

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 3rd, 2022

10:00AM to 2:00PM

Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Chair Jeff Brown
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Denise Andahazy
- Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Tim Bean
- Secretary Jennifer Berrier
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Julene Campion
- Senator Amanda Cappelletti
- Representative Morgan Cephas
- Patrick Eiding
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Brian Funkhouser
- Justin Genzlinger
- Nick Gilson
- James Harper, Jr.
- Ryan Hyde
- Sarah Hollister
- Marguerite Kline
- Andrea McArthur
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Henry Nicholas
- Jodi Pace
- Commissioner Michael Pipe
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- Rep. Melissa Shusterman
- Jessica Trybus
- Laura Wand
- Deputy Secretary Tara Williams for Governor Tom Wolf
- Eric Kratz for Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Gwen Ross for Secretary Dennis Davin
- Amy Schwenk for Acting Secretary George Little
- Deputy Secretary Tanya Garcia for Acting Secretary Eric Hagarty
- Billie Barnes for Commissioner Robert Harvie, Jr.
- Sara Gligora for Secretary Russel Redding
- Hoa Pham for Acting Secretary Meg Snead
- Zach Zobrist for Matt Yarnell

Presenters:

- Deputy Secretary Tara Williams, Governor's Office
- Secretary Jennifer Berrier, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Deputy Secretary, Shelia Ireland, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Acting Executive Director Ryan Hyde, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Hoa Pham, PA Department of Human Services
- Gwen Ross, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Amy Schwenk, PA Department of Corrections
- Sara Gligora, PA Department of Agriculture
- Deputy Secretary Tanya Garcia, PA Department of Education

- James Martini, PA Workforce Development Board
- Rick Bloomingdale, Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee
- Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee
- Zach Zobrist, Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Rod Hodapp, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Michael White, PA Department of Labor and Industry

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Shuana Davis, Michelle Lengel, Shannon Austin

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Brown began the meeting.

Chair Brown asked Senator Amanda Cappelletti to introduce herself. She noted that she represents the 17th district which is parts of Delaware and Montgomery counties. She is also the minority chair of Community, Economic, and Recreational Development committee. She is attorney by trade and has a Master of Public Health. For her, workforce development is a huge part of the social determinants of health and helping individuals being able to better their lives and access to healthcare. She is very excited to be a part of the Board and help drive workforce development in PA and the economy. Chair also noted that Brian Campbell from Brian Campbell Farms and Acting Secretary for the Department of Education, Eric Hagarty were new members but were not able to be on the call. Chair Brown then introduced Acting Executive Director for OVR, Ryan Hyde. Mr. Hyde noted he had been with the Department of Labor and Industry for roughly 20 years and most of that was spent with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Chair's Updates

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the minutes from the February 9th, 2022 meeting.

MOTION: Rick Bloomingdale made the motion to approve the minutes. James Harper Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Governor's Office Updates

Deputy Secretary Tara Williams gave the Governor's report and focused on few key areas. Ms. Williams wanted to reiterate gratitude and excitement for the new board members, and she knows all will bring strong leadership and experience to their roles. Secondly, the commonwealth is in the budget season, and they continue to advocate for the Governor's budget proposal and its investments in workforce, education, and economic development. They continue the push to move Pennsylvania into the modern era with a minimum wage of \$12 per hour with a pathway to \$15. That would benefit nearly 1 million workers across the state. They are also pursuing continued historic investments in the education system at all levels from pre-K to K-12 to postsecondary education, business growth, and a reduction in the corporate net income tax and modernization of the current structure. They have a proposal to fund a

comprehensive statewide longitudinal data system, SLDS, which is something other states have in place and is considered a best practice for data-driven decision making. The data system would bring together data sets from various agencies in the workforce system to help answer research questions, which ultimately drive policy and funding decisions. For example, what are the employment outcomes of people who participate in PA's adult education programs? They are excited about that and its implications to strengthen workforce efforts.

In terms of ARPA and COVID relief funds, various investments have been made in the health care and childcare sectors to stabilize those industries. They are sitting on over \$2 billion that is use it or lose it funding. The governor released a plan in February that includes investments in health care worker recruitment and retention, small business grants, rent and mortgage rebates, and a plan to provide COVID relief funds directly to households to support whatever individual needs they might have incurred related to the pandemic. They can use them on things like childcare and education and training costs. A portion is also slated to be used for the Nellie Bly Scholarship program with creates pathways from community colleges to PASSHE institutions. There is a specific focus of the program on workforce sectors that have been particularly impacted by the pandemic. They are anxious for those proposals to move forward to make sure they are using the money and investing in Pennsylvanians before the deadline.

