

Testimony
of
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before the

Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Hearing on “Providing More Students a Pathway to Success by Strengthening
Career and Technical Education”

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BASF

BASF has operations at 154 locations in 29 states in the U.S. of which, 81 are production sites and 17 are research and development facilities. The company has more than 15,000 employees in the U.S. and is dedicated to hiring and developing people in a wide range of roles, including operations, engineering, research and development, sales and marketing. We support a variety of education initiatives to help fill the workforce pipeline. In 2016, BASF contributed more than \$4.5 million to non-profit organizations supporting communities where we work and live throughout the U.S.

Manufacturing Workforce Development

The purpose of the U.S. education system is to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for individuals to be successful in life, whatever their pursuits may be. Making a good living is the foundation of a successful life. Alignment between the education system and the business community is critical if we are going to deliver the knowledge and skills necessary for an individual's success. Collaboration between business and education makes sense. Wherever possible, BASF seeks out and promotes these collaborations, from K-12 through graduate school. Perkins grants are an important tool that enhances the collaborative process and adds to student success.

Important to Talent Acquisition is our pursuit to seek the best candidates. But Talent Acquisition begins with a strategy of enticing the best candidates to seek us. Beginning in 2016, 11,000 baby boomers are turning 70 every day. Projected record investments in the U.S., will result in a shortage of 2 million manufacturing workers. As this inevitability comes to fruition, the most profound effect will be within job sectors that require education beyond high school. Jobs in technology are among those most at risk. To mitigate the impact of this skills gap, BASF is taking a more engaged approach to workforce development and is focusing on "Pipeline Relationship Management."

This includes direct involvement in all stages of workforce preparation; building continuous and meaningful relationships with workforce potentials and organizations, and providing continuous opportunities to deliver the BASF Value Proposition to potential job candidates. Three directives drive our Manufacturing Workforce Development program:

- Drive Career & Technical Education Awareness (To grow the pipeline)
- Cultivate "Nested Educational Partnerships" (To increase the quality of the pipeline)
- Leverage Government and Industrial Partnerships (To accelerate pipeline productivity)

Career & Technical Education (CTE) Awareness

Within CTE we endeavor to grow the pipeline of workforce potentials. Surveys report that 52% of all teenagers say they have no interest in a manufacturing career. However, the data also reports that the most influential factor for students deciding what career to pursue is "personal experience" (to what they have been exposed). This drives our need to do more to familiarize these workforce potentials with jobs in manufacturing technology. Since 2010, more than 380,000 schoolchildren in grades K-12 have participated in science education programs offered by BASF.

- Through programs like BASF's Kids' Lab, we are helping grade school students build on their natural curiosity for how things work and to develop an interest in science.
- Through National sponsorship of the Chemical Educational Foundation's You Be the Chemist Challenge program, we are helping students in grades 5 through 8 to build on their love for science and prepare for challenging high-school curricula.
- In programs like BASF's Science Academy and Tech Academy, we seek to attract high school students to skilled career paths in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- For retooling adults, our recruitment message goes beyond standard career discussions and shines a light on misconceptions of pay, lifestyle, and future job availability projections.

- We are positioning our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to lead the way as Ambassadors within CTE activities. These groups focus on specific diversity segments and are uniquely qualified for outreach in these areas. Part of BASF's workforce development vision is that people of diverse backgrounds see us as a company that doesn't just seek to be, but is, diverse and sees value in being so.

We strive to equip students and other workforce potentials with the right information to make STEM, Manufacturing, and BASF career decisions. **CTE is an area where BASF collaborates with our industry partners to increase the size of the workforce pipeline so that we can all have a "Tap off of the Main."**

Nested Educational Partnerships

Through a steadfast commitment to our Nested Educational Partnerships we seek to increase the workforce pipeline quality. Within degree programs that align with our hiring projections, we:

- Join/create industry led educational advisory committees
- Align education program learning with workplace knowledge and skill needs
- Provide BASF site tours, student internships, and faculty externships

Examples of these efforts include:

