



MAKING AN

IMPACT

Annual Year in Review - **FY2023**

Stark Education Partnership (SEP) provides a much needed support system to local workforce and education entities by acting as a **CATALYST** for implementing new programs, works as a **CONNECTOR** of people and organizations, and is viewed as a trusted **CORNERSTONE** organization in Stark County.

The 34-year nonprofit organization recently underwent a shift in its focus. After an extensive information gathering and strategic planning process, SEP's Board of Directors unanimously approved a new plan in May 2022, followed by a reset of the Board's composition in September of 2022.

Today, through its focused efforts, SEP supports education and workforce career opportunities by **TAKING IDEAS TO IMPLEMENTATION – ALWAYS WITH AN EYE ON IMPACT.** It is with enthusiasm and excitement we share this report on the progress of that impact!

STARK Education
Partnership^{Inc.}

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Mission & Vision



Mission: Stark Education Partnership is a catalyst, engaging and collaborating with education, business, civic and community stakeholders to drive sustainable improvement and innovation to provide all students with education and career success.



Vision: To build generations of successful individuals who fulfill their potential and grow roots in Stark County.

Strategic Plan

SEP's current strategic plan – unanimously approved in May 2022 by our Board of Directors – reflects the input of the community and is designed to work in synergy with the efforts of other community partners. The plan focuses on three key, interrelated strategies that work together to meet SEP's vision.

- **Strategy 1** – Create pathways to in-demand jobs through talent development (SEP's primary focus)
- **Strategy 2** – Foster best practices, innovation, and technology in education
- **Strategy 3** – Enable strategic action through communication, data, and research



Working at the Intersection

Underlying all of SEP's work is a belief that individuals thrive, as does the community they are part of, when we create opportunities for an individual's interests and abilities to find their alignment with local career opportunities.



SEP's strategies work at the intersection of each student's interests, abilities, and opportunities. SEP looks to make an impact by ensuring individuals have a greater opportunity to identify their interests, develop in-demand skills, and connect to local job opportunities.

PRIMARY FOCUS

Strategy 1 – Career Pathways

SEP's primary strategy is about creating and strengthening connections between employers and education. Much progress has been made over the past year, including those listed here:

- Hired a **Director of Talent Development**, Christine Taylor, to shepherd the work of SEP's primary strategy.
- After consulting with foundation leaders, SEP changed the **composition of its Board of Directors** to better align with the strategic direction of the organization.
- Chose **YouScience** Aptitude and Career Discovery assessments in middle school and high school to determine students' career interests and aptitudes, and in turn to connect them with local career opportunities.
- Began **partnering with schools and employers** in the development of career-based programming for all students in late fall of 2022, hosting a kickoff event for the schools and workforce partners to begin planning efforts.
- **Implementation of career-based activities** in schools and at work sites began early in 2023.
- **Video Series** – November 2022, saw video production begin, highlighting various job opportunities at specific employers. These professionally produced videos are available for all Stark County schools to use in their career programming efforts.
- **School-Based Career Connected Learning**
In-school activities include workforce speakers, career fairs, videos and other activities that have a career focus and occur in a school building. During the 2022-23 school year, partner schools hosted 34 such events, including over 4,000 students.
- **Work-Based Career Connected Learning**
Work-based events include field trips, job shadows, micro-internships, internships, and other events that take place at a worksite. During the 2022-23 school year, 35 work-based touchpoints occurred, including 420 student participants.



- **Stark Tank** encourages innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship. In the 2022-23 school year, local business owners acted as “sharks” (judges) and awarded a total of \$40,000 to winning high school and college students towards their pitched ideas/products.
- **AmeriCorps College & Career Guides** help students discover their passions and purpose. Currently, there are guides located in Alliance, Canton, and Massillon high schools, serving 1,411 students.

