

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Tuesday November 9th, 2021

10:00AM to 2:00PM

Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Governor Tom Wolf
- Chair Jeff Brown
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Shannon Austin
- Denise Andahazy
- Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Tim Bean
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Julene Champion
- Representative Morgan Cephas
- Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Brian Funkhouser
- Justin Genzlinger
- James Harper, Jr.
- Commissioner Robert J. Harvie, Jr.
- Brad Hollabaugh
- Sarah Hollister
- Secretary Allison Jones
- Marguerite Kline
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Bob McAuliffe
- Henry Nicholas
- Jodi Pace
- Commissioner Michael Pipe
- Tom Redden
- Secretary Russell Redding
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- John "Ski" Sygielski
- Jessica Trybus
- Laura Wand
- Matt Yarnell
- Executive Deputy Secretary Bill Trusky for Secretary Berrier
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko for Secretary Dennis Davin
- Amy Schwenk for Acting Sectary George Little
- Deputy Secretary Tanya Garcia for Secretary Noe Ortega
- Carl Feldman for Acting Secretary Meg Snead
- David Miles for Secretary Robert Torres

Presenters:

- Governor Tom Wolf
- Anne Gemmell, The Future Works AlliancePHL
- Deputy Secretary Tara Williams, Governor's Office
- Executive Deputy Secretary Bill Trusky, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Director Dan Kuba, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Carl Feldman, PA Department of Human Services
- Dave Miles, PA Department of Aging
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Amy Schwenk, PA Department of Corrections
- Secretary Russell Redding, PA Department of Agriculture
- Deputy Secretary Tanya Garcia, PA Department of Education
- Julie Kane, PA Department of Education
- Dr. Brian Troop, Ephrata School District
- Executive Director Shannon Austin, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- Jeffrey Abramowitz, Reentry Ad Hoc Committee
- John "Ski" Sygielski, Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee
- Rick Bloomingdale, Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee

- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee
- Eliza Arentz, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee
- Ryan Hyde, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Executive Director James Martini, PA Workforce Development Board

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Tracey Turner, Shuana Davis, Mary Hoskins, Michelle Lengel

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jeff Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Governor Wolf to give opening remarks. Chair Brown noted that he thinks that Governor Wolf has been the workforce governor.

Governor Wolf began by thanking each of the Board members for their support of workforce development in Pennsylvania. He noted that the Board bridges business, workforce, education, and political leaders and it makes a difference in terms of policies. He then remarked about some of the job's numbers and how in August a record 4.3 million Americans left their jobs. He noted that the last two years have done a lot to throw a wrench into the economy and worsened existing disparities and inequities while revealing some new ones. Governor Wolf then talked about the swift adjustment to technology and how remote jobs are becoming more common. In a survey they did of the commonwealth, in the Harrisburg area alone, there are 12,500 commonwealth workers who can spend at least part of their time working from home and that is going to make a big difference in the square footage needed and things like parking spaces.

They have also been seeing people reassess their career and trying to figure out what they are getting out of work. It is a transformative moment where the workforce has choices, so the state needs to support and respond to the changing inclinations of the workforce and as public policy makers, the state needs to make sure that they are nudging workers in the direction that helps Pennsylvania and helps the commonwealth's economy. Governor Wolf signed an executive order in October to take action to improve workplace safety, provide fair benefits, and raise wages. He noted that that the executive action can only go so far, which is why it is important that the Board and the legislature work to enshrine some of those things in laws that can actually change the plight of workers for good. They also need to support equitable access to post-secondary education options and quality employment.

Another thing that the commonwealth has learned is how important childcare care is. There are a lot of people who cannot hold a job if they have to be home when their children are home. Children are home because there is no good Pre-K childcare. They are also home because their child is in school but sick and home for a couple of days. It is not a good way to build a career and so they need to do what they can in the workplace to make sure that they are making childcare reliable, accessible, and affordable.

Governor Wolf then touched on the direct care worker crisis and the recommendations that the Board has made about reentrants going back to their community after prison. They are making sure that they are successful in connecting to resources. He then talked about the gap that reentrants go through in healthcare when they leave prison. Instead of terminating Medicaid when reentrants leave prison, they extended it and it will likely help with recidivism.

Governor Wolf then summarized that the pandemic highlighted the challenges that they were already facing. He then thanked Chair Brown for his leadership and everyone on the Board for what they are doing.

Chair Brown thanked the Governor for his time.

Chair's Updates

Chair Brown then introduced the new Board member, Justin Genzlinger from Settlers Hospitality. Mr. Genzlinger was having technical difficulties.

Chair Brown said he was seeking a motion to approve the August 11, 2021, quarterly board meeting minutes.

