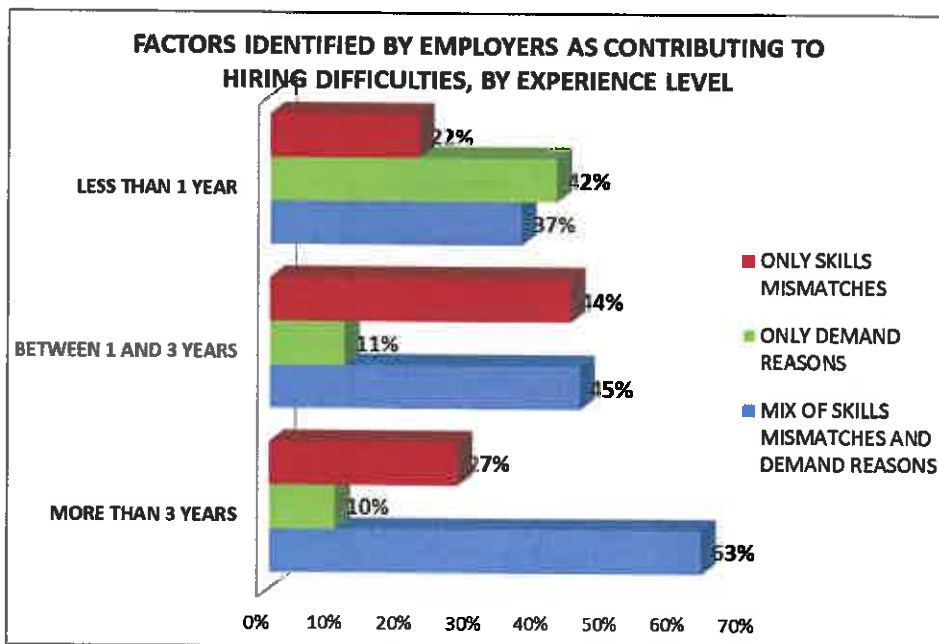
Figure 3



Far more common were hiring difficulties where employers also identified a demand-side problem in conjunction with a supply-side problem. This indicates that skills mismatches rarely occur in isolation from demand-side factors. Least common were hiring difficulties that were attributed exclusively to factors unrelated to the supply of skills.

When responses are broken down by experience level as shown in Figure 4, we notice a high concentration (42 percent) of purely demand-driven hiring difficulties in vacancies requiring less than one year of experience, corresponding to the entry-level job market. When asked to identify the reasons for hiring difficulties in this group of vacancies, employers attributed 40 percent fully or in part to unattractive wages/compensation.

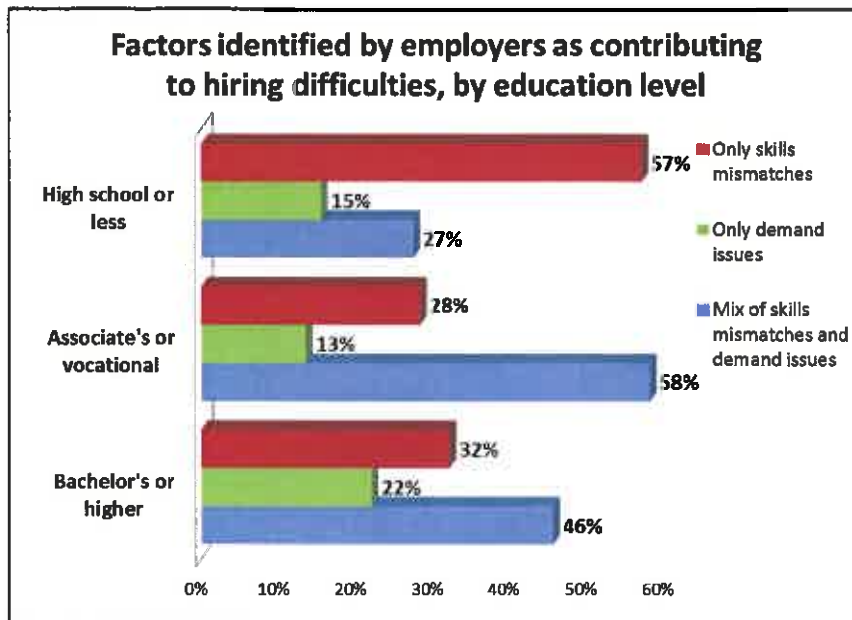
Figure 4



Interestingly, pure skills mismatches were not concentrated in high-experience vacancies as one would have expected, but rather in vacancies requiring intermediate work experience, from one to three years. The difficulties in filling high-experience positions were overwhelmingly caused by a mix of supply and demand issues. A closer look at these cases reveals that 87 percent were caused by the inability to find candidates with specialized skills, yet one-half of these also mentioned location as a contributing factor. This result is a clear demonstration of how supply problems can interact with other issues like geographic mismatches. Some employers feel that attracting experienced workers would be much easier if the firm were located in a different area. An additional and unexpected finding was that Greater Minnesota regions experienced geographic mismatches at rates not much higher than the Metro Area. Some of the locations indicated as “problematic for hiring” were actually in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

Some surprising results also emerge in the distribution of skills mismatches by education level (see Figure 5). In fact, employers were more likely to report skills mismatches as the exclusive reason for hiring difficulties for jobs requiring no post-secondary education (57 percent). On the other end of the spectrum, for positions requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher, pure skills mismatches were cited in just 32 percent of the cases, and demand-side reasons in 22 percent of cases. The implication is that, in general, education level alone is not driving skills mismatches.

Figure 5



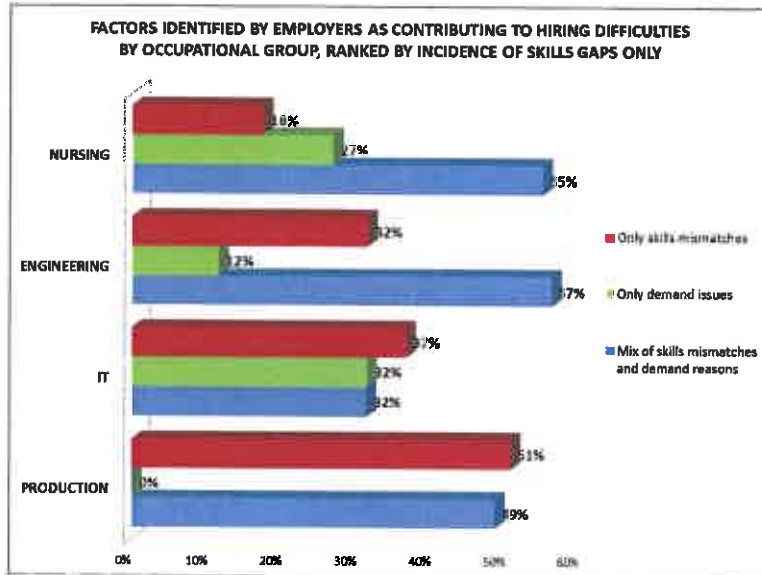
Thus, skills mismatches were sometimes found to be related to inadequate levels of experience, but not to inadequate levels of education. This demonstrates that skills mismatches, as a cause of hiring difficulty, cannot automatically be assumed to be the result of a shortage of skilled workers.

The incidence and characteristics of skills mismatches by occupation

When responses are broken down by occupational group (see Figure 6), three scenarios emerge:

1. Occupations with a low incidence of pure skills mismatches relative to other reasons for hiring difficulties (nursing, with 18 percent);
2. Occupations with a moderate incidence of pure skills mismatches (engineering, 32 percent, and IT, 37 percent);
3. Occupations with a high incidence of pure skill mismatches (production, 51 percent).

Figure 6



It is important to recall that these occupations were intentionally selected precisely because of anecdotal evidence of skills-related hiring difficulties. Therefore, there was a high probability of finding skills gaps in these fields.

Following are the summarized results by occupational group.

NURSING: Low incidence of skills-related hiring difficulties

Among all occupational groups surveyed, Nursing had the lowest incidence of hiring difficulties at 32 percent (see Figure 1). Of that minority, only a small subset (18 percent) were perceived by employers as related exclusively to skills mismatches, while 27 percent were exclusively caused by demand factors, and the remaining 55 percent were driven by a combination of supply and demand factors.

When skills mismatches were cited as a problem, the challenge for employers was finding candidates with experience in a specific role or industry as opposed to more formal education.

The following quotations illustrate this important finding:

- “Candidates had the years of experience as an RN, but their experience was in long-term care facilities not in a hospital, and that’s a different animal.”
- “We sometimes get nurses who work in the home and are not required to do case-management, and thus lack the skills we need to do prompt and efficient paperwork.”

When demand-side factors were cited as the main challenge, undesirable location was most frequently mentioned, followed by substandard wages or compensation, undesirable work

shifts, and competition from other employers to attract the most experienced candidates. Here are a few quotations:

- “From this area people can easily commute to the Metro area or to Rochester where there are a lot of other job opportunities.”
- “Our industry has a much lower wage base than others. So, perhaps the reason we can't get enough applicants is that everybody knows the pay is \$10 a day lower.”
- “We can't compete with places that offer high hiring bonuses.”
- “The position has 10-hour shifts which are tougher to fill.”

Overall, advanced specialty nursing vacancies – which included Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Anesthetists - were much harder to fill than Registered Nurses vacancies. This obvious lack of evidence of a shortage of RNs might be the effect of years of effort by the Healthcare Industry to alert career seekers and educators to potential future shortages as well as a very successful effort on the part of post-secondary institutions in Minnesota to align the supply of nursing graduates with the anticipated industry demand.

INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING: Moderate incidence of skills-related hiring difficulties

As illustrated in Figure 1, one out of two industrial engineering vacancies were reported as hard-to-fill. One out of three hard-to-fill positions was perceived as driven by skills mismatches with no other demand-side factors identified. The overwhelming reason for hiring difficulties, accounting for 57 percent of cases, appears to be a blend of supply and demand factors (see Figure 4).

Employers' comments reveal that finding new graduates in engineering was not a problem for employers. Rather, applicants lacked hyper-specialized experience or a unique blend of skills that could be extremely difficult to find even when plenty of people apply. The following quotations illustrate this point:

- “Hiring entry-level manufacturing engineers is pretty easy, but finding experienced workers is more challenging.”
- “There were enough applicants with the right training, but they did not have the right experience after getting their degree. We were looking for someone with a similar experience with another manufacturer.”
- “We were looking for experience in Atomic Force Microscopy.”
- “We always have difficulties filling this position because we require specific experience in test engineering in the electronics industry. There might be total of 150 qualified people in the Midwest! Training these people internally is a big investment for a company, that's why there are so few qualified candidates.”

The difficulty in Engineering seems primarily one of matching the experience requirements of a vacancy with the experience profile of those who apply. Unfortunately, this match is hard to

achieve even through additional years of training or experience if that additional training is not specifically tailored around the needs of a particular industry or even an individual employer. That's probably why some employers prefer to hire engineering candidates with work-based experience such as internships.

Other recruiting difficulties stemmed from substandard wages, undesirable geographic locations, or lack of candidates interested in the type of work¹.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: Moderate incidence of skills-related hiring difficulties

As illustrated in Figure 1, hiring difficulties impacted only 37 percent of vacancies in IT occupations. Of that minority, the reasons for the difficulties were fairly evenly split between those exclusively from skills deficiencies (37 percent); those exclusively from unattractive demand or other factors (32 percent); and those from a mix of skills deficiencies and unattractive demand (31 percent).

In IT as in engineering, the main supply-side problem was work experience and—importantly—the skills obtained through that experience.

- “The applicant pool with IT positions is often very small because people tend to have more of a general skill set compared to the specialized skill set that we need.”
- “It is hard to find people with Mainframe skills (older skills like COBOL that are no longer taught). Also, many people with skills aren't interested in working with older technologies.”
- “Low unemployment in the IT field creates a lot of competition, therefore—despite the huge response to the ads—we are not getting the right type of candidate. We are either getting candidates with too much experience (overqualified) or zero experience.”
- “We're looking for someone with specific technical skills and experience in Window Installer, Install, Shield, visual Studio, and familiarity with image editing. We haven't been able to find anyone who has all of those.”

The tendency to set very stringent qualification requirements in the IT field is mainly the result of rapid technological changes and the consequent proliferation of technological platforms that, once adopted by a firm, must be maintained by professionals with hyper-specialized knowledge or experience (Java versus .NET, for example). As new IT graduates learn the most advanced technologies, and seasoned employees trained in “niche” technologies or even in technologies that are becoming obsolete, start to retire, employers face the problem of maintaining legacy systems that newly minted grads may not have learned or may not be interested in working with compared to newer technological platforms. However, sometimes

¹ One quotation illustrates this point: “People want to do development engineering, which is very different from manufacturing engineering. So it's hard to find people who want to do this work.”

employers can deliberately set very stringent qualification requirements because the candidate pool is large enough that they can be particular. Here is a quotation from a respondent who did not report any hiring difficulties with their IT positions:

“With our IT positions, we get such a large applicant pool that we can get exactly what we’re looking for in terms of preferential experience.”

Formal education, while often preferred, was not generally considered absolutely necessary in IT vacancies. Fourteen percent of IT vacancies included in the survey did not require any formal education at all. Often, specific skill sets and previous work experience were much more important to the employer than the degree of formal credentials.

Where other issues besides skills mismatches were indicated as a challenge, the primary ones were non-competitive wages, low mobility of the workforce, and lack of interest in the nature of the work. The following quotations illustrate these challenges.

- “We pay under-market, and we tend to make that up with bonuses but that doesn't seem to be a solution for that role. “
- “The unemployment rate in IT jobs is very low. People are still concerned about the economy and stay at their jobs. So people who have skills and experience needed for this position are not moving.”
- “More women need to be encouraged to enter the IT field to increase the pool of available candidates.”
- “This organization doesn't focus specifically on software engineering, and many people want to work for more innovative firms.”

Strategies such as making IT workplaces more attractive to new STEM graduates (especially women), creating incentives for seasoned employees to stay with the firm, and producing frequently updated career information that advises candidates on in-demand skill sets could be effective ways of addressing some of these problems.

PRODUCTION: High incidence of skills-related hiring difficulties

Hiring difficulties were substantially more prevalent in Production occupations, which included Machinist, CNC Machinist, and Computer-Control Machine Tool Operators. Two out of three vacancies or 68 percent were reported as hard-to-fill (see Figure 1), and skills mismatches alone affected one half of cases. Unique to Production occupations is the absence of demand-side factors cited as the only reason for recruiting difficulties. As previously mentioned (see Figure 4), surveyed Manufacturing employers attributed all hiring difficulties in these occupations to supply issues, either alone or in combination with demand issues.

