



**2017**  
ANNUAL REPORT

**bbec**  
**BERKS BUSINESS  
EDUCATION COALITION**

*inform.*

*involve.*

*inspire.*



## MISSION:

The mission of the Berks Business Education Coalition is to develop and to coordinate programs within the business and education communities which improve the competencies of students and ensure that they have the aspirations, skills, and knowledge to plan appropriately for their lives after high school.

## GOALS:

1. Promote career awareness and development programs for students in Berks County.
2. Support member schools in the effort to improve basic academic performance.
3. Promote appropriate, differentiated interest in pursuit of post secondary education.
4. Facilitate continuing dialogue between, with, and among K-12 and higher education.
5. Provide for the viability and sustainability of Coalition programs and services.

Much is happening in education in Berks County and at the Berks Business Education Coalition (BBEC) we are pleased to be part of it. As you will read in this report, a focus around the county is on points of transition.

The newly formed Berks Early Learning Coalition (BELC) advocates for programs and resources for children in the Pre-K learning years. We can all agree that these formative years are the building blocks for learning all the years through high school and beyond. The Berks Business Education Coalition is pleased to be an active partner in this advocacy.

Two Berks Business Education Coalition programs, Students Interacting with Business and Higher Education Campus Visits, provide ninth graders a first look into the culture and expectations of business and higher education during the first year of high school. The past two years, BBEC has been instrumental in helping schools develop internship placements for juniors and seniors to explore possible career interests after graduation.

Making good, informed decisions is what life is all about. At the Berks Business Education Coalition, we are excited to be active partners with the schools and the business community to support students to engage positively in this process.

**John P. Weidenhammer**



## Students Interacting with Business

The Students Interacting with Business program engages students for the better part of one day in class size groups for a “boots on the ground” experience with a participating Berks County business. The day starts with a morning assembly program presented by a business professional focusing on the factors that employers value in a good employee. The students then travel by bus to a business to learn about that business and the array of employment opportunities available at that business and within Berks County more generally.

*Brandywine Heights Area High School ninth graders enjoyed the sweet taste of success at R. M. Palmer Company, September 29, 2017, under the guidance of Steve Welman, Director of Human Resources.*

Seventeen of the 18 Berks County school districts participated in 2017, sending 3,833 ninth graders, September 25 to 29, to 26 Berks County businesses.

SIMB

A big “tip of the hat” to these businesses for their engagement.

- Alcon Research, Ltd.
- BB&T
- Berks County Agricultural Center
- Brentwood Industries
- Cambridge-Lee Industries LLC
- Carpenter Technology Corporation
- Dollar General
- DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
- East Penn Manufacturing Co.
- EnerSys
- Fleetwood Industries
- Met-Ed, A FirstEnergy Company
- Penn State Health St. Joseph
- Penske Truck Leasing
- Quadrant Engineering Products
- Reading Eagle
- Reading Health System
- R. M. Palmer Company
- Sealstrip Corporation
- SFS intec, Inc.
- Steve Moyer Subaru
- UGI Energy Services
- UGI Utilities, Inc.
- Unique Pretzels
- Weidenhammer Systems Corporation
- WORLD electronics



*Schuylkill Valley students weathering a rainy day visit with the Penn State Berks Lion, April 4, 2017.*

## Higher Education Campus Visits

Berks County is fortunate to be the home for five colleges and universities. Albright College, Alvernia University, Kutztown University, Penn State Berks, and the Reading Area Community College offer a spectrum of programs suitable to every possible need and interest of post-secondary students.

The five schools, the Berks Business Education Coalition, and the 18 Berks County

public school districts have partnered for the past 14 years to bring ninth grade students early in their secondary school experience onto the college/university campuses to experience directly the culture and expectations of the college environment. In 2017 the higher education institutions welcomed 4,435 ninth graders in class size groups, providing information, a campus tour, and culminating, not least important, with lunch!

## The Internship Experience

Recently I attended the 30th reunion of the Class of 1987 of Baltimore City College (High School). The class was 350 strong. I was their principal. A senior year option for the students was the practicum experience, placing students for two hours each day, five days a week for the semester and/or year at a business or other professional site to gain an informed perspective for their post high school plans: 90 of the students, or 25% of the class chose that option. They thrived in that “real world” experience while still under the guiding, supportive umbrella of their school. They developed an enhanced perspective of the world that awaited them, they acquired a greater sense of themselves, and importantly, they learned in depth about one or

more possible career directions post high school.

