



EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: Q1

Date of meeting: 9/2/2026

Report prepared by: Terri Clark

Local workforce development board contact: Terri Clark Date: 9/2/2026

B. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organization	Industry or Education Organization	Contact Information
Laura Roberts	Manatee Technical College	Education	Roberts1@manateeschools.net
Michelle Groves	Sarasota County Schools CTE	Education	mgroves@sarasotacountyschools.edu
Rob Harris	SAMA	Manufacturing	Executivedirector@sama.org
Christina Witt	CS Suncoast	Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)	cwitt@careersourcesc.com
James Disbro	CS Suncoast	Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)	jdisbro@careersourcesc.com

Terri Clark	CS Suncoast/ TClark Workforce Solutions	Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)	tclark@careersourcesc.com
Kelli Kennedy	School District Manatee	Education	kkennedy@manateeschools.net
Ron Serpliss	State College of Florida	Education	serplisr@scf.edu
Justin Erickson	ROOTS Education	Industry	justine@rootseducation.co
Darby Lenoir	Suncoast Technical College	Education	dlenoir@sarasotacountyschools.edu

B. SUMMARY REPORT

1. Summary analysis of the local labor market based on the industry representative needs and education offerings. (Provide summary)

The Q1 Education & Industry Consortium Committee (EICC) meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams on September 2, 2026, with ten (10) participants in attendance. The meeting brought together workforce, education, and industry partners to discuss regional employment trends, workforce development priorities, and collaborative efforts to strengthen the talent pipeline. Attendees received updates from technical colleges, school district Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, community college workforce initiatives, and industry representatives. Following introductions and roll call, the committee reviewed employer and education partner updates, discussed apprenticeship-related initiatives and survey findings, and concluded with public comments and closing remarks.

Industry Updates

ROOTS is launching its first local Robotics Technician Registered Apprenticeship cohort in September in collaboration with Manatee Technical College, CareerSource Suncoast, Career Edge, and other partners. The program is intended as a model for expansion to additional technical college campuses.

Manufacturing partners are working to increase employer participation in apprenticeship, including upskilling existing employees and creating pre-apprenticeship pathways for unemployed and underemployed individuals. Manufacturing Month activities will include student visits to manufacturing facilities and manufacturers visiting classrooms in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Employer engagement will help educators validate that instruction is aligned with employer needs and prepares students for employment, technical education, and apprenticeship.

A potential pre-apprenticeship pathway is being developed with Planet Sarasota, SAMA, ROOTS, and CareerSource, with a possible North Port location. The group emphasized connecting pre-apprenticeship completers to employment and then into registered apprenticeship with participating employers.

Education Partner Updates

Manatee County CTE

- Engineering and technology student tours are planned for October.
- Manatee County will participate in the construction rodeo hosted by Suncoast Technical College.
- The district plans to participate in Port Careers Day in January to introduce students to shipping and port-related careers.
- Construction technology apprenticeship activity is underway at Palmetto High School and Bayshore High School.
- A new Spectrum partnership is giving TSA and TV production students real-world PSA pitch and production experience focused on hurricane connectivity.

Manatee Technical College

- Classes resumed August 4, with approximately 1,200 career and technical education students and an additional 170 apprentices expected in September and October.
- Adult Education enrollment is approximately 739, with programming expanded to Bayshore High School.
- The aviation Airframe program is expected to open in January 2027 with 25 students. Construction is nearing completion, with final hangar approval pending.

- Workforce Wednesdays and employer partnerships are active. The Fall Advisory Program meeting is scheduled for October 12, with approximately 145 employers registered.
- CareerSource Suncoast's Ginger Swanson is now regularly stationed at the MTC campus and is coordinating student presentations and career services.

Suncoast Technical College

- Digital Design students had artwork displayed at The Ringling Museum.
- Marine Service instructor Keith Rollins was named Teacher of the Year by the American Boat & Yacht Council.
- The Law Enforcement Academy completed a full-scale active-assailant response simulation.
- The second Career Edge-supported tiny house has been completed.
- STC graduated its first LPN-to-RN diploma cohort and has begun another.
- Recent first-time pass rates were 94% for Paramedic and 98% for EMT.
- The Patient Care Technician program continues to grow with both high school and adult students.

Sarasota County Schools CTE

- Wellen Park High School opened for grades 9–12 with multiple CTE programs.
- Gulf Coast Academy of Innovation and Technology, formerly Brookside Middle School, has been rebranded as a magnet school with a focus including AI and cybersecurity.
- CTE opportunities are expanding into additional schools as several transition toward K-8 models.
- Upcoming activities include an Experience Engineering luncheon in November, a healthcare-focused luncheon in February, and Career Skills Challenges for high school students in December and middle school students in February.

State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota

- SCF reported approximately 1,250 associate degree graduates and 200 bachelor degree graduates last year.
- Fall enrollment is just under 10,000 students, representing approximately 5–6% growth.
- A new Cybersecurity Associate of Science degree began this year, with plans to explore additional certificate opportunities.
- SCF is evaluating its Engineering Technology program and plans to strengthen its industry advisory committee with additional industry partners.

2. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area. (Provide summary)

Employment and Job Outlook

Committee members discussed current workforce trends impacting the region, including:

- Increased demand for internships and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Continued emphasis on strengthening employer and industry partnerships.
- Growing importance of career readiness and employability skills among students and job seekers.
- Ongoing efforts to align educational curriculum with evolving workforce and industry needs.

Financial Literacy and Apprentice Support

James Disbro shared that CareerSource Suncoast has received additional funding through its partnership with Credit Union 1 to provide support services for apprentices. Planned activities include financial wellness support and presentations for apprentices and employers. The discussion also emphasized the value of support services in helping apprentices remain in programs and complete their apprenticeships.

3. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations. (Provide summary)

Florida Employment and Job Outlook

Terri Clark reviewed Florida labor market data for July 2026. Florida's unemployment rate was 4.6%, ranking seventh lowest among the ten largest states. Florida gained approximately 41,000 jobs year-over-year and 4,500 jobs in July. The discussion emphasized continued employment growth and the need to align education and apprenticeship pathways with workforce demand.

Collaboration and Follow-Up

- Terri will distribute the additional Florida labor market/BLS information referenced during the meeting.
- The committee will explore rotating in-person meetings or field visits, including MTC's aviation program, port/shipping-related programs, and the ROOTS robotics lab.
- SCF will connect with ROOTS and SAMA regarding industry advisory committee participation and contacts for Engineering Technology.
- Education and industry partners will continue coordinating Manufacturing Month activities, employer visits, student tours, and classroom engagement.

- CareerSource Suncoast will continue promoting apprenticeship opportunities, employer engagement, and support services for apprentices.
- The committee will continue working toward stronger healthcare, finance, and construction representation.

Next Meeting: Q2 Education & Industry Consortium Committee Meeting: Wednesday, November 4, 2026. The committee plans to review Manufacturing Month activities and continue discussion of education, industry, workforce, and apprenticeship initiatives