MOTION: Matt Yarnell made the motion. Brad Hollabaugh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Future of Workers 5-Year Strategy for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Chair Brown introduced Anne Gemmell from The Future Works AlliancePHL. Ms. Gemmell noted that they were going to review the process and data that emerged from the process and discussion. She said that back in March and April, they started discussing with the Department of Labor and Industry the definition and the parameters of the future of work since the pandemic hit. The buzz word, future of work, has been around for a number of years but it has really taken off in dialogue in the media since the pandemic hit. It was well-known among a certain class of researchers and thinkers tracking what is known as the fourth Industrial Revolution that once a recession hit, companies would look to their use of the automate CI and labor saving devices. She then talked about using the Aspen Institute's framework around developing and identifying solutions to reimagine protections and benefits for workers as they see that more people are becoming 1099 and independent contract workers. There are people all across education and skills levels that are opting into making their own schedule, determining the flexibility of how they earn a living. From that, they wanted to make sure that it was not just a project about the robot apocalypse because that is not even accurate. There are a lot of benefits to emerging technology that can be used by the systems that support workers in career and job transitions. Also, they want to leverage the collective knowledge to inform education and training. She mentioned how people like Elon Musk are at the very front edge of their field and investing in new things. It is creating a warp speed loop of innovation. However, public sector systems and large institutions do not move at that speed. Democracy is slower. As a result, there is a widening gap between what is out there and viable and what the public sector may or may not know about.

Anne Gemmell commented that in March or April they had talked to about 35 to 40 people participating and from word of mouth more people wanted to participate. It is an amazing sign about how so many people care about the future of Pennsylvania and by the end of the preplanning they had almost 90 people on the invitation list. Some questions that arose in the project were: What should the goals of the five-year future workers strategy be? What are the unintended consequences? What are the potential barriers? Also is it a methodology that is protected by a nondisclosure agreement that allows people to be totally honest? The third step was then a convergence form and quite a high percentage of the original participants completed the form. The purpose of the first four steps was to pinpoint where to spend time on. She said the beauty of the process is that it is very time efficient because it pinpoints exactly where the deeper discussions need to happen. She said that they need to focus on alignment because if

misalignment is not sufficiently resolved, key stakeholders may not act in the implementation phase and that can hinder the success of the program. She then highlighted the methodology around assumptions. She noted that they discussed what the goals should be and how they will meet those goals.

She noted that they had 121 unique and relevant opinions expressed in the first step. They then examined how like-minded the group was. She provided information on the different opinions that individuals had and how they fit in with the like-mindedness of the group. She noted that the participants were assured that the process was anonymous and private, so they were more comfortable providing their honest opinion. Ms. Gemmell then moved on and remarked that one of the major headlines and it was evident in the data, was that regionalism is key. She noted that that they need to have regional strategies and that there is a divide between credentials and skills, and careers. She highlighted that an important point that came through was that they need to decide what is important to measure and start measuring it.

Ms. Gemmell then finished her presentation and noted that it was pleasure to work on the project. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Governor's Office Updates

Deputy Secretary Tara Williams then provided updates from the Governor's Office. Deputy Secretary Williams thanked Ms. Gemmell for leading the future of work project. She then shared that Secretary Allison Jones had returned from parental leave to resume her duties as Secretary of Policy and Planning. She remarked that Pennsylvania was recently selected as an awardee and participant in the National Governor's Association Workforce Innovation Network. The grant includes \$100,000 and technical assistance to develop a state plan around advancing digital skills. She noted that addressing the digital divide was important before the pandemic, but it has become such a key component of workforce development going forward. They have seen the rapid acceleration of technology, which will require basic digital skills to be a foundational skill set for so many jobs, while advance technology skills will become even more important. They have also seen the evolution of remote work that is requiring more people to have the skill set. In alignment with the National Skills Coalition, they see that digital access is really made up of three components: broadband access, adequate devices, and digital literacy. If they are not addressed, they are leaving Pennsylvanians behind which exacerbates equity gaps. Many of the PA agencies have taken on work to address those areas before and during the pandemic and they know there will be substantial additional investments in broadband through the recently passed infrastructure act. The grant award will allow them to look at data to understand where continued gaps exist, to map resources and create more awareness of resources and how to access them. Team PA also has a focus on this work.

Deputy Secretary Williams then followed up on some Healthcare Committee recommendations. The Department of Education was planning to provide an update on the implementation of Act 138 pertaining to career pathways for temporary nurse aides and that work was being done in collaboration with Health and Human Services to find a path forward to meet the intention of the act while still being in alignment with the federal requirement. Also, recently the National Governor's Association had a webinar pertaining to the direct care worker concerns. They had a good conversation with NGA and would be getting materials representing training models, particularly around states that are trying to use apprenticeship and also SNAP Implemented training resources. Deputy Secretary Williams then remarked that was the end of her report.

Agency Report- Department of Labor and Industry

Executive Deputy Secretary Bill Trusky then introduced himself as he would be participating on behalf of Secretary Berrier. He then provided unemployment numbers and remarked that since March 15th of 2020, the department had paid out close to \$52 billion dollars in unemployment compensation. That is 89 million individual payments. Since they went live with the new system on June 8th, they paid a total of 560,000 claimants to the tune of \$3.2 billion. He said that the new system had some hiccups, but things were going relatively well on that end. He then thanked Dan Kuba who was helping UC provide in-person identity verification at the PA CareerLink[®]. That was an ask from both the legislature and all of their stakeholders. Unfortunately, due to the amount of fraud that they were seeing in the UI systems across the county, the Department of Labor was asking that they provide identity verification to make sure they were paying out to the proper claimants. He then thanked all of the L & I staff for their hard work over the last 20 months. Executive Deputy Secretary Trusky then asked Dan Kuba to present the workforce development update as Deputy Secretary Ireland also had other commitments during the meeting.

