2026 MSSC Leadership Council Meeting Recap

Date: June 11th, 2026

Time: 3:00 pm ET – 4:30 pm ET

Meeting Recording

Section	Speaker	Recording Timestamp
MSSC Updates & 2026 Key Initiatives	Neil Reddy, CEO and Chair, MSSC	
Manufacturing & Reshoring Trends	Harry Moser, President & Founder, Reshoring Initiative	9:17
Workforce Pell Implementation	Neil Reddy, CEO and Chair, MSSC	19:13
Latest out of Washington	Gardner Carrick, Chief Program Officer, Manufacturing Institute	31:12
Frontline Worker Industrial AI Trends	Leo Reddy, President, MSSC	46:21
"Make School Work"	Stephanie Reisner, CEO, GPS Education Partners	56:37
Supply Chain Industry Workforce Trends	Steve Harrington, Sr. Advisor, MSSC & Josh Gonzalez, Director of Technical Training Centers, Target Corporation	1:11:31

MSSC Updates & 2026 Key Initiatives

Neil Reddy, CEO and Chair, MSSC

2025 Performance Highlights

- Administered more than 30,000 assessments during the past year.
- Served over 15,500 candidates, including 6,249 high school students.
- Expanded MSSC's cumulative reach to more than 170,000 participants and over 300,000 credentials issued.

- Continued growth across manufacturing and supply chain certification programs nationwide.

Growth of MSSC Network and Certifications

- MSSC's network has grown to approximately 4,035 authorized instructors nationwide.
- The organization now supports approximately 2,270 assessment and training centers across the country.
- MSSC certifications continue to gain traction in secondary education, workforce development, military transition programs, and industry-led training initiatives.
- The Certified Logistics Technician (CLT) credential remains one of the most popular certifications selected by active-duty military personnel and veterans.

Standards Review and Curriculum Alignment

- MSSC recently completed updates to its industry standards and continues to review certification content for alignment with current workforce needs.
- Ongoing efforts include updates to assessments, curriculum, learning materials, and supporting resources.

CPT 4.0+ Integration

- Last summer, MSSC launched the integrated CPT 4.0+ model, combining CPT eLearning with Skill Boss hands-on activities.
- The program creates a project-based learning experience that allows students to move directly between classroom instruction and practical skill application.
- New instructional and marketing resources have been developed to support implementation and adoption.

Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Initiatives

- MSSC continues to support apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs nationwide.
- The organization is working closely with workforce partners to strengthen career pathways into manufacturing and logistics occupations.

National Outreach and Industry Engagement

- MSSC remains active at the state and national levels through workforce development initiatives, industry partnerships, and government engagement.

- The organization participates in major conferences, state workforce activities, and federal workforce discussions to promote industry-recognized credentials and workforce solutions.
- Ongoing collaboration with employers, educators, workforce boards, and industry associations continues to expand awareness and adoption of MSSC programs.

Manufacturing & Reshoring Trends

Harry Moser, President & Founder, Reshoring Initiative
Slides

U.S. manufacturing continues to show strong momentum, fueled by investments in data centers, semiconductor production, defense manufacturing, and ongoing reshoring activity. Several leading indicators point to accelerating growth, including a 28% increase in machine tool orders, a 13% increase in cutting tool sales, an ISM Manufacturing PMI of 54.0 in May (its highest level since 2022), and five consecutive months of growth in the Gardner Metalworking Business Index. These trends suggest renewed domestic manufacturing investment and improving productivity across multiple sectors.

The presentation also highlighted the continued impact of reshoring and foreign direct investment (FDI) on U.S. job creation. Since 2010, announced reshoring and FDI projects have grown dramatically, reaching a projected 338,517 jobs in 2026, with potential to hit a record level this year. While cost competitiveness between the U.S. and overseas manufacturing locations continues to improve, workforce availability remains one of the most significant challenges facing manufacturers seeking to expand domestic production capacity.

Encouragingly, attitudes toward skilled trades and technical careers continue to shift. Recent research shows that nearly 9 in 10 parents believe students should consider careers in the skilled trades, while enrollment in trade programs has increased by 23% and vocational-focused community college programs have grown by 16%. Often referred to as the "Toolbelt Generation," Gen Z is increasingly pursuing technical career pathways as employers face growing labor shortages and retirements among experienced workers.

