



LANE WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

Lane Workforce Partnership Community Engagement Committee Minutes

Date: 9/25/2026

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Jesse Quinn, Hannah (Felt) Davila, Nicole Desch, Charlie Vermilyea, Rhonda Busek

Agenda Items:

Key Outcomes

This meeting brought together representatives from Lane Workforce Partnership (LWP), Lane ESD, Pivot, Collaborative EDO, Emergence, and Bushnell University to align on workforce development initiatives across K–12 and post-secondary education. Major topics included the structure and upcoming schedule of Fall Regional Advisory Committees (RACs), a detailed exploration of healthcare and behavioral health industry engagement in classrooms, and a proposed spring showcase consolidating all 110 CTE programs in Lane County. Several concrete follow-up actions were identified, including connecting Bushnell with HECC short-term certificate grant work and exploring a healthcare-equivalent of the Sand & Gravel Days industry event.

Fall Regional Advisory Committees (RACs)

All Fall RAC dates are now confirmed, running from the first week of October through mid-November.

Fall 2026 RAC Dates - all meetings run from 4:30–6:30 pm (locations TBA)

- Manufacturing & Engineering: Tuesday, October 6
 - Visual & Media Arts: Thursday, October 8
 - Early Childhood Education: Monday, October 12
 - Computer Science: Thursday, October 22
 - Agriculture: Monday, October 26
 - Business: Wednesday, October 28
 - Culinary: Monday, November 2
 - Construction: Tuesday, November 3
 - Natural Resources: Monday, November 9
 - Health Sciences: Tuesday, November 10
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- RACs are a federal Department of Education requirement for CTE programs — they exist to give industry and local employers formal input on classroom content to keep curriculum relevant and current.
 - Lane ESD restructured from school-by-school advisory committees to 10 regional advisory committees to reduce burden on employers who previously had to attend separately for all 110 programs.
 - Goals of regional structure: build regional ecosystems of support, enable shared employer connections across programs, and avoid each teacher having to independently maintain their own industry relationships.
 - Health Sciences RAC is a joint committee with Lane Community College (LCC) faculty in the

room — designed so LCC can assess whether high school graduates arrive prepared for community college programs.

- Bushnell University (Rhonda) was invited to attend the Health Sciences RAC on November 10th and to bring faculty, particularly those involved in hiring or with a pulse on skills requirements.
- Hannah (contracted through Lane ESD) coordinates the RACs as part of a shared vision of moving individuals from classroom to employment, education, or wraparound services.
- Four professional development offerings for educators launched this year, stemming directly from RAC conversations last year:
 - Employability skills — intentional classroom instruction
 - AI and AI usage in the classroom
 - Manufacturing-specific PD
 - Natural resources-specific PD
- Shared equipment initiative under development: exploring whether LCC equipment used once per term could be checked out by high school programs between uses, and whether high schools could share equipment regionally rather than each purchasing independently.

Spring CTE Showcase — March Planning

- All 110 CTE programs across Lane County will be brought together for a single large showcase in March at Lane Community College, replacing 10 separate showcases or individual school events.
- Fall RACs are explicitly designed to feed into spring showcase planning: programs will identify what they want to showcase and begin initial coordination.
- Student selection process is still being determined — teachers will select top seniors, or students may earn a spot through competition; this is a key conversation topic for the fall RACs.
- Career fair / talent match integration is being actively considered:
 - Nicole raised the idea of incorporating industry project review alongside a career fair element.
 - Hannah proposed a more organic model: employers and students wear badges indicating hiring/job-seeking status, enabling natural career conversations during the showcase rather than a formal tabling setup.
 - Open question: whether to run a structured career fair half-day or embed career conversations throughout the showcase day.

Healthcare & Behavioral Health Industry Engagement Clinical Validator Initiative

- MedSplash (summer program) will continue; the new school-year focus is the Clinical Validator model, introduced by Carrie Pilgrim at the Industry Sector Partnership.
- Concept: rather than sending students into clinical settings (largely impractical), industry professionals come into classrooms to validate skills students are learning and provide mentorship — e.g., observing and coaching during IV practice.
- Skills mapping is ongoing; a list of specific skills needing this type of mentorship exists but was not fully reviewed in the meeting — Keri Pilgrim is the point of contact.
- Flexibility options being explored: virtual 15-minute check-ins with students, Zoom-based industry participation, near-peer mentorship (LCC or Bushnell students mentoring high schoolers).
- Constraint acknowledged: nursing programs run all day with labs, making it very difficult for

instructors or students to leave during school hours.