Actively Engaged Higher Education Leaders

Dr. Tom Botzman, SEP's Post-Secondary Strategist, connects SEP with local colleges and universities. This post-secondary work includes:



- 1) SEP hosts **roundtable discussions** with the presidents to inform the activities of SEP as related to college students.
- 2) **Career Services** representatives from the campuses met to discuss the implementation and results of YouScience and its application to a college setting.
- 3) SEP is exploring opportunities for college students to act as **mentors for high school students** interested in pursuing careers requiring higher education.
- 4) **Health Science** representatives from regional campuses met to discuss how to best engage high school students in the health sciences. Initial YouScience results indicate there are approximately three times as many high school students with sufficient aptitude for health sciences than those who indicate health sciences as a top career interest.

Strategy 2– Best Practices

SEP's second strategy is about supporting and challenging the local education system in evidence-based practices that enhance its primary strategy. Recognizing that the return of investment to building a strong community and workforce begins at birth, SEP served as a connector and collaborator to positively impact education in the following ways:

- **Free Application for Free Student Aid (FAFSA)**
The main goal of this program is to help students/families see the importance of the FAFSA and complete the form. SEP tracks completion and communicates to participating districts twice monthly, sharing relevant strategies and articles. The result is that FAFSA completions have been trending up for two consecutive years.
- **Great Start for Great Futures Coalition**
The Great Start for Great Futures (GSGF) Coalition began in December 2016 and is comprised of early education providers, agencies, advocates, businesses, and community leaders collaborating to improve the outcomes of prenatal to kindergarten children. SEP shifted from a leadership to a support role.
- **Stark County Transition Skills Summary**
The Stark County Transition Skill Summary, aligned to Ohio Department of Education standards, is a summative end-of-preschool observation tool used to capture a child's readiness for kindergarten in 47 key developmental skill areas. SEP provides support for this work.
- **Comprehensive Literacy State Development Sub-Grant** - The Ohio Department of Education's Comprehensive Literacy State Development Subgrant is a four-year initiative (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024) designed to increase language and literacy from birth to grade 12. SEP supports the programs through monitoring, evaluation, and decision-making coaching.

Strategy 3– Communication & Data

SEP's third strategy is about supporting the other strategies with data, research, and communication. The following section provides a summary of SEP's impact data.

Evaluations Summary

- 1) **Data Dashboard** is updated on SEP's website annually, focusing on predictive points for long-term student success.
- 2) **Alliance Early Learning School (AELS)**
This pilot grant is in its second and final year of funding from the Stark Community Foundation. SEP provides the grant evaluation which includes reviewing effectiveness and evidenced-based approaches, designed to coach families on action steps that will ultimately move them out of poverty.
- 3) **Comprehensive Literacy Sub-Grant** – SEP provides data and organizational support to early childhood centers located in Alliance, Canton, and Massillon.
- 4) **21st Century Afterschool Program** – SEP provides evaluation services for all Canton City participating schools.

Communications Statistics

- Electronically **sent out 20 Issues** newsletters covering topics from Stark County student data and high-demand jobs, to career connected experiences and the AmeriCorps College & Career Guides.
- Increased **SEP's mailing list** 16% – from 555 (following a deep clean to remove old/outdated addresses) to the current total of 641.
- Raised the *Issues* **newsletter open rate** from 33% to 45%. This is 8% higher than the industry average of 37%.
- Launched a **new SEP website** in August 2022.
- **SEP's videos webpage**, containing all of the Stark County Career Pathway Videos, continues to receive the most page views as well as the most unique visitors.



Goals, Targets & Metrics Summary

SEP is committed to impact. This includes using data to monitor progress, adjust course, and celebrate success. The career connected learning data below demonstrates SEP's progress to date in this FY2023 pilot year.

