

Board Meeting
December 3, 2015
10:00am – 12:15pm
Pennsylvania School Boards Association

Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Mark Butler, Vice Chairman Jeffrey Brown, Secretary Kathy Manderino, Secretary Russell Redding, Deputy Secretary Diane Bosak, Idayat Adewunmi, Thomas Beddard, Lynette Brown-Sow, David Chalson, Wendie DiMatteo Holsinger, Brian Funkhouser, Abe Harpster, Peter Klein, Ron Kratofil, James Kunz, Diane Ellis-Marseglia, JoAnne Ryan, Richard Schall, Brian Schaller, John Sygielski, Jessica Trybus, Cindy Klenk representing Senator John Blake, Lisa Williams representing Neal Bisno, Pat Clancy representing Secretary Ted Dallas, Carol Kilko representing Secretary Dennis Davin, Daniel Bauder representing Patrick Eiding, Kendra Wiederhold representing Representative Ryan Mackenzie, Cheryl Feldman representing Henry Nicholas, Glenn Miller representing Secretary Pedro Rivera, Walter Friedrich representing Frank Sirianni

Staff Present: Stephanie Larkin, Joel Miller, Eric Kratz, Michael Leister

Welcome and Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Mark Butler called the meeting to order at 10:08am. He welcomed the board members and thanked them for their attendance. Chairman Butler noted that a quorum was not established and, as such, asked for a motion to vote on the minutes from the October 8th, 2015 PA WDB meeting electronically at a later date.

MOTION: Secretary Russell Redding moved that the PA WDB vote on the minutes from the October 8th, 2015 WDB meeting electronically at a later date. Lynette Brown-Sow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Butler then expressed his congratulations and appreciation to Jeff Brown, who he asked to serve as Vice Chair of the Board. As Vice Chair, Mr. Brown, CEO of Brown's Superstore, will serve as the Board Chair in Chairman Butler's absence and as part of the Executive Committee.

Chairman Butler then introduced JoAnne Ryan and informed the board that Ms. Ryan volunteered to serve as the Board's mandated representative to the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council. The council's main focus is employment for persons with disabilities in Pennsylvania and the factors that affect their employment. Chairman Butler thanked Ms. Ryan for volunteering to serve on the council.

Chairman Butler said that the PA WDB Bylaws were included in the board meeting packet. With no quorum present, he asked for a motion to vote on the bylaws electronically at a later date.

MOTION: Richard Schall moved that the PA WDB vote on the Bylaws electronically at a later date. Lynette Brown-Sow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Combined State Workforce Plan

Eric Kratz, Director of Grants and Planning at the PA WDB, provided an update on the State Workforce Development Plan. Mr. Kratz informed the board that shortly after that October board meeting, the Governor's Office held a meeting with the state agencies involved in or with the potential to be involved in the State Plan, including the Departments of Labor and Industry, Human Services, Education, Department of Community and Economic Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Aging, and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. At that meeting, it was determined that the Commonwealth would include most of the optional programs in its combined State Plan.

Mr. Kratz said there was the option of submitting a combined State Plan which would incorporate optional programs that are also federally funded. The Department of Aging had previously decided that they would be part of the combined State Plan including their Senior Community Service Employment Program. But, following the meeting with the Governor's Office, Mr. Kratz said the commonwealth is in the process of adding the following: Career and Technical Education Program under the Carl D. Perkins Act – Department of Education; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program – Department of Human Services; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Employment and training sections) – Department of Human Services; Trade Adjustment Assistance Program – Department of Labor and Industry; Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program – Department of Labor and Industry; Unemployment Insurance Program – Department of Labor and Industry; Community Services Block Grant Program – Department of Community and Economic Development; and, the Reintegration of Ex-offenders Program which no agency really oversees directly as the funds flow directly from the federal government to the grant recipients but Department of Corrections has the most familiarity.

Mr. Kratz said that all of the programs will be included based on the federal requirements and will be incorporated into the overall plan. In addition to all those agencies that now have programs in the plan, Mr. Kratz said that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Department of Agriculture were both asked to review and comment on the draft plan and to suggest additional programs, services, and interagency efforts that should be incorporated to strengthen the overall plan.