- Retired professionals identified as a promising pool: Hannah noted they may have the schedule flexibility that active practitioners do not.
- Charlie offered to send Hannah links to four national associations for retired nurses with state and local chapters.
- Lane County Medical Society is also a resource — Jesse noted that an ad in their publication successfully recruited volunteer medical directors for HIV Alliance (Dr. Pelz and Dr. Gail Hacker).

Emergence — Behavioral Health Partnership with Casey Reid

- Casey Reid and Lori Noggle have been visiting Emergence every couple of months to brainstorm how Emergence can partner with high school behavioral health and peer support programs.
- Casey is separately working with Emergence's peer support manager on supporting mental health peers in high schools.
- Emergence's clinical director and director of mental health are coordinating to bring high school students to Emergence for a "day in the life" experience on October 23rd, with a follow-up visit in January (date TBD).
- Students will conduct mock assessments and a mock therapy session, talk to therapists, and ask questions — no real clients involved due to HIPAA.
- Emergence therapists and mental health interns will also go into high schools to evaluate student projects and curriculum for industry relevance.

HECC Short-Term Certificate Grants

- Lane ESD and LCC received **three HEC short-term certificate grants**:
 1. Behavioral health / peer support certificates
 2. Construction — entry-level trades
 3. Medical assisting redesign/build-out at LCC
- Jesse recommended Rhonda reach out to **Shareen** to explore how Bushnell could support or collaborate on the behavioral health certificate grant work.

Bushnell University — Nursing Simulation Lab & Engagement Potential

- Bushnell has a state-of-the-art nursing simulation lab including a mannequin capable of simulating pregnancy, hemorrhage, and vomiting simultaneously.
- The simulation equipment is hardwired into the wall and cannot be transported to an off-site event.
- The nursing program is an 18-month accelerated BSN — highly intensive, students in class all day, faculty very protective of program integrity and student focus.
- Rhonda committed to talking to nursing director about evening engagement opportunities (when students are not in the building) and about the feasibility of hosting visits.
- Clinical mental health building is always locked due to confidentiality requirements — limits tour options for that program.
- Hannah suggested an alternative: a multi-part panel series (careers panel, education pathways panel) rather than an in-person facility tour, potentially held in the evening.

Sand & Gravel Days — Expansion & Healthcare Equivalent

- Sand & Gravel Days is an annual multi-employer event involving four organizations: Riverbend, Knife River, Wildish, and Delta Sand & Gravel — rotating host sites.
- Last year: ~80 students; this year scaling to 300 students, including a third day for 150 seventh graders from Kelly Middle School (split into Group A and B).
- Jesse proposed exploring a healthcare equivalent — a multi-employer tour-style event for health/behavioral health careers.
- HIPAA barrier confirmed by both Charlie and Rhonda: putting students in front of actual clients would violate confidentiality and risk loss of licenses — mock scenarios are the only viable alternative.
- Nicole reframed the model: Sand & Gravel Days also includes presentation stations where employers talk about careers, requirements, and pathways — this element is replicable in healthcare without patient exposure.
- Rhonda committed to starting internal conversations about what a Bushnell-hosted component could look like, particularly for nursing.
- Hannah suggested the RAC itself as the right venue to ask teachers what they actually want from such an event, rather than the planning group deciding for them.