School Partners
ACROSS 5 DISTRICTS



Students Having Taken YouScience Assessment
OUT OF 1,295



Career Videos Professionally Produced
HIGHLIGHTING LOCAL COMPANIES



Business Partners
PROVIDING STUDENTS WORK-BASED, CAREER CONNECTED OPPORTUNITIES



Local Businesses Registered
IN YOU SCIENCE DATABASE



Students Engaged
IN SCHOOL AND/OR WORK-BASED CAREER CONNECTED EXPERIENCES



Two Deeper Research Questions

The deeper research questions (lagging indicators) are two:

- 1) Are SEP's efforts **resulting in students fulfilling their potential** by having a specific, informed career plan in place by their high-school senior year?
- 2) Are SEP's efforts **influencing students to remain in Stark County** for post-secondary education and career opportunities?

SEP will be working directly with partner schools over the next several years to answer these two questions through longitudinal survey data.

3-Year Budget Projection

<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>
General Operating			
Carryover from Previous FY	\$ 454,487	\$ 899,583	\$ 620,887
Endowment	272,333	274,535	266,664
Foundations	967,850	266,075	266,075
Businesses & Individuals	4,025	4,025	4,025
Grants			
Career Pathway Videos	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500
Stark Tank	60,000	60,000	60,000
YouScience	25,000	25,000	25,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,800,195	\$ 1,545,718	\$ 1,259,151
EXPENSES			
Staff Salary & Benefits	\$ 756,130	\$ 778,494	\$ 801,524
External Contracted Time	572	592	610
Back Office	76,729	79,415	81,797
Strategies & Grants			
<i>Strategy 1 – Career Pathways</i>	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
Career Pathways videos	12,000	12,000	12,000
Americorps	29,300	6,800	6,800
Stark Tank	35,000	35,000	35,000
Straight A YEC Grant	18,997	18,997	18,997
YouScience	50,000	75,000	75,000
<i>Strategy 2 – Best Practices, Innovation, Tech</i>	-	-	-
Early Childhood Symposium	2,190	2,190	2,190
SC Transition Skills Summary (TSS)	800	900	1,000
<i>Strategy 3 – Communication, Data, Research</i>	-	-	-
YWCA Early Literacy	15,000	15,000	-
Less: Staff time paid through grants	(98,606)	(102,057)	(105,119)
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 900,612	\$ 924,831	\$ 932,299
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 899,583	\$ 620,887	\$ 326,852

Important Note: The 3-year budget above is based upon receiving \$1.5M in funding from local foundations. Approval on that request is still pending. If the foundations award \$1.2M instead, SEP’s ending FY2026 balance will be just **\$26,852**



Diversification of Funding Efforts

- SEP is attempting to secure **financial contributions from various sources**, including grants, workforce partners, corporate sponsors, and individuals. Additionally, SEP has reviewed any services provided (very limited, but there are a few) and determined to begin assessing a nominal fee, rather than in-kind.
- SEP was **successful in obtaining state budget language** in Ohio’s Biennial State Budget that passed the House (SHB33) and remains optimistic the language will endure in the bill upon final passage and signature by Governor DeWine.
- SEP **conducted a targeted fundraising campaign** in 2022 for individuals and organizations. This will become an annual event taking place each November.



Focus & Future

- SEP, through its strategic priorities, maintains a **narrow focus** on one primary strategy and two supporting strategies.
- SEP sets **priorities for each quarter** aligned to mission, vision, and strategies to maintain focus. In addition, SEP's **team meets on a weekly basis** to review progress being made against those quarterly priorities and the completion of related tasks.
- As SEP completes its initial year of implementation with the first career planning cohort, additional schools and businesses will be partnering with SEP in the 2023-24 school year. A total of **19 schools in 8 school districts and 30+ workforce partners** will work together to provide career touchpoints for students.

SEP's Aspiration

is to see all 17 Stark County school districts involved in intentional career-connected learning for all students by the 2025-26 school year.



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THANK YOU

to the Supporters & Partners of SEP's Vision –
Foundations, Businesses, Individuals, Schools!