The third thing Deputy Secretary Williams wanted to mention is infrastructure. They are continuing to work on preparations for the various projects and programs under the federal infrastructure act under the leadership of the esteemed state infrastructure coordinator. She and James Martini were able to attend the National Governor's Association convening in March and learned that a lot of states have similar questions as PA does as various phases of the act are rolled out. They know there are significant workforce implications embedded throughout various projects in the act. The Department of Labor and Industry put together initial questions and solicited information from some of the lead agencies so that they can all be thinking about short, mid, and long-term workforce needs and what PA as a commonwealth needs in order to ramp up to meet those needs, especially as they know they are simultaneously navigating evolving workforce trends coming out of the pandemic. One of the things they have repeatedly heard is a focus on quality jobs that provide fair wages and benefits, safe and healthy work environments, and are inclusive and accessible. Those are aspects they will include in their planning as well. One more specific item is they know broadband is a major component of the act. They have had a team working on the challenges, goals, and a draft plan that touches on the physical infrastructure for broad band expansion, and also access to devices, affordable service plans, and digital skills for people to access and use the technology. Those four buckets have been noted by the National Governor's Association as forward thinking. That will probably also roll up into the state's digital equity planning and they are very excited to get partner feedback and input. They were planning to host webinars this week and next week. There is a total of five sessions. They would love for any of the PA WDB members to participate or share with their networks or anyone who may want to participate and learn what the components of the plan are. If anyone wants the minimum wage fact sheets again, please let them know.

Agency Report- Department of Labor and Industry

Secretary Berrier gave Labor and Industry's report. Pennsylvania's unemployment rate for March of 2022 is at 4.9%, which is very good. It is below actually the pre-pandemic March 2020 rate and it is down significantly from when they were in the midst of the pandemic in March of 2021 at 7.1%. That is an encouraging sign that the economy is getting back to normal following several long years of a pandemic. The initial claims and continuing claims are still down below the unprecedented heights of 2020. A four-week average of initial claims in April of 2022 was about 9,300 claims. To put that into comparison, at the height of the pandemic in April of 2020, they were averaging 154,000 claims over a four-week average. That is just the initial claims each week, which is astronomical for the department to handle.

As far as continuing claims, currently for a four-week average in April, they are at 77,000 individuals filing continuing claims for unemployment. To put that in a comparison, in April of 2020, they were averaging almost 800,000 continuing claims a week. However, the Department still has a lot of cleanup work to do.. To give you an update on the UC trust fund. The balance is approximately \$35 million. Pennsylvania has a federal loan balance of approximately \$827 million. What does this mean? If this loan is not repaid by November of 2022, the employer tax rate for UC tax will actually be increased starting January of 2023, 0.3%, if that loan is not repaid.

Currently, they have the business services evaluation underway. This was the product of the Keystone Command Center where they contracted out with a third party in partnership with DCED to basically evaluate the services that are being provided to businesses within the workforce development system. They are very excited to see the developments and the findings of this evaluation and to be able to adjust their services to make sure that they are promoting workforce development and being great partners with businesses in the workforce development system.

Lastly, Secretary Berrier touched on the worker misclassification task force submitting its preliminary report to the General Assembly. This joint task force was created by Act 85 of 2020 to study workforce misclassification in Pennsylvania. She highlighted a few findings from the report. 389,000 Pennsylvania workers are misclassified annually. This misclassification has resulted in approximately 11,670 workers suffering injury or illness at work and were wrongfully denied Worker's Compensation accusation which is a collective loss of more than \$176 million in medical coverage and income replacement to those workers. This really does have a great impact to workers who are misclassified. The impact to the state is stunning as well. \$131 million in annual lost revenue to the UC trust fund is due to misclassification.

Chair Brown then asked if they anticipated that they would bring in enough revenue to the UC fund that they would not have to pay the higher rate. Secretary Berrier said that they will not repay the loan at the current rate. As it stands, the increase will be triggered. Chair Brown asked what can be done about that. Secretary Berrier said there has been discussions with the Governor about potentially using ARPA funds to pay off the loans so that the increase is not triggered but she was not sure where those discussions currently stood.

Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland gave the workforce development report. She said that their written report ramps out into four categories: Grant making, systems improvements, policy updates, and then preparing the workforce. For grants, they put out approximately \$9.74 million over the last quarter focused on opportunities such as business education partnerships with school districts, clean energy, pre-apprenticeships, and veterans. At this point, with their second goal of digital literacy, they are up to a total of 53 public computing centers across Pennsylvania as they attempt to traverse the digital divide. Part of that evaluation will require the cooperation of the business community to get a better understanding of where they are in terms of the system and how helpful they are to the business community.

Deputy Secretary Ireland also noted that they are cognizant of many of the strategies they are employing to digitize the workforce, so they are more effective. One of that is the digital intake form they are doing. This summer, the public will see pilots in six PA CareerLink® locations across the state as they attempt to understand how effective that strategy is. For policy perspective, in their report, there are eight different policies they have been working on across the breadth of the program. At this moment in time, the high priority occupations list is up for comment. That deadline is June 10th. For those who would like to add to the list or petition to add, that would be an important one to see. And then lastly, as they prepare the workforce of Pennsylvania for the future, SkillUp PA is up and running as of April 25th. There are 8,400 registered users who completed 10,395 courses. All 22 local workforce boards are launching their own SkillUp PA portals to have access to this free resource. She encouraged the board to understand that the access is free to any job seeker in Pennsylvania. One of the things she thinks has not become clear is that it is a free resource for business as well to upskill and reskill employees in your organizations.

She then gave some shout outs to the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis. They had a wonderful labor market information forum in Beaver County.

Agency Report- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Acting Executive Director Ryan Hyde gave the OVR report. OVR's mission is to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities through district offices located throughout the state and through the services offered by the Hiram G. Andrews Center located in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Right now, they have a variety of initiatives going on. Number one, they are hiring. They have about 120 positions in the

various stages of the hiring action to kind of rebuild our organization and get back out there. They are also working on an outreach initiative. Each office has developed an outreach plan to reconstitute their services post-pandemic, make new connections in the community, and reconnect with our schools, vendors, and other referral locations.

They did reopen all the offices in April and the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) will return to dual capacity in the dorms for the fall semester. They are excited for that after the restrictions that were put in place for the school during the pandemic.

Mr. Hyde noted that what he was most excited to talk about was the summer programs. Every year, OVR commits a significant amount of summer programs for students with disabilities. They are estimating that they would be investing about \$13 million in pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities in a variety of programs. That \$13 million will serve roughly 7,000 students in the various programs. Most of the programs will focus on paid work experiences, trainings to prepare students for work or post-secondary education, and a few summer academies for students to learn how to advocate for themselves as well as utilize assistive technology once they transition from high school to college. They would also leave knowing how to navigate a different world that is post-secondary education.

A few highlights that he then talked about was the MY Works program. MY Works is a paid work experience for students with disabilities. They have one in just about every area of the state. It is a partnership between OVR, a local municipality, and a third-party vendor there to provide supports. It is their primary program this summer. He said that MY Works is great because it gives students with disabilities an opportunity to do a variety of jobs as a municipality. They could help run summer youth camps, do clerical activities, landscaping, ultimately whatever the municipality needs, and it gives the students an opportunity to try stuff out. It also supports their community. They are out at parks and doing other beautifying programs. The community sees students with disabilities doing something for the community while getting paid. It is really win, win, win for everybody involved in the program. They are always looking to expand that. He asked if anyone was interested to reach out. One of the other major programs they have planned for this summer is they are having a deaf and hard of hearing summer academy at the HGAC. It will be a two-week program at the end of July. The students who are deaf and hard of hearing will stay at the center for the two-week period and learn about assistive technology, how to advocate for themselves and navigate the transition from high school to a post-secondary setting. All the supports that they would ever need will be there. That includes interpreters, CART, and all the assistive technology to make sure that the students are successful when they move on to their college experience. They also have the access planning and strategies academy. It is another program offered at the HGAC. This is for a broader population of students with disabilities but the same kind of services will be offered. He then commented on the Commonwealth Summer Internship Program. It was started several years ago and due to the pandemic, it took a little bit of a hiatus. They have at least 30 interns lined up that will be placed in a variety of Commonwealth employment settings for the summer. That will be a paid experience. The idea is that everyone gets an internship opportunity for students with disabilities in college. It will also help build a pipeline of future employees for the Commonwealth who are dedicated to becoming a civil servant. They are proud of the program. They appreciate the partnership between OVR, the Office of Administration, and all the placement sites. They have had great experiences with these interns over the past couple of years so it has been a great experience for everybody involved.