When demand-side factors were cited as a problem, location² was the biggest barrier, followed by non-competitive wages and undesirable work shifts. The following quotations from respondents illustrate these points:

- “There aren’t many people with the required skills and education in this county, so location contributes to our hiring difficulties. There are some qualified people three counties away, but who knows if they are willing to relocate?”
- “Firms steal people from other firms, competing on wage.”
- “We’ve always offered good benefits here, but apparently people are more interested in the pay than in benefits. We might consider offering more money and less benefits.”
- “The job market for machinists is very competitive. There aren’t that many out there compared to demand so they can be choosy on where they want to work and the days/hours of work.”
- “It’s hard to get someone with that level of experience to work on a weekend.”

When supply-side factors were cited as a problem, three main issues emerged: inadequate experience of applicants, inadequate training of applicants, and/or overall low number of applicants for Production openings. Below are some illustrative comments from respondents:

- “Applicants had training, but no practical experience on our machines.”
- “There are trade schools (2-year program for machining) where the lowest level machinist comes from. In our area there aren’t enough qualified machinists because they are being pulled by other machine shops. So we recently started an apprenticeship program to recruit people with some sort of mechanical background and put them through 6-8 weeks of training. We’ll continue running those programs until we get enough people. There is really no end in sight.”
- “At the high school level, students are being pushed to go to a 4-year college program, losing sight of the need for vocational programs.”
- “There are not enough applicants. Blue collar work—factory work—is not what people want. They don’t want to go to school to learn the trades.”

To summarize, employers labeled as skills mismatches the difficulties they encountered when trying to fit the specific experience requirements of a job with the experience profile of candidates. Unfortunately this match is hard to achieve even when supply of qualified labor is abundant. Additionally, the emphasis given to industry-specific experience is bad news for the long-term unemployed, especially if their previous job was in a shrinking industry. The lack of

² Location can be problematic either because rural areas are hard to commute to or because semi-urban areas have a high concentration of manufacturers that compete for the same candidate pool.

workforce attachment can seriously prevent candidates from demonstrating the relevance of their skills and cannot simply be compensated by holding the right educational credentials.

How serious a problem do skills gaps represent, and what are employers doing about it?

If the impact of skills gaps is severe, we would expect a high proportion of those skills-related, hard-to-fill vacancies to remain unfilled at the time the survey was conducted - typically two to five months after the position was posted. What we see, instead, is that 61 percent were successfully filled, suggesting that most skills mismatches were only a temporary challenge.

When asked which strategies they would use or are already using to respond to hiring difficulties, employers volunteered the following suggestions:

- **Make demand more attractive:** Offer wages or benefits that are more aligned with competitors; offer more flexible work hours and telecommuting options.
- **Enhance internal training:** Establish an apprenticeship program; find more effective ways of training internally such as longer orientations, mentorship programs, or on-the-job training so that a new hire without all of the desired qualifications can be brought up to speed.
- **Make qualification requirements less stringent:** Look at transferable skills rather than hyper-specialized skills; reduce the number of years of experience required.
- **Collaborate with high schools and technical colleges:** Establish student internship programs to build a pool of pre-qualified candidates.
- **Improve recruiting and retention strategies:** Recruit new grads from local colleges or advertise on alumni websites; use social media, such as LinkedIn, to attract workers who did not apply for the job; improve internal employee retention so that experienced workers are not lost to other firms.

Enhancing internal training and collaborating with education institutions were the most frequently mentioned strategies, because employers recognize their value. The benefit of partnering with local schools appears to be particularly critical in out-state Minnesota³.

In conclusion, skills gaps are often just the tip of the iceberg of a much broader and more intricate set of factors. There is a need for targeted interventions at various levels of the education system to allow early exposure to careers in skilled trades. Such exposure will increase student interest in technical vocational degrees. Equally important is the role employers can play to improve access for students and job-seekers to work-based learning opportunities that develop the most needed skills.

³ One respondent who experienced hiring difficulties commented: "We think it might help to utilize some of our education partners and target schools to see if they have students that are interested in applying. Since part of the issue is our location (hard to get people to relocate or travel) it might help to target the schools in the area."

Matching Workers with Registered Nurse Openings: Are Skills Scarce?

A new DEED study found that a lack of skilled candidates is a small factor in the inability of employers to fill openings for registered nurses. Unfavorable characteristics related to the job, firm or industry and geographic mismatches are often bigger contributors to hiring challenges in the field.

Skills mismatches occur when there is a gap between supply and demand for a particular skill, resulting in unfilled job vacancies and significantly slower hiring. Where skill gaps do, in fact, result in inadequate staffing, additional workforce training or education could spur economic growth. There are other reasons, however, that vacancies may go unfilled, including factors unrelated to the candidate pool such as uncompetitive compensation packages, ineffective recruitment strategies and unattractive job requirements.

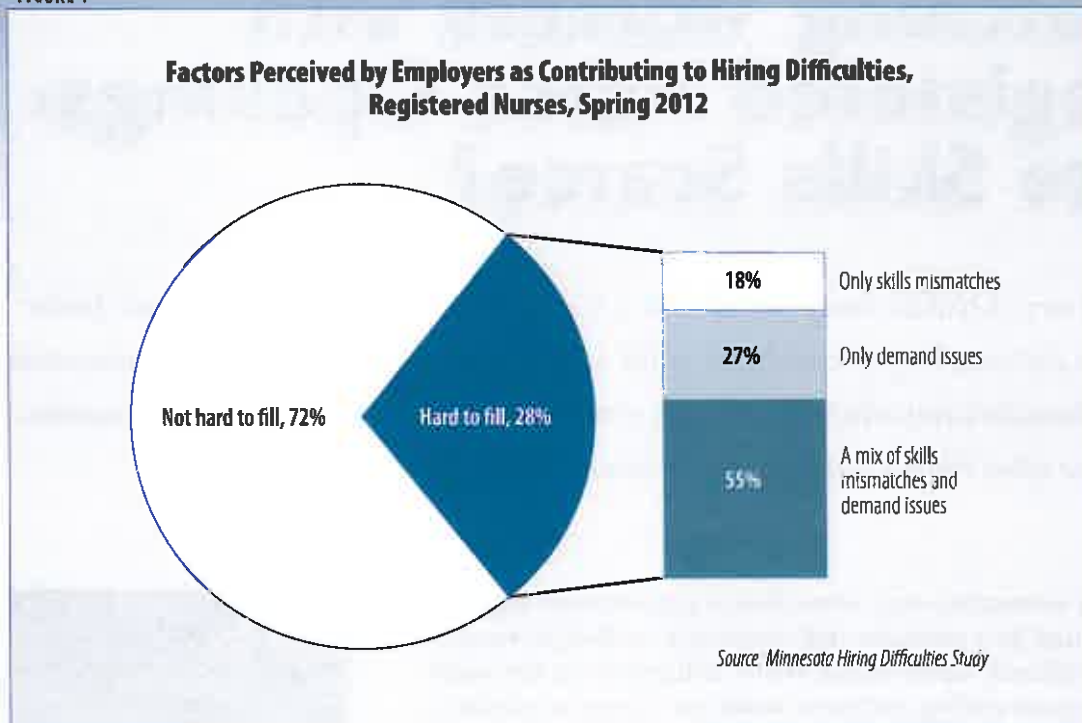
Where skills are scarce we expect to see hiring difficulties across a variety of industries, regions, and job characteristics for vacancies within the same occupation. Moreover, we would expect jobs requiring more skills and experience to be harder to fill overall than entry-level jobs within the same occupation.

DEED's Hiring Difficulties Survey last fall looked at employers' perceptions of hiring difficulties by occupation and compared them with a variety of firm and job characteristics. Six occupations were chosen based on available anecdotal evidence of hiring difficulties. This article, focusing on survey findings for the registered nurse (RN) occupation, is the first in a series of reports on different occupations.

A summary report on the first round, including findings for all nine occupations surveyed, is available on the DEED website at www.tinyurl.com/HiringDifficultiesStudy.



FIGURE 1



Are Nursing Positions Hard to Fill?

In order to identify hiring difficulties, employers were first asked the following question: “Did you have/Are you having difficulties filling the position?” Those who reported difficulties were asked to identify the reasons. Was hiring difficulty driven by a lack of training, skills or experience of applicants or demand factors unrelated to the candidate pool, including unattractive work hours, wages or geographic location?

As illustrated in Figure 1, 28 percent of RN vacancies were reported as hard to fill during second quarter 2012. This section will focus on this group of RN vacancies.

According to the human resource professionals who were interviewed, skills deficiencies rarely occur in isolation from demand-side factors. Of the hard-to-fill vacancies, only 18 percent fell into this category exclusively because candidates did not have the qualifications required. The majority, 55

percent, fell into this category due to a combination of skills mismatches and unattractive demand characteristics.

Moreover, when skills mismatches were cited as a problem, employers cited insufficient experience in a specific role or industry rather than insufficient formal education in the candidate pool. The following quotes illustrate this finding:

- “Candidates had the years of experience as an RN, but their experience was in long-term care facilities, not in a hospital, and that’s a different animal.”
- “We sometimes get nurses who work in the home and are not required to do case-management, and thus lack the skills we need to do prompt and efficient paperwork.”
- “Dialysis and ICU experience are hard to find.”

If the problem is a mismatch between the experience requirements of vacancies and the experience profile of the candidate pool, the solution is not more schooling but more cross-functional work-based learning to increase the transferability of skills.

When demand-side factors were cited as a problem, undesirable location was most frequently mentioned, followed by uncompetitive wages or compensation in general, work shifts and competition from other employers who invest more resources in attracting candidates. The following quotes illustrate this point:

- “From this area people can easily commute to the metro area or to Rochester where there are a lot of other job opportunities.”
- “We are located in a rural area and it is hard to get people to relocate.”
- “Some candidates do not like having to drive to see patients.”
- “Our industry has a much lower wage base than others. So perhaps the reason we can’t get enough applicants is that everybody knows the pay is \$10-a-day lower.”
- “We can’t compete with places that offer high hiring bonuses.”
- “The position has 10-hour shifts, which are tougher to fill.”
- “Every few years, when hospitals start hiring, we have a hard time filling nurse positions. We’ve lost a lot of our nurses to hospitals.”

Recruiters are very much aware of what else could be done to improve the quantity and quality of the

applicant pool. In fact, the strategies they’ve used in the past, and plan to use if hiring difficulties persist, address precisely these issues. Here are some insightful ideas collected from respondents:

- **Rethink the experience requirements of the position:** Are they truly necessary? Can we loosen them?
- **Rethink the staffing mix:** Can we start hiring staff who are cross-trained so we have a number of people who can take some of the responsibilities of the position while we train the new hire?
- **Rethink shifts and schedules:** Can we spread the least attractive shifts across more positions in the unit so that one person does not have to handle too many of them?
- **Rethink recruitment strategies:** Can we offer hiring bonuses to talented applicants or referral bonuses to our staff? Can we recruit from local schools or from organizations that are affiliated with the type of care we are delivering?¹



TABLE 1

Incidence of Hiring Difficulties in RN Vacancies by Firm and Job Characteristics, Spring 2012 ¹		
Factor	Categories	% Hard to fill
Location of Firm**	Metro area	22
	Greater Minnesota	34
Size of Firm**	Small: Fewer than 50 employees	1
	Medium: 50 to 249 employees	52
	Large: 250 or more employees	30
Industry of Firm**	NAICS 621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	27
	NAICS 622 Hospitals	37
	NAICS 623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	47
	Industries outside of health care	7
Job Experience Requirements**	No experience required (entry-level)	47
	Experience of less than three years	19
	More than three years of experience	60
Job Education Requirements*	Associate degree	27
	Bachelor's degree	34
** strong factor * weak factor		
¹ The model was able to correctly predict the presence (or absence) of a hiring difficulty in 84 percent of survey data, with a Nagelkerke R Square of .526. The following variables were included in the model: geography (six Planning Regions), firm size, industry, experience, education and interactions between industry and experience level.		

Source: Minnesota Hiring Difficulties Study

Most hiring difficulties did not prevent employers from successfully hiring. Fifty-six percent of positions reported as hard to fill were successfully filled by the time the interviews were conducted, about three to eight months after the job was posted.

Overall, survey results suggest that the difficulties employers face in finding adequately prepared candidates are strongly dependent on demand characteristics.² The next section of the article explores these demand characteristics and their ability to explain hiring difficulties.

Underlying Causes of Hiring Difficulties

Table 1 categorizes firm and job factors associated with hiring difficulties as determined by the actual explanatory power they show when they are included in a model that predicts the probability of a vacancy being hard to fill. This analysis of 893 estimated RN vacancies reveals that factors such as firm location, firm size and industry strongly affect the probability of a job being hard to fill.

Hiring Difficulties Survey Quick Facts

Data collection method: in-depth phone interviews with employers who reported RN vacancies as part of the Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey, second quarter 2012.

- 100 establishments with 893 RN vacancies responded, representing a 78 percent response rate.
- Data collected for each establishment: geographic location, industry classification, employment size.
- Data collected for each job vacancy: number of openings, experience level, education level, part-time status.
- Survey questions for the measurement of hiring difficulties:

1. Did you have/are you having difficulties filling this position?

**2. If yes, are these statements true or not for this position?
(Check all that apply.)**

- a) There weren't enough applicants with the right type of education or training.
- b) There weren't enough applicants with the right skills, knowledge, or experience.
- c) The hiring difficulty was related to the wage being offered.
- d) The hiring difficulty was related to the geographic location of the work.
- e) The hiring difficulty was related to the hours or shifts of work.

The effect of each factor is explained below.

Geographic location: The data show that the probability of a job being hard to fill increases by a factor of 8 in Greater Minnesota compared with the metro area.

Firm size: The probability of a job being hard to fill increases by a factor of 4 in midsized firms compared with large firms. Large health care establishments definitely have a recruiting advantage because they can advertise more, offer higher wages and learning opportunities, as well as hiring bonuses and other incentives to relocate. So firm size appears to be a proxy for compensation and other aspects that make a vacancy more or less attractive to applicants.

Industry: Results show that, compared with jobs in nursing care facilities, the probability of a vacancy being hard to fill

decreases to almost zero (.04) if it occurs in ambulatory services or in industries outside of health care, and to one-third (.38) in hospitals. Although the effect of wage offers on hiring difficulties could not be measured,³ wage might be one of the reasons some industries are experiencing significantly more hiring difficulties than others. For example, long-term care facilities may have difficulty attracting and retaining nurses in part because they are not reimbursed at the same rates as hospitals and cannot always offer competitive wages. But compensation is not the only issue. Industry captures other underlying factors that influence a nurse's choice of where to work, including schedules, types of patients served, career development opportunities, etc. For example, ambulatory surgery centers might be less likely to experience hiring difficulties because of lower stress levels and no night, holiday or weekend shifts.

