

Understanding the Skills Gap in Bruce County

FACT SHEET



FEBRUARY 2014

Acknowledgements from Gemma Mendez-Smith, Executive Director

As the economy of Ontario continues to change along with national and global impacts so too does the Four County Region. It is important to know, with some degree of certainty, what assets and liabilities are present as we fashion a workforce and economic development strategy that keeps the region progressing to the future. This Skills Gap Study was commissioned by the Four County Labour Market Planning Board and its community partners as an update to the 2005 reports completed for Bruce Grey and Huron Perth.

The information in this report will provide recommendations to set guideposts that will keep us on track to building a successful, vibrant and sustainable future.

This study was completed by Harry Cummings, Don Murray and Shannon McIntyre of Harry Cummings and Associates.

Special thanks to the study committee; Rose Austin, Dave Barrett, Meredith Bowers, Debbie Davidson, Barb Fisher, Paul Nichol, Alyson Nyiri, and Kristin Sainsbury for their time and commitment to the study.

Thanks to the administration at our 4 district school boards and the leadership at the 24 participating high schools that supported this study without whom we would not have an insight from our future workforce.

Many thanks to the survey team for their hard work and dedication to getting the answers; Inem Chahal, Mark Ferguson, Carolyn Robertson, Elena Christy, Monika Kokoszka, Bakhtawar Khan, Anna Chow, Alberto Salguero, Shawn Filson, and Mary Ellen Wales.

Much gratitude to all of the employees, employers and high school students of Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth counties who responded to a survey or participated in a focus group or interview. Your input will help us with our future planning goals.

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Project Partners: Avon Maitland District School Board; Bluewater District School Board; Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation; Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board; Huron Perth Catholic District School Board



Four County
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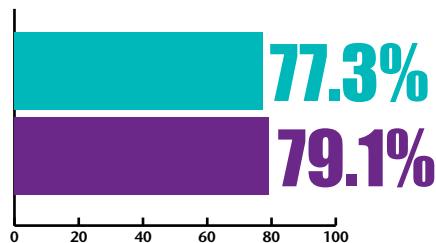


Bruce High School Student Profile

This fact sheet focuses on the key findings gathered from the Grade 12 students attending high school in the Four County Region, with a specific focus on Bruce County students. Bruce County had 137 male respondents (59.8%) and 92 female respondents (40.2%), the large majority of respondents were 17 years old.¹

Where possible comparisons to the study completed in 2005 were made. It should be noted that the 2005 high school student survey included Grade 10, 11 and 12 students and the 2013 high school student survey only surveyed Grade 12 students.

Academic Achievement



The average for all classes in the last school year was 77.3% for males and 79.1% for females.

ENGLISH

Students reported their highest average for this core course.

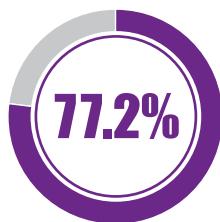


The least common elective course, by number of credits attained, was computer studies.



Males in Bruce are more likely than females to enroll in a technology education course.

Extra-Curricular Activities



75.2% of males and 77.2% of females participate in extra-curricular activities, an increase from the 2005 study period.



9.2 HOURS PER WEEK

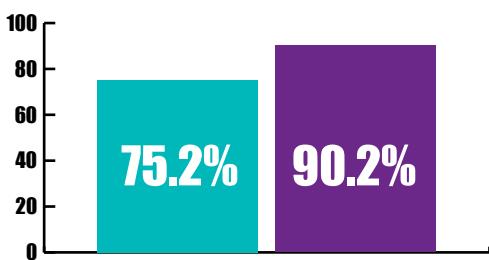
In Bruce County, students spend 9.2 hours per week engaged in extra-curricular activities.



Sports and/or physical activities are the most common of extra-curricular activities.

¹ The gender split of 60% males / 40% females for the survey is consistent with the gender split for all Grade 12 students in Bruce County Secondary Schools (448 males and 294 females).

Volunteer Activities



75.2% of males and 90.2% of females have volunteered in the last year, an increase from the 2005 study period.

49.3

The average number of hours spent volunteering over the last year.

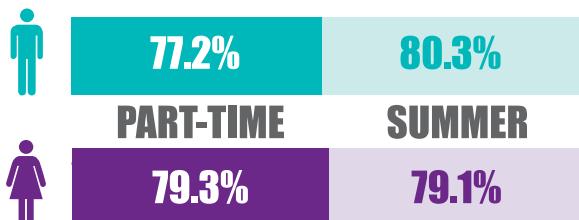
The most common industries students reported volunteer participation in were:

Information, Culture, and Recreation

Religious, Civic, Environmental or Social Advocacy

Agriculture

Part-Time and Summer Employment



Roughly the same number of students are working part-time or summer jobs compared to the 2005 study. 77.2% of males and 79.3% of females work part-time during the school year and 80.3% of males and 79.1% of females work in the summer.

