A glowing lightbulb is held between two hands, one above and one below, symbolizing synergy. The background is a soft, warm gradient.

synergy | 'sinerjē | *noun*
the interaction or cooperation
of two or more organizations,
substances, or other agents to
produce a combined effect
greater than the sum of their
separate effects.

2018
ANNUAL REPORT

bbec
**BERKS BUSINESS
EDUCATION COALITION**



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 Pre-K, K-12, and higher education.
5. Support initiatives to assure that quality Pre-K education, ages 3-5, is available for all children in Berks County, in particular, for those from disadvantaged or at risk backgrounds.
6. Provide for the viability and sustainability of Coalition programs and services.

Synergy. In the business community, we strive relentlessly to engage in beneficial partnerships with other businesses. Our goal is to provide a product or service that meets the needs of a particular organization, allows us to grow our size and business scope, or combines to create positive outcomes which separately could not be achieved. At the Berks Business Education Coalition, we strive to put that same sense of partnership and collaboration into play within our community, to create growth and opportunities for students which separately could not be attained to the same degree or would not exist even at all.

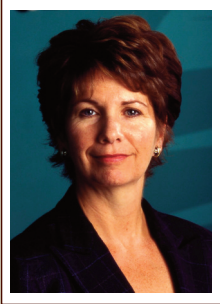
In this report, you will read about the partnerships which bring young high school students directly into the workplace and also onto a college campus for the first time. You will read about summer workplace learning experiences for teachers and about the foundational value of quality Pre-K education. You will learn about middle school students producing first rate videos about manufacturing. And you will learn about students participating in world-class presentations on important, international topics.

The Berks Business Education Coalition is an important partner, often the key player, in making these important programs happen. 2018 marked our 26th year since founding this organization. We are proud of what we have accomplished and will continue to accomplish in the years ahead. Moreover, we are grateful for all who have helped us along the way.

John P. Weidenhammer



Berks Early Learning Coalition



The Berks Early Coalition (BELC) is a partnership of Berks County businesses and organizations with the set purpose of realizing quality

Pre-K education for all children. For children who are raised in poverty with the debilitating factors that often associate with poverty, the issue is particularly acute.

Julia Klein, Chairwoman and CEO, C. H. Briggs, and BELC co-chair, puts the matter compellingly in the essay below, first published in the *Reading Eagle*, October, 2018, published here with permission.

THE \$12 BILLION DIVIDEND

Some things are hard to do. Others are so easy that everyone assumes someone else will take charge.

And once in a while, a critical issue lands in our business wheelhouse. It must be done, and it's doable.

Early childhood education is that issue. Investing in our young children is not hard. It's not soft. It's not complicated. It's not partisan. It's not up to someone else. It's an imperative backed by decades of research.

Every child is born with a brain primed to learn. Neurons connect and spark, building pathways for language, critical thinking and social and emotional functioning.

However, these pathways don't build themselves. Young children require the right stimulation and enrichment. Proper brain growth is encouraged through exposure to language and math concepts,

attention from caring adults and behavioral guidance. The young brain that's properly nurtured builds the foundation for a lifetime of functioning.

As I said, it's not complicated. The research makes the case.

Recently the Berks Early Learning Coalition held an early childhood education summit in Berks County. We were proud to host prominent researcher **Lynn A. Karoly** of Rand Corp., who addressed the economic benefits of investing early. Her findings showed that investing in early learning affects all of us, because every child who falls behind in learning generates costs that last into adulthood.

The message from Karoly put the imperative in stark terms. Pennsylvania ranks among the top 10 states in student achievement but also in the worst 10 for achievement gaps in reading between white and African-American and white and Latino students. The higher the student achievement, the higher the growth rate in per-capita GDP. If Pennsylvania's achievement gaps had been closed in 2003, our 2014 GDP would have been higher by \$12 billion to \$44 billion.