Entry-level versus experienced jobs: The probability of a job being hard to fill drops to one-seventh (.14) if the job requires intermediate or high experience compared with no experience. Besides ambulatories and industries outside of health care, where high experience vacancies were fewer and harder to fill than others, nursing positions requiring experience generally are easier to fill than those requiring no experience. This finding undermines the argument of a skills gap in the RN occupation in that we would expect to see an increase in hiring difficulty in vacancies requiring higher levels of skill (including experience). It is important to note that employers are, in general, reluctant to train entry-level nurses because it entails additional resources including staff time of experienced RNs. It appears that many employers look for experienced candidates to fill even entry-level positions, which



may explain some of the hiring difficulty associated with entry level RN positions.

Associate degree versus bachelor's degree jobs:

Post-secondary education and licensure are absolute requirements for work in the RN field. Therefore, the education system plays an essential role in ensuring an adequate supply of new nursing graduates to meet growing levels of demand. Although some employers prefer a bachelor's over an associate degree, most look only at the RN license. Therefore, adding years of education beyond a license may not ease hiring difficulties. This finding provides evidence against a widespread skills gap for RNs.⁴

Conclusions

Poor supply of skills is the root cause of only a small fraction of hiring difficulties in the RN occupation. The quantitative analysis reveals a multitude of potential causes that, at a minimum, cautions against drawing conclusions about talent shortages. Hiring difficulties

definitely occur, but they seem to be driven primarily by less-than-attractive job, firm or industry characteristics and location mismatches (demand-side factors), rather than by the lack of available occupational skills in the workforce. Quantitative evidence is also consistent with employers' perceptions of a complex mix of contributing factors. Because experience is such an important component of RN skills, both job seekers and employers have a role to play in closing the skills gap. Job seekers may be well guided to take less than ideal jobs in order to obtain experience. On the other hand, employers who do not offer meaningful development opportunities to their nursing workforce are at risk of losing the talent race. If the goal is to match workforce skills with employers' needs, both sides will have to adjust their expectations and commit to work-based learning. **■**



¹One respondent who experienced hiring difficulties commented: "We think it might help to utilize some of our education partners and target schools to see if they have students that are interested in applying. Since part of the issue is our location (hard to get people to relocate or travel), it might help to target the schools in the area."

²The difficulties firms face in finding an adequate candidate pool also appear to be driven, in part, by ineffective recruiting strategies and by historically low geographic mobility of the workforce as a consequence of the real estate crash, but these aspects go beyond the scope of our survey.

³The effect of wage offers could not be measured because most employers can increase or decrease it as a response to anticipated market conditions. Thus, it is simultaneously a cause and an effect of hiring difficulties.

⁴This article focuses on registered nurses. Other nursing occupations requiring schooling beyond a bachelor's degree (nurse anesthetists and nurse practitioners) were not included in the analysis.

Hiring Difficulties Study: Information Technology

DEED's Hiring Difficulties Study looks at select occupations to determine why employers may or may not be having difficulty filling open positions. The first round of the study last fall looked at six occupations.

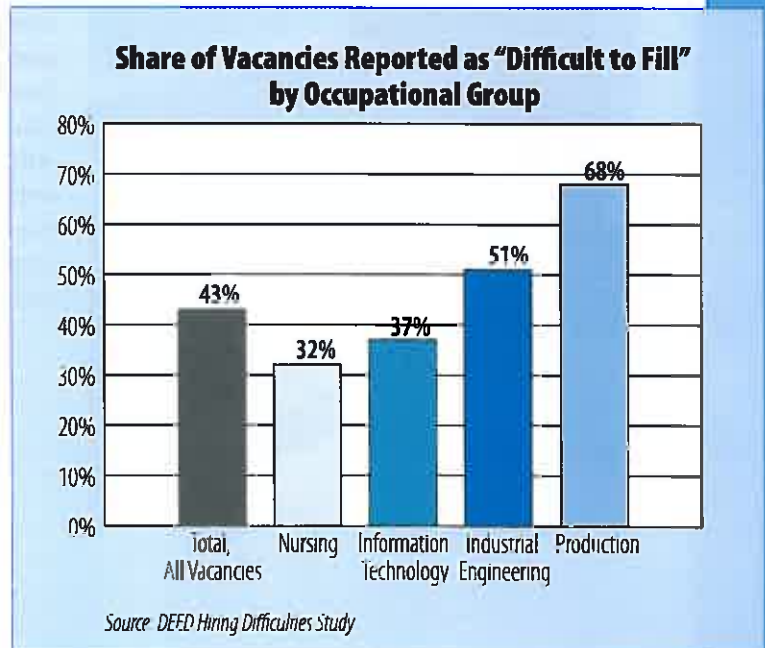
In the latest round, employers were asked about their experiences filling jobs in information technology (IT). Previously, results were obtained for certain engineering, nursing and production occupations. Figure 1 shows the percentage of positions in those fields that were considered difficult to fill by employers.

Hiring difficulties impacted 37 percent of vacancies in IT occupations. The reasons for the difficulties were fairly equally split between those due exclusively to skills deficiencies (37 percent), exclusively to unattractive demand such as uncompetitive wages or other factors (32 percent), or a mix of skills deficiencies and unattractive demand (31 percent).

IT employers said the main supply-side problem was work experience and, importantly, the skills obtained through that experience. The following quotes from employers illustrate that point:

- "It is hard to find people with mainframe skills [older skills like COBOL that are no longer taught]. Also, many people with skills aren't interested in working with older technologies."
 - "Low unemployment in the IT field creates a lot of competition, therefore — despite the huge response to the ads — we are not getting the right type of candidate. We are either getting candidates with too much experience [overqualified] or zero experience."
 - "We're looking for someone with specific technical skills and experience in Window Installer, Install, Shield, Visual Studio, and familiarity with image editing. We haven't been able to find anyone who has all of those."
- "The applicant pool ... is often very small because people tend to have more of a general skill set compared to the specialized skill set that we need."

FIGURE 1



The tendency to set stringent qualification requirements in the IT field is mainly the result of rapid technological changes and the proliferation of technological platforms that, once adopted by a firm, must be maintained by professionals with hyper-specialized knowledge or experience (Java versus .NET, for example).

As new IT graduates learn the most advanced technologies and seasoned employees trained in “niche” systems — or even in technologies that are becoming obsolete — start to retire, employers face the problem of maintaining legacy systems that new graduates might not have learned or might not be interested in working

While formal education is often preferred, it is not generally considered absolutely necessary in IT. Fourteen percent of IT vacancies included in the survey required no formal education. Often, specific skill sets and previous work experience were more important to the employer than the degree of formal credentials. The most common degrees employers preferred were computer science or management information systems.


Survey Quick Facts for IT Occupations

- Period: Based on vacancies open during fall of 2012
- Response rate: 70 percent (122 establishments with 559 estimated vacancies responded to the phone survey).
- Occupations surveyed: software developers (systems software), software developers (applications), computer user support specialists, computer network support specialists.



with compared to newer technological platforms. Sometimes, however, employers can deliberately set stringent qualification requirements because the candidate pool is large enough that they can be particular.

Where other issues besides skills mismatches were indicated, the primary challenges were non-competitive wages, low mobility of the workforce and lack of interest in the nature of the work. Strategies such as making IT workplaces more attractive to women, creating incentives for seasoned employees to stay with the firm, and producing career information that advises candidates on in-demand skill sets could be effective ways of addressing some of these problems.

More details about the study and its findings are at www.tinyurl.com/HiringDifficultiesStudy. 

Hiring Difficulties in the Manufacturing Sector

With two-thirds of manufacturing vacancies in the state classified as hard to fill, employers are getting creative in their search for workers, including training new hires internally.

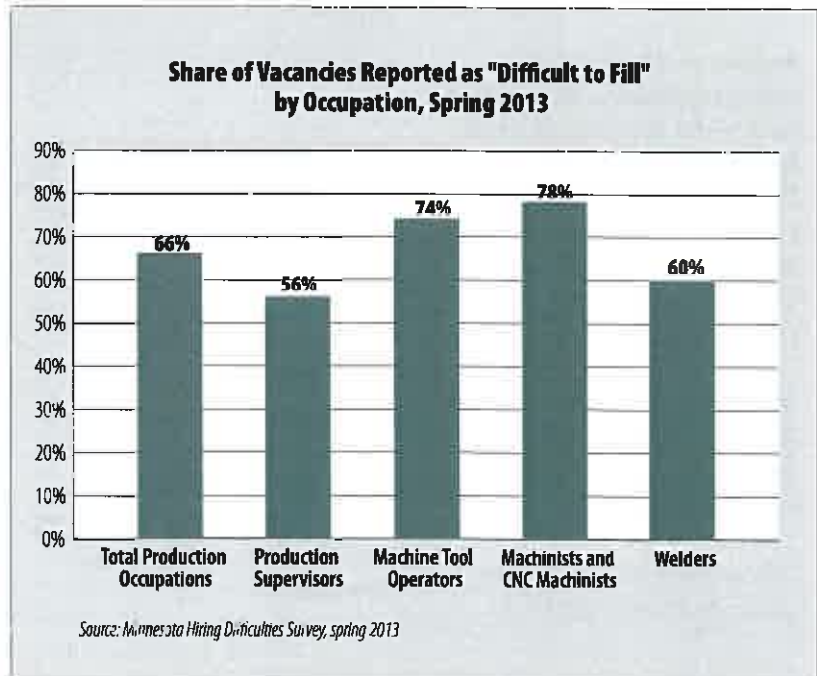
Hiring difficulties persist in the manufacturing sector. Based on results from the spring 2013 round of the Minnesota Hiring Difficulties Survey, two-thirds of the industry's positions were hard to fill, virtually unchanged from the 68 percent reported in spring 2012. Machinist jobs were the hardest positions to fill at 78 percent, followed by machine tool operators (see Figure 1).

Turnover is one reason for persistent hiring difficulties: 84 percent of production vacancies experienced turnover during the last two years for reasons unrelated to retirements or internal job transfers. Supervisors had the lowest turnover at 54 percent, while machinists had the highest at 100 percent.

Most hiring difficulties were only temporary. In fact, 68 percent

of hard-to-fill positions were filled within four months of the posting date. When employers were asked how satisfied they were with the qualifications of the people they hired, the response was "very satisfied" in 65 percent of the cases, "somewhat satisfied" in 20 percent of the cases, and "not satisfied" in only 15 percent of the cases.

FIGURE 1



Employer Perceptions About Skills Gaps

Hiring difficulties are not synonymous with skills gaps. When employers were asked to identify the causes of their hiring difficulties, only 14 percent of cases were attributed exclusively to the lack of skilled applicants for current vacancies. The majority of hiring difficulties (31 percent) were caused by a mix of skills mismatches and other reasons (see Figure 2). Demand conditions alone accounted for 26 percent of hiring difficulties, while 28 percent were attributed exclusively to candidates' lack of work ethic or interest in a manufacturing career. Lack of work ethic and motivation are not skills gaps, but they can make a candidate unattractive in a setting where everyone is expected to arrive on time and work as a team.¹

Another problem was not enough applicants: 70 percent of hard-to-fill positions attracted fewer than 10 applicants. Employers said low supply is a result of declining interest in skilled production as a career track. The following quotes from employers illustrate this point:

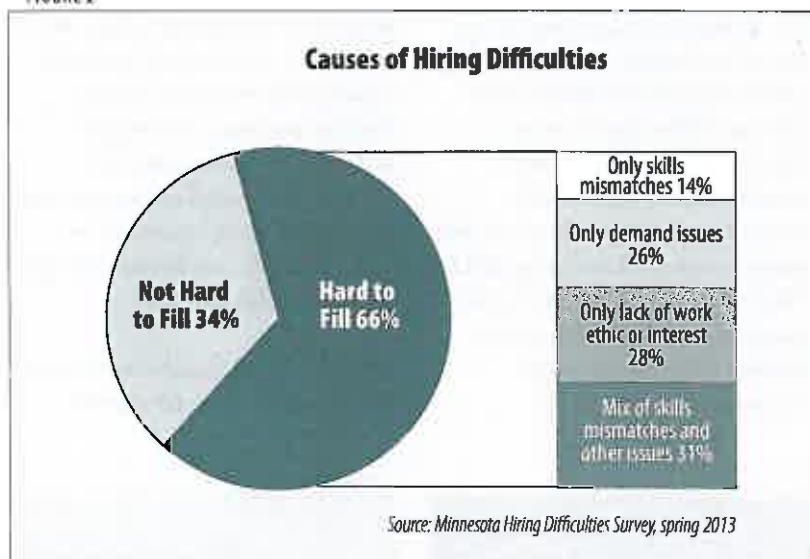
"Interest in welding has gone down. And we can train people on the job only if they have the interest in pursuing welding as a career."

"Not as many people choose this career. And it takes a while to

Hiring Difficulties Survey Quick Facts

- Data collection methods In-depth phone interviews with employers who reported vacancies in production occupations as part of the Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Spring 2013
- 59 establishments responded for a 78.7 percent response rate.

FIGURE 2



become a qualified machinist, so even if you complete the right vocational degree, then you have got to come in as an apprentice somewhere and you've got to be willing to stay in the field and get educated."

"The colleges are just responding to demand from high school, and with no demand for machining, programming or setups, there is no incentive for the colleges to offer those classes."

The lack of long-term commitment in new hires discourages firms from offering on-the-job training and post-secondary institutions from offering more classes in these fields. It also leads to fierce competition among manufacturers for qualified candidates and some reluctance to invest in internal skills formation for fear of losing skilled workers to competitors.

When demand factors were cited as primary barriers in recruiting, undesirable geographic location topped the list followed by uncompetitive wages and inconvenient work shifts. These factors are often interrelated as qualified candidates are unwilling to work for firms located in low-wage regions, especially if working hours are long and inflexible. Here is how respondents described these challenges:

"It's a combination of location and compensation, because to induce a candidate to relocate you've got to offer them comparable wages to what they are making in their current location. Often they are in the Twin Cities, and we can't bring them in that high without offsetting our own compensation program."

"We are not competitive [in terms of wage]."

"The job is not that specialized. It's more about the work ethic, the willingness to work from 10 to 14 hours a day, the willingness to live in a small town and the low pay."

Failing to account for these factors may lead employers and policymakers to misdiagnose the problem of hiring difficulties as a lack of qualifications alone — skills gaps — and to prescribe policy responses that address the symptoms rather than the real causes of hiring difficulties.