Similar programs are emerging here in Berks County, led by the long standing program in the Twin Valley School District. Thirteen (13) of the eighteen (18) Berks County public school districts have internship (practicum) programs in place at some level. Internships as part of the high school curriculum, primarily senior year, have increased from three, just three years ago to 13 in the 2017/2018 school year. The thirteen districts reported a total of 222 external and 129 in district placements as of November, 2017. The number of students will be augmented by additional placements in the spring, 2018.

The internship experience is a

transitional experience, one level of endeavor to another. For high school seniors, it provides an informed step into adulthood.

Transition points on every level of a child’s education are important. Pre-K to kindergarten; grade 3 to grade 4; grade 4 to grade 8; and grade 8 to grade 9. Setting milestones, points of attainment, academically, emotionally, and physically creates standards for assessment.

For the high school senior, the internship experience can be life changing. The student can verify (or not, equally important) that a perceived career interest is really what he/she wishes to continue to pursue and in so doing, have formed a basis for informed life decisions after high school.

*Solomon Lausch*

### BERKS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS INTERNSHIP PLACEMENTS

First Semester 2017–2018

SCHOOL	SENIORS	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL
Boyertown Area Senior HS	547	6	10
Brandywine Heights Area HS	114	20	5
Conrad Weiser Area HS	245	15	–
Exeter Township Senior HS	361	4	6
Fleetwood Area HS	200	10	0
Governor Mifflin Senior HS	355	17	7
Hamburg Area HS	173	4	1
Kutztown Area Senior HS	114	10	4
Oley Valley HS	145	1	1
Reading HS	831	–	–
Schuylkill Valley HS	159	0	11
Twin Valley HS	312	72	68
Wilson HS	520	63	16
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4,076</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>129</b>





*Intern Andrea Landrum, Wyomissing Area SD, shared her experience with the group.*

In partnership with the Berks County Intermediate Unit, the Berks Business Education Coalition placed 27 Berks County educators at 18 participating businesses and organizations for one week this past summer. The educators gained direct insight into the culture, expectations, and employment opportunities at that business or organization and developed teaching materials to be used with their students in the classroom.

**Our thanks to participating businesses and organizations:**

- Alvernia University
- East Penn Manufacturing Co., Inc.
- Greater Reading Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
- Kautter & Kelley Architects
- Make the Road PA
- Met-Ed, A First Energy Company
- Nolde Forest
- Packaging Corporation of America
- Penn Werner Hotel
- Quadrant Engineering
- Reading Public Museum
- Reading Eagle
- Reading Fightin Phils
- Reading Health System
- Safe Berks (formerly Berks Women in Crisis)
- TOMPKINS VIST Bank
- United Way of Berks County
- White Star Tour & Travel Center

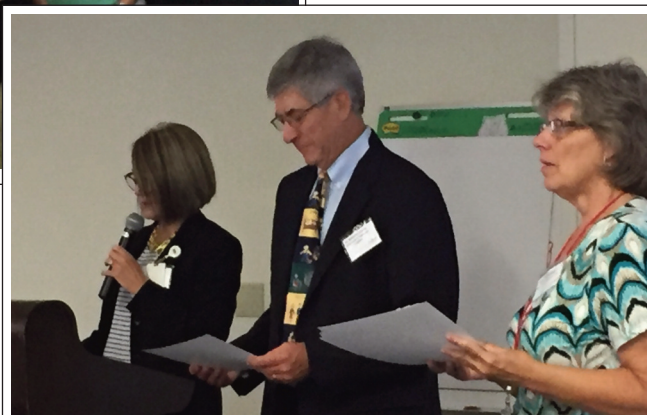
**inside  
BERKS  
business:**

A five-day learning experience for educators



*inside Berks business provided relevant, first-hand experiences to 23 educators in Berks County this year.*

*Connie Skipper (BCIU), Solomon Lausch, and Lori Gerber (BCIU) introduce the educators as they share their experiences with the iBb program.*



OUR ROLE IS  
**AWARENESS,  
ADVOCACY,  
& ACTION.**

## MISSION

To promote Berks County business partnerships and community connections that support pre-kindergarten early learning.

# belc

## Berks Early Learning Coalition

The Berks Early Learning Coalition (BELC) formed in 2016 to focus on the issue of Pre-K education. Co-chairs **Julia H. Klein**, Chairwoman and CEO, C. H. Briggs Company, and **Alan J. Ottinger**, CEO, QIC, Inc., are also governor appointees to the state-wide Pennsylvania Early Learning Investment Commission.

The research is clear on the positive, long term effect of dollars invested early on student achievement. The key always is which programs and at what level of competence and duration.

