

Eric Neal:

Welcome to The State Support Team 11 podcast. I'm your host Eric Neal. Today we are joined by John Hambrick. John is the work based learning coordinator at the ESC of central Ohio. Welcome John, how are you today?

John Hambrick:

Oh, I'm great today, Eric, how about yourself?

Eric Neal:

I'm doing well, thank you for joining us. This is going to be a fun conversation. Can you tell us a little bit about the work that you do at the ESC of central Ohio?

John Hambrick:

Sure, sure. And again, thanks so much for having me here and the opportunity to promote the work of work-based learning here in central Ohio and through the ESC and all of our member districts and really the rippling effects throughout the state of Ohio, which has just been super cool in the last two years that I've been in this role. And I'll just share, before I got into this role, what really led me into this is the last 15 years here in central Ohio I've been in workforce development really helping to nurture those relationships with business and industry partners, economic development partners, training providers, whether that's the two year school, the four year institution, credentialing certification and having all of those great relationships to really... For the benefit and the promotion of at that time for the last 15 years adult job seekers. Whether they're underemployed, unemployed, dislocated through no fault of their own, really, to help nurture those relationships to help make that connection to have a meaningful employment opportunity. And so a couple of years ago this opportunity presented itself. Is to take those relationships and apply it to a different constituency and that's our K12 ecosystem here in the region.

John Hambrick:

And I really appreciate a regional view and that's why I'm so fond of the ESC of central Ohio, where our main counties, Franklin county, Delaware county, Union county, so much robust economic development growth of the last many years. But really it just permeates through the region, our 11 counties and then throughout the state of really helping making those connections with our business partners and our economic development partners for our emerging workforce. And that's what we have and that's what the cool thing with this work based learning role is really helping for awareness in our early grades, some experiences and exposure in the middle grades, and then that actual the readiness and then opportunities to apply some of the competencies and things that students have learned in high school to work with an employer side by side for some really cool future options.

John Hambrick:

And that's I think one of the things that with work-based learning and talking with our institutions, both higher education institutions, our credentialing partners and our work based learning partners, our business industry is that students when they come out of high school they have options now. It can be an and, it doesn't have to be an or with work based learning experiences.

John Hambrick:

Students can go right into the work base, the work environment after high school but continue with more credentialing, can continue with an associate's degree. And then into the four year degree. It doesn't have to be an or discussion any longer. Or that if they say, "Hey, I want to go to the military and continue." The military's a great employer and they want to continue the education. Just work based learning here in central Ohio is it's so dynamic right now and really has just some really innovative partners to help our young students to be engaged. And it's... I'm a little hyped about this man. It's a super exciting time for really all our parties involved.

Eric Neal:

Yeah. I'm excited as well. It's really interesting. I think this summer will be 15 years I've been in Ohio and it's changed so much in that amount of time and we've always had this mix, especially in central Ohio, this mix between a lot of white collar jobs and then a lot of manufacturing and blue collar jobs also. But now you've really had in the last five, 10 years a lot of technology companies coming into the mix. And now you're looking at really that chip manufacturing plant that's coming in. If I heard correctly is going to be maybe the largest in the country so really exciting times and really important to be making these connections right now.

John Hambrick:

That's right. And Intel, I think they're going to want to boast, Eric, that not only will it be the largest chip manufacturing in the country but I think the footprint that they want to establish in Lincoln county there, is the largest chip manufacturer in a world on that particular site. Yeah, very exciting for central Ohio and really all of the spokes if you think of if we just used Intel as that example of the center spoke, just all of the connections it's going to have with skill trades, healthcare, technology, again our students, as they are learning these different subject matter areas and how to apply that into Intel. How they're going to bring in the adult workforce that needs to be retrained and re skilled through our continuing education, our career technical partners that do adult education. It's again, it's a super dynamic. And to your point, not only after the last 10 years we've had the influx of a Midwest Silicon valley but our healthcare systems are so dynamic right now. We have four key pillars here in the region and they too are not only growing within the clinical space but the nonclinical space and that interweaving of technology and healthcare is bar none.