TABLE 1

Comparison of Hard-to-Fill and Not-Hard-to-Fill Vacancies by Firm and Job Characteristics		
Factor	Categories	% Hard to fill
Firm Location	Metro Area	35%
	Greater Minnesota	79%
Firm Size	Small: Less than 50 employees	76%
	Medium: 50–249 employees	68%
	Large: 250 or more employees	41%
Experience Requirements	No experience required	64%
	Experience of less than three years	58%
	More than three years of experience	79%
Education Requirements	High School	69%
	Associate or Vocational	64%
	Bachelor's	35%
Training Indicator	Yes, the firm offered training	61%
	No, the firm did not offer training	82%

*Training is defined as any of the following: structured on-the-job training, apprenticeship or internship, off-the-job training and tuition reimbursement for classroom training.

The model was able to correctly predict the presence (or absence) of a hiring difficulty in 89 percent of cases, with a Nagelkerke R Square of .602. The following variables were included in the model: region (metro versus Greater Minnesota), firm size, educational level, experience level, occupation, and an indicator of whether the firm offered structured training to new hires or incumbent workers over the last 12 months.

Source: Minnesota Hiring Difficulties Survey, spring 2013

When skills mismatches were cited as a problem alone or together with demand factors, the reasons mentioned were consistent with survey responses collected in 2012. Applicants have either inadequate hands-on training or inadequate experience. These gaps are best filled through employer-provided training, as the following quote illustrates:

"We are looking for a mixed skills set: good mechanical aptitude, physical energy, and the ability to set up and operate a multi-axis lathe. You can't come out of school and be able to run these machines. It's a skill usually built through mentorship programs in companies that stay current with technology. Some people can pick it up after three to five years, others after a decade."

Firm and Job Characteristics Drive Hiring Difficulties

The previous section looked at employer perceptions of the causes of hiring difficulties. In this section we analyze the impact of firm and job characteristics on hiring difficulties. Factors such as firm location, firm size and educational requirement of the vacancy have the strongest influence on the probability of a vacancy being hard to fill (see Table 1).

The influence of each factor is explained below.

Firm location: Seventy-nine percent of production vacancies in Greater Minnesota were hard to fill compared with 35 percent in the Twin Cities. Distance from the metro area and rural/urban divide alone do not explain this difference. As shown in Figure 3, central Minnesota — densely populated and closest to the Twin Cities — experienced significantly more hiring difficulties (90 percent) compared with remote northwestern Minnesota (52 percent). The explanation is probably that firms in central Minnesota experience competition from both local and Twin Cities manufacturers.

Firm size: Vacancies were much more likely to be hard-to-fill in small and medium-

sized firms (fewer than 250 employees) compared with large firms (250 and over). Small manufacturing firms are clearly at a disadvantage compared with large firms when recruiting.

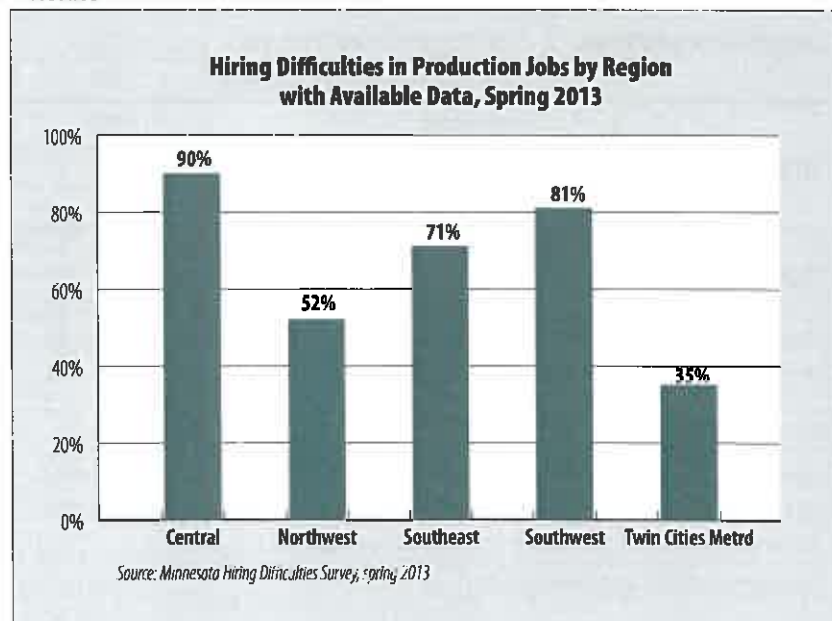
Delivery of training: Eighty-two percent of firms that did not offer structured training had difficulties filling production vacancies compared with 61 percent that did offer training. A possible explanation is that firms that lack the capacity to deliver training to new hires probably also lack the flexibility to hire inexperienced candidates.

Education and experience level: Hiring difficulties were much more common in vacancies requiring a high school degree (69 percent hard to fill) compared with those requiring post-secondary education. Only



PHOTO COURTESY CSU MAY

FIGURE 3





29 percent of the high-school vacancies, however, were truly entry-level, requiring neither education nor experience (see Figure 4), while 71 percent required more than one year of related work experience at a minimum.

Expecting high-school educated external candidates to bring a mid-level skill set clearly presents a challenge for employers, especially after the disappearance of machine shop classes from K-12. This is one reason some firms are going back to a strategy of building skills and promoting from within as an alternative to hiring for mid-level skills. The decision to develop skills internally or buy from outside through new hires is often dictated by the tightness of the labor market.

Employer Responses to Hiring Difficulties

Figure 5 illustrates the actions taken by employers who reported difficulties filling production vacancies.

The most popular response, adopted in 64 percent of the cases, is changing advertising or recruiting methods, which is low cost and effective in the short term. The most remarkable survey finding is the high share of firms (40 percent) that increased training for new hires. As the labor market tightens and competition among firms for qualified workers increases, employers are clearly more willing to hire inexperienced candidates and address their skills gaps through training, indicating a shift from a “buying” to a “making” approach to skills.

Internal training often requires a change in roles and work practices that does not come without resistance. As one HR professional said:

“I am trying to convince the plant manager to train the supervisors better. They have the bad habit of providing some cursory training and throwing them out there. Sometimes training by ‘trial by fire’ is the way to go, but not necessarily. The supervisors become frustrated early because they don’t know what they’re doing and aren’t sure how to get the help, and occasionally they’ll leave. They also should not expect

a recently promoted supervisor to supervise 100 people perfectly. We should give them tools they need to do their job well: classes, schooling, whatever.”

In 30 percent of the cases, employers attempted to make their vacancy more attractive by raising the wage or improving benefits. This is indicative of employer awareness of the role demand factors play in causing hiring difficulties. In another 17 percent of cases, employers partnered with schools for curriculum development, internships or sponsorship programs to help students pay for schooling.

According to respondents, strategies that combine internal training and partnerships with colleges are particularly effective because they facilitate the transition from school to work and help build the future pipeline of qualified workers. The following are three of the many success stories that employers shared during the interviews:

“We have a successful internship program whereby we pay a generous portion of tuition for students, and they can work here part time and also go to school. Many of them end up working full time after they graduate, and that’s how we get most of our machining positions filled.”

“Last year this company had 120 percent turnover over the summer.

This year we are at 35 percent thanks to better hiring standards followed by better training for new hires. We're one of the few companies willing to lower the experience requirements and train new hires as machine operators. We created an apprenticeship program through the local technical college. Students complete the two-year degree over four years while working for us full time and we pay for everything including their books."

"We partner with schools offering programs in machining and welding. Local manufacturers hold regular meetings to offer feedback on curriculum design."

In these and other cases, Minnesota employers and schools are developing innovative partnerships that are helping to strengthen the entire manufacturing sector.²

Training

Thirty percent of firms reported no training needs for incumbent workers. Of the 70 percent that identified gaps in their current workforces, work-related experience was most often cited, consistent with the types of gaps cited in job candidates. Interestingly, respondents also emphasized the need for more cross-training rather than occupation-specific training. While post-secondary educational institutions have a role to play by providing

FIGURE 4

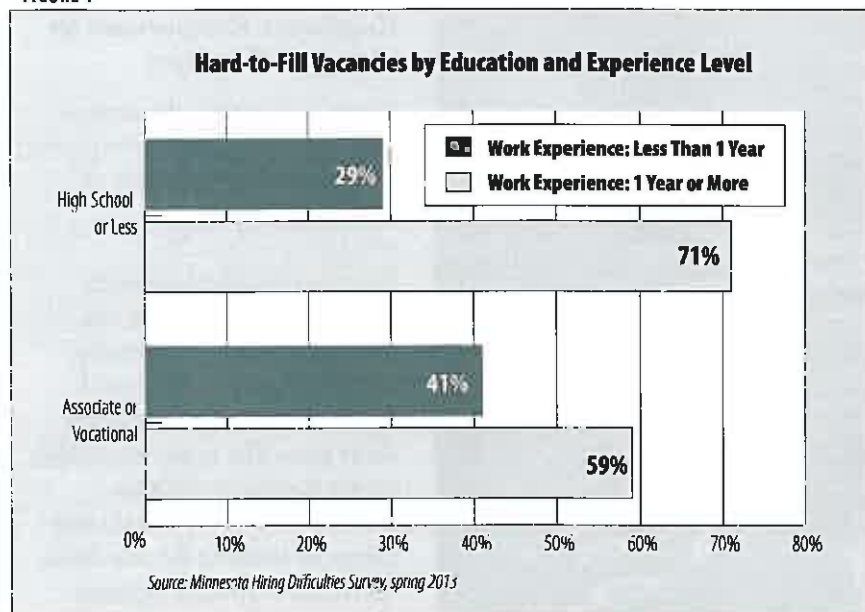
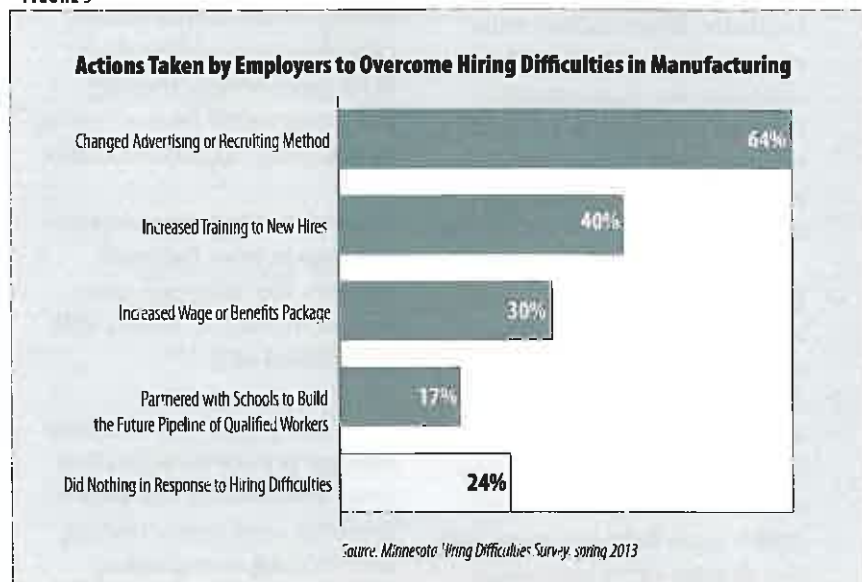


FIGURE 5



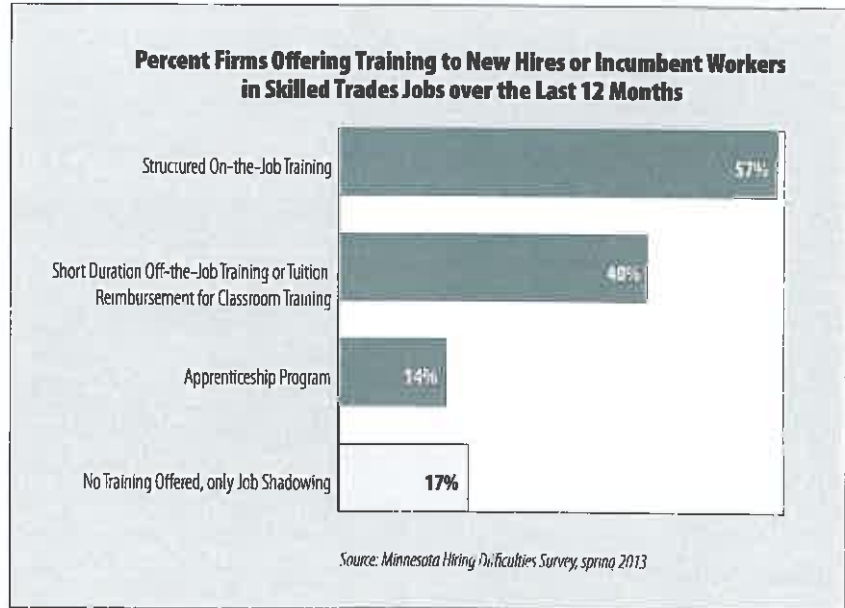
multidisciplinary training, on-the-job training is the main path for developing a workforce that fits the needs of individual manufacturers.

What are employers doing to train their workforces? Figure 6 shows the types of training that employers reported delivering over the last 12 months.

To put these results in context, remember that full competency in machining, CNC (computer numerical control) machining, welding and machine operations is acquired through structured on-the-job training lasting from one month to one year. With that in mind, these relatively low frequencies for job training and apprenticeships may be the result of cuts in employer training budgets during the Great Recession when skilled labor was abundant and firms could still find high school graduates with machine-shop skills. Between 2012 and 2013, almost all surveyed firms had job shadowing or buddy schemes, with 17 percent relying exclusively on job shadowing to train new hires.³ The trend appears to be turning back toward an increase in structured on-the-job training in response to a tightening labor market.

Figure 6 also shows that 40 percent of firms offered tuition reimbursement or paid classroom training. Employers value post-secondary training, both to upgrade the skills of their workers and to attract candidates who otherwise could not afford to earn a degree.

FIGURE 6



Conclusions

Manufacturers face unprecedented challenges in filling skilled production positions, including competition from other firms, declining interest in manufacturing careers among young people, unattractive firm locations and work shifts, uncompetitive wages and skills gaps.

Minnesota employers are investing in solutions to remove some of these barriers. Demand factors are more often acknowledged and addressed,

and firms are shifting from a strategy of buying skills from outside to building skills by training incumbent and new workers. Investing in internal skills, either in partnership or in-house, will pay off in the long term. Employer-driven initiatives and policies that favor business-education collaborations tailored to the unique needs of a region and industry are critical to the future competitiveness of Minnesota's manufacturers. ■

One respondent expressed this as follows: "Younger generations seem to have a sense of entitlement. When they're asked to do something different, they expect to be paid more. But in our firm everybody, even those who are working in the office, can be pulled to the shop at some time. Everything is your job if you get compensated. That's why we ended up hiring someone older, who had none of the technical skills and qualifications required to work as a CNC operator. It's pretty much just the work ethic that got him the job."

