

**NEW Manufacturing Alliance
K-12/STEM taskforce meeting**

May 13, 2026

Teams

8:30 a.m.

Minutes

ATTENDEES: Rebecca Droessler Mersch, CESA6; Emily Morris ; Kurtis Butrymowicz, HART; Ann Fanz, NEWMA; Cynthia Pavelski, CESA 6; Melissa Schultz, Samuel; Christi Lemery, Appleton Area School District; Cindy Bailey, NWTC; Lindsay Allen, CESA7; Valerie Brooks, CESA8; Leah Bruess, CESA6; Sarah Putbress, NEWMA; Amber Smetek, Green Bay Packaging; Danielle Dale, KI; Shannon Seaman, Oshkosh Chamber; Anne Troka, Sargento; Kristin Comerford, Appleton Area School District

Topic 1: Plan Excellence in Mfg./K-12 Partnerships Awards

- Dinner Details (Oct 27, Fire and Fir):
 - Bill Jartz will be contacted to serve as the emcee.
 - Schedule: ACP Roundtable (3:00 PM) → Cocktail Reception (4:30 PM) → Dinner (6:00 PM) → Awards Program (6:45 PM) → 7:45 PM End of program.
 - No all-stars this year – they have their own event now.
 - Ann will contract NorthCoast about them creating the Awards video.
- Think about for next meeting – any tweaks to program?
 - Invite 1st years winners to attend for free:
 - Have them introduce the Award that they received.
 - Will discuss more at next meeting
- Sponsorships (Fundraiser for Scholarships):
 - Gold (\$3,000): BW Converting confirmed for Education category. Seeking sponsors for Business and Community.
 - Tech Ed Teacher (\$2,000): NWTC to be contacted. Includes 20 free tickets for Tech Ed teachers.
 - Gold (\$1,000): Includes a full-page ad in the Excellence publication and 2 free tickets to the dinner.
 - Silver (\$300): Includes a logo on the publication's back cover.
- Please keep winners confidential until we are ready to share in August.

Topic 2: All About Boats! Tech Ed Teacher Tours & Dialogue on June 11, 2026 recap

- 19 educators – hosted by Bay Shipbuilding & Burger Boat
 - De Pere, Luxembourg-Casco, Gresham, Hilbert, Pulaski, Shawano, Kohler, Winneconne, Peshtigo, Two Rivers
 - Parochial Schools: Fox Valley Lutheran and Winnebago Lutheran
- Great response from educators.
- Marion Bodyworks is interested in hosting for next year.
- If interested, we usually schedule around the second week of June.

Topic 3: Discuss October is Manufacturing Month – ACP Roundtable & Made in Our Community plant tours

Brainstorm the ACP Roundtable meeting – held before Excellence Awards:

- Focus: YA; connect to early talent. Possibly also inviting Skills USA students.
- Promote event to manufacturers focused on 'Connect to Early Talent'.
- Goal: Increase YA adoption by proactively addressing common barriers.
- Execution Plan:
 - Pre-Survey: Ask non-participating companies for their reasons/barriers.
 - Send outreach survey (August)
 - Panel: Feature current YA students and successful YA alumni.
 - Students on the panel will only answer a few questions, not all that are asked.
 - Feature YA students that are now permanently employed at their YA company.
 - Invite YA Mentor & YA award winners and nominees to be on the panel.

- Content: Use survey results to structure the panel around overcoming identified barriers.
- Resources: Provide a "playbook" for starting a YA program.
- Try to include YAs/YA alum at each table – students will receive a \$50 gift card for attending.

Discussion on Made in Our Community plant tours

- Problem: The previous tour coordination process was "clunky" for employers, who need certainty for scheduling.
- Solution: Streamline the process to a single, pre-scheduled date/time per company.
- Process: Ann will collect fixed dates from companies via a survey, then share the list with CESAs and schools to fill the slots.

Topic 3: Guide for successful engagement for industry at career fairs, plant tours and hands-on activities handbook

- **Available for 2027 full membership event**
 - Rationale: Address a key knowledge gap for companies wanting to do K-12 outreach but lacking expertise.
 - Scope: A guide covering best practices for career fairs, plant tours, hands-on activities, and running a successful YA program.
 - Process: A subcommittee will compile existing CESA resources, identify gaps, and create new content.
 - Reach out if you would be willing to be on the subcommittee for this project

Topic 4: Upcoming events and programming for NEWMA

July 22nd: **NEWMA Taps + Tours at Graetz Manufacturing.** Come anytime between 3 p.m. – 5 p.m. for a tour and beverage. The address is W11094 WI-64, Pound.

This is a free event for NEWMA members: <https://form.jotform.com/261663183835160>.

July 29th – **NEWMA AI training focused on Generative AI** will be held on July 29 – September 2, 2026. This marks the 9th cohort of the training, in which over 600 Alliance members have taken the course. The training is free for NEWMA members. To register go to: <https://form.jotform.com/261664002765153>.

August 4 – Kick off to registration for the 12th Internship Draft Day.

Topic 5: Next agenda for August 12th at 8:30 AM via Teams.