Mr. Kratz stated that the timeline for the State Plan had changed with the additional programs added to the plan. He said that the required 30 day public comment period was planned to start on February 1, 2016. All public comments will be reviewed by the respective agencies and the commonwealth will respond to all of the comments in the final submission of the plan.

Mr. Kratz also announced that the commonwealth would be hosting a series of public forums on January 19, 20, and 21. The January 19th forum will be at Community College of Philadelphia from 11:00am to 1:00pm, the January 20th forum will be a virtual forum where commenters will be able to participate at Butler County Community College or the Community College of Allegheny County from 2:00 to 4:00pm, and January 21st forum will again be virtual where commenters can participate at Northampton Community College or the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center from 2:00 to 4:00pm.

Mr. Kratz said the plan is due March 2nd and has to be submitted through an online portal. He concluded by saying the Board had an Ad Hoc Committee to focus specifically on the State Plan. The

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committee met to provide feedback on the plan as it was drafted at the time. He said Jeff Brown was elected to be Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee and asked him to provide a brief report on what the Ad Hoc Committee discussed in that meeting.

Vice Chairman Brown said the Ad Hoc Committee met on November 6th and a number of the members read the report and sent written feedback. The committee had a discussion of the feedback and came to a consensus on the issues that were raised. The feedback generally fell into the following categories: Requests for clarification which would be defining terms, providing the source of information, rephrasing statements, request for specificity, need to be more clearly-defined goals and targets, identify who's responsible for certain activities and request to add or emphasize certain desired activities, being more explicit about serving the hardest to serve, greater emphasis on soft skills attainment which we had discussed in our meetings, and cross-program alignment.

Vice Chairman Brown said the key areas of discussion for the committee included ensuring the state strategy operational components, and recognizing and emphasizing serving out-of-school youth. He said there was discussion about setting benchmarks for the spending of funds to ensure a significant portion of the funds are used for training of the hardest to serve. There was general agreement with the concept of benchmarks so long as it was not overly prescriptive and that at least a portion of the funds would be targeted for local innovations and serving targeted populations. Also discussed was ensuring alignment with other partner programs to improve not just service delivery, but recognition that state agency funds often subsidize large segments of the economy, particularly health care, and that state funding should be used to encourage desired workforce development outcomes and priorities such as jobs that pay family-sustaining wages.

Vice Chairman Brown added that the need to establish a clear goal measure of success around employer engagement was also discussed as the federal government is required to establish a metric for employer engagement but has not yet done so. The metric is expected in final regulations early next year. There was discussion within the committee and general agreement around the state utilizing market penetration rate, how many employers are actively using workforce development system, as a starting point. He added that it was agreed the Performance and Accountability Committee was a logical place for further discussion on employer engagement and measurements and the need to establish a clear measure of success around the goal to better use and share data. There was agreement that the state should develop a dashboard to track progress on goals identified in the State Plan. It was also agreed upon the Performance and Accountability Committee should consider additional performance measures.

Vice Chairman Brown finished by saying a revised plan was sent to the committee and reviewed on November 10th. Edits are being made to the operational section of the plan to emphasize key goals and objectives. He said the committee has done an excellent job of understanding every comment and appropriately reflecting it in the plan so far. The discussion was then opened to the board for questions.

Secretary of L&I Kathy Manderino asked when the committee discussed the goal of making sure there is a focus on the hardest to serve, if there was further dialogue about what and who that meant. Vice Chairman Brown responded yes, and said the committee spent the most time on this topic because many on the committee felt the current system had rules that made it hard for the hardest to serve to

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take advantage of programs. He said some of the things talked about were a stepping stone-type job, one that may not meet the current criteria, but may be a person's first opportunity to work. The employer might not be able to meet every standard on that stepping stone or internship-type job, but it is important that a person has that first work experience.