²One of the pioneers is Skills Right Now, a program in machine-tool technology that leads to industry-recognized credentials through the National Institute of Metalworking Skills. It features a semester of paid internships alternating with a semester of in-class instruction.

³Job shadowing involves pairing the new hire with an experienced worker who is not officially tasked with training. On-the-job training is an intensive, longer-term approach that establishes a trainer-trainee relationship to build a broad set of competencies.

Mechatronics

Mechatronics is an interdisciplinary approach merging the study of control systems with mechanical, electronic, and software engineering.

Courses 2014-2015

Industrial Electricity - MFGM 1870

4 cr

This is a fundamental course encompassing AC and DC electricity to build a foundation for the student to advance on to applications which are based on powered and controlled systems. The student will cover topics of series circuits, parallel circuits, combinations circuits, characteristics of electrical devices, trouble shooting of circuits for circuit faults caused by either faulty components or incorrect connections. AC/DC knowledge gained from this course is essential for the following classes: Electrical Controls & Apparatus; PLC I, II, and III; and Systems Troubleshooting.

Electrical Controls & Apparatus (Motor Controls) - MFGM 2110

3 cr

This course is designed to give machine operators, maintenance mechanics and technicians an understanding of electrical blueprints and wiring diagrams with an emphasis on motor controls.

Electronics/Electrical Control Theory (PLC I) - MFGM 2131

2 cr

The Programmable Logic Controller Introductory course is the first level for technical personnel that have little or no exposure to PLC technology. Successful completion of this course will allow the student to proceed to advanced training with other hardware and software automation packages.

We are gauging interest in a summer 2013 PLC series - Electrical knowledge a must to be successful. Please contact Marlo if you are interested.

Electrical Control Theory (PLC II) - MFGM 1780

3 cr

This course is an intermediate course using digital design techniques in a simple application of PLC controller interface to a Human Machine Interface display for use by a "machine operator". The machine operator will be able to view machine status and perform remote control. The course incorporates the use of Data Highway Networking and a Human Machine Interface. This course offers the foundation for students who wish to go onto advance programming courses such as PLC-Advanced Digital Control.

Advanced Electrical Control Theory (PLC III) - MFGM 1150

2 cr

This is an advanced course consisting of group lab exercises with the expectation of exact results, including the set up and connection of hardware components and networked equipment and related assignments. Students will use Rockwell Automation RSLinx, RSLogix 500 and RSLogix 5000 programming software to write, edit, download, and operate control programs for Allen-Bradley MicroLogix 1100, SLC-500, and CompactLogix PLC hardware. Prerequisites: Successful completion of MFGM 2131(Basic PLCs – PLC I) and MFGM 1780 (Intermediate PLCs – PLC II) is required. No exceptions.

Systems Troubleshooting - MFGM 1730

2 cr

The process of quickly and effectively locating faults in an electrical system will be the focus of the troubleshooting course. The student will learn to apply electronics knowledge in a linear methodology to improve effectiveness in locating problems. The course will incorporate example circuits covering the majority of circuits encountered in the industrial environment. The 32 hour course consists of 16 hours of theory and 16 hours of hands on lab. Strong knowledge of electricity and PLCs is needed to be successful in this class.

INDUSTRIAL & ENERGY PLANT MAINTENANCE

Delivery: Daytime and Online Classes
 Start: Fall Semester, Full-Time
 Location: Rosemount Campus

Outcome

Industrial and Energy Plant Maintenance Diploma45 cr.

Major Description

With training in the Industrial and Energy Plant Maintenance program you will obtain the necessary skills to maintain manufacturing, industry, and energy plants. Modern manufacturing, industry and energy plants are highly complicated and require a skilled worker to maintain them.

This program prepares students with a foundation in the theory, application and principles of these complicated environments. This includes the proper installation, maintenance and troubleshooting of mechanical, electrical, electronic, electromechanical, hydraulic and pneumatic power equipment. Our programs also focus on bearings and seals, print reading, preventative/predictive maintenance, safety, welding, laser alignment, and vibration analysis.

The Industrial and Energy Plant Maintenance program is an ideal choice for students with good mechanical aptitude who take pride in their work.

INDUSTRIAL AND ENERGY PLANT MAINTENANCE - DIPLOMA

*This is a sample course sequence.
 Please contact your program advisor regarding your academic plans.*

First Year - First Semester

ETSA1515	Intro to Industrial Safety and Health	2
ETSA1511	Fundamentals of AC/DC Electricity I	3
ETSA1512	Fundamentals of AC/DC Electricity II	3
RNEW1300	Intro to Trade/Renewable Energy	3
Total Credits		11

First Year - Second Semester

ETSA1507	Digital Electronics	3
ETSA1523	Print Reading	3
ETSA1552	Metal Joining and Fabrication	2
ETSA1541	Mechanical Fundamentals	3
Total Credits		11

Second Year - First Semester

ETSA2516	Mechanical Systems II	4
ETSA1531	Process Controls/Instrumentation I	3
ETSA2512	Hydraulics	3
ETSA2513	Pneumatics	3
Total Credits		13

Second Year - Second Semester

ETSA2543	PLC Fundamentals	3
ETSA2546	Powerplant Technology	4
ETSA2547	Mechanical Fundamentals for Process Controls	3
Total Credits		10

TOTAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS 45

** Pending MnSCU approval*

WELDING TECHNOLOGY

Delivery: Daytime and Afternoon/Evening Classes
 Start: Fall Semester, Full-Time
 Location: Rosemount Campus

Outcome

Welding Diploma36 cr.

Major Description

The Welding Program offers a variety of training in different welding processes specific to our trade. Students will gain knowledge through theory in class and hands on experience in the welding lab. The major topics and welding processes will be covered in this nine-month course to ready the student for entry level positions in the industry. Subjects that are covered include: Shielded Metal Arc, Gas Metal Arc, Flux Cored Arc, Gas Tungsten Arc Welding Processes Oxy/Fuel, Plasma Arc, Carbon Air Arc Cutting and Gouging Processes. Students will work with a variety of metals which include: Steel, Stainless Steel, and Aluminum. Shop Fabrication, Blueprint Reading, Math, Visual Inspection, Safety are covered in the curriculum.

Work Environment

Welders with the ability to fabricate and weld metal products from blueprints are needed in great demand in a wide range of industries. Working careers in industry consist of three major areas: Manufacturing, Construction, and Repair.

Potential Job Titles

- Welder
- Welding Assembly Technician
- Machine Operator
- Spot Welder
- Braze Operator
- Fitter-Welder
- Robot Operator
- Fabricator
- Finishing Technician

Salary Data

- Average Wage: \$19.17/hour
- Top Earners: \$25.94/hour

WELDING TECHNOLOGY - DIPLOMA

*This is a sample course sequence.
 Please contact your program advisor regarding your academic plans.*

First Year - First Semester

WELD1101	Welding Safety and Theory I	3
WELD1111	Shielded Metal Arc Welding I	3
WELD1120	Gas Metal Arc Welding I	2
WELD1130	Flux Cored Arc Welding I	2
WELD1140	Gas Tungsten Arc Welding I	3
WELD1150	Print Reading I	3
MATS1000	Math for Welders	3
Total Credits		19

First Year - Second Semester

WELD1200	Print Reading II	3
WELD1210	Welding Safety and Theory II	3
WELD1230	Shielded Metal Arc Welding II	3
WELD1240	Gas Metal Arc Welding II	2
WELD1250	Flux Cored Arc Welding II	2
WELD1260	Gas Tungsten Arc Welding II	3
INTS1010	Job Search Skills	1
Total Credits		17

TOTAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS 36



Hand Soldering and IPC Certification

Learn skills and earn certification on the industry's most widely used soldering standard . . .

Introduction to Hand Soldering

Our "skills-intensive" hand soldering courses are designed to put emphasis on accelerated skill development. DCTC offers a state of the art soldering laboratory. This introductory course is appropriate for those who just want to learn soldering skills and those planning to go on to earn IPC certification. Topics include:

- Soldering basics
- Through-hole technology
- Through-hole technology rework



IPC A-610 Acceptability of Electronic Assemblies

With its comprehensive criteria for printed circuit board assemblies, **IPC-A-610** is the most widely used inspection standard in the electronics industry — and has earned an international reputation as the source for end-product acceptance criteria for consumer and high reliability printed circuit assemblies. Now updated to lead free, IPC-A-610 has been embraced by original equipment manufacturers and electronics manufacturing services companies worldwide. Topics include:

- Soldering criteria, including lead free connections
- Soldered requirements for connecting to terminals
- Soldered connection requirements for plated-through holes
- Surface mounting criteria for chip components
- Component mounting criteria for DIPs, socket pins and card edge connectors
- Jumper wire assembly requirements
- Criteria for component damage, laminate conditions, cleaning and coating

IPC J-STD Requirements for Soldering Electrical and Electronic Assemblies

The **IPC J-STD-001** certification has emerged as the preeminent authority for electronics assembly manufacturing. The standard describes materials, methods and verification criteria for producing high quality soldered interconnections. The standard emphasizes process control and sets industry-consensus requirements for a broad range of electronic products. Topics include:

- Safety, tools and electrostatic discharge (ESD)
- Wire and terminal assembly requirements
- Through hole technology requirements
- Component mounting criteria for DIPs, socket pins and card edge connectors
- Jumper wire assembly requirements
- Criteria for component damage



To register: Call Lea Schendel 651-423-8279
Or online www.dctc.edu/continuing-education
Click on Manufacturing & Trades > Soldering



Basic Forklift Operation and Safety Training

Trainees will learn the following Course Objectives:

- Identification of Forklift components
- Forklift pre-operation inspection
- Introduction to Power Truck types and fueling safeguards
- Fork placement
- Levers and controls: forward/backward tilt; raising and lowering forks
- Load balance and characteristics of a rear-weighted vehicle
- Load transport: forward and backward operation
- Turning characteristics of a rear-wheel steering vehicle
- Site-specific hazard recognition in compliance with OSHA rules
- General safety concepts
- Forklift operation in a warehouse setting with storage racks
- Forklift operation on a ramp or incline
- Forklift operation entering, exiting, and loading a truck trailer
- Proper shut-down and safe storage

Training is compliant with OSHA regulation 1910.178

This Basic Forklift Operation and Safety Training class will provide the fundamentals of general forklift operation and safety, plus hands-on practice in a variety of operating circumstances common in an industrial setting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a Pharmacy Technician...

You will work under the supervision of a registered pharmacist, with the opportunity to work in hospitals, home infusion pharmacies, community pharmacies as well as other health care settings.

Your responsibilities will include assisting patients, filling prescriptions, maintaining inventory and charting pharmacy records.

A pharmacy technician should be customer service oriented and enjoy working with people. They should also be able to follow detailed procedures and be well organized.

After completion of 50 hours of classroom instruction at DCTC, you will be eligible to take the pharmacy technician certification exam, administered by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB).



DAKOTA COUNTY
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CONTINUING EDUCATION
& CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

For more information, contact Karen Christiansen
karen.christiansen@ddtc.edu | 651-423-8092

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Pharmacy Technician



DAKOTA COUNTY
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CONTINUING EDUCATION
& CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

RAILROAD CONDUCTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Dakota County Technical College's Railroad Conductor Technology program is the only of its kind in Minnesota and one of only a select few in the nation. Graduates of the program earn a 16-credit certificate in just 15 weeks. With seven weeks of classroom instruction and outdoor lab training followed by an eight-week internship, DCTC's graduates come prepared with the hands-on experience that railroad employers are seeking.

INDUSTRY-CURRENT CURRICULUM

DCTC's curriculum is developed from current railroad operation manuals and documents. The program also has its own advisory committee composed of industry professionals who are instrumental in ensuring graduates obtain the skills necessary for entry-level conductor positions. DCTC's graduates continue to be highly sought-after by the railroad industry. In fact, our graduates are the number one hiring choice for Canadian National.

RECRUITING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

In response to retirements and position attrition, freight railroads in the U.S. are expected to hire 11,000 more employees in 2013. With approximately 22% of the industry's workforce eligible for retirement in the next five years, railroads are dedicated to recruiting skilled employees who are committed to a career in railroading. DCTC's graduates have proven that commitment by seeking out this career path and obtaining the training necessary for employment.

COMMITMENT TO VETERANS

DCTC's Railroad Conductor Technology program supports the railroad industries long-standing commitment to veterans and military service members. Through recruitment efforts and a dedicated Veterans Resource Center, DCTC is committed to identifying talented service members and assisting them in transitioning from military service to private-sector employment.

RAILROAD CONDUCTOR PROGRAM COURSE DESIGN

- INDIVIDUAL WORKBOOK ASSIGNMENTS FOR EACH TOPIC COVERED.
- ASSESSMENT VIA INSTRUCTION TESTING AND OBSERVATION OF APPLIED SUBJECT MATERIAL.

Hazardous Material Handling	Track & Car Components	Air Brake Inspection & Tests	Safety On & Near Tracks	Hand & Switch Operations	Restrictions for Train Movements	Signal Systems for Train Control	Main Track Authorities
Emergency Response Book	Rail—Switches Deraill—Electric Locks	EOT & Hand Gauge All Brake Components	Hand & Switch Operations	Equipment & Track Clearances	Red Flags	Hand Signs & Lanterns	Yard Limits CTC Track Warrant
Train Switching & Placement Requirements	Safety Appliances Hand Brake Use Wheel Structure Defects	Class I: IA Test Class II Test Class III Test	PPE Requirements Drug & Alcohol Good Faith Challenge	Equipment & Track Clearances	Yellow-Red Flags	Radio Communication & Protocol	Current Traffic BRT
		Yard Transfer Test	CRM Job Briefing FRA Parts 217, 218, 242		Yellow-Green Flags	Block Signal Systems	Interlocking Manual & Automatic
			Situation Awareness Crew Communication		Blue Flag Worker Protection	Road Crossing Protection	
					Track Bullets	Head Lights	



Minneapolis

3:00 p.m., March 11

Minnesota Precision Manufacturing Association (MPMA) and Saint Paul Port Authority

The MPMA group engaged in a lively discussion last year about where things were headed. Let's start as you sit here today, we'll start with you (name), how does life look in terms of your business today vs. what it was a year ago? Seems to me you were looking to do some more business in Costa Rica. What happened?

We did a cost justification on putting a facility in Costa Rica and at this time it just didn't pay for itself. That was an investigation we did and took four trips down there. Business down there is continuing to grow, but at this time it just wasn't worthy of the dollar spent. The payback wouldn't be there.