Dan Kuba then highlighted that the department recently received a \$3 million grant for the Career National Dislocated Worker Grant. He noted that Ryan Hyde would be talking about it in further depth. He then remarked that they have designated state employee staff throughout each of the PA CareerLink[®] offices to oversee the ID.me and the employment verification process that UC has developed to help streamline that process and reduce the number of fraud cases that they are dealing with. With the SkillUp program, one of the key things that the Governor and Secretary wanted them to accomplish was making sure that claimants coming off of benefits had additional opportunities. He noted that the Department's efforts to advertise the program had been very robust and over 2.5 million UC claimants received information on the program. Mr. Kuba then talked about the Business Education Partnership grants. He noted that that grant was currently out, and they were looking forward to supporting it. They also have another grant out. It is digital literacy and round two has been made available for about \$1.5 million. They were looking to support grants and awards of up to \$45,000 to support effective programs that enhance foundational digital literacy skills. He then remarked on the comprehensive update that the Apprenticeship and Training Office had provided.

Mr. Kuba then remarked that at the last board meeting, they had talked about a statement of work that they had put out on the street to find a vendor that would take on the role of putting together a white paper around the FAFSA application process. As part of the state plan, they have a goal of trying to help achieve the 60% post-secondary training certification in the Commonwealth. As part of that, one of the things that they were really looking at was between the 1,400 and 1,700 workforce case managers in Pennsylvania that help everyday citizens. The statement of work and contract was put out and given to PWDA. They are currently working through putting together the survey gathering a lot of data regarding the current training opportunities that exist out there and making sure that they know and understand what the needs are of the current workforce to make sure that they can enhance their knowledge and understanding. As part of the training dollars and other departmental and agency dollars, it is critical that people fill out the FAFSA applications and get those dollars because a lot of times, the federal dollars that they have are the last dollar available to be used to support training opportunity. There are a number of white papers out there talking about how Pennsylvanians leave billions of dollars on the table by not accurately filling out those applications. This training will hopefully be a step forward in helping the overall citizen gain access to those critical dollars for training.

Agency Report- Department of Human Services

Carl Feldman then provided the update for the Department of Human Services. He remarked that the employment and training procurement was still being anticipated for release in the fourth quarter of 2021. Then he added that they were expecting approval on their home and community based services funding plan that week and were hoping to have more information to share about how it will be used. DHS received \$1.2 billion for childcare through the American Rescue Plan and as of October 28th, 67% of eligible providers had been approved for \$442.8 million in payments. They were using some of the funds to increase base rates for childcare providers and also to provide incentive payments for non-traditional care hours.

Agency Report- Department of Aging

David Miles then remarked that he did not have anything additional to add to his report than what was already in the book.

Agency Report- Department of Community and Economic Development

Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko then provided the report for DCED. She noted that DCED and L&I continue to collaborate on a number of projects together. She then mentioned that they were curious to see if training during the pandemic would continue to be a top priority for many companies as it relates to WEDnet and it was. Two of the main sectors utilizing that funding are healthcare and manufacturing.

Agency Report- Department of Corrections

Amy Schwenk then provided the report for DOC. She noted that Dorenda Hamarlund, their workforce specialist continued to pound the pavement and talk about the benefits of hiring reentrants in the community. She remarked that she appreciated Governor Wolf mentioning the medical assistance program for inmates. She said it is a challenge for them when someone is incarcerated, particularly a parole violator, once they come back into prison, those benefits are suspended, and it has become easier for them to help those reentrants once they depart the SCI in reactivating those benefits. One of the challenges they experience is that if they are the primary benefit holder for some reason for children, then those children can also have benefits suspended. She noted that they were continuing to emphasize their reentry assistance for inmates. They were also continuing to partner with PENNDOT on IDs and driver's licenses as they depart the institution.

They were also specifically working on two larger initiatives. One was with the First Lady on the benefits and the needs of female reentrants and the specific needs that they have when they exit an institution surrounding their families and childcare. The second initiative is around their hard to place inmates. They have had a significant increase in the age of their population although the population is down. She said that as they exit the SCI, they are having a hard time finding jobs that they can do at that advanced age, and they are also coming out with some mental health challenges.

Agency Report- Department of Agriculture

Secretary Russel Redding then provided the report for the Department of Agriculture. Secretary Redding began by thanking Secretary Berrier, Deputy Secretary Ireland, and the entire Labor and Industry team for their collaboration with Agriculture on apprenticeship. He noted that they have seven approved apprenticeships, three in development, and two pre-apprenticeships. He said that was a credit to the department and Sara Gligora, their workforce specialist. He then talked about H2A and H2B workers and

their significance. He also noted that the week after the November 2021 Board meeting was National Apprenticeship week where they were going to go on the road and talk about apprenticeships and highlight where they are, and who was doing them. He then talked about the work that the Commission on Ag Education and Excellence was doing. Finally, he noted about the challenges that agricultural employers were going through with talent acquisition.