Achievement gaps also lead to higher dropout rates. That creates costs to society, as dropouts earn less on the job and cost more in crime fighting and dependence. If we close the gap in graduation rates for students traditionally left behind in unreasonably large numbers — African-Americans, Latinos and low-income — the lifetime social benefits to society for each group would be \$2.8 billion to \$5.1 billion.

Early childhood investments, especially for disadvantaged children, help

close the gaps. Programs that address the needs of young children include early care and education, home visiting and parent education. The vast majority show at least one favorable outcome in such lifetime essentials as behavior and emotion, cognitive achievement, lower crime and dependence, and higher employment and earnings.

The economic benefits ripple outward, reducing costs in child welfare, criminal justice and education, while they also boost tax revenues. Benefits for every dollar invested range from \$2 to \$4, Karoly said.

We know what works. Quality early learning closes the achievement gap and positions children to succeed in school and in life. Aligning early childhood progress with learning in kindergarten through third grade helps sustain those gains through the school years. The foundation that's built of positive social and emotional behavior positions children to function in society and be healthier adults.

Support for early childhood education is bipartisan. In Pennsylvania, that tradition stretches back many years. It continued into this summer, when Gov. Wolf and the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved a 2018-19 state budget with an additional \$66.5 million for early learning programs.

It is up to us — business people, concerned members of the community, policymakers — to maintain momentum and invest like it matters, because it does. Children can't do it for themselves. That's our job. When we invest in quality programs, we promise our children lifetimes of success, and we reap the benefits in the economic growth and vitality of our communities.



The Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) and the Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC) provide a valuable education during the high school years for students interested in going directly into the workforce upon graduation. The experience of **Kristen Mulligan** and her employment at Electro-Space Fabricators, reported here in her own words, illustrates the value of vocational technical education.

Vocational Technical Education

“I went to Muhlenberg High School and Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center. At RMCTC, I studied electro-mechanical engineering in their Engineering Automation Technology shop. I learned how to program robots and logic controls, how to solder electrical boards, and how to set up and run pneumatic, hydraulic, and electrical systems and circuits. I am a programmer at Electro-Space Fabricators and my experience in programming from RMCTC set me up and got me ready for what I have to do daily.

My shop teacher, **Mr. Harmuth**, had a lot to do with how I came to Electro-Space Fabricators. Towards the end of my senior year, he sat down with all of the third year students and asked what we were planning to do: college, trade school, or join the workforce. At that time he showed us an Electro-Space brochure and told us we could apply if we were unsure of our plans after graduation. My teacher and counselor helped me write my resume and submitted it for me. A couple of weeks later, I interviewed and was offered the job. I didn’t want to waste any time starting my career — so I started the day after I graduated, June 6, 2017, and I’ve been here ever since.”



Fourteen of the 18 Berks County high schools now offer the internship elective in the senior year courses of study. During the first semester of the 2018/2019 school year, 304 seniors were placed in internships in Berks County businesses, typically two hours a day, five days a week. Another 148 were engaged in a parallel way within the schools themselves.

Internships afford the students, college bound or work bound, an in-depth look at a possible career trajectory while still in high

bbec in the news



Ninth grade students from Wyomissing Area Jr/Sr High School visiting at Sunsweet Growers Inc.

Students Interacting with Business

The Students Interacting with Business program exemplifies the commitment Berks County businesses have to education. Now in its sixth year, the program this year brought 4,500 students, mostly ninth graders, from 19 schools to 28 participating businesses to learn about the culture, expectations, and opportunities for employment in Berks County. For most, the day began with an introductory assembly program, followed by a visit in class size groups to a Berks County business.

As with the Higher Education Campus Visits program, described elsewhere in this report, the purpose here is to add to the knowledge base students draw upon in making decisions for their remaining years of school and for their lives after high school.

Over the past six years, 22,000 students have experienced firsthand what businesses need and expect in an employee and the opportunities available in Berks County. A big salute to these businesses for their involvement in 2018.

school. For some, the experience is confirming. For others, the student determines the path is not for them. Either outcome provides a useful, valuable perspective for the student in planning the direction for their lives after graduation.