John Hambrick:

The companies coming into central Ohio around gene therapy and artificial intelligence, our students that are going to be graduating or that are facing the workforce right now are going towards jobs that have never existed before. And we've talked about that, just in conversations, like, "Wow, so some of these jobs are really kind of scifi." And we maybe saw them on Star Trek or Star Wars something like just... It wasn't real but now it is absolutely real. The future is here, the future is now and students are training for things that are being created on a daily basis.

Eric Neal:

Well, that's brings me to the point, you talked a lot about a big part of your work is making those connections between schools and the business industry so that we're making sure that the things that the students are learning and the opportunities that are available to them are aligned with what the needs are, the quickly changing needs of the business community. How do you go about making those connections?

John Hambrick:

I appreciate that question. One, it's historical for me. I've created a network here in central Ohio over the last 15 plus years. I've moved to central Ohio in 1998 and it was really the restaurant industry that brought me here but it... From then changing from a restaurant into working in private industry and then in nonprofit and then workforce, I've developed these relationships across all of our industries here in central Ohio. And we have great industries. We've already mentioned healthcare and information technology but we have logistics. We have modern manufacturing. We have hospitality. Our friends in nonprofit will share with you that the nonprofit sector here in central Ohio is the third largest employing sector in central Ohio. And so it's all these dynamic relationships that continue to not only build with one in particular employer but then it permeates out to the broadening this network.

John Hambrick:

And I got to tell you, just as a... Educators are listening to this, one of the most useful tools for me as I build out a network, is LinkedIn. I talk to teachers on a regular basis and they're like, yeah, "I've heard about LinkedIn, I haven't really stepped towards that." And I just share that LinkedIn is my electronic Rolodex. I remember growing up and my dad had a Rolodex on his office desk and I got to tell you it was phenomenal and still keeping an address book to send out Christmas cards. But it's today in business and industry it's how can you connect the folks really on a much faster pace than snail mail? And LinkedIn for me has just been incredibly useful and a great teaching tool too for our teachers as they continue to teach workforce development and career readiness. And for our students that can use not only the tools through LinkedIn on building a profile but have that compliment as they build out their Ohio Means Jobs profile for their Ohio Means Jobs readiness field.

John Hambrick:

And so that's just... And then compound we've had a break, right? With COVID. We've not had those in person networking events. I've really missed those. I really fancy being in a room, shaking some hands and just helping to build a network for the benefit of somebody else, right? And we've missed that but we're getting back, I think, to being able to meet in person. But LinkedIn has been a steady constant tool to build out both that professional network but also increasing that educational network as educators find value in using a professional networking tool like that.

Eric Neal:

No, definitely. And that's something I think you hear a lot about soft skills and things that they're talking about with students but there's more than just learning content or passing an exam or getting a certification. It's really about teaching them how to interact in a professional setting and in the business world. And I agree, I think LinkedIn is a great tool and it's good to give exposure and keep you connected, learned about things that are happening out in whatever fields you're going into, couldn't agree more. It's definitely-

John Hambrick:

What interesting is with all the different social platforms available I can share my age to say that Facebook is my go-to on the social side. My daughters would be Instagram. But we're also integrating some of the Instagram and Twitter and TikTok for employment benefits. It's been really interesting to watch how business and industry are using those social media sites to attract talent and using that as a tool to be like, "Hey, come work here. It's hip, it's slick, it's the state of the art," and seeing more of that.

John Hambrick:

But that's going to be something I think that's really helping our emerging workforce but then also those that are a little more experienced, think, "Hey, we also have to broaden our awareness." And to use these social media tools really for some great benefits of those soft skills because certainly you'll communicate a little bit differently on an Instagram account than you would on a LinkedIn. And I think teaching that is also going... Is important. And I've found it to be good value to say, "Hey, we're not going to talk BRB on LinkedIn. You can do that on the other social sites, Hey, rock on, right?" But what we will really use the vocabulary that you've learned and adapted so well with in that particular format. And it's been a lot of fun to watch, not only my daughters but just students around me, embrace the tool that LinkedIn can be for.