Agency Report- Department of Education

Deputy Secretary Tanya Garcia then noted that she had several exciting updates, and they are all examples of cross agency and cross sector collaboration which the Wolf Administration is known for. She began with the excellent work of the adult education division and how they are trying to cross pollinate all of the important services and training that are available to the commonwealth employees doing that important work. She then transitioned to the CareerReady PA Coalitions and how they just had the launch of the school year led by Laura Fridirici. She said there has been a lot of work across every single CareerReady PA region on best practices and how to connect education and their first priorities. She said the Board would soon be hearing from Dr. Brian Troop on how they have been engaging in the work to prepare young people. Also, the career counseling and career technical education division has been putting together a lot of work around preparing students to be able to choose the careers of their future and to get acquainted with what they might explore and figure out what career they want to pursue. Finally, she remarked that the Teacher in the Workplace grants, are federally funded grants that have concluded earlier in the year and local education implemented virtual and in-person experiences to connect the classroom to the workplace across Pennsylvania. They were able to engage with over 300 industries, a thousand educators, and over 8,000 student outcomes, and career readiness experiences as part of the Future Ready PA index. Julie Kane, Policy Director at the Department of Education, then added a quick update on the temporary nurse aide initiative. Their effort has been underway under Act 138 of 2020. The act provided a pathway for nurse aides that were hired at the beginning of the pandemic and were not able to complete their certification because maybe their school program was closed. They know it is really important that they continue to have a pathway to certification and that they not lose them from the workforce. She said that thanks to the help of folks at L&I, DHS, and DOH, as well as the PA Healthcare Association and Matt Yarnell, they had someone to help them think through all of the different avenues. They were pleased to say that at the beginning of October, they published new guidance on the PDE website that lays out a process by which the TNAs can now have a direct path to certification that they need to be on the Certified Nurse Aide Registry. The Bureau of Career and Technical Education run by Dr. Burkett and her team have been reviewing the forms that have been coming in. She believed at last count that there were about 80 or 90 of those forms that had been submitted and were being reviewed. When the emergency ends, then the TNAs who have not yet been certified still have 120 days after that emergency declaration ends to complete the process. Dr. Tanya Garcia then introduced Dr. Brian Troop, superintendent of the Ephrata School District. She noted that two of his post-secondary credentials come from post-secondary institutions here in the commonwealth, Millersville University, and Immaculata University.

Dr. Troop then thanked the Board for having him to share some of the work their team was doing. About five years ago, they had created a portrait of a graduate that outlines the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for what they thought was a rapidly changing world, back prior to the pandemic. They were making the case that there are some skills and dispositions that have a long shelf life and are extremely valuable in facing the rate of change that they were experiencing due to technology. The pandemic has done nothing but accelerate that. They call it their life ready graduate profile. It serves as their north star for everything they do for K to 12. They have a long list of local businesses and partners

within their community who recognize that the skills and dispositions are maybe better aligned to what they need in their workforce and what is needed in society more so than traditional academic only themed curriculum. At the high school they are certainly aggressively trying to blur the lines between school and the real world so that their students can see the connections. No matter what their plans are after graduation, whether it be going right into industry, employment, a two-year technical degree, or a four-year college, they believe there are certain skills and dispositions that are valued, like resilience and grit, adaptability, flexibility. They want their students to have an opportunity to demonstrate that they have some level of mastery of those skills before they leave them.

The Teacher in the Workplace Grant was designed to help them blur the lines between what is happening in the real world and what is happening in their academic classroom. They were really excited about getting their teachers en masse out into the workforce to see how their content and their skills that they were promoting within the classroom are valued out in the workplace. Last spring, they came to the realization that they were not going to have enough interested teachers after the exhausting year that they experienced interested in doing the program over the summer, as well as the limitations on a lot of employers to host anybody outside of their work. Because of that they had to pivot. They had to be adaptable and flexible with how they were going to implement the grant. Through the great relationships with employers and workplaces within their district and surrounding areas, they pitched the idea to pivot their grant to go out and film people from all of those different organizations, talking about how important some the traits are in the real world, ranging from the CEOs and presidents of organizations. They now have the collections of videos that provide evidence to their students about how important they are not just from a teacher saying about skills and dispositions. They want to see it from the authentic real-world people that work at Barnstormers baseball facility for example. He then played an example video. Dr. Troop then continued saying that they have a collection of eight videos that highlight a pair of traits or teams they think are valued in the workplace. Dr. Troop thanked the commonwealth for the grant opportunity to capture these videos since they pivoted to having a real experience and now the videos are being imbedded in instructional settings to help them see how the values, the skills, and dispositions that they are prioritizing are valued in the workplace. Brad Hollabaugh then asked Dr. Troop if they were sharing the project with other school districts in the state. Dr. Troop replied that they were in the process of building the instructional design and the curriculum to embed it in. They were working locally first with Career Ready Lancaster and efforts there, but they are posted publicly on their website for anyone that wants to use them. Chair Brown then asked for him to share the link.