The most common part-time and summer employment activities include:

- Wholesale and Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Arts, Entertainment, Recreation
- Construction and/or Specialty Trade Contractor

Co-op Education

In Bruce County, slightly fewer students overall are participating in co-op education compared to 2005.



In 2013, 16.1% of males and 21.7% of females have participated in co-op in the last year.



Males participating in co-op were most likely to be involved in construction or education.



Females participating in co-op were most likely to be involved in health care and social assistance and education.

Self-Assessment of Skills



Males have scored themselves the highest in social or interpersonal skills, followed by reading and analytical, decision making and problem solving in 2013. In 2005, physical/mechanical was ranked as the highest self-assessed skill among males.



In 2005 and 2013, females scored themselves the highest in social, interpersonal skills and reading; in 2013 teamwork was also ranked high for females.

Future Education

96.9%

In Bruce, 96.9% of students expect to finish high school and continue onto post-secondary school or apprenticeship program, an increase from 91% in 2005.



Females are slightly more likely to be planning on attending post-secondary education than males.



51.4% 37.8%



In 2013, 51.4% of the students are planning to pursue a university program and 37.8% of students are looking to enter a college program upon graduating high school.

Males are much more likely to enroll in a trade, vocational or apprenticeship with 16.7% of the male respondents planning to attend a trade program compared to 2.2% of females.

16.7%
VS
2.2%

Future Place of Work and Residence

The top industry categories that male students are most likely to expect themselves to be employed were:

01

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

02

Construction and/or Specialty Trade Contractor

03

Health Care and Social Assistance

The top industry categories that female students are most likely to expect themselves be employed were:

01

Health Care and Social Assistance

02

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

03

Arts, Entertainment, Recreation



In Bruce County, 57.7% of males and 53.3% of females do not expect to find a job or live in the Four County Region, in 2005 64% of students were expecting to leave.



Bruce Employee Experiences

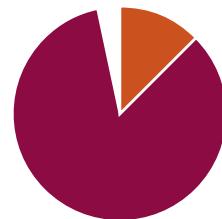
The study carried out for the Four County Labour Market Planning Board in 2013 included a labour market profile and surveys with high school students, employees and employers in Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth counties. When possible comparisons to the 2005 study were made.

This fact sheet focuses on the key findings gathered from the Bruce County employees surveyed by telephone in the summer of 2013. Bruce County had 150 male respondents (49.8%) and 151 female respondents (50.2%) and the average age of respondents was 48.3 years.

Employment Status

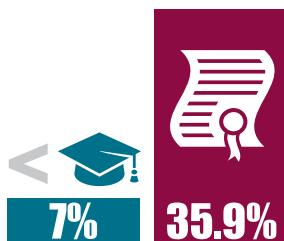


Approximately 91% of respondents had worked in the last year.



12.7% of respondents held multiple jobs and 84% of respondents' primary employment was full-time.

Education of Employees



In 2013, 7% of Bruce County respondents have not completed high school, a slight decrease from 2005. In 2013, 35.9% reported college or a speciality school as their highest completed education.

Top three fields of post-secondary study were:

13.9%

Health, parks,
recreation and
fitness



11.9%

Architecture,
engineering
and related
technologies

12.9% Business, management
and public administration

Top Five Occupations



Areas for Skill Improvement Among Employees

Employees in Bruce County perceive the following as their weakest skills:

Sector specific skills

(AutoCAD, health and social service, construction, manufacturing)

Database

Information Technology

Artistic, Creative

In 2005, computer skills, math and artistic and creative skills were among the weakest skills for Bruce County respondents.

Top Skills Among Employees

Employees in Bruce County perceive the following as their top skills:



Reading



Teamwork



Verbal Communication



Critical Thinking or Problem Solving



Written Communication



Social or Interpersonal



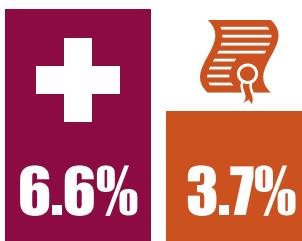
Organizational Skills

In 2005, employees perceived verbal, reading and social and interpersonal skills as their top skills.

Training Opportunities Pursued by Employees

50%

In Bruce County, more than 50% of respondents did not participate in any training in the last year.