Career Ready Lane & Career Tours

- Career Ready Lane is the matchmaking platform connecting instructors with industry for classroom presentations.
- Pilot year results: 84 classroom presentations vs. a prior baseline of 28 — a 3x increase.
- Networking event: October 15th, 4:30–6:30 PM at Ninkasi Better Living Room — all attendees encouraged to register and attend.
- Universal background check MOU signed by all 16 Lane County superintendents: one background check now grants an employer access to any of the 16 school districts, eliminating a major bureaucratic barrier to classroom entry.
- Career Tours program (Nicole, coordinating with U of O Career Center) — open to LCC and Bushnell students as well:
 - Fall (October 16): Intersection of Technology & Design — Pipeworks Studios, Avant Assessments, Lane County IT
 - Winter: Life Sciences — ABCAM / Riverfront Research Park, Thermo Fisher Scientific (chartered bus secured via grant)
 - Spring: Banking & Finance
- Nicole flagged Bushnell as a potential Career Tour stop for a future healthcare-focused tour.
- Healthcare Sector Partnership reconvening October 15th at Riverbend Annex — updates from three committees, recruiting new participants.
- Construction & Aggregate Sector reconvening November 17th; expanded skilled trades series planned with Reynolds Electric (Jessica):
 - Employability/Essential Skills workshop
 - Skilled trades panel
 - New: Apprenticeships-focused panel
 - New: Educator-only site visit (similar to Blueprint model) — bringing teachers/counselors/college instructors into industry sites

New Leader Onboarding / Welcome Committee Concept

- John (unable to attend) asked the group to consider how LWP and partners should welcome and brief new leaders entering Lane County — e.g., new 4J superintendent, new Lane ESD superintendent, new city council members, new college leadership.
- Current approach criticized as information-dumping rather than relationship-building — Charlie noted her own experience as a new HR director at Emergence where she was overwhelmed with what others wanted her to know, rather than being asked what she needed.
- Proposed approach: Lead with listening — ask new leaders what their biggest concerns or interests are; let them drive the conversation.
- Rhonda proposed a more personal, sector-specific contact model: assign a known community member as a point of contact for new leaders in their sector (e.g., Charlie for behavioral health providers, Rhonda for healthcare) who can take them to lunch, bring them to their first event, and answer informal questions.
- Hannah noted this mirrors a broader challenge: new business owners and providers coming into Eugene often lack a welcoming infrastructure to help them navigate the community.
- Nicole connected this to economic recruitment: personal connections (school recommendations, real estate agents, community feel) are often the deciding factor for companies considering relocating or expanding to the region.
- A prior working group on this topic was recalled — included Paige Walters, Matt, Nicole, and others — originally convened around PeaceHealth's international nurse recruitment needs; concluded the Chamber of Commerce already covered much of this ground.
- Healthcare Sector Partnership website already contains resources compiled from that prior effort.

Action Items

- Jesse → Rhonda/Shareen Email: Jesse will connect Rhonda Busek with Shareen via email, framing Bushnell as a potential collaborator on the HECC behavioral health/peer support short-term certificate grant.
- Rhonda → Nursing Director: Explore feasibility of evening engagement opportunities (tours, presentations, panel participation) for high school students at Bushnell's nursing building.
- Rhonda → Internal conversations: Begin discussions about a potential healthcare industry event (Sand & Gravel equivalent or panel series) and what Bushnell could contribute.
- Hannah → Rhonda: Send the Health Sciences RAC email invite (not yet distributed) so Rhonda can forward to relevant Bushnell faculty.
- Nicole → Rhonda: Forward Rhonda's current contact number to Jesse and CC Jesse on it.
- Charlie → Hannah: Send links to national retired nurse associations (four identified via Google search) with state/local chapter information.
- Jesse → Group text thread: Send photos from the Team Oregon Build work site to Rhonda and Nicole; add group thread (Hannah already included).
- All: Register for Career Ready Lane networking event — October 15th, 4:30–6:30 PM, Ninkasi Better Living Room.
- Rhonda (optional): Investigate whether nursing simulation equipment could be transported or whether a portable alternative could be arranged for an off-site healthcare showcase event.
- Hannah/Group: Continue conversation at the Health Sciences RAC (November 10th) about what teachers actually want from industry engagement, rather than deciding on their behalf.

Open Questions

- Can Bushnell nursing simulation equipment be transported to an off-site event, or is hardwired infrastructure a permanent constraint?

- What is the final format for the Spring CTE Showcase — organic career conversations embedded throughout, or a structured career fair block?
- How will students be selected to attend the Spring Showcase (competition, teacher nomination, grade-based)?
- What is the best structure for a healthcare industry event (full Sand & Gravel-style day vs. evening panel series), and what do teachers actually want?
- How should LWP and partners structure new leader onboarding — sector-specific personal contacts, formal welcome packets, or a hybrid approach?