Eric Neal:

Definitely. Can you tell me a little bit about the Drive Ohio program that you guys work with?

John Hambrick:

Yeah, we were talking about just innovators in central Ohio and really throughout the state and technology. A few years back our past governor Kasich said, "Hey, what we needed in the state of Ohio is really an opportunity to help broaden awareness and readiness for automated technology, connected technology and drone technology." And so they executive ordered to create Drive Ohio and that's what they really focus on are those three key areas. It's enhanced since they started but really taking the...

John Hambrick:

As we see the increase in drone technology not just for recreational use but as they're using drone technology, and this is just state of the art for organ donor transplant where some of these organs can be transported over many hours but some really have a very short window of minutes under an hour. And to be able to create a connected aerial network from Cleveland to Columbus to get a drone to transport a human heart without a human pilot, from one site to the next, logistically get there. Get it to take off from Cleveland, do the flight path down 71, land at one of our particular hospitals here in Columbus and then be able to use that organ and Drive Ohio is really encouraged and brought in incredible companies to help meet that need that we have. And Drive Ohio has expanded too. They've flight Ohio. You talk about the improvements in a last mile where you've got Uber and Lyft. But imagine taking that in a drone large enough to transport a human. And we're seeing so much of that come out of Dayton and Right Pat and a lot of great companies around there.

John Hambrick:

But I think too, for some of the educators listening today, Drive Ohio has a great outreach program that touches multiple grades. The elementary grades, the middle schools and the high schools. And the elementary schools are they're using little [inaudible 00:15:27] to help our really expanding minds to code. And then when you get into the middle grades and high school grades, they've developed a smart mobility ambassador program where they're training high school students around smart mobility. Again, whether that's the automated, the connected, the drone technology or unmanned aerial to go into middle grades and share about smart mobility and really the many impacts it has. And as we talked a little earlier, there are jobs being created now around smart mobility that never existed. And to share with these students that, "Hey, there's something you've never seen before and wouldn't, you want to be a part of that?" And it's just... Yeah, it's growing, it's growing, the excitement level around that. Not only when I talk with the team at Drive Ohio but just even in the school systems that have embraced

that smart mobility ambassador program that they're just seeing light bulbs of excitement and ideas and opportunity with students that again just hadn't heard or seen or maybe even believe that this kind of technology would be available to them.

Eric Neal:

Yeah. It sounds like in the elementary school, it's really just about that exposure and getting them excited about it. And they hit middle school, it's a little bit more hands on. As they enter high school, they're getting closer to choosing a career path. How does the program support that the students are at that point in their lives that are ready to actually start doing some things that may attach them to a career right out of school?

John Hambrick:

Yeah, I think a great question. And I think part of that ambassador program sets them up with a network of opportunity to say, "Hey, if you're interested in drone technology, there's great programming going down in Cincinnati." Whether at the university of Cincinnati or some of the other schools there that there are state-of-the-art drone programs that Ohio is leading in the country. And then they can say, "Hey, not only can we set that up but they're establishing scholarships for students to be able to step towards that." And they're setting up just even through Ohio department of transportation, as an example, they have a drone operator credential that they need students to go towards and earn if for nothing else, as we're expanding on our recent Build Back Better transportation money that's coming out from the administration.

John Hambrick:

We need these drones to inspect our bridges. Not just the transportation aspect of getting something from a product from point A to point B but for infrastructure. Learning how to operate a drone and using the different technology that incorporated in a drone, the sensors, the video, to be able to say, "Hey, look, we're going to use this where we can cover a lot more ground, a lot more efficiently and then take that back to the engineers to be able to see where we need to go next."

John Hambrick:

And so that's incredibly rich opportunities for our students as they move on to that. Or just even if you have a student that is in a career technical pathway of being an automotive technician. Smart mobility will... We all know that in newer cars all of the sensors that are built into the body of the car and into the braking systems... This is not your grandfather's garage of just a lift and wrench and a tool.