The presentation concluded by examining how advanced manufacturing technologies are reshaping global competitiveness. New research from Boston Consulting Group suggests that automation, digitalization, and AI-driven manufacturing systems are significantly improving the economics of domestic production. As manufacturers adopt "Factory of the Future"

technologies, the combination of advanced technology and a highly skilled workforce is expected to play a critical role in strengthening U.S. manufacturing competitiveness and supporting future reshoring efforts.

The 2026 National Reshoring Survey remains open through July 15th and manufacturers are encouraged to participate. The survey is designed to gather current data on reshoring activity, workforce availability, supply chain challenges, automation adoption, and investment trends across the manufacturing sector. Responses will help identify the key opportunities and barriers facing U.S. manufacturers and provide valuable insights that can be used to support workforce development strategies, industry advocacy efforts, and policies aimed at strengthening domestic manufacturing competitiveness.

- Survey News Release
- Promotional Article

Workforce Pell Implementation

Neil Reddy, CEO and Chair, MSSC

Workforce Pell officially launches on July 1, 2026, creating a new pathway for eligible students to use federal financial aid for approved short-term workforce training programs. Eligible programs must meet specific requirements related to instructional hours, completion rates, job placement outcomes, and alignment with high-demand occupations.

Eligible programs must:

- Be 150–599 clock hours in length, or an equivalent number of credit hours, and require between 8 and 15 weeks of instructional time to complete.
- Provide education aligned with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industries or occupations; meet employer hiring needs; lead to a stackable and portable recognized postsecondary credential (or prepare students for employment where only one recognized credential exists); and ensure students receive academic credit applicable toward at least one certificate or degree program at one or more eligible institutions.
- Have existed for at least 12 months prior to approval and demonstrate both a 70% completion rate and a 70% job placement rate.

An eligible workforce program's published tuition and fees cannot exceed its value-added earnings—defined as the difference between graduates' adjusted median earnings and 150% of the federal poverty guideline for a single individual. The earnings calculation includes only Pell

Grant recipients who completed the program, are employed, and are not enrolled in another educational program.

Link to Final Rules.

Latest out of Washington

Gardner Carrick, Chief Program Officer, Manufacturing Institute

Workforce Pell Implementation

- Workforce Pell remains a major focus in Washington, though implementation is proving more complex than originally anticipated due to statutory requirements built into the legislation.
- States are expected to play a significant role in determining how Workforce Pell is implemented and approved locally.

Goal of 1 Million New Apprentices

- The U.S. Department of Labor continues to prioritize the Administration's goal of reaching one million new registered apprentices.
- Apprenticeship expansion remains one of the highest-profile workforce development initiatives currently receiving attention in Washington.

Senate HELP Committee Apprenticeship Reform Bill

- A Senate proposal was introduced to simplify the Registered Apprenticeship system and reduce administrative complexity for employers.
- While generally supported by industry groups, its prospects for passage appear uncertain given the limited legislative calendar and lack of momentum in Congress.

$35 Million Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Fund

- The Department of Labor released more than $35 million in apprenticeship incentive funding.
- The program is administered through Arkansas but is available nationwide.
- Employers can receive approximately $3,500 per registered apprentice through a reimbursement model.
- The funding applies to apprentices registered since March 1, 2026 and is intended to encourage growth in apprenticeship participation.

Additional $150 Million Apprenticeship Funding Initiative

- A separate apprenticeship funding opportunity totaling approximately $150 million recently closed.
- The funding is expected to support apprenticeship expansion in targeted industries and reimburse employers and sponsors that increase apprenticeship participation.

AI and Registered Apprenticeships

- Federal agencies are actively exploring ways to incorporate AI-related skills into registered apprenticeship programs.
- Additional funding opportunities may be developed to support the integration of AI training into apprenticeship pathways.

WIOA Reauthorization

- Efforts to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) stalled despite nearly reaching completion in late 2024.
- A new House proposal has been introduced but currently lacks bipartisan support and faces uncertain prospects.

"Make America Skilled Again" Grants

- The Administration proposed a workforce funding consolidation initiative known as Make America Skilled Again (MASA) Grants.
- The proposal would shift workforce funding toward state-controlled grant structures.
- The concept has received skepticism from both parties and is unlikely to move forward in its current form.