In Berks County we are committed to determining cost effective measures to expand the number of eligible

children in formal Pre-K programs and to improve the quality of the instruction the students receive. On the latter point, it can be a constant struggle to find and keep high quality Pre-K providers, teachers and aides. The problem is often of money, with teachers able to command higher salaries in the public and private school K-12 programs. For classroom aides, the issue is even more acute. Salaries typically are set at or only slightly above minimum wage.

The United Way of Berks County, working with a grant from Brad and Barbara Hall, Berks County philanthropists, has piloted a three year program for 12 persons presently

working as teacher aides in Pre-K programs which serve students mostly of lower income Latino heritage. The program includes small group and one-to-one mentoring. For the aides, a \$1,000 salary bonus is provided each of two years upon completion of certain milestones. The program also provides funding for persons who are interested to pursue an associate degree in early childhood education at the Reading Area Community College.

Practical, innovative programs such as the above hold real promise in the battle to intervene early, when it makes a difference, to overcome the barriers to achievement which associate with poverty.

## BELC PURPOSE

To ensure all Berks County pre-kindergarten children who are considered at risk have access to a high-quality early learning education.

**belc**  
Berks Early Learning Coalition  
[www.berksiu.org/belc](http://www.berksiu.org/belc)





The nonprofit Manufacturer’s Resource Center (MRC), Allentown, PA is engaged with students to discover the answer to just this question. In the 2016/2017 school year, MRC brought the *What’s Cool About Manufacturing* program, already successful in Lehigh County, to Berks County and Schuylkill County.

The program provides teams of 6 to 8 seventh and eighth graders and a teacher adviser, the resources and coaching to develop a plan to report on a manufacturing business. The students typically observe, tour, interview and film for about three hours. They then edit what they have filmed into a three minute video which then is judged by a panel of experts, with awards in 10 categories. The winning teams are announced in a culminating evening celebration, held this first year March 7, 2017, at the Sovereign Performing Arts Center with 600 people attending. **John Weidenhammer**, BBEC Board Chairman, served as master of ceremonies.

The program generates lots of excitement, school and community spirit, just the right fit for high energy 13- and 14-year-olds. This first year, 19 middle schools in Berks and Schuylkill Counties participated, matched with 19 manufacturing companies.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAMS	COMPANY PARTICIPANTS
Boyertown Area	Bally Ribbon Mills
Conrad Weiser Area	Misco Products Corporation
Daniel Boone Area	American Crane & Equipment Corp.
Fleetwood Area	Tray Pak Corporation
Governor Mifflin	Brentwood Industries, Inc.
Kutztown Area	PetSmart
Muhlenberg	Appeelling Fruit, Inc.
North Schuylkill	Ashland Technologies, Inc.
Reading Northwest MS	Carpenter Technology Corporation
Reading Northeast MS	Berks Packing Company, Inc.
Reading Southern MS	Remcon Plastics, Inc.
Reading Southwest MS	Industrial Metal Plating, Inc.
Schuylkill Haven	SAPA Extrusion
Schuylkill Valley	Packaging Corporation of America
Tamaqua	Highwood USA
Tulpehocken Area	Unique Pretzel Bakery, Inc.
Twin Valley	Morgan Corporation
Wilson West MS	Sweet Street Desserts
Wilson Southern MS	Cambridge-Lee Industries LLC

The program has grown exponentially in just the second year. In 2017/2018, 29 schools and manufacturers are participating. The 2018 culminating event is planned for March 6 at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Reading, PA.

The videos for each of the 19 schools and manufacturers are readily accessed through our BBEC website ([www.berksbec.org](http://www.berksbec.org)). They are interesting to watch and tell 19 good stories about manufacturing in our local and greater community.

# Academic Standards

Academic standards and achievement have rightly been the focus of education through all millennia. In the formal, topical sense, it has certainly been so throughout the 150 years of mandatory public education in American history.

Discussion became more pronounced in the middle of the last century as education came to be seen as the gateway to upward mobility. Concern for an equitable standard for college admissions, for example, resulted in the adoption of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in the 1940's.

Every president since Dwight Eisenhower has in some way declared himself the "education" president. Thus the passage of the 1958 federal legislation focusing on science in reaction to the

Russian satellite Sputnik scare. And so it has been for the 60 years since then.

One problem has been failure to set consistent policy, administration to administration at both the national and state levels. Pennsylvania has had in place the Pennsylvania System for School Assessment since 1992. Remarkable that a program has endured with the same name for 16 years, unremarkable in that it has gone through iteration after iteration, always with a moving set of content and standards.

