

## **BC Skills Program Overview**

BC Skills really started as an answer to some of the toughest questions faced by educators and industry leaders in our community. How do we address poverty in our community and train an adult work-force that is underemployed or unemployed? How do we strengthen our local economy by drawing industry and business to our region? How do we produce students who are work-ready upon graduation from high school?

To address these difficult issues, Barren County Schools, in close collaboration with community stake-holders, industry leaders, and local and state government, created BC Skills. BC Skills is a cutting edge program that equips students with 21st Century skills in responsive web-design and development. We help students build a professional profile and networks as well as a portfolio of products.

The Barren County School Board was integral to the development of BC Skills. They approved the initial formation of BC Skills and the application to the Work Ready Skills Initiative that provided the essential funding for the program. They supported the added salary for Justin Browning as the BC Skills project manager and have participated in multiple recruiting events and coding nights connected to the program.

The first cohort for BC Skills began in August 2018. Thirty six participants took part, including thirteen adults for workforce training and twenty three students in eleventh and twelfth grade. Participants came from not only Barren County, but from surrounding counties including Metcalfe, Monroe, Allen, and Warren. Curriculum was provided by Interapt, LLC. which allowed industry leaders to teach the content (the best scenario to ensure workforce readiness for students). Between training and apprenticeships, participants logged over 41,000 training hours combined.

Cohort I completed fourteen projects including webpages and apps for small businesses, e-commerce, community relief programs, and social media. Five LLCs (limited liability companies) were created as a result of Cohort 1. Seventeen of those students are continuing their education in related science fields. Ninety seven percent of the participants completed the program successfully. Eleven are employed full time in the field of computer science with annual salaries ranging from \$29,121 to \$62,400. The cost of Cohort I was \$400,000 and was funded entirely by the generosity of local community members.

Cohort II began in August 2019 with fourteen adults and sixteen students participating. The cost of Cohort II was \$150,000 which was funded by the Barren County Economic Authority. Using the knowledge gained from Cohort I, BC Skills partnered with a new startup to develop React Javascript, the current curriculum for the program, which significantly reduced overhead cost.

BC Skills has forged partnerships with national and local industry leaders, understanding that these connections are vital to maintaining the program and ensuring that students are truly prepared to meet the needs of today's technology market. Consulting partners include: ADK Group of Boston, Apple Inc., U.S. Department of the Interior, Launch Academy of Boston, Springboard Enterprises of Washington D.C., Byte2Eat Advisors of St. Louis, Appfire of Boston, Dunkin' Donuts, Panera Bread, University of Iowa John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, and Fleurish of Seattle. Hiring partners include South Central Rural Telephone Company of Glasgow, KY; Span-Tech of Glasgow, KY; Barren County Government of Glasgow, KY; Apple Inc. of Knoxville, TN; Mobile Mentor of Nashville, TN; Honeywick of Louisville, KY; and El Toro of Louisville, KY.

BC Skills is an affiliate site for the South Central Kentucky Workforce Board's Career Team. Through this collaboration, local citizens seeking employment come to BC Skills to learn of opportunities in the local job market and trade industries. We also work with local businesses to train

workers; we offered six continuing education classes for nurses on data organization and database training, and we have consulted with local government on 21st Century technology needs.

Since its inception in 2018, BC Skills has produced a net gain of \$451,160. This calculation includes workers who increased their hourly pay, those who moved from hourly rates to salaried positions, and those who went from being unemployed to being employed in hourly or salaried positions. \$50,000 of gain was also produced through part-time “gigs” completed by program participants. Our five year projected net gain is over 4.4 million dollars.

We are equipping individuals with the skills they need to thrive in today’s job market, creating paths to employment for the unemployed, and training people up so that they can move up. At the same time, we are building a work-force that will support existing businesses in our community and draw new businesses to the area. Through our innovative work and partnerships, BC Skills is changing the community one cohort at a time.

**Point/Contact person:**  
**Heather Gardner, PR Assistant, District Grant Writer**  
**[heather.gardner@barren.kyschools.us](mailto:heather.gardner@barren.kyschools.us)**  
**270-651-3787 (phone)**  
**270-651-8836 (fax)**



Justin Browning  
Project Manager, BC Skills  
475 Trojan Trail  
Glasgow, KY 42141  
[justin.browning@barren.kyschools.us](mailto:justin.browning@barren.kyschools.us)  
270.590.0053

Dear Distinguished Panel:

It is my privilege to provide this letter of support on behalf of BC Skills for the 2019 PEAK Award. During my two decades in the state of Kentucky serving in the K-12 education sector, I have not encountered a program that exceeds or matches the potential impact of BC Skills. The product of an amazing team of motivated innovators and out-of-the-box thinkers, BC Skills provides opportunities for Barren County students and adults that are truly unparalleled.

In many ways, "impact" is a difficult concept to measure. Metrics allow one to measure certain outcomes related to a particular endeavor that are easily quantifiable; however, impact cannot always be communicated with numbers. Concerning BC Skills, the impact is both quantifiable by economics and by lives changed.

When considering only the local economic impact, the metrics are clear from Cohort I of BC Skills as it reaches to the hundreds of thousands in annual net gains and the conservatively projected ROI of over one million dollars by year ten. Assuming the same holds true for Cohort II (in progress) through Cohort V, the projected impact will reach nearly six million dollars. Six million additional dollars flooding the economy of a small, struggling community impacted by deindustrialization and globalization translates to jobs, healthy businesses, and thriving families.