Agency Report- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Executive Director Shannon Austin then provided the update for OVR. She noted that they were rolling out a summer employment internship program. They took a hiatus from it last summer because of the pandemic but were going to be redoing it this upcoming summer. They were doing a ten-week summer internship for college students with disabilities. They were going to be placing students in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. They were still looking for bureaus or agencies that still wanted to be a site for an internship. The internships are fully funded, and they would be paying about \$12 an hour for the students to be placed. They were taking applications from the meeting time until the middle of December for students that were interested in the program. The second thing that she talked about was the rollout of the MOU with the Bureau of Special Education that they rolled out back in March. They were working on another MOU to finalize soon. It could potentially mean that they would have 29 navigators throughout the state, and they were going to have two navigators that are Spanish speaking. They were looking to fund those positions over a 4-year period. They were also going to be rolling out special education technical assistant programs and were working with special education to introduce youth ambassador

positions. They are for high school students 14 to 21 years of age. She finally then mentioned about their business services team. They were working on a marketing strategy and potentially working to get employers in their system and talking about on the job training.

Chair Brown then called for a break.

Committee Update- One-Stop Service Delivery System

Chair Sarah Hollister highlighted that they had a wonderful presentation from Matthew Flinner, the Director of the Office of Transformation at the Department of Labor and Industry. He talked about the various training platforms that available to PA staff. She said that the information was really helpful and speaks to the wonderful work that has been going on to focus in on the career pathways of career advisors and career specialists at the one-stop. She remarked that at their next committee meeting, they were going to be hearing from several older workers who are seeking employment in Lancaster County and the difficulties they have had. They have heard a lot about the shortage of workers, but they are also hearing from the mismatch between being employed and where those shortages are.

Committee Update- Reentry Ad Hoc

Co-chair Jeffrey Abramowitz thanked the First Lady and her chief of staff as they met with them regarding the initiative of helping women that are returning home. He then commented that the employer tip sheet that the board had approved several months ago was out and being circulated and their reentry employer toolkit was also being finalized. The main purpose for the committee during the meeting was to present a recommendation to the board. The recommendation was that the commonwealth should take all requisite steps including, if necessary, promulgating new regulations to ensure the prompt review within one year by the Board of Pardons of all applications for pardon from Pennsylvanians who have completed their sentences five or more years ago on convictions that did not include crimes of violence and have remained arrest free ever since. In August of 2020, the Board approved unanimously a recommendation to increase the capacity of the Board of Pardons to decrease the amount of time for an applicant to be considered to increase the number of individuals who have been granted their pardons. With that recommendation that they had made was to increase additional staff so that the vetting process could take place more efficiently and give them more capacity. What has happened over the course of the year and past few months is that the number of applications and individuals seeking commutations has gone through the roof. Because of that, the amount of time it takes for investigation to take place for the pardons to go through has increased dramatically. They know that there is a direct correlation, the number of pardons that are given to the number of individuals that have an opportunity to get back into the workforce. The Economy League did a study in April of 2020 that really documented the economic impact of pardons for those men and women that are coming home that have had a criminal background. They are asking that they accelerate the review process, which is kind of already in place at the state level, be formalized and make it a priority so that individuals that are trying to seek a pardon can do it in a timelier fashion.

Chair Brown then asked if there were any questions. Amy Schwenk from the Department of Corrections noted that she was supportive of the request. She was curious to know how many more resources would be required in order to make the step reasonable because she knows that there are a lot of pending applications. Co-chair Abramowitz said that it was a difficult question. He said that there are some individuals that are really kind of no-brainer decisions that should be pushed through the system in a more

efficient way. He wants to make sure that the accelerated review process becomes more formalized so that they can imbed it in the system.

Amy Schwenk responded that in addition, a lot of that review involves a background check, a criminal investigation, and things like that. Mr. Abramowitz said that he had talked with Secretary Flood, and they were looking to have regional districts review those applications, but he thinks that is a little bit further down the road. Ms. Schwenk asked if there was any conversation around expungement. She said that a person can get a pardon in PA but it does not expunge the case from the records and that is really what most people are looking for. Mr. Abramowitz said that the committee has a number of organizations doing expungement clinics and they have given them a litany of suggestions.

Anne Gemmell then asked if they had considered or looked into any robotics processes or automation tools? She said that RPA could automate a lot of the repetitive things, so she was curious if there was any interest. Co-chair Abramowitz replied that he had met with Secretary Flood, and they have had extensive discussions to make the process more efficient.

Chair Brown added that the Board advises the governor on policy. He thinks that the previous conversation falls in the secondary step that is not in the Board's scope of work. He said that the recommendation says all of the requisite steps, which to him recognizes the authority of the governor to figure out the best way to implement the policy.

Chair Brown then said he was looking for a motion to approve the recommendation.