Is that in part because the economic environment here is improving?

• No. More that the equipment needed and the investment that would have to be placed down there would have such a long payback that it just wouldn't really be worth it. Not saying that there is not benefit from other companies from moving down there, mine would just not be advantageous.

So what's your overall sense? Has Minnesota's business climate gotten back on the "right track?"

• In some areas I definitely think we are in some areas and other areas I think we should learn from our mistakes.

- I would say that everybody out there is fairly nervous, maybe cautious is a better word, as to what they invest and what they look for in business today. It all depends upon the laws. We have one right now, which I don't know if it was repealed yet or not, that was the warehousing tax that Minnesota is putting on. That can cause us to be less competitive.
- That and the B to B taxes. Everything that I do today is now taxed and it wasn't prior to July 1st. It's been a very difficult thing to deal with.
- I was just at a leadership group meeting before this. And of the seven people in the room everyone said they're flatter down right now and I would say we're in that same ball game. A year ago things were a little more optimistic or at least I was more optimistic. But this year we're just cautious. I agree with your wording, people are not feeling the visibility of business being out there in terms of what our government's going to enforce or to us.
- We're flat in everything this guy said and that's what the owner says too. They're worried about what's coming our way tax wise.

Related to that, I think there was a time six or seven years ago when most people around this table would say that they could confidently forecast for a year in the future.

- That's what I'm hearing and seeing in the business too. That's what I'm hearing in talking to a lot of people.
- Last year we ended up very, very well. January and February we came in shy of our forecast, March looks like we are going to exceed our forecast and April we'll probably exceed it also. But we watch it very closely and that will probably get us to about break even for the first three months.

Really? And to what do you attribute it?

- Typically March and April are usually some pretty strong months for us. So I think that's just kind of inherent to our business. But the scary part is January and February. The high end manufacturers, or I should say OEM manufacturers, they were a little on the slow side. Not totally uncommon, so I'm not going to jump off any cliffs yet but it is concerning. Just concerning. When you come in a few 100,000 light you kind have to question why? But it's looking good now.

As you consider growth, what factors might drive growth? New customers? New products? Trade/ISO issues? Supply chain relationships? The economy?

- For us it is new products. And growth in some other products. But pretty much new products are the driving force for us.
- For us too, new products. We design a small design group. We design valves for people and we've seen that slow down.
- New customers.

Do you grow by geography? Have you gone out and looked at different sales territories or are you growing just from within from where you were already serving?

- A little of both. We're probably about 55 percent international and that makes a big difference in what happens with our growth. We expanded into China last year a little bit. In January we hired a part-time person in China. So most of the growth has been in China. A year ago it was probably Europe. But we've also opened an office in Japan, we have two employees there.

How much is market uncertainty that comes from what we see either at the Capitol in St. Paul or in Congress? How much does that contribute to your level of uncertainty about how you make decisions in your business? Does it matter?

- I think it matters a lot. If I understood your question correctly. I think our economy was just starting to come around. Paul spoke to it, last year he had more optimism. I think it was just starting to come around. Then all of a sudden, we as Minnesotans have now had to deal with these taxes which influence us tremendously. And now we're going to spend our money moving forward and how we can predict the future.

Taxes? Regulations?

- Yes.
- Absolutely.
- Affordable healthcare is also a big squeeze.

Healthcare?

- We are a very small company. We are not self-insured; we are part of a small group plan. So the amount of transactional fees and expenses that we will incur will probably be in the neighborhood of \$50,000 this year. And that's a big impact on a small \$5 million company.

Do you feel like you'll get some relief once the exchanges take hold?

- No.

were teaching most everything.

- I just finished up on the Governor's workforce council in education and that was the big push. That was my big beef too. I grew up on a farm, and everybody around worked 2nd shift at Caterpillar or John Deere where I'm from. So you just knew that that was always a good life. But that's all gone now. And how do we get the parents and the kids trained starting at a very young age to make them aware of this. It's not just we're going to send you to a four-year college.
- We need the counselors at the school to not be pushing something unreasonable.

• When we did the National Manufacturers Estate through NAM, and for part of that, we invited schools and in talking to those schools, the counselors, they're not necessarily opposed to it but they are feeling pressure from the administration of the school and the parents thinking that it needs to be the four-year degree that they are pushing.

• I assume that everyone is kind of familiar with Alexandria, Minnesota? They're actually in the process of building a new high school. And the communities really got together, and I've got to say I've not been totally involved in this one, but they went to the school as they're building the school and saying, you guys need to change. You need to get the kids ready for jobs besides through four-year colleges.

The workforce is out there, everybody wants technical people and they're having a hard time finding them. So there's a whole, and I can leave these with you if you'd like, but there's a whole bunch of companies within Alexandria area that have donated equipment, donated funds, donated a lot of stuff to the new school, I think in total they had \$5 million just in donations to the new high school. From that they are also going to go in with career paths. I think they're going in with four blocks per day or something like that, I forget how exactly, and then they get to choose different career paths. And they have engineering, manufacturing technologies, natural resources, health sciences and human resources and they have different academics below each one of them, business communication and entrepreneurship. And then they have the freshman academy. But they are going to have machine tools in there and robotics in there. People coming through to go to all the programs, there will be all glass windows, they'll actually see this equipment running as they go through to their sons' or daughters' games. So they're actually looking for some huge growth. But that's kind of the business that we're doing, trying to get people involved at the high school age because I'm kind of a fossil in a way. When I went to school we had VoTech where everyone could spend different quarters in different areas and that's what actually got me interested in machining. But this is how you get kids involved and I think it's kind of cool.

If I were to split up the three things that government does in relation to business: regulation, tax and we'll separate out healthcare. Which is the one that gives you the most heartburn? Is it taxes? Is it regulations? Is it healthcare right now? Or all of the above equally?

- It seems like all of them.
- Yeah. I know on a personal level at work, we are all self-insured and because our insurance is worth \$12,000/per person, and that the government has decided that nobody deserves more than \$8,000 worth of insurance, I'm going to get \$4,000 added to my W-2, as well as everybody else at work and we get taxed on it.

What about the availability of workers?

- We're running out of machinists.
- We even went back to having an engineering apprenticeship. We not only have the machinists apprenticeship they now have a full engineering apprenticeship. Because you just have to and you have to take that responsibility on if you are going to go.
- And the Tech schools are trying really hard but in an 18-month crash course, you don't get a Grade "A" person out of there. You get a beginner -- an absolute beginner -- and you have to take on the responsibility to train.

Is it sometimes better to recruit someone with that level of training or is it better to just to find a smart person that you can train yourself?

- It's nice to have the training. When you're really starting from scratch, that's impossible.
- When you're really starting from scratch, that's almost impossible. We tried and it took me about four years to convince our owner that we needed to go through the Tech Schools, so we started about a year and a half ago and we picked-up five or six 2-year degrees. And at least they understand when I talk in offset or I talk feed range and things like that. Whereas temps don't have a clue.

Another focus group talked about how students are graduating from high school lacking even basic skills. They talk about the fellow who was out and wanted to do auto repair, and was out and ready to do the auto repair program, but couldn't do the basic math test requisite to get into that program. Was that your experience here as well?

- We were teaching them math, we were teaching them English, we

How does it happen? Did it just happen out of critical mass or out of people at the VoTech up there?

• I think a lot of this came from the businesses in the community that have just been begging to get people and start back at the high school level. We did the Tech College stuff, I'm also on the board for that for the Machine Technology Tool Program there, but they kept saying we can't get the kid interested. The counselors aren't showing them what's out there, so no fault to the kids. They've been playing video games and they don't know what manufacturing is. And our media doesn't always help us so well on that. Saying all the jobs are going to China or a low cost country. So that was one way of the business getting together and getting the kids interested and so far it is going pretty well.

• Something to add to that and we talked a lot about this at the Governors Workforce Council are the technical schools in the state, starting with the mPower was the first and the Right Skills now started at Dunwoody and that's like a one semester program where they cram a year in and then you can go on from there. They're NIM Certified. So everybody is teaching the same way so that teachers have to become NIM Certified and the students all take a basic program and they get this NIM Certification, I believe. I was at White Bear High School talking with Kristine Wehrkamp and I met her through this program and I said why can't high schools get NIM Certified? Because if I get a 2-year AA degree of some sort by the time I get out of high school, why can't I get a NIM Certified 1-year, one semester, 2-year, whatever, technical degree of some sort from the high school and start them even earlier?

What was the answer?

• They loved the idea! They absolutely loved the idea. And my big push in this whole thing, and I was in the Right Skills Now a year before that, was let's make it stackable. Because you work, I worked for quite a few years and Red was my boss. Everyone should feel sorry for me. (laughter) You're taking a lot of hits today. (More laughter) For 12 years I worked at Caterpillar and they had a rule before I could hire somebody from the floor. They had to have a four-year degree. I watched so many young people get their 2-year degree and have to throw out every single credit and then start over with a four-year degree. And I'm an industrial technology major out of Iowa State. They gave me credits for building a garage, I had machining, I had plastic injection molding, I had sheet metal, I had electronics and electricity, hydraulics, I had everything. They gave me credits. Go look at some of the credits four-year colleges give. Why can't you make a 2-year degree almost completely stackable into a four-year and help everybody out?

Do you talk to 916, at Century? Do you talk to them?

• Not Century, they got rid of their machining program a long time ago but I work with Sheryl Daumier from St. Paul Tech and they graduate, I don't remember from last summer whether it was 50 a year or 50 a semester. But right now, they are getting all their teachers NIM Certified and they are putting on an entire 2nd shift to emulate 1st shift as far as the number of graduates. So they're doubling their machine tool.

It's a really good idea.

• And that worked out nice because they work for four hours and then they go to four or five hours of class every night. And because they got into the mPower, that class was all paid for. So they weren't getting a lot but they could still make a living. And that really was a drawing card for really good people.

• And that was St. Paul Tech, and they even told me they were going to copy Hennepin and were going to put in an entire 2nd shift of machining so we can have people working during the day and going to school at night.

How much of the challenge in your business is getting employees, or helping employees get additional training so that they can move up in the organization? Are they ready to take that on? Do they want to do it? Do you have the relationships with the Vocational Technical schools to have that happen or is it just not an issue?

• Three or four percent want to do it. That's probably the more difficult part. Finding the resources, I'd say for a while, was probably a problem. But I think there are a lot more resources out there now, for the training. But getting people to want to go for a few hours a couple nights a week is tough.

Do they just not see the payday at the end?

• No, they just can't see it.

• Yeah. I know when we were at CAT we were hiring welders and we had 150 welders there. And as I was hiring welders and after one year found out that they were dropping out. They were on 2nd shift. And so we made a stipulation that you will get fired if you do not get your 2-year degree. And it worked, every single person finished.

Really?

• Yeah. And that's what I'm hearing too. Companies are grabbing people before they're done with their 2-year degrees and they never finish. Robert Musgrove has mentioned that to me numerous times. Up at Pine Tech.

- Is it fair to say that although workforce is a challenge you feel like there is something you can do about it? As opposed to taxes and healthcare. Where you don't feel like you can do anything about it. So there's that fence of frustration?
- That's a good statement.
- The schools are always willing to work with us. They're always willing to change their curriculum and what do you guys need? What do you guys need? They're right in there with skills of work and the Government Workforce Council and everything else. But the government is like, WOW, what do we do?
- That stems down a little bit. As the parent of a teenager going to school now. I remember going to school and shop class was mandatory. Shop and Home Ec and life skills class and now they don't offer it because of funding. You have to take an art and a music. But no shop class anymore at the 8th and 9th grade levels. So you're getting young people who aren't exposed to it so they don't know or have an interest.
- Yeah. I'd like to say we have a need to get rid of the hobby classes and get some life classes. Some things that you can support yourself. Music is great and art is great but a machinist is going to make more money. So they've got to replace them with those cheap hobby classes that just hurt our kids' and our future.
- And I think that that is maybe why you don't have young people today bridging into trades because of that lack of exposure at a young age.
- Yep. Let's get a career going for these guys even in high school instead of a hobby. Even woodworking is just a hobby really. You could jetison woodworking could have a little bit because there are a lot of cabinet shops and things like that, but I tell you, welding machines and things like that. . .

It seems that the worker shortage is becoming more chronic in Greater Minnesota.

- Especially, as we talked earlier, the smaller communities that don't get a Wal-Mart, Menards in town, there's very little reason for people to go to the small town that doesn't have much anymore. And they're dying on the vine. It's tough. I was telling him the story, I have a big engineering contract and I hired a guy from the north shore and he was saying that the young people were moving out at such a rate that even the county couldn't even find people to drive their snowplows a couple of winters ago. Because they don't want to be there. I mean there's just nothing for them there, so what do they do, they move. The farming communities are shrinking. There's nothing you can do about that either. It's reality.

Do you see that in Alexandria at all? You have this bastion of great manufacturing right in the middle of the state but do you see it around you?

- I would assume there's some of that around there but like in Alexandria we really don't have that. It seems to be thriving. I'd like to go back a little bit on the training portion there a little bit. I hate to back up everybody. We actually do have what we call a Leadership Academy. Where we have people from all shifts and we run five shifts. So typically I think the next graduating class, this is year two and I want to say there are probably about 35 people in it of different leadership differences. Because our people are aging and you want to try to promote within. So we actually have a Leadership Academy that was created two years ago. Well, part of it was through the school and part of it was through grants through the school that we had received for the training. And they have very specific areas that they work on. So that's actually helping. A good example is when I interviewed somebody five years ago for a position. And I interviewed that person about two months ago for the same position and it was night and day difference on this gal. The way she came across. She was so nervous previously. I think she's actually grown up as she's aged obviously. I think the skill set that she got with the training has really, really enhanced and improved her. I would go from a 1 to a 10 and she actually did get the position by the way. It was that much remarkable. So training within your organization, I would encourage it. It does cost money but sometimes you can find funds out there to offset some of those costs. And that was working through the local tech college to get some of the grants.
- I think if you take a look at the other states that are really after manufacturing, I would say Ohio is one of them, they went after the aircraft industry. They have researched 12 different buildings set around the state in the research. One is doing on composite, one's doing it on structure, one's on machining, one's on lean, and they are placed around and they're not only helping the small businesses but they're helping the Tech Schools with the latest technology, so the Tech School does not get mucked in and this is the best. They're actually out there helping them. They'll come right into your business and help you process a report. So the states down there, and consequently I think the last year I when was down there they had acquired 65,000 jobs in the aircraft industry, manufacturing, because they had been doing this for years. And I think if the state wants to do it, we have so much medical business in this community, if they put a research, I heard Chicago just got a big chunk of this money that the government coughed up, this \$70 million, for their research center and a friend of mine is going to run

that. And why doesn't this state put a priority on this instead of waving at us all the time?