John Hambrick:

There are so many systems that have to be programmed, that have to be readjusted and our automotive technician students are learning that and where some students are getting exposure to that they're "Ooh, wow I want to be more involved with something like that." And that really gives I think, again, that broad awareness because Drive Ohio is in the schools and they are partnering and they want to broaden the awareness of smart mobility and it's going throughout the state of Ohio. It's not just specific to central but they're really trying to set up some great programming around the state. And I'll just share if you want to connect with them, the email address workforce@drive.ohio.gov. Just that's a...whether you're an elementary, middle, or high school and you want to connect with Drive Ohio, that's a great way to do that.

Eric Neal:

No, that's great. And something that we spoke about when we were preparing for this that was really encouraging to me was, many people think of when I was in high school where if you were in auto shop that you were on a certain kind of path. There were the career tech path and then there was the people going to college path. And it sounds like what you guys are working on is, How do I create new pathways that are scalable all the way up through college, if that's what the student wants." Instead of having to branch left or right, you say, "Well, I'm going to jump into it here at a technical certificate or some sort of training that allows me to enter but if that doesn't pigeonhole me or stick me with career tech forever that if I decide I get good at that and I want to learn more, it allows me to go further on down the same path, which leads to college." If that's where they want to go. Or just to another certificate or some better training so that there it's more of this continuum rather than a branch in the road.

John Hambrick:

That's right. There... I was talking with a superintendent about a year and a half ago, and he was sharing that education does a lot of really good things. And our system is well grounded to do certain things really well. But in the development in the last many years, that's really helped education with business and industry are those on-ramps and off-ramps, especially around career technical education. And we're seeing that increase on a very regular basis, whether that's through credentialing pre apprenticeships that could matriculate into a registered apprenticeship program. Or had a really cool conversation last week with a car dealership network here in central Ohio. And they're trying to train up their auto mechanic technicians. They again, all the new technology coming out, plus that it's hard to buy the car right now, if you want to buy one.

Eric Neal:

If you can get one.

John Hambrick:

If you can get one and if you're not paying two or three \$4,000 over list. But that you can rely that you've got a skilled technician working on your vehicle. And so we're seeing increases in that where it's not just in the career technical space but we're also seeing that in the comprehensive schools where they want to partner with a Coda or with a car dealership to provide training, credentialing employment and beyond just even in that auto mechanic space. Or as we build out more healthcare credentials in the healthcare space, information technology. Students are finishing, can finish high school with college credit credentialing in security or programming and then either choose to go on to continue the education step into employment and continue the education.

John Hambrick:

To your point, yes, it's very savvy and easy on and off with career technical but that model is being replicated in our comprehensive schools and we're just seeing that explode, just really seeing that explode. And I think I mentioned, I don't know if I did give elementary grades there due where we talked a little bit about Drive Ohio and how they're doing Ozobots and the awareness factor. But also other careers around healthcare. A strong program in the elementary schools around the state is it's called Careers That Love You Back. And it's from Leading Age Ohio, it's around how do we care for our seniors and all of the dynamic of involved in senior care, memory care, and just even in hospital care and just giving that awareness which could lead to those on ramps and off ramps later on in career technical education or within the comprehensive schools.

John Hambrick:

The opportunities for students now has never been richer when it comes to different pathways and then creating that. Graduation requirements are changing real soon, being official 2023. And we know, Hey, a student has to graduate with so many course requirements, 20 hours, we know that. But then the demonstration of competent part coming up, whether they say, "Hey, I don't know if I want to do career technical education but maybe I want to go towards an industry recognized credential." Man, that's a demonstration of competency earning that. And if they do a pre-apprenticeship inside of that, that's a two for one. Or students, "Hey, I'm really, I'm college bound. I'm going to do my college credit plus courses. I'm going to take the SATACT and I'm going to move on." Or they enlist but they have those on ramps. And then the other part of that graduation requirement is bringing in the readiness. And those are Ohio graduation seals. Students can pick two of 12 and really they can do more. We have some older tiers that are getting multiple credentials of graduation seals, and it's just dynamic for them. But they can use that again, to start that path in middle school, into the high school and then after.