MOTION: Dr. John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion. Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee Update- Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement

Chair John "Ski" Sygielski then gave his report. He thanked Chair Brown for all his leadership and his work promoting workforce and working with all disadvantaged people within his communities. He noted that their report in the briefing book had a summary of their interviews with high demand sectors. He said they started with agriculture and that they would soon be having their healthcare industry sector focus group. Later on, they would talk with business and hospitality, IT, manufacturing, and construction. He remarked that in looking at all industries, are they looking at how they are going to continue to create those talent pipelines. Also, recruitment and retaining talent has become quite a pressure point. Chair Sygielski noted that the committee is hard at work in interviewing and working with different sector organizations, companies to get their input.

Committee Update- Career Pathways and Apprenticeship

Chair Rick Bloomingdale then provided his report for the Career Pathways and Apprenticeship committee. He remarked that Tara Lowe of the Apprenticeship and Training Office has been doing a spectacular job of building out that office. He then remarked on the opportunities that Pennsylvanians will have with the scope of the infrastructure bill from the federal government. He said that President Biden will assign the state the amount of money and that he appreciated what the Department of Education was doing in terms of making sure that students are aware of all of the opportunities that are going to be out there. He then noted that the rest of their report was in the book.

Chair Brown thanked Chair Bloomingdale and said that he agreed with him. He said that the infrastructure bill is very exciting, but he is still nervous about where they are going to get workers. Chair Bloomingdale said that was right in and they still need them for the home care industries and for work in stores that are essential.

Committee Update- Youth

Chair Chekemma Townsend reported that they have spent the last quarter focusing on learning a lot about STEM education and options. She thanked Jeff Remington and also Heather Sherman and Juan-Carlos Aguilar as they both gave presentations on the working being done in Ohio and Georgia related to STEM designations and how business schools and services providers are working to ensure the next generation of workers has access to high quality STEM education. She noted that as a committee, they are invested in ensuring not only that they explore promising practices but that they look at the implications before they make recommendations to the committee. She noted that because they wanted to learn so much more about how STEM was unfolding that they did not have a recommendation yet.

Committee Update- Continuous Improvement

Chair Brian Funkhouser noted that their entire report was in the briefing book, but he wanted to provide a quick update on digital intake. He said that that pilot program would be completed next year. He then noted that the committee would like to update the bylaws in line with three primary updates. They revolved around board responsibility for the laws, removing the in-person requirement, and creating a development feedback loop for processes after the Workforce Development Board makes recommendations. He remarked that the actual language was in the briefing book. Mr. Martini said that he did not have anything to add to that summary.

Chair Brown then announced he was looking for a motion to approve the recommendation.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion. Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PA Workforce System Performance Presentation

Eliza Arentz of the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis then began her presentation. She remarked that she manages the production of the performance accountability reports and she works with the Bureau of Workforce Partnership Operations and Bureau of Workforce Development Administration to ensure data integrity with the workforce performance data. She said her performance would be about WIOA performance but only as it pertains to the workforce development programs administered with the Department of Labor and Industry. WIOA does address the administration of six core programs of which four of them fall within the Department of Labor and Industry. They are WIOA Title I, adult dislocated worker, youth, and the Title III Wagner-Peyser program. That program is also known as labor exchange.

Ms. Arentz then began with the history and noted that in July of 2014, WIOA was enacted. It was not until July of 2015 where participants began to receive services under the new law, and it was not until July of 2016 that the performance accountability portions of the law became effective. The ramifications of that one-year delay allow for a build of data. The first outcome data became available in November of 2017, but they did not even begin to see data though until October 1, 2018. That was just three years ago. That is the reason that while WIOA has been around for so many years, the performance accountability just

finished the freeze. They only have outcome data available for program years 2018, 2019, and 2020. Program year 2020 just ended in June and that data was recorded to the U.S. Department of Labor in October. She then summarized that performance accountability is a set of five metrics focused on identifying how well the programs are able to adjust customers in succeeding in the labor markets, whether that be helping them with finding family sustainable employment or skills and credentials through training to help them succeed. The employment related measures are determined for all individuals who receive services while the training related measures evaluate achievements of only those who were in training or education while they were receiving services.

The employment measures are based on wage record data submitted by employers as part of the unemployment compensation system. That data is submitted to the Department of Labor and Industry. The credential attainment rate evaluates the number of participants who were in training and ends a credential after completion of training. While the measurable skill gain gauges a participant's interim progress toward a credential or employment.

Ms. Arentz then continued that they put together aggregate level data across all four programs administered by the Department of Labor and Industry for their review. That means that the trends are influenced by the largest of the programs, which happens to be the Wagner-Peyser program. Wagner-Peyser serves up to three times as many individuals as the adult dislocated worker and youth programs combined. Another point she made is that the trends used data for each distinct quarter of the program years for illustration purposes. However, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education evaluate performance once a year based on an average of all four quarters within the program year.

