



Vantage Levy Information

By Staci Kaufman, Superintendent
Vantage Career Center

Which came first? Good communities or good schools?

Good schools and communities don't just happen. Chances are good that our schools produced the talented individuals living in a good community. Those individuals will contribute to their community's success by reporting to work, volunteering, mentoring young people, assisting within their local schools, senior centers, and churches, for the benefit of children, teens, and the elderly. Good communities look out for their schools because they value the by-products of a good education. Skilled training is also education and gives back to a community.

Without a skilled workforce, a community slips away. New industry doesn't locate there, because they need a source for trained technicians and service people, restaurants don't thrive because their employees lack customer service skills or their culinary talents are unremarkable, local people don't start their own businesses, invent a more efficient process at their manufacturing plant or expand their beauty salon and offer the latest services. All of these examples require skilled employees with a solid education base. Skilled employees help their company's bottom line -- they keep customers coming back, orders coming in, parts being manufactured and shipped. By doing so, they help their community prosper. People depend on the assortment of business and services located within a community. If services aren't there, they do business elsewhere.

Vantage Career Center is one of the smaller "joint vocational schools" (now called career centers) in Ohio. Since 1976 our purpose has been to provide skilled training for high school students, adults, and employers. In recent years, our mission has been increased to link students to colleges so they can learn advanced skills and technical degrees in their profession.

What's not good about helping people of all ages earn a living?

A community without a vibrant career center overlooks a key building block in the potential success of that community. People benefit by finding employment after training at Vantage. Our building is overflowing with adults seeking retraining in new careers as their jobs were eliminated. Our high school students find talents in auto repair and service, welding, machining, carpentry, health care and several service-based occupations. Many students go on to college and many enter the workforce immediately and begin their lives in a profession they enjoy.

Help Vantage continue to serve high school students and adults. Vote on November 3 to bring \$16.2 million in state funding to Vantage Career Center. We build people's skills so they can build their lives -- and their communities.

Vantage – Can students be competitive in the workforce?

An area businessman said it best: Would you buy 30-year old technology? No -- why would you want it? The Vantage building issue on the November 3 ballot is a great example of this question. Vantage students are trained for 17 different career programs, many of which still use equipment original to the 1976 building. The building has not been changed since it opened its doors in the mid-70s, except to add more than twice the number of classrooms within the same walls. Yes, it has kept up with some new equipment over the years in its programs, and it still offers training on much older equipment used in area shops and service garages.

Students continue to come to school at Vantage because they want a hands-on education. Many students excel in this learning environment, finding the motivation of teachers who have worked in industry fill a void in their school experience.

Why are students being trained at Vantage for skilled jobs if there aren't any? Because there ARE jobs in manufacturing, auto technology, construction, welding, and in service industries like health, food service, cosmetology, and child care. And all of these occupations offer the opportunity for a person to start their own business. The difference is that good jobs require more technical skill, and many demand additional training after high school. Good wages go with skilled jobs, and students who practice good work ethic and demonstrate problem solving skills can move to the top of their profession.

Vantage's training facility needs major repair and expansion. Can their students be competitive in the workforce today if they continue to train in a facility without adequate power, antique heating and ventilation systems, and a roof that needs replaced? Passing the local 1.05 mill bond issue now while \$16.2 million of the state's funds are coming to Vantage is wise. The offer of \$16.2 million ends for Vantage if local voters don't approve the bond issue in November. Most school construction projects cost much more than \$30 a year. Vantage can renovate and expand the current building for only the price of one tank of gas per year for the \$100,000 homeowner. Without as much state assistance, Vantage's building project will cost residents much more. The building's problems won't disappear. The price tag will continue to go up as the economy comes back and inflation spikes. Take time to watch the video on the Vantage website or at www.BeSceneVideo.com/vantage . The project is necessary now, at a price that is more than reasonable.

Would you trade a tank of gas for \$16 million dollars?

That is the question that Citizens for Vantage Career Center members are asking their friends and neighbors. If the answer is a resounding “YES” on the November 3 ballot, area residents will see a much needed construction project begin at Vantage. The Ohio School Facilities Commission will provide \$16.2 million to improve Vantage’s facility, but only if the local share is passed on the November 3 ballot. The 1.05 mill levy costs about one tank of gas PER YEAR for the \$100,000 home owner. But the \$16.2 million may be on the table for the last time for Vantage.

Several community members and business people have stepped forward to help Vantage inform voters. Area committee members were motivated to action when they toured Vantage on July 30 and saw firsthand the difficulties people experience when attending the facility. Vantage has been serving high school students and adults from thirteen area school districts in all or parts of four different counties (Paulding, Putnam, Mercer and Van Wert) for 33 years.

A short video portrays a clear need for building improvement, particularly the replacement of the original heating and electrical systems, and handicap accessibility. (You can watch the video at www.bescenevideo.com/vantage). Equally important is the need for additional classroom space -- several trade and industry classes are taught on loft platforms, overlooking the industrial lab. Students sit just inches from the engine exhaust ducts, and swelter on these upstairs platforms when hot temperatures occur, making learning conditions almost unbearable.

Construction of new classrooms will also create rooms large enough to seat 25 students, a typical class size, but currently students are squeezed into classrooms of 500 to 600 square feet-- not nearly adequate for teaching high school juniors and seniors and adults.

Vantage’s four science classrooms were created from former training lab spaces. Daylight and running water would provide a learning environment where students perform experiments, challenging them to fully understand the concepts presented.

Best of all, the career training labs which are the reason students choose Vantage Career Center, will be modernized. Carpentry, Precision Machining, and Welding will occupy new lab spaces, and old ventilation, heating, and mechanical systems throughout the building will be replaced with cost-effective, efficient operating systems. New lab equipment is proposed to assist students in keeping the competitive edge in the workforce. High school students and adults will continue to “Get the Edge” when they complete training at Vantage.

Contact Staci Kaufman, Superintendent, at 419.238.5411, extension 102. Better yet, stop at Vantage and ask to see the challenges that over 700 people daily struggle to overcome.