6.6% have completed a workplace safety or first aid training and 3.7% completed a college or university course in the last year.

The most common type of training or education in the last year was an industry or occupation specific course, workshop or conference.

Other Trends Among Employees

90% ☺ ☺

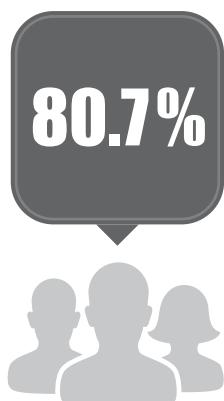
The majority of Bruce County respondents are very satisfied with their current employment, more than 90% are satisfied or very satisfied with their current employment.



Percentage of respondents who believe they are **underemployed** (working less than 30 hours per week, not by choice; when skills are underutilized; when wages, productivity or other job qualities are substandard relative to skill and education level).



More than half believe the wages they receive are adequate for the work they do, 17.7% of respondents believe the wages are somewhat more than adequate.



In the next year, 80.7% of the respondents from Bruce County believe they will be in the same job.

Over 8% believe they will be retired in one year.

ONE YEAR

30.3% of respondents reported they believe they will be retired in five years.

FIVE YEARS



Bruce Employer Experiences

The study carried out for the Four County Labour Market Planning Board in 2013 included a labour market profile and surveys with high school students, employees and employers in Bruce, Grey, Huron and Perth counties. Where possible comparisons were made to a 2005 labour market study which surveyed over 400 employers in Bruce and Grey.

This fact sheet focuses on the key findings gathered from the Bruce County employers surveyed by telephone and via an online survey. There were 40 employers surveyed for Bruce County, 32 of which had their head office located in Bruce County.

Business History

87% 

Approximately 87% of the businesses surveyed were started in Bruce, Grey, Huron or Perth counties.



The median number of years in operation in the Four County Region was 20 years.

40+ YEARS

6 businesses had been in operation in the Four County Region for more than 40 years.



Locating in Bruce County

Top five factors to locate in Bruce County:

01

High quality of life

04

Competitive costs

02

Business friendly environment

05

Personal preference

03

Lower taxes

Employee Profile



Almost half of the businesses surveyed have 10 employees or less.

≤ 10



2 businesses (6.7%) employ more than 200 people.

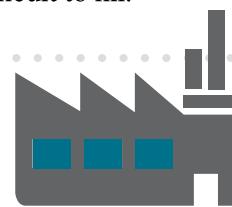
≥ 200



Skilled trades or skilled professionals positions are most difficult to fill.



95% of employers expect 10 retirements or less in the next five years.



Approximately 40% of employers believe that 100% of their employees live within 30 minutes from their place of work.

Income

\$20k

All employers reported that all of their employees earn at least \$20,000 annually.

\$60k

Half of management employees earn more than \$60,000 per year.

Management employees earn more than skilled trades and general labourers.



Skills

Employers from Bruce County are looking for the following occupations skills:

Teamwork

Verbal Communication

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Leadership

In 2005, employers were looking for employees with verbal, customer service and math skills.

Employers are having the most difficulty finding employees who have the following occupational skills:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Leadership skills
- Organizational
- A small number of employers are experiencing sector specific challenges (agriculture, construction, education, health)

Education and Training

 **32%**

32% of Bruce County business respondents require employees to have a high school diploma.

60% 

Approximately 60% offer apprenticeship opportunities in Bruce County.

Most companies offer a variety of occupational training to their employees on a regular basis including:



Hiring and Recruitment



As in 2005, companies today typically hire from outside the company.

70%

Approximately 70% of employers have hired outside the Four County Region due to lack of qualified employees, an increase from 2005.

Employers use a variety of methods to recruit employees including:



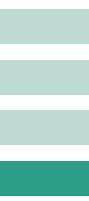
Word of mouth



Local media



Online job sites



Recommendations

Given the rapid pace of change in the regional job market stakeholders: businesses, educators and community partners, need to review and assess their strategies, programs and services to ensure they better reflect and address the new reality.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the various research components of this report. These recommendations are intended to inform the decision making process for all relevant stakeholders, in Bruce County, working with labour market issues.

Employers/Businesses

Employers and business owners set the pace at which career decisions are made for the local workforce. They are also able to build strong connections to help with workforce attraction.