Having said all the above, there is some light if the assessments that have been in place for the past three years hold, giving the schools something to bite into! Assessment scores are reported by school: elementary, middle and high school. Setting aside the Reading School District, which has its own challenges relating to poverty and other socio-economic factors, and where, not coincidentally real progress is being achieved, the demographics for the rest of Berks County, with some exception, are relatively consistent.

A legitimate exercise for those schools scoring below 70, but with similar demographics as high scoring schools such as Boyertown Area, Kutztown Area, and Wilson, would be to examine the programs in those schools to determine what changes they might incorporate into their curricula. The point is more acute if the same pattern has prevailed for two or more years.

*Solomon Lausch*

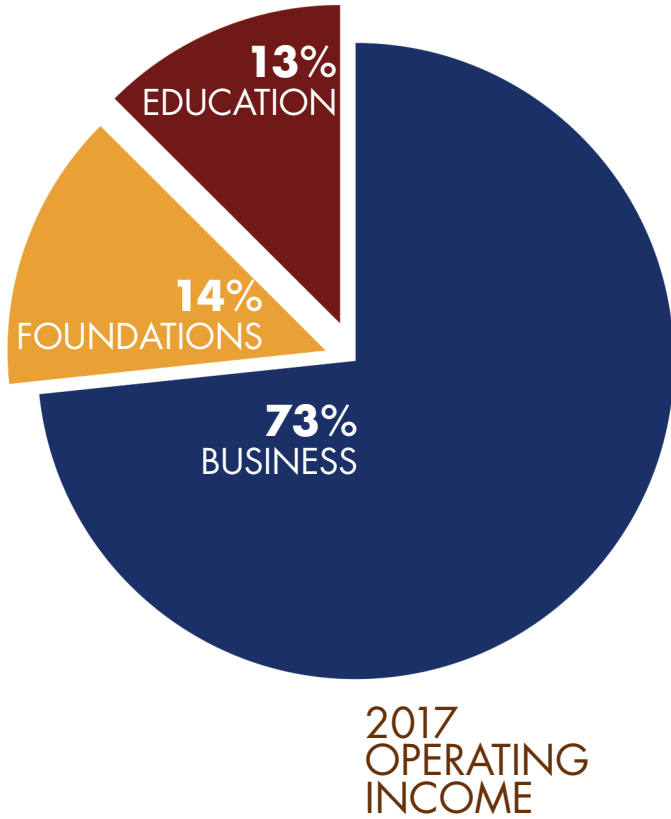
## 2016-2017 PSSA REPORT CARD

School Performance Profile Scores

Antietam Middle-Senior HS	56.8
Boyertown Area HS	84.2
Brandywine Heights Area HS	68.4
Conrad Weiser Area HS	74.9
Daniel Boone Area HS	66.1
Exeter Township HS	75.9
Fleetwood Area HS	82.9
Governor Mifflin HS	76.2
Hamburg Area HS	79.3
Kutztown Area HS	85.8
Muhlenberg HS	80.6
Oley Valley HS	78.6
Reading HS	Score Not Available
Schuylkill Valley HS	63.9
Tulpehocken Junior-Senior HS	75.1
Twin Valley HS	64.1
Wilson HS	88.8
Wyomissing Area Junior-Senior HS	70.1