She began with the participant and exit trends and remarked that as the pandemic shut down began in March of 2020, there was an immediate drop in the participation level that was mirrored by significant increase in exiters at the same time due to the initial closing of PA CareerLink®, followed by a decline of exiters after virtual services began to be implemented. Those trends continued through the next two quarters when participation levels began to improve, and it is anticipated that the exiter trends will soon begin to follow. She then asked what was the overall impact of those trends on performance? The skill gain measure, the credential attainment rate, and the median earnings either remained level or increased since the pandemic began. However, as expected, the employment measures did decline and the declines came a few quarters later after the shutdown began as this was due to the time lag between individuals completing services and the time of measurement. As far as employment rate measures are made, they look at two quarters after they complete services, and then again at four quarters after they have completed services so there is always a delay in the data that they see.

She then pointed out that performance was not as bad as one would expect as a result of the pandemic and shared annual trends for each individual programs for program years 2018 through 2020.

She finished with saying that while COVID has definitely had an impact on performance, Pennsylvania is meeting or exceeding performance goals for all the programs and the performance metrics. In fact, they have exceeded negotiated levels for a majority of the measures, especially for adult and dislocated worker programs. The anticipation is that the downward trends experienced over the last year with the employment related metrics has ceased, and while performance is not expected to be recouped to prior levels immediately, slight improvement is project over the coming program year.

Chair Brown asked if there has been any thought about how to get the number of participants back to historical levels? Ms. Arentz said that would be a question for workforce program offices as she just

handles reports on the data. Dan Kuba jumped and said that they were doing multiple campaigns and outreach efforts. They have expanded the trade program for those companies affected. They were creating a series of videos and informational sessions that will help educate the commonwealth citizens who are eligible for that program.

Committee Update- Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc

Chair Matt Yarnell then gave the committee's report. He noted that the committee was continuing to dig in around caregiving issues and they had a subcommittee exploring and talking specifically about medication technicians and how they might be able to be used in skilled nursing. He then transitioned to the recommendation that they were putting forth before the board. He remarked that the PA Workforce Development Board would like to express appreciation to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for their efforts and determination in developing guidance and finalizing a pathway for temporary nurse aides (TNAs) to transition to certified nursing assistants. The PAWDB is now encouraging all stakeholders to invest in encouraging the success of over 900 current TNAs and any future ones, particularly through funding and offering of hands-on skills training and exam preparation. In addition, they were asking the state government to explore openings to make grants available to training and education providers to assist with the overall effort.

Chair Brown asked if there were any questions for Chair Yarnell.

Chair Brown announced that he was looking for a motion to approve the recommendation.

MOTION: John "Ski" Sygielski made the motion to approve the recommendation. James Harper, Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SkillUp PA Presentation

Ryan Hyde then presented on the SkillUp PA initiative. He noted that he is the Deputy Director for the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration and the presentation that he was about to give was given a few weeks prior to NASWA. Mr. Hyde then continued and said that in the summer they had entered into a contract to purchase the Metrix online learning portal and have branded it as SkillUp PA. SkillUp PA is an online learning portal that is available 24/7 and is fully online and mobile friendly. It allows anyone, regardless of their program eligibility to participate within the portal. The only thing that someone must do is register with the PA CareerLink®. Mr. Hyde then proceeded to give a quick tutorial of the website. He noted that the software curates the catalogs, tracks the users, and there are 6,000 learning modules. There are 130 plus career pathways and a skill gap assessment. Some of the courses include soft skills, communication skills, all the Microsoft Office packages, leadership, accounting, and IT. The site is pretty comprehensive. The content created not by Metrix but is contracted through Skillssoft, a national recognized content creator that works with a lot of Fortune 500 companies.

Mr. Hyde then continued that SkillUp PA tracks the users' utilization and offers milestone badges. It offers certificates of completion if the user passes the knowledge check at the end of the course. It also offers users the ability to take an industry recognized credential exam through a third-party at an additional cost. They also have an assessment that if somebody really does not know where to start, they can do a self-based skills gap analysis that would tell the individual where their skills gaps are and what courses they maybe out to take to address those. Mr. Hyde then talked about some of the certifications offered. He also offered that the service is completely self-based and self-serviced. Customers do not have to interact

with the PA CareerLink® staff and register within PA CareerLink® online. They have been getting comments about it is the ease of use. It is WIOA centric. Lancaster County has had the Metrix online learning tool for about five years now and has really liked the outcomes they have had with the program.

Mr. Hyde commented that they had done a lot of training sessions for both staff and administrators. They also encouraged their own staff to register and take some courses so that they are familiar with the tool. He then moved onto what is next for the program. They were working on expanding their integration and reported. They were trying to target UC recipients and industry groups to try to get underserved and unserved customers to be aware of the program. Another thing that they are excited about with the program is that they were creating a local SkillUp PA portal for each local workforce development board where they can bring in partners to curate custom content and meet local and regional workforce needs. Once the portal is created, the local workforce development board can enroll their partners into the portal, all online, so they can connect with their schools, nonprofits, community services agencies, employers, and chambers.