- 1. It is recommended that employers become more engaged in providing workplace training opportunities that could include co-op, apprenticeships, job shadows for the local labour force.*
- 2. It is recommended that employers invest in ongoing training in the workplace by providing flexible hours to accommodate employee training. This will help employees adapt to a changing workplace.*
- 3. It is recommended that employers collaborate with other businesses with similar skill requirements to provide necessary training (i.e. Health and Safety, sector specific training) to employees at a lower cost.*
- 4. It is recommended that employers engage their workforce in training and mentoring to fill management positions and to ensure knowledge transfer among generations.*
- 5. It is recommended that employers collaborate with community partners to highlight local career options and build an attraction strategy to aid in succession planning.*
- 6. It is recommended that employers increase exposure to local job opportunities through a model similar to “Power Engineers Program” run by Bruce Power thereby creating a pipeline of employees to fill future demand.*

Educators

High Schools, Colleges, Universities, Private Career Colleges, Technical Delivery Agencies, etc.

Educators are able to build the skills of the future and current workforce to ensure they meet the demands of the local labour market.

- 1. It is recommended that guidance counsellors and those teaching the Grade 10 Careers Studies (GLC2O) in high schools share information on the current local labour market and trends to ensure youth understand the dynamics of the local labour market to make sound education and career decisions.*
- 2. It is recommended that the education sector make use of resources available through community partners including the Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Saugeen Economic and Bruce Community Futures Development Corporations and employment and training service providers.*
- 3. It is recommended that educators collaborate with community providers and parents to develop the soft skills in youth required by employers. These skills are not limited to but include; work ethic, leadership, teamwork, adaptability, organizational, problem solving and computer literacy.*
- 4. It is recommended that colleges offer more flexibility in training to accommodate continuous learning opportunities.*
- 5. It is recommended that guidance counsellors work with employers and community partners to promote the diversity of job opportunities in the area to students.*
- 6. It is recommended that educators collaborate with employers to build an attraction strategy for students who leave for post-secondary opportunities. Local high schools should develop a strategy to connect with alumni to maintain the relationship between graduates of the County and the local job market. This would include events to connect with youth when they return for holidays and vacation, newsletters and social media.*
- 7. It is recommended that educators highlight the apprenticeship opportunities to local youth, especially to females.*
- 8. It is recommended that educators incorporate business courses to help the workforce understand leadership and management in business.*
- 9. It is recommended that educators collaborate with community partners to track Grade 12 graduates through post-secondary education and those who enter the workplace directly. The students' field of work, field of study, place of study and place of residence could be tracked to maintain a database of the upcoming labour market skills, education and aspirations.*
- 10. It is recommended that educators development a stronger partnership with businesses to develop a career program that connect students with companies in the community.*

Community Partners

Workforce Planning Board, Employment and Training Service Providers, Adult Learning Centres, Community Futures Development Corporations, County/Municipal Economic Development Services, Small Business Enterprise Centres, etc.

Community partners are the link between job seekers, business and education. It is important that they are involved in the strategies for workforce development.

- 1. It is recommended that the Planning Board engage in a promotional program directed at education and employment partners to inform them about the existing and projected skills gaps and collaborate with these partners to provide support in assisting youth and job seekers in general to enhance their skills to meet the needs of the business community.*
- 2. It is recommended that employment services partner with schools to promote their summer employment and other youth services in the schools to students as they look for employment related to their field of study or career of interest.*
- 3. It is recommended that employment services partner with schools to offer their expertise in job development and career coaching to guidance counsellors and Career Studies teachers.*
- 4. It is recommended that Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) engage youth to explore the opportunities for entrepreneurship.*
- 5. It is recommended that Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBECS) and CFDCs promote their training opportunities to local businesses.*
- 6. It is recommended that County and Municipal Economic Development departments work with employers to build a strong workforce attraction strategy to fill immediate skills gaps.*
- 7. It is recommended that adult education services promote their computer and education upgrading programs to local businesses.*
- 8. It is recommended that community partners offer employment readiness programs to youth through a variety of options that could include Junior Achievement and Job Readiness Program offered by Owen Sound YMCA Employment Services.*
- 9. It is recommended that community partners develop a strategy to connect with expatriates to communicate business and careers opportunities in Bruce County. The target audience could include youth who go off to post-secondary or employment.*

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- 10. It is recommended that community partners must work together to study rural transportation issues and opportunities to encourage strategies related to improving accessibility to and from the workplace from those with limited access to a vehicle.*
 - 11. It is recommended that community partners should use the findings from this study and others to develop a strategic plan for local recruitment and retention including promotion of the rural lifestyle and recreational amenities, and spousal support for dual income households new to the area.*

Overall, it will take a unified approach among the three key stakeholder groups to ensure economic and workforce development success for Bruce County.

To view the full report please visit
www.planningboard.ca



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Serving Bruce Grey Huron Perth

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