Concerning the impact of BC Skills at a more personal level, it is just as much felt as it is seen. To communicate this, I will briefly share with you Dustin's (*name changed for privacy*) story. The oldest child of a single parent, Dustin has experienced more sorrow than joy. Circumstances have allowed Dustin to know homelessness, generational poverty, and clinical depression to the point of multiple hospitalizations. As may be expected, Dustin, though a very thoughtful individual, struggled in the traditional school setting as evidenced by poor attendance and grades prior to BC Skills. He had no hope to change the vicious cycle and no passion or skill to serve as motivation. Entering his senior year at Barren County High School, Dustin genuinely needed "something." In August of his senior year, Dustin entered BC Skills, and I am confident the rest of his story will be something to witness! Today, only one year later, I am blessed to share that Dustin is studying computer science and business at a state

university on a full scholarship, and he is freelancing as a software and web developer to support himself and to gain valuable experience. BC Skills introduced Dustin to new world saturated with exciting opportunities, and he is thriving in this new world. Mind you, Dustin is not an outlier. I could share with you the stories of Ian, Katelyn, Jamie, Alex, Tanner, Gabriella and many others and you would be just as moved. Their stories evidence the one statement that you will hear said in the Skills environment on a daily basis, that being, "If you can see it, you can be it."

Speaking to something I am passionate about comes easily for me, and I am passionate about opportunities for students and adults in my community that leads to personal, professional, and societal growth. BC Skills is a catalyst toward changing mindsets in our community. It has become the regional core of innovation from which five new small businesses and over a dozen new apps and websites have been birthed... in only twelve months. It is the launchpad for what is now 65 individuals into a world in which they are now skilled to thrive. It is the evidence that a small, rural community can produce top-tier, next generational talent. BC Skills' mission is "Educate. Innovate. Deploy," and as far as I am concerned, it is the best example of how K-12 (*and beyond*) school systems can expand their impact to a depth that can change a community at its very core.

Thank you for your consideration of BC Skills as a 2019 recipient of the PEAK Award.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. A small arrow points to the top of the signature.

Justin Browning

# Tanner York

851 California St, San Francisco, CA 94108 · 270-590-8539 · tannerwyork@gmail.com

September 11, 2019

Dear Kentucky School Boards Association:

I am beyond excited that I am the person writing BC Skills' PEAK Award recommendation letter. Without the BC Skills program, I would not be where I am today. The way the program was structured allowed me time to fully comprehend what I was learning. The project-based learning made sure what I was being taught stuck, and the instructors' support helped me work through the harder concepts. The program, even in its first run-through, opened my eyes to what I can truly achieve and the great things that are possible if given the right learning plan.

Personally, the program showed me a field that I was unaware of before, and in a way that allowed me to not only understand the actions you take in the field but why you should be taking them. To be more specific, going into the BC Skills program, I had no experience in the skills and mindset needed for computer programming. However, coming out of the first semester, I realized the many benefits that the program gave me and took it again for the final semester of my senior year. After finishing the final term and graduating, I not only had the skills to understand and work in the industry, but also the mindset to continue to improve my skills and develop new ones. Due to BC Skills, I am continuing my computer science education at Make School in San Francisco, an opportunity I may not have been aware of otherwise.

The reason BC Skills should be granted the PEAK Award is that not only is it a truly innovative way to teach students, but also because it does more than teach students. BC Skills helps develop students' ideas on what they really want to do in life and how they can do it.

Sincerely,



Tanner York



## **BARREN COUNTY SCHOOLS**

202 West Washington Street , Glasgow, KY 42141 | 270-651-3787 Phone | 270-651-8836 Fax | barren.kyschools.us

**Bo Matthews, Superintendent**

**September 12, 2019**

**Kentucky School Boards Association  
260 Democrat Drive  
Frankfort, KY 40601**

**Dear Kentucky School Boards Association:**

**I am writing on behalf of the Barren County Board of Education to express our support for the BC Skills program. This cutting-edge program has already had a tremendous impact on our community, and its potential impact in the years to come will be transformative, not just for the students of Barren and the surrounding counties, but for the entire region.**

**We are living in a transitional time when industry is rapidly changing and jobs that once sustained our community are becoming obsolete. While this transition creates difficult challenges, it also offers a new world of opportunities, and BC Skills is positioned to support our community in overcoming the challenges by equipping citizens to seize the opportunities.**

**By training current workforce and future workforce participants in the 21st Century technology skills they need to be successful in this new economy, BC Skills is addressing multiple critical issues in our community from reducing unemployment to attracting new industry to the area. Through our partnership with not only local industry, but also with national business partners, we have developed the infrastructure needed to sustain the program for years to come. These connections ensure that instruction and training are relevant to industry needs and offer our participants a wide-range of employment opportunities.**

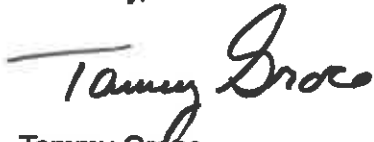
**One of the most impressive features of BC Skills is that it meets the needs of such a wide range of people. Participants include adult workforce who wish to better equip themselves for upward mobility, at-risk students who have had difficulty finding their niche, and tech-savvy students who have known for years they wanted to pursue a future in responsive web design. Of the twenty-three students who participated in the first cohort, eighteen are currently enrolled in college, one is employed full-time at SpanTech, and two are in training programs to become instructors. 91% of student participants have transitioned to college or the workforce.**

**Since its beginning in the fall of 2018, BC Skills has included 66 participants with plans to increase its capacity to serve an even larger number of people each year. The economic impact**

of the program already exceeds \$500,000, and it is projected to exceed \$6,000,000 within five years. These are numbers that do not just change individual lives, they change our community as a whole.

The Barren County Board of Education takes great pride in this innovative, transformative work, and we are committed to expanding and sustaining this work. BC Skills is a national exemplar of how innovative school programming can transform a school, a district, a region and a community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Groce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first name.

Tammy Groce

Barren County School Board Member