



Three reasons why every Jackson County resident should get involved with Cradle 2 Career



Sara Scott | sscott2@mlive.com February 07, 2014

JACKSON, MI — Chances are, you're probably not that familiar with Cradle to Career — a countywide network tasked with ensuring each Jackson County student is prepared for the workforce. I'm hoping, not only to change that, but to also persuade you to do more than read about it. I'm hoping you'll actively get involved.

I first learned about Cradle 2 Career **a little over a year ago**, and opted to become more actively involved in early spring by joining the network's Community Engagement Committee, whose mission is to educate and encourage involvement. In short, Cradle 2 Career is a network of people who care about local education, the economy and doing what's necessary to ensure Jackson's future success. Participants come from all areas, including businesses, government, educational institutions, parents and other volunteers.

If you're not already involved, here are a few good reasons to think about it:

1. This is legitimate. I've been around here long enough to know that every few years or so, a group with good intentions will get together and roll out a grand plan that's going to fix the schools, lower crime, grow business or (fill in the blank here.) Everyone gathers for a introductory meeting, picks up their stakeholder pin and then goes home. The End. Cradle 2 Career is not that. It is based on pretty impressive research, supported by every major player in the region, and has already started to show success.
2. This is a truly collaborative effort. Every school superintendent in the county has signed on, in addition to city and county government, Jackson College, the Enterprise Group of Jackson, the Jackson District Library, Community Action Agency, United Way, the Jackson Chamber of Commerce, and well, you get the idea.
3. Regardless of your interests, skill sets or time restrictions, there is something you can do. Cradle 2 Career is comprised of several committees, including early childhood, elementary, middle school, secondary and post-secondary. Each is tasked with addressing obstacles in career-readiness at specific levels. If committees aren't your thing, **considering volunteering as a tutor or mentor**. Check out **this website** to find out more.

— Sara Scott is the editor of the Jackson Citizen Patriot and MLive Jackson.