Eric Neal:

It's just so encouraging because it's meeting that need that's that's out there in industry. Every industry from hospitality all the way up are looking for workers at all, but qualified especially, and to set students up on the path of opportunity instead of just like, "Well, I'm going to take what I can get it." It's really encouraging that's where we're at and that we're thinking about it while they're in school and not trying to adapt after school.

John Hambrick:

That's right. And so a couple of key periods in that educational pathway that are really impactful. We know we do some awareness in the elementary grades but if we can provide some experiences in the middle grades that can really change the trajectory, educational wise, career path wise. As an example here in central Ohio, the ESC is partnered with Columbus city schools and we're doing a virtual career chat with all of Columbus city school middle grades. It's on our landing page through the ESC. If you go to the business advisory council and the parent and community awareness landing page, we've recorded them and put them there. And we set up an idea it's like, "First let's focus on college and career. What to look at if you go to a college. We had several colleges, Ohio state, Columbus state, Franklin university, local.

John Hambrick:

What would it look like if you went to career technical or into a skilled trades? What would it look like? And even the side of that one, yes, we had career technical schools but also even somebody like the Aveda Institute. If somebody wanted to go in to be an esthetician or somebody who does hair, they don't have a very good customer in me but that's, because I'm bald for with those listeners that can't see me. And so... But to provide that experience... And then military, and so we set that college and career awareness so those middle grade students and their parents could hear options. And then we've set a series up on a monthly basis of our different industry sectors here in central Ohio. We had an IT conversation with three great employers in central Ohio. We've had healthcare, modern manufacturing, coming up is retail and logistics, huge here in central Ohio. And then as I mentioned, a third largest employer in the region is our nonprofit sector. And then our business services and our headquarters. Columbus us is rich with headquarters and all the different job functions inside of that. And so we set up this monthly cadence so middle grade students can hear and see options and I think if they get inspired by that then then that's going to change their pathway. And to whatever that early high school grades

and to complete a high school around a particular degree or the diploma and then adding credentials or certifications through that.

John Hambrick:

And then what could lead after graduation. But I mentioned that it's important that we're showing this to our middle grade students but we're also putting that so the family members can see this and that they can have a conversation, over a meal or while they're driving in a car and say, "Hey, I watched that, I know that you saw that in your classroom, but I watched that video and doesn't that look interesting? Drone technology with Drive Ohio. Doesn't that look interesting, an autonomous welding arm where you're not welding, you're not getting dirty, you're just programming the thing. That's an interesting pathway that we hadn't really thought about before for you." And to be able to provide that opportunity to encourage those kinds of conversations.

Eric Neal:

Yeah. And it can only help with some of the challenges you run into in some school districts or certain places or that it's about around engagement or attendance or things like that. It can only be a benefit to hit them early and get them motivated to not just be interested in the subjects but to think, Wow, my engagement now is going to actually pay real dividends here as I go through." It's no longer anymore about it's the right thing to do, it's about this is good for you and your family.

John Hambrick:

And it's, pay dividends. That's an interesting phrase right there, Eric, because it both can be the intrinsic dividend of, "Hey, I saw something in the nonprofit space. I'm going to be able to go in and make an impact. I saw something in the healthcare space, I can get into 3D modeling. Parents can see what's going on with their children, that's making impact. Or I'm going to go with the information technology or I'm going to be an automotive technician and be able to make six figures, that's an economic impact." Talk about dividends. What I can do this program, not have to go to college but get my credential and certification with this. And then all of a sudden I'm making six figures by the time I'm 28 years old. Holy cow, that's definitely impacting the trajectory of students and families.

Eric Neal:

Definitely. The ESC has a business advisory council that you mentioned, has rated three stars out of four in the first two years. I want to say congratulations on that. That's an amazing achievement. Can you explain a little bit about what the council does?