Richard Schall commented that the largest source of new jobs in any economy is new business. He said there have been several surveys that show over 80 percent of all businesses are located where they are because that is where the founder just happened to live. He said it is an important component to find a way to encourage and assist people who have good business ideas to get up and running or to grow their business. It does no good to train people for jobs if we don't have the jobs for them to take. A classic example is the teacher training program in the State System of Pennsylvania where 75 percent of all the graduates have to go to the southwest or southeast to get a job. He asked that would be something that would fall under the board's purview, to make recommendations to identify and encourage entrepreneurs to either start up a business trying to create jobs. Chairman Butler said yes, agreed with Mr. Schall, and said it was one of the major topics at the last meeting. Carol Kilko from the Department of Community and Economic Development added that encouraging entrepreneurship is one of the top priorities of the Governor. Ms. Kilko offered to share information on entrepreneur programs with any board members that were interested.

Cheryl Feldman said she was interested in the concept of career pathways and the fact that they are an important and new part of WIOA. She asked Vice Chairman Brown if there was discussion of whether there is interest in defining the harder to serve more in our combined plan than it is defined in the WIOA legislation where, she said, it is pretty vague as to how it will be implemented. Ms. Feldman thought the implementation part of it and giving guidance to the local workforce boards is something that the combined plan could do to better serve the hardest to serve but with a career pathway that addresses the needs of business at all levels. Vice Chairman Brown said the committee had a lot of discussion on the topic because there are standards now to make sure public dollars are not wasted on inappropriate dead-end jobs. But, he said the interesting part is sometimes because there's a career pathway, that low-paying job can become a high-paying job and that there is clearly a difference between a low-paying dead-end job and a low-paying job with a pathway. Vice Chairman Brown said there is a balancing act between flexibility and customizing the solution to the employer and the circumstance. He added that local boards need to exercise some judgment and that some further guidance on how to do that would be a good idea.

Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding commented that he thinks this plan is really trying to build on career pathways and start a conversation at the state level with the board that will clearly lead to more substantive conversations with employers and, most importantly, potential employees. He added that having a Perkins and a CTE component in the combined plan this is critical. The combined and comprehensive approach is important and allows for conversation about what to do to address career pathways and how to educate all training and education providers on their importance.

David Chalson was glad to hear the committee talked about soft skills issues because when talking about the hardest to serve individuals, that are a key issue. He asked Deputy Secretary Diane Bosak to talk about the Workforce Innovation Fund Grant (WIF) to Pennsylvania as it will help with this issue. Deputy Secretary Bosak said the commonwealth is working with seven local workforce boards and seven

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community colleges on the development of micro- or mini-credentials that will help bolster a skill set of individuals with significant barriers to employment and help place them on pathways to career opportunities. The colleges and the local boards are working on identifying the populations they are going to target for those mini-credentials and the specific career pathways that they are going to be developing. She is very excited about the opportunity and said there is a lot of national interest in the work Pennsylvania is doing with this grant.

Ron Kratofil commented that building a system that is flexible and realizes that all jobs can provide an opportunity to demonstrate basic work-ready and life-ready skills, will provide flexibility to loop people back through badges and mini-credentials to help them find their passion. He thinks it is important to build a flexible system that can be done in pieces that are stackable in terms of badges and recognize that life is not linear. Vice Chairman Brown agreed and asked how to judge what the better investments are. He said that for someone who is not work ready and has never worked before, a job that gets them work ready is a step forward. But then, at some point, Vice Chairman Brown said he would like to see them continue to progress, and that the providers that have a good track record of that are better providers. Richard Schall added in his experience, a dead-end job that is a dead-end job has more to do with the person holding the job than the job itself. Any job, if you don't have a job, is a step up and a way to acquire soft skills.

John Sygielski said that Secretary Gary Tennis from the Department of Alcohol Program was at Harrisburg Area Community College to engage them in a conversation about how to get ex-offenders of the Latino population to become counselors or advisors in a very short period of time before they assume an associate's degree. As such, they have had discussions around micro-credentialing and in three to six months providing basic skills to be able to start down a career pathway for counseling and advising. He commented that it was very interesting to see this idea developing at the ground floor.