Why doesn't it?

- I worked with Pawlenty for quite a while, and Pawlenty's right-hand man in that. And I thought we were getting something going. But then he went out of office. They talk a lot but they don't do anything. I mean some of these states, they understand that wages for machinists here, working at McDonalds, is down here. I mean it's income, it's tax money coming in. We don't see that in this state.

Do you feel there are inconsistencies between what elected officials say and what they do with regard to manufacturing? People who "make stuff" seem to be getting a lot of love from politicians these days. Are they backing it up? Or is it just PR?

- Some of the things the EPA is doing are ridiculous.
- I heard something, this goes all the way back to Reagan who was considered business friendly, but starting with him there have been 2,300 new regulations since his term as President. That's a lot! And it's taken quite a turn. Even though they say that they're all behind it.
- When Norm Coleman was in there we could go directly to his office and get results. I had a lot of research money that came through there. The only thing you had to learn is how much time it took and then when they wrote out the check they would send it to somebody, like say the Army, they would take 25 percent of it and then give you the rest after writing out the check. But the little guy can't afford to chase that all down. If it was in the state and there were some regulations, so if you needed something to do, sometimes new and you didn't know how, you could go to them and sometimes you had to pay 50 percent of the money to develop new technologies or something, but I think that's the way you are going to keep things going. Otherwise it's just, to me, like they're just not doing much for you.

- I grew up on a farm. Every farm, our parents were always involved in the local legislatures. And even though my mom's in Iowa, she's got four kids in four states, she says this is what's going on in Iowa. Write your legislators for your three states about the same thing and just tell them you live on the Iowa border, which we do, or the Illinois border in Iowa not in Minnesota. So, but still we're farmers. So I write them a lot but I write them about business too.

- It's interesting. I went to a day at the Capitol with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce a couple of years ago. We make appointments with representatives during that day. And I remember I wanted to speak to the ones that represented the areas I work in, so I was speaking to

them about business issues. And they wouldn't make appointments with me. I had to see ones that represented where I lived instead.

Really?

- Yeah, you can't write anybody outside your area.
- That might be changing a little bit. I've gotten some pretty good responses from my work legislators, especially this year. I don't know why they've changed. But up until this year, or two years ago I guess I would say, I got very little response back, very, very little response from my work legislators. But my home legislators believed in what I believed in so you still wrote them but it didn't seem to do quite as much good.

We talked a little bit about trade. What do you think of that trend we read about the Home Sourcing or Home Shoring trend?

- We would lose valves to China and literally three years, four years later, they just came back. And how it started was with the dental industry. Because that's super high quantity and we've got a division out in Grand Falls, they would lose 50 and 100,000 valves at a time to China and we would think, oh no. Because that plant is only 25 people out there, but boy they really put out the work. And within six months their customers were sending them the China valves to take them apart to put American O-rings and Japanese O-rings in them because they were leaking within weeks of them being put in. And they did that for a couple of years and it was still cheaper. They finally said, the heck with this, and they went right back to Grand Falls. So that's a great story.
- Yeah, I worked for 12 years with the Chinese and into China and I left (company) six years ago to go to my current company and they were \$2.00/hour for a welder in China and there was a design center in India where you could send your design over, get them back the next day, they'd work over night it was actually pretty efficient. They had industrial engineers who would do all your time studies and put them together for you, but right now I've still got friends in China that I still work with quite a bit and a welder is now making \$6.00/hour and they are rethinking whether we want to make stuff in China to ship all over the world. Right now it is, let's just make it in China for China and not send any more work over there. Because going from \$2.00 to \$6.00/hour and our welders at (company) are making around \$20, that's enough to make it not pay anymore. That's great. And that design center in India, they're closing it and moving it to Rapid City. Is that cool or what? Because it got too expensive.
- In 2012 we were being pushed by our medical community to put a plant in China. So I was in charge of doing the research. At the end

of the day there was not one penny advantage to being there. There's a 19 percent back tax. Every bit of value you add, you have to pay the government 19 percent tax. The average turnover is 30 percent a year because they have no allegiance to a company. They will go down the road for five cents and the infrastructure wasn't there. Depending on the market you are in. So when we got done we showed the customers that and since then the fuel, the shipping has gone up, but at that point there was no advantage to manufacturing parts for us in China.

Did that surprise you at the time you did it?

• Yeah, at the time we did it, it did. Everything isn't as rosy. In fact, they're losing a lot of the low cost stuff to African places now. They have a tremendous engineering plant over there. They're graduating in engineering, and they will be a force to be reckon with. But I think a lot of things are going to turn around and be manufactured at the point of youth because of the \$3.65 cost of gasoline. And the time. (Company) has made the wings for the 777 since it's started and we were having joint venture with Asia and we showed Boeing. It took 16 weeks out of the time to ship my boat over there, again put it together and get it back here. They redesigned and poof, it was here. So that tie and shipping is becoming a big issue.

Anybody have anything as we wind down here that you'd like to talk about here that we didn't? Or any benedictions you'd like to put in the meeting?

• Maybe watch, because I've worked in Illinois for (company) also, right when I left 6 years ago, Illinois raised their state income tax 50 percent. It went from three percent to four½. Now that does not sound like much when you say, oh we're seven or eight or whatever it is but my property taxes that were \$12,500 for the exact same house I have here and it's \$2,300 here, so the property tax is where they get you. But when they did that, everybody went up in arms. So they reconvened and they talked for a year and then they came back out and said in the article mmm, we can't cut a penny. So it remains. So then Caterpillar got six states offering to move their world headquarters to their state and give them all these benefits and so did John Deere. And that's the only two big companies, I'm familiar with down there, big ones. They actually went to the governor and legislature and said we're going to leave unless you drop our taxes back down, and they didn't. So now the little people, and I know a bunch of people have business there right across the river from my parents and stuff and they're like; oh man, why in the hell didn't I relocate when I expanded into Iowa? And they're talking about moving to Iowa. Be careful, the state legislature

here has to be careful not to become Illinois. And Illinois on one hand is doing things like you talked about in Chicago, with that big training center and stuff but then they do stuff on the other hand. Because I know Caterpillar bought these Bucyrus Mines in Milwaukee and the mining division of Caterpillar out of Decatur is 10 times the size of Bucyrus. And in six months they moved their world headquarters up to Milwaukee and now you don't have to pay Illinois taxes. And the moved the engine division over to Little Rock, AR. They moved Motor Graders to Little Rock and they moved Excavators, which put 1,500 people out of work in Aurora, where the plant I was at, cut the plant size in half, down to Houston. Because they all said come here, we'll give you all the breaks. And so (company) has moved like 6,000 jobs out of Illinois in the last three years.

• (Company) has got the deal on that new research center going into Chicago. And one of the by-products of that, is if you look at the bottom of who's already signed up to be members, you've got Boeing, Caterpillar, 3M, all of them. And you pick up that they want to do business, because they know it can be done up here and it's a big deal. If you get those research centers in here that are developing technology for certain industries, you bring a customer base in to town. And everybody will get an advantage from it.

Do they do it independently? Do they do it through schools?

• They do it right in the research center. And then if John Deere wants to have something developed, a lot of times they'll pay for half of it and maybe the rest of the members will chip in if they want to be part of it. And it brings customers and it brings new ways to do things in the area. It's not just an isolated thing that happens.

Where the jobs are: The new blue collar

MORE THAN 2.5 MILLION GOOD-PAYING JOBS WILL BE CREATED IN THE NEXT
FEW YEARS. WILL WORKERS KNOW HOW TO GET THEM?

MaryJo Webster, USA TODAY

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Millions of new jobs

IF YOU HAVE THE TRAINING AND KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

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Joseph Poole will make more than \$100,000 in wages and overtime by the end of the year.

The 21-year-old works in what looks like NASA's mission control, monitoring the manufacturing process at Chevron Phillips petrochemical plant in Houston. Poole didn't get the job with the engineering degree he originally considered. Instead, Poole landed it with a two-year course at a local community college.

"The potential to make just as much money as an engineer, but for half the cost of the education, was here," Poole says. "Just seeing firsthand how things are made is something I really enjoy doing."



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By 2017, an estimated 2.5 million new, middle-skill jobs like Poole's are expected to be added to the workforce, accounting for nearly 40% of all job growth, according to a USA TODAY analysis of local data from Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. and CareerBuilder.

Not all pay as much as Poole's, but all pay at least \$13 an hour; many pay much more. These jobs require some training but far less school than a bachelor's degree. Technology has given many a makeover, leaving them worlds away from their assembly-line predecessors and challenging the notion that good blue-collar jobs are dead and that the only path to a good career is a four-year degree.



Joe Poole describes his job as a petrochemical process operator at Chevron Phillips Chemical in Houston.

VPC

"There's a new middle. It's tougher, and takes more skill," says Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

USA TODAY looked at jobs data in 125 of the nation's largest metros, finding that prospects look good.

- Houston is expected to add more than 100,000 middle-skill jobs by 2017, with 40% paying \$20 per hour or more. Several other Texas metros — Dallas, McAllen, Austin, Killeen and San Antonio — are among those expecting the fastest growth in middle-skill jobs.
- Atlanta needs construction workers, lighting experts and others to work in its fast-growing film industry. Skill is required, but not necessarily film experience for the 77,000 film workers (average pay \$84,000) and support personnel in 2012, who turned out movies such as *The Fast and the Furious* and *The Hunger Games* franchises, according to the Motion Picture Association of America.

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• In Augusta, Ga., Salt Lake City, Knoxville, Tenn., and Vallejo, Calif., livable-wage, middle-skill jobs will be the primary driver for overall job growth, accounting for nearly half of all new jobs.

• In most metro areas, some of the best-paying middle-skill jobs include radiation therapists, elevator installers and repairers, and dental hygienists, all with a median wage of more than \$70,000.

SEARCH FOR THE HOTTEST JOBS IN OUR INTERACTIVE



LOCATION



SALARY



EDUCATION



JOB

Nearly 600 occupations are expected to see a 5% or more growth in jobs by 2017. Data include jobs of all skill levels in the 125 largest metros.

Source: USA TODAY analysis of Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc./ Career Builder
Credit: Tory Fargro, Jeff Dionise, Joel Upton, Mary Jo Webster, Jerry Mosemak, Bob Laird and Chad Palmer, USA TODAY



• In such places as Texas and North Dakota where the gas and oil industries are booming, petroleum workers are needed. But so are the electricians, pipefitters, carpenters and others who build the infrastructure.

"This country is facing a shortage of that kind of talent. So the demand is there, big time," says Peter Cella, CEO of Chevron Phillips Chemical. Chevron and competitor ExxonMobil Chemical are both building giant plants that will triple the output of plastics from Houston. "What we need to work on is the supply."

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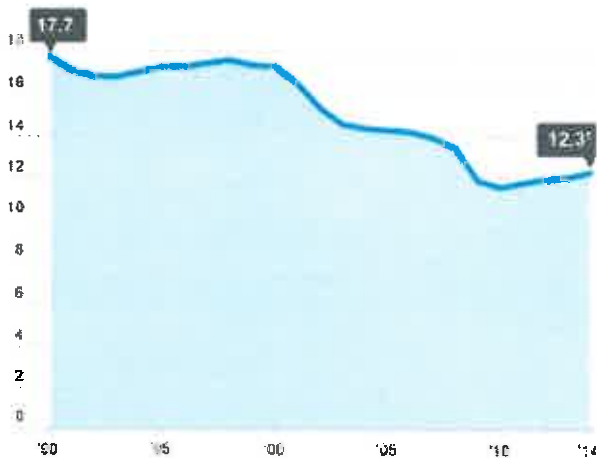


Jobs Are Coming Back

BUT THEY AREN'T THE SAME AS THE ONES THAT WENT OFFSHORE

Manufacturers are hiring again

U.S. MANUFACTURING COMPANIES HAVE HIRED THOUSANDS OF WORKERS SINCE JOBS PLUMBED IN THE LATE '90s, BUT TOTAL EMPLOYMENT HAS PICKED UP AGAIN. TOTAL EMPLOYMENT BY YEAR (IN MILLIONS)



1 - Preliminary figure for August.
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

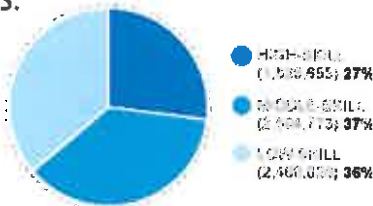
The loss of blue-collar jobs — accelerated by the recent recession — has resulted in the "hollowing out of the middle," which has left behind either low-paying jobs or higher-paying jobs that require significant skills say some economists. But some economists say the middle is not gone; rather, it's growing.

"We have not become a barbell economy," says Paul Osterman, an economist and professor at the MIT Sloan School. "There will be tremendous demand for these jobs when the Baby Boom generation retires

New jobs in the U.S.

MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS, REQUIRING SOME POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION BUT LESS THAN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE, ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE UP THE LARGEST SHARE OF NEW JOBS

NEW JOBS CREATED 2013 TO 2017:



Source: Economic Modeling Services, LLC. Calculations by FRANK FORPA, USA TODAY

(<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1300767-osterman-report.html>). " Currently, Boomers make up about 20% of the workforce.

Although manufacturing jobs have declined 35% since 1980, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there's actually been a resurgence in recent years as American companies have found that moving jobs offshore was not a good approach for production that requires highly skilled labor.

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"There's a lot of re-shoring," says Andrew Crapuchettes, CEO of Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. "They're coming back, but they are coming back different. More technician jobs, which pay more. There may be fewer jobs, but they are better jobs."

But that means more training, given that nearly 80% of the new blue-collar jobs require some, typically less than a year, according to [Carnevale's research](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1300768-five-ways-that-pay.html) (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1300768-five-ways-that-pay.html>). Some companies can provide it, but many require prospective workers to find their own classes.

Even in red-hot Houston, you'll need training.

"If you have no skills, you're not necessarily going to pop down here and find a job," says Cally Graves, senior industry liaison for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board in Houston. "You need to get some training or education ... otherwise, you'll end up in the same old situation you were in back home."

At E.J. Ajax, a precision manufacturing company near Minneapolis, training eats up 5% of the company's payroll, just to ensure a pipeline of workers is available to move up as employees retire.

"The global competition doesn't keep me up at night," says Erick Ajax, co-owner and grandson of the founder. "I know we can go toe-to-toe with any company in the world. But having people that have the right skill set ... that wakes me up at 3 o'clock in the morning."