John Hambrick:

Sure, thanks. Business advisory councils are in the statute. Ohio revised codes says, "Hey, you know what? School districts have to have a business advisory council." And so the ESC of central Ohio has a business advisory council that our member districts can align with. And so with 32 plus member districts in our ESC footprint, we have superintendents, we have curriculum developers, we have work-based learning coordinators or internship coordinators coupled with our business and industry partners, our community partners, our teachers, our students attending, all to promote several areas. One, how are we as a business advisory council developing professional skills for the future? And so as we bring in guest speakers, as we bring in some of the program that we've talked about that we're doing through the business advisory council participants, how are we shaping that?

John Hambrick:

How are we coordinating career development experiences? How are we building partnerships? All these key areas that any business advisory council is trying to do on a very localized level or on a regional level, like the ESC, our ESC also, within the business advisory council, we're putting all of these really smart people and passionate vocational experts said, "Hey, we also want to work around a couple of areas too. How do we increase and improve work-based learning in the region?" We have a work-based learning work group to build on that so that's enhancing partnerships. That's bringing more voices and actionable folks to the table. That's building out pre apprenticeships. That's building out more experiences and opportunity for our emerging workforce to have those choices. And our business advisory council also said, "Hey, what can we do to help better engage our parents and in the community?"

John Hambrick:

And so what was born of that is the Parent Community Awareness Group. And they're focused on just even some things inside of that. Not only the career awareness, not only the opportunity to learn more about credentialing certification but what about other parts of our student population that maybe we don't help on a regular basis, are as important, our special needs students. What kind of resources can we put together so that parents, A, when it comes time, when they're identifying that they're young learner has a disability, seen or unseen, what are resources for them there when they're in the middle grades? What kind of resources can parents access and can communicate together as a community to support one another as they travel that path with their learner? And then when they're in the high schools, transition services, keenly important, because as you mentioned, our business and industry partners are screaming for folks to work with them. Well if a true equal opportunity employer is going to say, "All right, well what can we do then to help with that transition of someone that has again, a special needs seen or unseen that we can transition into our workforce?" And what kind of services are needed to make that as successful and as accountability appropriate transition as possible. And so we've got a group working on, a subgroup working on that of just great, great folks. And I'm super excited to be a part of that.

John Hambrick:

We also have other parts of our population, those that have been just as involved, what are we doing to help with those students that have a background early on but need to transition into the workforce. Just a lot of areas of our student population that we want to try and provide awareness, connection, and meaningful opportunity with our business and industry partners. And of course, to the student and the family themselves.

Eric Neal:

Absolutely.

John Hambrick:

It's just a huge win when these conversations turn into opportunity and retention.

Eric Neal:

Yeah, absolutely. All this has just been so exciting and encouraging for me. If people would like to find out more about you and the work that you do, where should they go?

John Hambrick:

Well, you can go a couple places. Of course, [inaudible 00:37:22] connect with me on LinkedIn, John Hambrick, My Employers Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. Please feel free to connect there. You can go to the ESCs escoco.org and do a search for Business Advisory Council. You can do a search for a Parent Community Awareness and connect. If there is an interest with the work that you're doing, where I might be a resource for you, I fancy myself, Eric, of being a connector and a convener of resources and really it's these resources that are for the benefit of somebody else. But I think that's what we're supposed to do. I think we're supposed to come to a point where we've got a network, where we've got resources, where we've got knowledge that we need to share that and then promote it to benefit others. And so I think that's my mission here right now and that's to help make those connections. Please feel free to reach out via LinkedIn or just shoot me an email. Gosh, that'd be john.hambrick@escoco.org, but either way, Hey, just look me up and connect.

Eric Neal:

No, definitely. Well, John, I really want to thank you again for joining us. It's been a real pleasure.

John Hambrick:

Eric, thank you very much.

Eric Neal:

Well, that wraps up this episode of the State Support Team 11 podcast. If you'd like to know more about the work that we do here at SST11, go to our website, it's SST11.org. Give us a call at (614) 753-4694 or hit us up on Twitter. We're at [sstregion11](https://twitter.com/sstregion11). If you'd like to get ahold of me, I'm at eric.neal@escoco.org. Until next time, thanks for listening.