The experience of Wilson High School senior **Parker Lenart** is illustrative. Parker is interested in aviation as a possible career. He participated in an internship at Quest Diagnos-

tics, Reading, PA, during the 2018/2019 school year. Parker has had the opportunity to engage in everything from air traffic control to replacing an engine in a plane. He has flown nightly to nearby states and even had the opportunity to fly to Kansas in a Phenom 100 jet. Parker will tell you that the internship has been among the most valuable experiences of his four years of high school.

Our thanks to the businesses who participated in our 2018 program.

Alcon Research, Ltd.
 Berks County Agricultural Center
 Brentwood Industries
 Cambridge-Lee Industries LLC
 Carpenter Technology Corporation
 Dollar General
 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
 East Penn Manufacturing Co.
 Electro-Space Fabricators
 EnerSys
 Good Life Companies
 Met-Ed, A FirstEnergy Company
 New Castle Lawn & Landscaping
 Penn State Health St. Joseph
 Penske Truck Leasing
 Quadrant Engineering Products
 Radius Corporation
 R.M. Palmer Company
 Seakeeper, Inc.
 Sealstrip Corporation
 SFS intec, Inc.
 Solo Laboratories
 Sunsweet Growers Inc.
 Tower Health – Reading Hospital
 UGI Energy Services
 UGI Utilities, Inc.
 Weidenhammer Systems Corp.
 WORLD electronics

bbec in the news

Celebrating the 15th Year of Higher Education Campus Visits



Berks County is unusually fortunate to have five degree granting higher education institutions based right here in our midst: Albright College, Alvernia University, Kutztown University, Penn State Berks, and Reading Area Community College. The Berks Technical Institute adds to the rich fabric these institutions present for students in their post-secondary educational decisions.

2018 marked the 15th year for the Higher Education Campus Visits program. Each of the 18 Berks County public high schools again participated, with 4,300 ninth graders engaging in an on campus visit, most for the first

time, to learn about the culture and expectations of higher education while still in their formative, first year of high school.

The important point here is that all students have the opportunity to participate, whether higher education bound or not after high school. Ninth grade is not the time to make that decision. Ninth grade is the time to explore, to consider widely, so that come graduation the student has a more informed foundation for a self-sustaining future.



Regina Barletta, Counselor, Wyomissing Area Junior/Senior High School, prepares for her day at Quadrant Engineering.

inside Berks business: A Five-Day Learning Experience for Teachers

In partnership with the Berks County Intermediate Unit, the Berks Business Education Coalition arranged for workplace experiences for 20 Berks County educators during the summer of 2018 at 13 participating Berks County based businesses and organizations. This long standing program provides teachers a week-long set of imbedded experiences with a business or organization in which they have expressed an interest. The teachers then take what they have learned and translate it into their classroom teaching.



World Affairs Council of Greater Reading Outreach

World Affairs Council speaker, Dr. Nina Kollars, spoke with Junior ROTC students at Boyertown Area Senior High School.

The World Affairs Council of Greater Reading (WAC) holds monthly luncheon programs with speakers on relevant, current international topics. WAC invites students from the Berks County schools and colleges and universities to attend at a significantly reduced cost.

The luncheon speakers are regularly available to speak to students earlier in the day at one of the high schools. During the 2017/2018 program year, the combined attendance for the luncheons and school presentations was 2,192 of which 43% were students and faculty chaperones.

WAC also holds monthly breakfast programs with local speakers on topics which have an international aspect. Students are also invited. WAC sponsors *Academic World Quest*, an academic competition in which students from Berks County high schools engage in team competition. The topics are centered on matters of international import. WAC also recently raised funds to award four scholarships to college-bound students in memory of the late Berks County solicitor, Alan Miller, a long-time WAC Board member.

