



Employer Certification Program

Catawba County values education for its citizens. The goal of the **Education Matters Certification Program** is to “leverage the power of partnerships with businesses, government, and education for the purpose of increasing the value of education in Catawba County and creating a culture in our community where dropping out is no longer an option.

Businesses, local government, education, and their partners believe in the strength of an educated workforce. Studies consistently demonstrate that individuals who are better educated are more prepared to withstand economic downturns, increase their earnings potential over their lifetimes, and are more productive in the workplace. This program is designed to meet the needs of the future of Catawba County by assuring that quality education is a valuable resource for all of its stakeholders through programming, accountability, investment, policy, and practice.

Education Matters Program Certification Levels:

Gold

Silver

Bronze

Employer Criteria for Education Matters Gold Certification:

1. **All** new hires effective 2012, will have a minimum of a high school credential or its equivalent (ex. GED, Adult HS Diploma, etc.). Individuals that are currently enrolled in high school or an approved program would meet this requirement.
2. Promote “Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools” and communicate the employer’s commitment to this initiative in effective and appropriate manners.
3. Provide human and capital resources in support of education annually.
4. Work with the Champions of Education staff to identify potential for employees to participate in opportunities that will bring classrooms to the real world of business and provide students with experiences and problem solving on Catawba County business issues.
5. Display “Education Matters” Certification in a prominent location to demonstrate the value of education in Catawba County.
6. Participate in Champions of Education programs.
7. Encourage employees to participate in educational opportunities as a tutor, mentor, volunteer, etc.

Employer Criteria for Education Matters Silver Certification:

1. **All** new hires effective 2012, will have a minimum of a high school credential or its equivalent (ex. GED, Adult HS Diploma, etc.). Individuals that are currently enrolled in high school or an approved program would meet this requirement.
2. Promote “Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools” and communicate the employer’s commitment to this initiative in effective and appropriate manners.
3. Work with the Champions of Education staff to identify potential for employees to participate in opportunities that will bring classrooms to the real world of business and provide students with experiences and problem solving on Catawba County business issues.
4. Display “Education Matters” Certification in a prominent location to demonstrate the value of education in Catawba County.
5. Participate in Champions of Education programs.

Employer Criteria for Education Matters Bronze Certification:

1. Employers will set as **a preference or a goal** not to hire anyone without a minimum of a high school credential or its equivalent (ex. GED, Adult HS Diploma, etc.) by 2012. Individuals that are currently enrolled in high school or an approved program would meet this requirement.
2. Promote “Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools” and communicate the employer’s commitment to this initiative in effective and appropriate manners.
3. Work with the Champions of Education staff to identify potential for employees to participate in opportunities that will bring classrooms to the real world of business and provide students with experiences and problem solving on Catawba County business issues.
4. Display “Education Matters” Certification in a prominent location to demonstrate the value of education in Catawba County.
5. Participate in Champions of Education programs.

Employer Benefits and Commitments from Education in Catawba County

**Catawba County Schools
Catawba Valley Community College
Hickory City Schools
Newton-Conover City Schools**

1. **Education Matters Future Ready Portfolio-** Every student graduating from Catawba County Schools, Hickory City Schools, Newton Conover Schools, and Catawba Valley Community College by 2012 will leave with an "Education Matters Future Ready Portfolio". This portfolio will include letters of reference, assessment scores (ie. CRC, SAT, COMPASS, etc.), transcripts, writing samples, service activities, attendance records, awards and honors, extra curricula activities, disciplinary records, personal goals, and any other relevant information.
2. **Catawba Valley Community College Graduate Guarantee-** By 2012, every **graduate** of a CVCC program will have the Education Matters Future Ready Portfolio that will include a graduate guarantee. This guarantee assures that any employer who hires a CVCC graduate will be assured in writing that the applicant is competent in identified key areas to employers (ie. critical thinking, problem solving, communication, etc., plus program specific technical competencies). This will be accomplished by full course and program integration of these employer critical competencies. Any employer that determines that a CVCC graduate is deficient in any of the identified competencies will be able to send their employee to additional education and training in the specific area free of charge to the employer or the graduate.
3. **Employability Training** will be provided to all students in the three school systems and Catawba Valley Community College prior to graduation.
4. **Education Matters Annual Report-** The educational systems in Catawba County will produce a collaborative annual report to **Education Matters Certified Employers** that will include items such as graduation rates, employer specific initiatives, Education Matters related initiatives, etc.

Employer Benefits and Commitments from Government in Catawba County

As part of their commitment to the importance of education in Catawba County, **Brookford, Catawba, Claremont, Conover, Hickory, Long View, Maiden, Newton, Catawba County, EDC, and Western Piedmont Council of Governments** agree to the following:

1. To promote "leave for parental involvement in schools" by matching up to four hours of time away from work (through employee's annual leave or compensatory time) for employees to:
 - a. attend teacher conferences and school supported activities for their children or grandchildren during work time;
 - b. volunteer with tutoring programs where they can use their credentials, disciplines, or unique experiences to help in the field of education; and
 - c. be part of a school system administered "speakers bureau" to lecture on special topics.
2. Our economic incentive agreements will require industries be an Education Matters Program Certification participant. To provide academic internships opportunities for high school students.
3. To encourage employees to participate in required high school graduation projects, serving as a mentor or a judge.
4. To request and review the Education Matters portfolio of all Catawba County high school graduates who have applied for vacancies.
5. Catawba County Government will continue to financially support the public school systems and Catawba Valley Community College.
6. Catawba County will require adoptive or foster parents to have their high school diplomas or GED, and will encourage Work First clients to obtain their high school diplomas or GED.



Application

Name of Employer: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Type of Employer (Business, Government, Education): _____

Level of Certification Applying For (Circle One): Gold Silver Bronze

CEO or Designated Representative: _____

Contact Information: Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

The aforementioned employer is applying for Education Matters in Catawba County Certification by the Catawba County Champions of Education. The employer agrees to the criteria (for designated level) as outlined in the Education Matters Certification Program and requests a review by Champions of Education staff to determine certification.

Signed (CEO or Designee): _____ Date: _____

Please send completed applications to:

Champions of Education
Attn: Lamar Mitchell
PO Box 1828
Hickory, NC 28603

Or fax to: 828-328-1175

Any questions? Call Lamar Mitchell at 828-328-6000 x.248



Program Certification Participation Levels
(check one)

Gold Level _____

- Hiring practices
- Promote "Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools"
- Provide human and capital resources in support of education
- Participate in COE staff consultation
- Display "Education Matters" certification
- Participate in Champions of Education programs
- Encourage employee volunteerism in schools

Silver Level _____

- Hiring practices
- Promote "Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools"
- Participate in COE staff consultation
- Display "Education Matters" certification
- Participate in Champions of Education programs

Bronze Level _____

- Hiring practices
- Promote "Leave for Parental Involvement in Schools"
- Participate in COE staff consultation
- Display "Education Matters" certification
- Participate in Champions of Education programs