

# CLASSROOMS TO CORPORATIONS

## SUSTAINABILITY | EDUCATION | WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Joseph Tarasco & Carter E. Strang

Many Northeast Ohio legal professionals are familiar with the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Green Initiative Committee Certification Program which certifies law firms and offices that engage in environmentally responsible practices. Discussed in this article is another certification program — Classrooms to Corporations (C2C) — which not only encourages responsible practices but also results in youth employment. Both help address the growing problem of e-waste.

According to a recent UN report, the U.S. produces about 6.3 million tons of electronic waste annually. Twenty-five percent of this waste is recycled, with most of the recycled materials being shipped abroad to have precious metals, minerals and some components removed and re-sold. There is another option.

C2C is an Ohio non-profit corporation established to provide two different levels of training to high school students, in each case using recycled and repurposed technology equipment from local corporations. The first level of training will allow students to engage in hands-on learning with technology equipment, teaching students to repurpose computers. The second, and more advanced, level of training will allow students to obtain certificate-level training — a distinguishing achievement and valued credential among corporations when it comes to student interns. C2C's initiative also provides an extended life for technology equipment that would otherwise be disposed of by corporate or individual donors. Once repurposed, the equipment can be donated or sold by C2C to generate a supporting revenue stream.

“These programs introduce high school students to various career paths in IT,” said Eric Gordon, Chief Executive Officer of Cleveland

Metropolitan School District. “The Cleveland Metropolitan School District applauds this educational and technical workforce development initiative and recommends financial support from philanthropic sources to continue this work.”

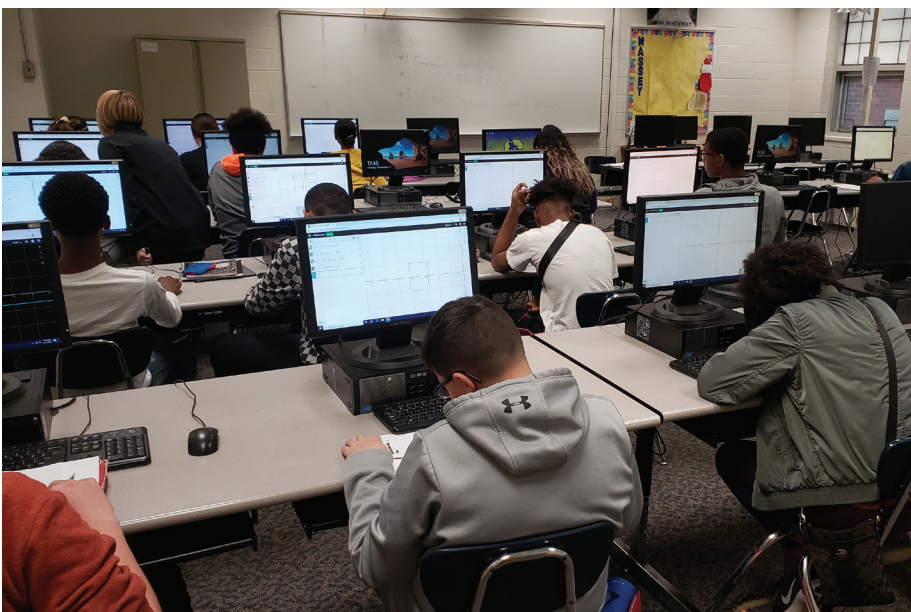
**Sustainability** – Earlier this year, Tucker Ellis LLP donated several hundred devices including computers which were then repurposed and installed in high school labs (see photo) at three Northeast Ohio school districts.

**Education** – Students tested and earned Microsoft certifications. Christopher Gregg, Support Technician at Tucker Ellis LLP, visited a class and shared his work experience with students.

**Workforce Development** – Certified students obtained employment at notable organizations including Google, Cleveland Clinic, Best Buy and John Carroll University.

“The C2C initiative fits strategically within the Mayor’s goal to reduce youth violence by driving up opportunities for youth and youth adults,” said former Chief Duane Deskins, Prevention, Intervention, & Opportunity for Youth and Young Adults. “This public health model of violence prevention focuses on reducing toxic stress in our youth by increasing youth-valued activities and surrounding them with a caring and competent adult. In addition, Cleveland’s youth seek greater access to technology and C2C is well-positioned to accomplish both missions.”

The CMBA and GIC encourage other law firms/offices — following the example set by Tucker Ellis LLP — to join C2C’s initiative by donating end-of-life technology



equipment that will lead to a reduction in e-waste and at the same time permit training and certification of a talented pipeline of Cleveland youth for employment by local corporations. For more information, visit [www.classroomstocorporations.org](http://www.classroomstocorporations.org).



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