A real but sometimes unstated value of the WAC programs, in particular the luncheon program, is the intergeneration engagement the programs afford.

inside **BERKS** business:

A five-day learning experience for educators

Our thanks to these participating businesses and organizations:

Berks County Conservation District	Quadrant Engineering
Berks County Parks and Recreation Department	Safe Berks
Caron Foundation	Tower Healthcare
Crowne Plaza Hotel	Weidenhammer Systems Corporation
East Penn Manufacturing	West Reading Borough
Met-Ed, A FirstEnergy Company	White Star Tours and Travel Center
Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center	

What's So Cool About Manufacturing?



In 2018/2019, teams from 35 Berks and Schuylkill county schools have been paired with 35 manufacturing businesses to answer **YES** resoundingly, “Manufacturing is Really Cool!”

In addition, the contest’s award trophies were designed and manufactured by students from Berks Career and Technology Center. Award certificates and event tickets were designed and printed by students from Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center.

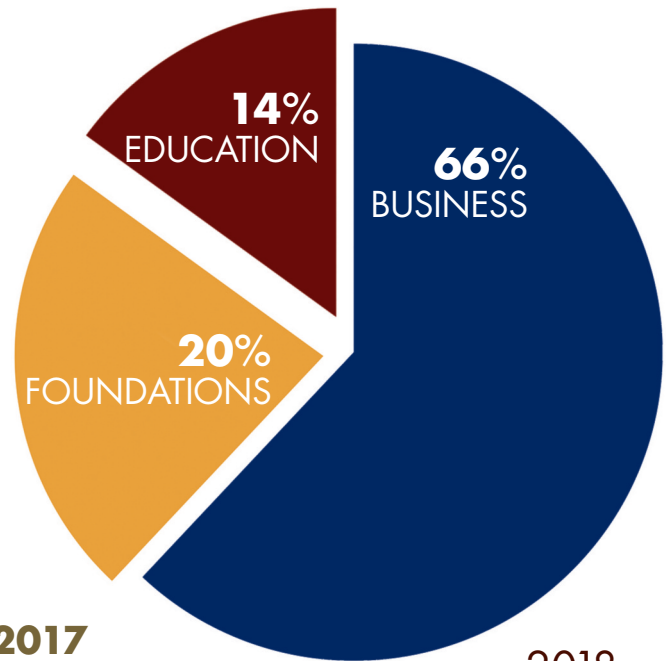
The Manufacturing Resource Center (MRC) of Allentown has asked this question of Berks County and Schuylkill County middle school students for the third straight year in 2018/2019. The program consists of teams of six to eight 7th and 8th graders going to a participating manufacturing facility to interview and film for three hours. The team then edits the work into a three-minute video with lots of expert guidance and critique to assist them.

Everything culminates in a “big splash” awards night in March, with hundreds of people in attendance. Awards are presented across 11 categories.



SCHOOL TEAMS	COMPANY PARTICIPANTS
Antietam Middle Senior HS	Sweet Street Desserts
Blue Mountain MS	Cardinal Systems, Inc.
Boyertown MS West	Misco Products Corporation
Brandywine Heights MS	Appeeling Fruit, Inc.
Conrad Weiser MS	Sealed Air
D. H. H. Lengel MS	Hydro Cressona
Daniel Boone MS	Mail Shark
Exeter Township Junior HS	Quadrant EPP
Fleetwood Area MS	R. M. Palmer Company
Governor Mifflin MS	Cambridge Lee Industries, LLC
Hamburg Area MS	J. F. Martin & Sons, Inc.
Kutztown Area MS	World Electronics
Mahanoy Area MS	Fabcon Precast
Minersville Jr./Sr. HS	Tredegar Film Products Corp.
Muhlenberg MS	East Penn Manufacturing Co.
North Schuylkill Jr./Sr. HS	Sterman Masser, Inc.
Oley Valley MS	Electro-Space Fabricators
Pine Grove Area MS	Solar Innovations Architectural Glazing Systems
Reading Intermediate HS	The Rose Corporation