Defense Industrial Base & Maritime Workforce Investments

- Significant federal investment is being directed toward shipbuilding, maritime infrastructure, and the defense industrial base.
- Additional workforce grants and apprenticeship funding opportunities are expected to emerge from these initiatives.
- One major apprenticeship grant program currently under development is focused specifically on the shipbuilding sector

---

Frontline Worker Industrial AI Trends

Leo Reddy, President, MSSC

Certifying AI Skills and Knowledge of Frontline Manufacturing Technicians

Artificial intelligence continues to emerge as one of the most transformative technologies affecting manufacturing, with applications expanding across production, maintenance, quality, logistics, and workforce support functions. The presentation highlighted the work of MSSC's AI Study Group, which has identified numerous manufacturing activities that are likely to be impacted by AI and emphasized the importance of preparing frontline workers for these changes.

"Make School Work"

Stephanie Reisner, CEO, GPS Education Partners

Slides, "Make School Work"

GPS Education Partners currently supports more than 10,000 students annually across 17 states, working with over 500 employers and impacting more than 200 school districts. The organization's model combines classroom instruction, paid work experience, and industry-recognized credentials to help students develop the skills, confidence, and career awareness needed for success in technical careers.

A key component of the GPS model is its close integration between education and industry. GPS operates manufacturing-embedded education centers where students complete their academic coursework while gaining meaningful workplace experience through youth apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities. The organization works directly with employers, schools, and community partners to align learning with workforce needs, creating a system in which students can apply classroom concepts in real-world settings while developing both technical and professional skills. In addition to operating its own programs, GPS also serves as a national intermediary and consultant, helping communities, school districts, employers, and workforce organizations build and scale sustainable work-based learning systems.

Notably, GPS Education Partners reported a 96% Certified Production Technician (CPT) pass rate, along with a 96% graduation rate, 90% technical career placement rate, and 67% full-time employment rate among participating students. Since 2022, students in GPS programs have successfully completed more than 1,900 MSSC certification exams, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining work-based learning, employer engagement, and industry-recognized credentials to prepare students for manufacturing careers.

Their newly released book, "Make School Work," shares their proven approach to connecting education and employment through work-based learning. Drawing on 25 years of experience,

the book offers a roadmap for communities seeking to build stronger talent pipelines and create meaningful career pathways for students.

Supply Chain Industry Workforce Trends

Steve Harrington, Sr. Advisor, MSSC & Josh Gonzalez, Director of Technical Training Centers, Target Corporation

Steve's Slides
Josh's Slides

Drawing from MHI and Deloitte's 2026 Annual Industry Report, Steve Harrington highlighted continued growth in technology investment, with 56% of supply chain leaders increasing technology spending, 52% planning to invest more than $1 million, and 17% expecting to invest over $10 million. Artificial intelligence was identified as the technology most likely to disrupt the industry over the next decade, with organizations increasingly looking to AI to improve decision-making, automate complex workflows, and drive operational efficiencies. At the same time, workforce challenges remain a significant concern, with 90% of surveyed companies reporting talent-related issues and two-thirds describing them as a major challenge. As a result, companies are increasingly turning to automation, robotics, and workforce development initiatives, such as the Certified Technician – Supply Chain Automation (CT-SCA) program, to attract, upskill, and retain the technical talent needed to support increasingly automated operations.

Josh Gonzalez shared how Target has built a comprehensive workforce development strategy to support more than 1,100 technicians across its distribution network. As automation and technology continue to increase the complexity of supply chain operations, the company has focused on developing talent internally through structured onboarding, technical assessments, simulation training, mentorship, industry-recognized certifications, and clearly defined career pathways. This approach is designed to help technicians develop the systems thinking, digital fluency, technical readiness, and continuous learning mindset needed to succeed in increasingly automated environments.

Since Target's Maintenance Technician Trainee (MTT) program program's inception, 336 technicians have participated, with 302 completing the program and an impressive 97% promotion rate, resulting in 292 promotions. Across the network, technicians have earned 1,194 MSSC certifications, and approximately 65% of the technician population now holds at least one MSSC credential. The company reported that certified technicians experience 33% higher retention rates than non-certified employees, reinforcing the value of structured workforce

development and credential-based training.

Josh also reported on how artificial intelligence is beginning to transform frontline operations. Rather than replacing technicians, AI is enabling a shift from reactive maintenance toward predictive and data-driven decision-making. Examples included predictive asset monitoring, HMI and reporting analysis, AI-assisted troubleshooting, and automated development of standard operating procedures. As these technologies become more prevalent, the role of technicians is evolving from executing individual tasks to making operational decisions based on real-time data and system insights, increasing the importance of analytical skills, digital fluency, systems thinking, and continuous learning.