'More Than One Road To Heaven'

THE IMAGE PROBLEM OF MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS

Society's push to get all young people into four-year colleges — what William Symonds calls the "one road to heaven" approach — contributes to a shortage of skilled workers.

"People degrade or demean jobs that don't require a four-year degree. ... That's not what they want their kids to do," says Symonds, who is launching the Global Pathways Institute at Arizona State University to study this issue and urge policymakers to help students find the best "pathway" to success.

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At the same time, high schools have dropped vocational and technical education programs over the past 30 years, eliminating a key way young people are introduced to these careers.



Mike Rowe, host of "Someone's Gotta Do It" and "Dirty Jobs," talks about the new blue-collar jobs.

WXIA-TV, Atlanta, for USA TODAY

"Over the last 40 or 50 years, we've portrayed work differently and we reward some forms of education far more passionately than others," says Mike Rowe, host of *Someone's Gotta Do It* and *Dirty Jobs*. After working blue-collar jobs across the country for his show, Rowe started a foundation, mikeroweWORKS, to address the image problem.

"Higher education is in one column and everything else is called alternative. And those kinds of pursuits are reserved for people who are somehow deficient or somehow not cut out for the desirable path."

Rowe worries there are too many young people going to four-year colleges, racking up huge amounts of debt and ultimately ending up unemployed, when they could've taken a less-expensive path and ended up with a good-paying job.

Rowe also points out that language matters.

"What's aspirational about 'middle skill'?" says Rowe. "It's going to take a generation to get people to really challenge the stereotypes that come along with skilled-labor type jobs."

Change won't happen without students getting better information about career planning, says Andy Van Kleunen, executive director of the [National Skills Coalition](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1279775-national-skills-coalition-report.html) (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1279775-national-skills-coalition-report.html>).

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"They need to know what the real employment prospects are going to be, including financial," Van Kleunen says. "What will school cost you? What will the pay be?"

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Community and technical colleges are trying to fill the gap by enrolling young adults who either drop out of a four-year college or can't find a job after graduation.

Instructors at Lee College, near Houston, say they are seeing an increasing number of students apply for the school's petrochemical-related programs after initially pursuing a bachelor's degree in petroleum or chemical engineering.

"These are 'gold collar' jobs," says Charles Thomas, the head of the school's process technology division. "Technicians in our program start out with \$62,000 base salary plus overtime."

Laci Patty, 30, a physics teacher, was frustrated by the emphasis on standardized testing and other changes in education. When a Lee College instructor came to her class to recruit students for the program, they ended up recruiting her. She started night classes earlier this year.

"There's actually a chance for advancement and more money," says Patty, who will graduate next summer.



Laci Patty, a physics teacher in the Houston area, is taking night classes to change careers and work in the petrochemical industry.
(Photo: KHOU-TV, Houston for USA TODAY)



The Information Gap

FINDING WAYS TO MATCH WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS

Researchers say there are some legitimate reasons employers might be having trouble finding qualified workers in certain locations or positions. This could include markets with low unemployment, jobs with relatively new skills and rural areas with a limited labor pool. And some areas of the country, may see few new jobs.

"It is such a local problem," Crapuchettes says, referring to what he calls an "information gap." In Durham, N.C., for example, programmers are in high demand commanding big salaries; in Virginia Beach, programmers earn a third as much.

"Employers don't know the talent is in Virginia Beach and (workers) don't know they can make three times as much three hours away," he says.

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*"People don't know about these jobs. ...
We want to use data as much as we can
to drive that."*

Where most jobs will be

THESE 10 METRO AREAS ARE EXPECTED TO CREATE THE MOST MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS BY 2017. FOR MOST OF THE COUNTRY, MIDDLE-SKILL JOBS WILL BE AN ECONOMIC DRIVER, ACCOUNTING FOR 37% OF ALL NEW JOBS.

Metro	Total new middle-skill jobs by 2017	Percent of all new jobs that will be middle-skill
HOUSTON	102,696	49%
DALLAS	89,541	39%
NEW YORK	82,592	26%
WASHINGTON	68,537	35%
LOS ANGELES	62,430	25%
PHOENIX	60,295	40%
BOSTON	59,519	25%
SEATTLE	47,400	40%
ATLANTA	39,440	33%
DENVER	31,500	35%

Source: USA TODAY analysis of EMSI's GreenBook data

Depressed housing prices have made it harder for workers to move, economists say. And in places such as Milwaukee, three-quarters of the jobs are in the suburbs where there are few mass transit options, says Marc Levine, senior fellow at the Center for Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Peter Cappelli, director of the Center for Human Resources at The Wharton School (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1302356-cappelli-report.html>), says other factors — such as automated screening algorithms in online application systems — might also play a role. In his book *Why Good People Can't Get Jobs*, Cappelli notes one case where a company received 25,000 applications for an engineering job, but none matched the qualifications.

Cappelli also argues that employers may say they can't find workers for political leverage: to loosen immigration laws, particularly for higher-skilled workers, and to get educational systems and public tax dollars to take over the burden of training workers.

If employers can't persuade the government to take action, Cappelli says, "then I think we'll see employers get creative, figure out ways to train people and the market will work this out."



'Creating A Worker'

NEW TRAINING FOR A NEW WORKFORCE

Vice President Biden leads the White House effort to "widen the pipeline" and create innovative job-training programs across the country.

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"These are not minimum-wage jobs. There are so many good jobs. But people don't know how to get to them," Biden said in a White House interview.

"It's not the federal government creating jobs. We're facilitating. We're putting the mechanism together to identify real jobs. We're just saying here's where the jobs are, here's the requirements, here's how you get those requirements and we'll help you pay for it, if you qualify."

Biden cites a program he visited in Detroit that taught programming skills to two dozen women with no previous experience. All graduated, and within days, were hired at salaries of \$55,000 to \$100,000.



Vice President Biden explains the millions in grants that will help connect employers, training and workers.

(Photo: Joe Martin, WUSA-TV, Washington D.C.)

The administration's report (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1279773-white-house-report-july-2014.html>), released in July, stresses the importance of employers working with schools to make sure students are getting the right skills, and promotes more apprenticeships. It also highlights programs that encourage accountability, such as a "report card" program in New Jersey where schools are graded based on where their graduates were placed and how much they earn.

Biden says he is confident some of the basic initiatives will be funded. On Monday, he announced \$450 million in new-job-training grants for partnerships between businesses and community colleges. Altogether, \$2 billion has been given out in the past three years.

"In this divided town, there is an emerging consensus. There's a lot of opportunity. Businesses are coming back if we have qualified workers."

Some state and local economic development organizations and community colleges are trying to generate data to help close the information gap.

- In Georgia, for example, the state government is trying to systematically assess which jobs are not being filled. That's especially important for a state where the growing film industry has lost projects for a lack of workers.



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Lee Thomas, Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment director, talks about the challenges of finding skilled trade workers for Atlanta's film industry.

WXIA-Atlanta for USA TODAY

• Monroe Community College in Rochester, N.Y., released a report linking programs at the school to data on supply, demand, wages and required skills for local occupations. For example, there are 42 job openings for students in the Applied Integrated Technology program — also referred to as mechatronics — in the area. Salaries can reach as high as \$31 an hour, but there aren't students being trained for these jobs. The college is starting a mechatronics program next fall.

• Many colleges, like Monroe, are trying to respond to the ebb and flow of job demand by offering fast-track, non-degree courses that get trained students into the workforce faster, but also can be easily scaled back or dismantled when the supply of workers meets demand.

"We need students who are college-ready and ready for an intensive experience," said Todd Oldham, vice president of economic and workforce development at Monroe Community College. "We're doing this to create a worker."



Competitors Pull Together

COMPANIES FIND THEIR OWN WORKPLACE SOLUTIONS

Ajax's company near Minneapolis isn't waiting for schools to take the lead.

He and several of his competitors worked with Anoka Technical College to launch the Precision Sheet Metal Academy five years ago. They got nearly \$1 million in equipment, tooling, safety, software and material donations to start the 100-hour, fast-track program. To date, it has put almost 300 people to work and has an employment rate of 98%, according to the college.

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"If we go to one of those schools and say we need a program to train the five new people we hired, they're going to laugh at us 'cause there's no way they can develop a program, buy the equipment, hire instructors, get the floor space for five people," Ajax said. "But if we get 10 companies and we're training 50 to 100 per year, that's a sustainable model."

It's also a model for workers who want to retool their own careers.

At 29, Emily Cramble had shifted from job to job after high school. She lost her job at a gas station, lost her home to foreclosure, had her car repossessed and racked up thousands of dollars in debt.



Then, the single mother heard companies were having a hard time finding precision sheet metal workers. She got a grant to cover tuition and within two days of finishing the three-month training, she had a job.

"It was totally worth it," said Cramble, who is now making more than \$41,000 per year between her salary and overtime — more than double what she made at the gas station and enough to make her feel confident that she can take care of her 5-year-old daughter on her own.

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I couldn't have imagined a year, year-and-a-half ago that this is where I'd be," Cramble said. "And I can't imagine where I'm going to be a couple years from now."



USA TODAY News
USA TODAY analysis finds hottest new jobs



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PART 1

Where The Jobs Are: The New Blue Collar

Credits: **Contributing:** Andrea McCarren and Joe Martin, WUSA-TV, Washington, D.C.; Doug Miller, KHOU-TV, Houston; Steven Eckert and John Drilling, KARE-TV, Minneapolis; Karyn Greer and Lauren Rudeseal, WXIA-TV, Atlanta; Shawn Chitnis, KREM-TV, Spokane; and Jodi Upton, USA TODAY.

Interactive and presentation: Chad Palmer, Frank Pompa, Maria Fowler, Bob Laird and Jodi Upton, USA TODAY

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Factories open doors to 3,000 youths on jobs tour

Bob Dohr, Daily Herald Media 2:55 p.m. CDT October 9, 2014



(Photo: T'xer Zhon Kha/Daily Herald Media)

WAUSAU – More than 3,000 eighth-graders from central Wisconsin got out of the classroom and into the factory Wednesday as part of the third annual Heavy Metal Tour.

Students from more than 30 schools in Marathon, Lincoln, Portage, Wood and Oneida counties boarded buses and visited various manufacturers to learn more about manufacturing in 2014 and the types of jobs available.

The goal of the tour is to inspire young people to go into manufacturing as an occupation, said Rene Daniels, executive director of the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, one of the primary organizers.

"I don't think that kids really understand what manufacturing is all about today," Daniels said. "It requires a lot of technical skills; it requires problem-solving skills, creative thinking and state-of-the-art technology (that) is being used in manufacturing today. So we really want them to understand what those occupations look like because we want to keep them here in north central Wisconsin to do that job."

Local manufacturing leaders are looking to "build a pipeline" to address an expected labor shortage in the next two to three years, a shortage created by retirements and other factors, she said.

Down the road, 13-year-old Logan Engel might fill one of those open positions. The Edgar Middle School eighth-grader was part of a group of students who toured Wausau Electric.

"They showed us a lot about how they made their electric motors, and all the different steps that go into making each different individual part of it," Logan said. "(They) just showed us around and what they've been doing and what they're looking forward to."

Logan said he always thought "engineering and putting together motors and stuff like that was a really cool thing," and the tour helped show him how it was done.

"It changed your mindset on how things are made and what people actually do, and the work that's put into it and all the machinery used," he said.

Classmate Daria Hoesly said she's leaning toward a career in the medical field and not manufacturing, but visiting Wausau Electric gave her an up-close look at people's work lives.

"It kind of just brings you to reality to look at people and what they do for a living, and how they make their money and support their family," Daria said.

Jarp Industries, Schuette Metals, Greenheck Fan Corp. and Wausau Window & Wall Systems also were among the 47 manufacturers that hosted students.

In addition to the company tours, the teens visited the Wausau and Antigo campuses of Northcentral Technical College, the Marshfield and Stevens Point campuses of Mid-State Technical College, and Nicolet College in Rhineland.

The tour has more than tripled in size in the past three years, Daniels said. About 1,000 students participated the first year. This year, schools from Portage and Wood counties were added to bring the total close to 3,100.

Also new was that several companies opened their doors to parents later in the day to give them a sense of what their kids experienced during the tours.

So how do organizers know if the tour has been a success? Daniels said they won't know until the tour-takers start graduating from high school and begin making choices about occupations and post-secondary education.

"Our educational institutions have committed to asking students four years from now, if they went into manufacturing, what inspired them to go into manufacturing, so we'll kind of be able to connect it four years later," she said.

Bob Dohr can be reached at 715-845-0660. Find him on Twitter as @BobDohr1.

On the subject

Factories open doors to 3,000 youths on jobs tour

Daily Herald Media and its partners in Gannett Wisconsin Media have launched a statewide project to connect future employees with growing career opportunities in Wisconsin. Called "State of Opportunity," the nine-month project provides an up-close look at a variety of industries and jobs in the state that expect to have worker shortages. Look for the stories, videos and more at www.wausaudailyherald.com/state-of-opportunity.

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Oct. 16, 2014, 7:32 a.m.



Duffy campaign staffer gives fake name at Westlund event

[\(/story/news/politics/2014/10/13/duffy-](/story/news/politics/2014/10/13/duffy-campaign-member-violates-policy/17224707/)

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Oct. 13, 2014, 9:02 p.m.



Everest Metro police log Sept. 26 through Oct. 3

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Oct. 15, 2014, 11:08 p.m.



Taco Bell testing Sriracha menu

[\(/story/money/business/2014/10/15/ta](/story/money/business/2014/10/15/taco-bell-testing-sriracha-menu/)

From the Pittsburgh Business Times

:<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/blog/morning-edition/2014/10/oberg-highlands-high-school-partner-on.html>

Oberg, Highlands High School partner on apprenticeship training

Oct 14, 2014, 7:34am EDT



[Justine Coyne](#)

Reporter- *Pittsburgh Business Times*

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Due to a growing shortage of qualified candidates for precision manufacturing openings, Freeport-based **Oberg Industries** Inc. has formed a partnership with Highlands High School in nearby Natrona Heights to directly connect students to industry-specific training.

The company recently introduced the Junior Apprentice training program to help participating students develop technological skills and become familiar with the industry. The program is offered to Highlands High School seniors at no cost or added expense to the students.

Students who successfully complete the JAA courses in good academic standing and pass the Oberg apprenticeship entrance requirements will be prequalified to be hired as full-time apprentices at Oberg Industries upon graduation in 2015.

"Oberg and Highlands believe that this program will provide each student with a head start toward a rewarding career in manufacturing," Oberg President and CEO [David Bonvenuto](#) said in a statement. "We are excited to be part of this new partnership and look forward to helping students and parents realize that manufacturing is an excellent career choice today and well into the future."

Justine Coyne covers manufacturing and higher education.