Lynette Brown-Sow said the Community College of Philadelphia has 70 career programs that lead to degrees but have also broken each program down to smaller pieces where students can take courses and earn certificates. She said that students get a certificate, can go to work, but continue to get college credits. Sometimes, she added, students may have to stop training, but they can start back up and go get another set and then build on the stackable credentials. She said it is important to her students that they have the ability to work while they continue to gain skills.

David Chalson said the other thing that he would be looking for as an employer is motivation. In a hard to employ or difficult to employ population, one of the issues is that the individual may not even know what they want to do or what they're good at. It becomes an aptitude issue. By utilizing the micro- and mini-credentialing and breaking down the training and education in smaller pieces, it gives people a chance to try different things and see what they really want to do.

Lisa Williams commented that micro-credentialing is interesting in terms of the need to develop the direct care workforce and diversity within the nursing profession by building credentials that can lead to a career pathway in nursing or in other health care related fields. She thought the skills that have been mentioned around soft skills – communication, teamwork, and professionalism – are things that the direct care workforce needs in terms of moving up in that field and that it would be important to think

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about integrating not just the education and workforce, but also with the Department of Health and Human Services in terms of funding.

JoAnn Ryan asked if L&I envisions having an individual training plan for the participants whereby those micro-credentials will be somewhat planned over time so that they would be building on those competencies and advancing their skill set or is it more ad hoc than that. Deputy Secretary Bosak responded that the real work of the grant is over three years and that as the grant progresses there may be some slight adjustments after the first year of implementation to think about some different ways of reconnecting with the participants or maybe a greater emphasis on career pathways. Stephanie Larkin added that there are also metrics attached to the WIF grant. And aside from the ones that the federal government is asking for tied to their funds, the commonwealth has an opportunity to measure some things and that might be something the board could take a look at in terms of the metrics of the grant and the success of it.

Daniel Bauder asked if it is possible with some of these micro-certifications or micro-credentials, that the process begin during the transition period when someone is going to be transitioning out of incarceration and back into the workforce or during the halfway house period or part of the probation service. Deputy Secretary Bosak responded that is certainly possible. She did not know if the participating colleges and boards are thinking about that, but it would certainly be possible. She said that if not in the WIF Grant, it is something L&I can continue to pursue with the Department of Corrections and the juvenile justice group. Glenn Miller informed that board that there is already, in every state correctional institution, a library and a certified librarian. He said there is the foundation there to begin that work and perhaps that is something the board could explore further.

Lynette Brown-Sow commented that the Community College of Philadelphia is trying to become more prescriptive. She said there is discussion around the country that you need to take these classes to try to really have people be prescriptive about the courses you take so that you can persist and get out as opposed to just taking courses and wasting your time and financials. Cheryl Feldman added that would be an excellent way to tie Title II programs which are part of the combined plan. Title II, which is usually called literacy or basic education, could be linked directly into the work in Title I programs because that career pathway thinking and planning and exposure can be part of the experience. She wants to ensure those linkages and make sure there is seamless articulation between the work that is being done with the people who do not have a GED yet or who are preparing to go to CCP or other community colleges. She said that work can directly link to the next step as they move up a career path, get their first jobs or move into higher-level jobs.

Idayat Adewunmi asked if any WIF grantees have looked at utilizing a career coach to go to the community colleges and mentor the students through their trainings. Stephanie Larkin responded that is not a requirement of the grant, but it is something she imagines people will be looking at because part of what the partnerships at the local level need to do is assess the support needs of the participants in the micro-credentialing and career pathways, and inventorying and then cataloging those supportive services that are needed.

After the discussion, Chairman Butler asked for a motion to vote on approval of the State Plan electronically at a later date.