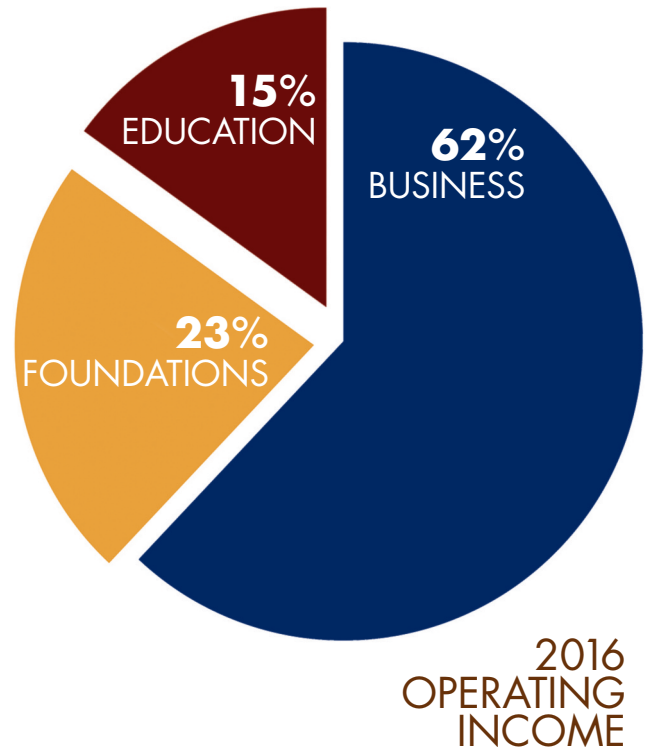


## FINANCIAL REPORT

OPERATIONS	2016	2017
<b>Operating Income:</b>		
Business	74,000	92,850
Education	16,900	16,050
Foundations	24,600	18,600
Interest on Savings	66	75
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>\$115,566</b>	<b>\$127,575</b>
<b>Operating Expenses:</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	85,289	85,729
Other Operating Supplies & Expenses	28,648	33,786
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$113,937</b>	<b>\$119,915</b>
<b>Operating Gain (Loss)</b>	<b>\$1,629</b>	<b>\$7,660</b>

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES	2016	2017
Direct Payment to Schools	74,999	47,734
Berks Early Learning Coalition	0	2,071
Higher Education Campus Visits	4,640	1,741
<b>Total Program Expenditures</b>	<b>\$79,639</b>	<b>\$51,546</b>

Financial Position	2016	2017
Total Liability and Equity	\$171,030	\$173,746





# MEMBERSHIP LIST



- |   |                                    |   |                                   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Albright College                            | Conrad Weiser Area School District | Jerlyn Foundation                             | Remcon Plastics                   |
| Alcon Research Ltd.                         | Customers Bank                     | Kutztown Area School District                 | R. M. Palmer Company              |
| Alvernia University                         | Daniel Boone Area School District  | Kutztown University                           | Schuylkill Valley School District |
| Antietam School District                    | Diocese of Allentown               | M&T Bank                                      | Sealstrip Corporation             |
| BB&T Bank                                   | Dollar General                     | Marlin Miller Jr. Family Foundation           | SFS intec, Inc.                   |
| Berks Career & Technology Center            | DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel         | Met-Ed, A FirstEnergy Company                 | Steve Moyer Subaru                |
| Berks County Agricultural Center            | East Penn Manufacturing Co., Inc.  | Meridian Bank                                 | TOMPKINS VIST Bank                |
| Berks County Community Foundation           | EnerSys                            | Muhlenberg School District                    | Tulpehocken Area School District  |
| Berks County Intermediate Unit              | Exeter Township School District    | Oley Valley School District                   | Twin Valley School District       |
| Berks County Workforce Development Board    | First Energy Foundation            | Penn State Berks                              | UGI Energy Services               |
| Brentwood Industries                        | First National Bank of PA          | Penn State Health St. Joseph                  | UGI Utilities, Inc.               |
| Boyertown Area School District              | First Priority Bank                | Penske Truck Leasing Co.                      | Unique Pretzels                   |
| Brandywine Heights Area School District     | Fleetwood Area School District     | Quadrant EPP USA                              | Weidenhammer Systems Corporation  |
| Cacoosing Family Charitable Foundation      | Fleetwood Industries               | QIC, Inc.                                     | Wells Fargo Bank                  |
| Cambridge-Lee Industries LLC                | Fulton Bank                        | Reading Area Community College                | White Star Tours                  |
| Carpenter Technology Corporation            | Gage Personnel                     | Reading Eagle                                 | Wilson School District            |
| Catherine V. & Martin W. Hofmann Foundation | Governor Mifflin School District   | Reading Health System                         | WORLD electronic                  |
|   | Greater Reading Chamber Alliance   | Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center | Wyomissing Area School District   |
|   | Hamburg Area School District       | Reading School District                       | Wyomissing Foundation             |
|   |                                    | RKL LLP                                       |                                   |

# BERKS BUSINESS EDUCATION COALITION

2 0 1 7   A N N U A L   R E P O R T

[www.berksbec.org](http://www.berksbec.org)



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Richard Faidley, Ed.D.  
Wilson School District

George Fiore, Ed.D.  
Kutztown Area School District

Thomas F. Flynn, Ph.D.  
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Diocese of Allentown

Andrea J. Funk  
Cambridge-Lee Industries LLC

Steven M. Gerhard, Ed.D.  
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Reading School District

Alan J. Ottinger  
QIC, Inc.

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Berks Business  
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Community College

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United Way of Berks County

Chester Winters  
Reading Area  
Community College



**bbec**

**BERKS BUSINESS  
EDUCATION COALITION**

[www.berksbec.org](http://www.berksbec.org)

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*January 2018*

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