SCHOOL TEAMS	COMPANY PARTICIPANTS
Reading Northeast MS	Reading Plastic Machining & Fabrication
Reading Northwest MS	Palram Americas
Reading Southern MS	Packaging Corporation of America
Reading Southwest MS	DeLux Dental Laboratory
Saint Clair MS	Guers Dairy
Schuylkill Haven Area MS	Northeast Prestressed Products, LLC
Schuylkill Valley MS	Berks Packing Company, Inc.
Shenandoah Valley Jr./Sr. HS	Mrs. T's Pierogies
Tamaqua Area MS	Bartush Signs, Inc.
Tri-Valley Jr./Sr. HS	Michael Foods, Inc.
Tulpehocken Jr./Sr. HS	American Crane & Equipment Corporation
Twin Valley MS	Viwinco, Inc.
Williams Valley Jr./Sr. HS	Ashland Technologies, Inc.
Wilson Southern MS	Radius Corp.
Wilson West MS	API
Wyomissing Area Jr./Sr. HS	Brentwood Industries



2018 OPERATING INCOME

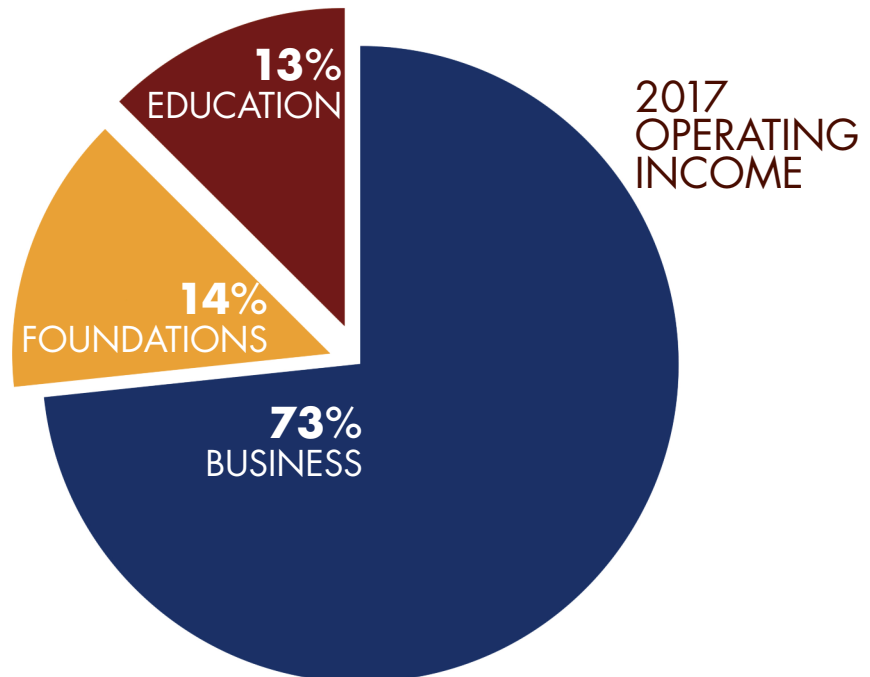
FINANCIAL REPORT

OPERATIONS

	2018	2017
Operating Income:		
Business	77,700	92,850
Education	16,200	16,050
Foundations	23,600	18,600
Interest on Savings	76	75
Total Operating Income	\$117,576	\$127,575

Operating Expenses:		
Salaries and Benefits	94,054	85,729
Other Operating Supplies & Expenses	25,217	34,186
Total Operating Expenses	\$119,271	\$119,915

Operating Gain (Loss)	(\$1,695)	\$7660
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2017 OPERATING INCOME



- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 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 electronics |
| | Greater Reading Chamber Alliance | Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center | Wyomissing Area School District |
| | Hamburg Area School District | Reading School District | Wyomissing Foundation |
| | | RKL LLP | |

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www.berksbec.org



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Synergy is better
than my way
or your way.
It's our way.

~ Stephen Covey

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**BERKS BUSINESS
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