MOTION: Vice Chairman Jeffrey Brown moved that the PA WDB vote on the approval of the State Plan electronically at a later date. John Sygielski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Framing Board Priorities

Chairman Butler began by saying that on November 12th, the Board met in Harrisburg for a facilitated retreat. The retreat led board members through a series of exercises designed to help them understand the PA CareerLink® customer experience and to start the thought process on how to improve service delivery for all segments of the population. By the end of the session, he said the board had three new focus areas: Digital strategy, career awareness and exposure, and using the PA CareerLink to connect people to services. Chairman Butler created and then placed members on three workgroups on those topics. He said a common theme among those who attended is that they would like more information on the system. In the board packets, there were attached documents that met those requests. Chairman Butler said it was a lot of data and it was not his expectation that the board move on anything today, but he informed the board that L&I staff was available to answer any questions.

In reference to the JobGateway® user demographics handout, James Kunz asked where a graduate of an apprenticeship program would be slotted in the education level section. Steve Fera responded that there is not anything specifically identified from an apprenticeship program in the program area definitions of highest grade completed. He said it is not currently reported or recorded in the system but there is an effort under way to identify apprenticeship programs as part of training and as those become identified, they will be a reporting factor that can be pulled from the system. Mr. Kunz said he thought it was important information that needed to be known by every employer using the system. He added that he thinks that the apprenticeship programs reflect a significantly higher level of education than is reflected in the system. Secretary Manderino thanked Mr. Kunz for making the point and informed him that L&I was establishing a new Office of Apprenticeship. She also appreciated him bringing the data system issue to her attention because it is another area where L&I must determine if it is not only asking for and capturing the correct information, but also reporting it out because it is very valuable information to job hirers and for job seekers in terms of self-identification.

Brian Funkhouser commented that some 30 percent of employers are registered in the JobGateway® system and 2 percent of those are active. He asked if there is a way of capturing a successful job connection. Mr. Fera answered that there is a metric for filled job orders but it was not captured on the graphic and would be shared at a later date.

Mr. Chalson asked if there was information on what jobs are more prevalent by industry in the system. Keith Bailey, Director of the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA) responded that CWIA produces, biannually, projections data that looks at both industry projections and occupational projections. He also added that at any time, CWIA can produce ad hoc reports that will break down any industry and show the occupations that are available.

Mr. Kunz asked if organized labor with apprenticeship programs can work with PA CareerLinks® for recruitment purposes. Ms. Larkin responded that there are two ways: become an eligible training

provider or work within the Commonwealth Workforce Development System to create an identifier for those programs.

Secretary Redding asked if there was a way to identify within the programs the recognized credentials obtained. Deputy Secretary Bosak responded the system is being changed to capture those participants that access training and their outcomes. This will include capturing the credentials obtained through training.

Cheryl Feldman commented that it would be nice to see a crosswalk to compare the applicants in the system with the available jobs. She added that data could be used to help determine career pathways and link jobs with them. Stephanie Larkin liked the idea and responded that the system is currently undergoing many changes. However, the crosswalk is one that is being worked toward.

Secretary Manderino said that once the short-term obligations of the State Plan are over, she would like the board to investigate how to raise employer demand and desire to use JobGateway®. Vice Chairman Brown and Richard Schall both agreed there needs to be a more robust promotion of JobGateway® and Pennsylvania's workforce system as a whole.

Lisa Williams emphasized the importance of connecting the dots between skills and requirements and applicants and jobs specifically in the healthcare industry. Chairman Butler agreed and said it is imperative to raise awareness, recruit, and then retain.

JoAnn Ryan commented the PA CareerLink® could become more valuable through providing a broader set of services. Training is one piece of one barrier to employment but there are a lot of other barriers that prevent very skilled individuals from being successful in the workforce. In order to continue to develop the workforce and meet the needs of employers that have jobs that go unfilled every day, Pennsylvania needs to deal with a lot of the other barriers as well. She said often times employees are not successful in being able to retain their position because they have other challenges in their life that prevent them from being successful that have nothing to do with training, including child care, transportation, and addiction. Finding ways to address these areas would be a very valuable service to employers.

Public Comment

Chairman Butler opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was offered.

Old/New Business

Richard Schall asked if there was any thought given to holding meetings around the state. Ms. Larkin commented that it has not yet been decided.

Adjournment

Chairman Butler thanked the board for their attendance. The meeting adjourned at 12:01pm