Mr. Hyde noted that the program went live on August 13th, and they had had over 4,000 users and 1,400 hours of training completed and 1,200 specific courses completed. His team was able to obtain a Career National Dislocated Worker grant from USDOL and would be using a significant portion of that funding to pay for the licensing for the software and to do additional outreach and update the CWDS systems so that they talk to each other.

Chair Brown then asked if anyone had any questions. Denise Andahazy said that she thought it was awesome, everything that they are doing. She originally had a question which was to clarify that gainfully employed people in PA could use it but he answered it. She then asked Mr. Martini to send out the slides by themselves so that the Board could look at them further.

Mr. Hyde then encouraged people to reach out to him if they have any questions.

Chair Brown then shared his enthusiasm for the program. He then asked for clarification on how to gain access to the program. Mr. Hyde clarified that the person has to register with the PA CareerLink® online and then navigate to the SkillUp PA page. Chair Brown asked if everyone in the state can use it if they set up an ID and password. Mr. Hyde responded in the affirmative. Chair Brown said that it is fantastic, and they should think about how to communicate it to the citizens. He knows that Mr. Hyde had mentioned a few things, but it seems like it warrants a bigger communication. Mr. Hyde responded that there were press releases when it went live, and he knows that L&I's press office was working on additional communications. They have also sent out millions of emails to former and current CWDS users to inform them of it.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Public Engagement

Mr. James Martini then presented. He noted that around two years ago, they did the initial submission of the WIOA Combined state plan. He noted that every state is required to have a workforce development board. Every workforce development board is required to coordinate among core and partner programs to formulate a combined state plan for workforce development. It includes the programs that Ms. Arentz had talked about earlier plus additional programs like the Perkins programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and SNAP programs. He also listed several others. He noted that Pennsylvania's plan was currently at 304 pages long. He noted that the vetted Vocational Rehabilitation Services plan or the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families plan was not included yet as both of those were going through

their own processes and public comment periods. Mr. Martini then mentioned that the plan included goals around the five standing committees of the Board. The biggest new thing for the plan this time around is the inclusion of the SNAP program. Mr. Martini then remarked on two changes that had been made since the briefing book was sent out and the meeting. The first was the demographics of the long term unemployed. He said that he thought that the workforce system needs to address it or at least account for it. He noted that for the long term unemployed over 24% were black and in PA only 11.2% of the population is black so they are disproportionately represented in the long term unemployed and that accounts for being unemployed for half a year or longer. It also happens to individuals of Hispanic ethnicity as they make up for 16% of the long term unemployed population even though they only make up 7% of the population. The other thing that was changed within the plan was looking at the disparate impacts are for men and women as far as labor force participation rate because of childcare.

Mr. Martini then moved onto the three biggest changes they made to the state plan for the modification. He noted about the inclusion of the SNAP Employment and Training programs into the PA WIOA Combined State Plan. The second major change that was made to the state plan was a focus around racial justice and issues of equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The plan was changed to be more intentional about where they set goals around those issues and how the programs are designed to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to utilize them and be successful. The last piece where there was some changes was about having virtual services. He noted that a lot more people were taking advantage of virtual services because of the pandemic. The two pieces to that puzzle include needing the infrastructure to deliver the services but they also need people to utilize the services in that way. They have noticed that a lot of people that come into the PA CareerLink® to take advantage of workforce development opportunities have some barriers around digital literacy for a number of reasons.

Chair Brown then asked what the next step of the plan was. Mr. Martini remarked that they were hoping for the Board to vote to move it into public comment, but it would not begin until mid-December and then would run until mid-January. There would still be some opportunity to make some tweaks to the plan. Once it is out for public comment, they would collect all of them and put together some responses. He noted that with the initial plan they received about 50 to 60 comments. Mr. Martini would then do a walkthrough of the comments at the February 9th Board meeting. After they would walk through the public comments and changes made to the plan then the Board would have one more time to review it and then take a vote to finalize the plan. He noted that himself and the Board staff would start putting it into the federal portal after that along with some of the partners. Between April and June, the feds review it. If they want more information or clarification the state will provide it and the modified plan will take effect on July 1, 2022.

Chair Brown then announced that he was seeking a motion to put the PA WIOA Combined State Plan Modification out for public comment.

MOTION: Matt Yarnell made the motion. Henry Nicholas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Chair Brown then asked if there were any public comments. Mr. Martini replied that no one had signed up to talk.

Dan Kuba then thanked Chair Brown and the rest of the Board. A little over three years ago, they had a presentation on the Metrix program from Cathy Rychalsky of the Lancaster County Workforce Development Board. The comments and reaction from that presentation to the Board led to BWPO and BWDA to spend years exploring option with the service and the PA has the program operational. He noted that from the bureaucratic standpoint, they pay attention, they listen, they read, and they take in and implement the things that the Board discusses. He is proud of the work that the Board is doing and how it has helped the state implement change in their own system.

Chair Brown thanked Mr. Kuba and said that it was good to hear from him and Governor Wolf in recognition of their advice being utilized.

Chair Brown then asked if new member Justin Genzlinger could introduce himself. Mr. Martini then noted that he had to leave the call but would like to introduce himself at the February Board meeting.

The meeting then adjourned.