- We are developing a "Nested Educational Partnership Playbook" that will define the roles and responsibilities of education and industry within this cooperation.
- The BASF site in Beaumont, Texas is in process of strengthening relationships with Lamar Institute of Technology and Lamar State College. The site is also hosting tours and site visits for students and faculty. Students who have participated in the BASF Science Academy program have gone on to earn scholarships to Lamar.
- Along with River Parishes Community College (RPCC) in Geismar, Louisiana, BASF is a Signature Partner for a state-of-the-art Advanced Technology Center and is piloting one of the state's first Accelerated Process Technology degree programs. Our investments here include:
 - \$500,000 Cash and Equipment donations
 - Providing dedicated Engineer support to the school for plant design and build
 - Establishment of a BASF Tech Academy (a week long STEM program for Jr. and Sr. high school students) – with \$10k per year donation to fund the program
 - Up to \$5k scholarships to the Jr. and Sr. high school students attending the Tech Academy who enroll in STEM programs at RPCC
 - BASF provides paid internships for Process Technology students at the Geismar site...and many of these students transition to full-time BASF employees
 - Targeting retooling adults, BASF helped found a "PTech Express" program at RPCC (an 18-week – fast track Process Technology degree) – for students already holding a Bachelor's level degree.
 - \$25k annual donation to their general fund
 - Representation on RPCC Advisory Committees to provide feedback to workforce readiness of graduates and influence curriculum improvements
- In Pasadena, Texas, BASF recently donated ~\$750,000 and is planning to surpass \$1 million in equipment donations before end of this summer to Texas A&M, Lee College, San Jacinto College, Lone Star College, and the University of Houston. The donations will foster more hands on and applied learning, and increase the quality of equipment lab environments at these colleges. BASF also provides site tours, externships, internships and co-op opportunities to students. In addition, BASF employees teach education modules for students, such as *Environmental Health and Safety Life Saving Rules*.

- The BASF site in Freeport, Texas is working with Brazosport College to provide externships and internships, and is piloting co-op opportunities in Process Technology and Maintenance crafts. The site also has executive representation on the College Foundation Board and has donated:
 - \$1,000,000 in 2008 to establish the BASF Center for process technology
 - \$250,000 in technical scholarship support from 2011 – 2015
 - \$125,000 in technical scholarship support pledged from 2016 – 2020
 - \$125,000 to support the founding of the Crafts Academy (which includes the welding facility)
 - \$10,000 annually to the Spirit of Music endowment fund for more than 10 years
 - \$5,000 in 2017 to support the College's student incentive program

This is only a short list of examples representing our programs that support education in a meaningful and impactful way throughout the United States.

Jobs in technology are of special consideration when discussing job preparation. **BASF is committed to assuring these programs are not just books and lecture but that they encompass applied performance criteria in equipment lab environments that mimic job performance. These programs must go beyond teaching theory and information. They must teach skills that can be directly applied on the job immediately.**

Government & Industrial Partnerships

Leveraging government and industrial partnerships includes advocacy within public policy at the federal, state and local levels, and establishing partnerships with industry groups where we:

- Established a corporate consortium with our industry partners to explore workforce development strategic alignments around metrics and key performance indicators.
- Worked with the National Association of Manufacturers to found the *Southeast Texas Education Foundation*, and are working to breaking ground for a similar program in Louisiana. We are using this as a framework to establish a model of CTE outreach that can be scaled across North America.
- Are positioned on the Education and Workforce Committee for the National Association of Manufactures to advocate for policy that supports industry such as reauthorization of the Perkins Act.
- Deliver testimony to the Texas State House Committee on benefits of collaborative efforts between education and industry to advocate for government support of these activities.

Future Execution

Moving forward, BASF will advance these activities across North America. We have developed a site specific execution plan that has already been initiated in multiple sites and will continue to be rolled out to more sites each quarter. The stage is being set for a comprehensive apprenticeship program that begins with relationships created during CTE awareness, nurtured through educational skill development and matured as workforce potentials become BASF hires.

BASF supports good education policy that allows for collaboration and makes good use of funding mechanisms, like Perkins grants, that better prepare individuals to be more competitive and successful in the world.