Agency Report- Department of Human Services

Hoa Pham presented the Pennsylvania Department of Human services report. She remarked that DHS would like to share updates on their ongoing efforts to stabilize and enhance services for vulnerable populations throughout the Commonwealth. For starters, DHS is continuing their investments into two key target industries in direct care and childcare workforces. On the direct care, DHS is continuing to infuse potentially \$140 million to home and community-based service providers. That is particularly for the purposes of protecting worker health and well-being, addressing worker recruitment and retention strategies, and increasing base payment rates. DHS is in the process of enhancing training opportunities for existing direct care workers, including a wide range of services including provisioning for online learning for shift care nurses and specialized orientations for professionals who support children with complex medical and behavior health. They are making it possible to provide pay for nurse shadowing in private care settings and expanding training opportunities around best practices within the service delivery model, particularly for items like trauma-informed care or

participant-directed models of service.

DHS would also like to share with the Board that they are working to expand the agency with choice model for long-term living models. This can provide direct care workers with health benefits and paid time off. For the other target industry, DHS is working to invest approximately \$1.2 billion in American Rescue Plan funds to support childcare statewide. To date, DHS awarded \$630 million to stabilize childcare providers. Furthermore, they are in the process of finalizing the application process for one-time grants to support workforce challenges within the childcare industry. Those will be grants to support worker recruitment, retention, training, and other costs associated with items like criminal background checks or childcare clearances. Those grants would allocate the remaining balance of the ARPA funds. They anticipate those applications will be released in May with the target goal of dispersing payments in the months of July and August. DHS is continuing to be hard at work at processing through the end of the public health emergency, and particularly, there are a number of requirements that have been waived over the course of the pandemic. They are expecting that they will be resuming with the end of the public health emergency. Ms. Pham then said they do want to share with the Board a couple of those requirements in resuming will have impacts or drive increased demand on the workforce system.

First, childcare providers across the Commonwealth are required again to train all staff on pediatric first aid and CPR. Work requirements for SNAP recipients considered able-bodied adults without dependents will resume in October 2022, unless there is additional federal action. What that means in context is there are 170,000 Pennsylvanians who may be subject to work requirements in October of 2022. DHS recently received federal approval for an update to the TANF work verification plan. That means that for this system, OIM will roll out a suite of policy and system updates designed to streamline the process for tracking work activities for their TANF system as of July 1, 2022.

Chair Brown asked if with the pending work requirements, if a recipient does not look for work they lose their entitlement. Ms. Pham responded that that is correct. Chair Brown asked if there was efforts to communicate with participants to make sure they understand that and start stepping up their efforts to find work opportunities. Ms. Pham said it was under consideration as the last thing they want to happen is that people become at risk of losing their benefits.

Agency Report- Department of Aging

David Miles was not present. Mr. Martini pointed out the highlights are in the briefing book including the updates on the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). He remarked that it is a great program assisting individuals 55 and over in finding meaningful work experiences that keep them engaged in society.

Agency Report- Department of Community and Economic Development

Chair Brown announced that Neil Weaver is the new acting secretary of the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) but that he was not available for the meeting. Gwen Ross presented Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) report. She remarked that DCED continues their work with sister agencies on everything workforce development related. It has been exciting, especially the past two years. Some of the exciting things that they are working with their sister agencies on include digital literacy, autonomous vehicles, and as Deputy Secretary Ireland had mentioned earlier, the evaluation of the business services that are offered through the workforce development system to ensure that the employers across the Commonwealth know about the great services offered through the system. When it comes to DCED specific workforce development programming, they do continue to see a demand for our programming. WedNET had been oversubscribed. Even as they are ending the fiscal year with the program, their partners across the Commonwealth continue to see and receive requests for manufacturers. The manufacturer training to career grant training program has really taken off since the last meeting. They have awarded almost \$3 million in grants this fiscal year for both awareness programs when it comes to manufacturing industry, and short-term training programs. One neat workforce training program that they are seeing through this program that she wanted to share is a student-run job shop. Basically, the students at a high school are running a manufacturing business. They are taking all of the positions, they are leading everything

from meeting with area manufacturers, listening to their clients, seeing what their needs are, developing proposals, and making products. DCED have heard from area manufacturers how the projects have helped with some supply chain issues they are having in having the local school district being able to supply them with some parts locally. DCED's full report can be found on page 34.

Chair Brown asked if someday the Board could get a presentation from the students.

Agency Report- Department of Corrections

Amy Schwenk gave the Department of Corrections report. One of the things she noted was that they are focusing a lot on hiring reentrants and providing them with opportunities in the community. From the DOC side, they are putting out a really big recruitment and retention campaign for the SCIs and nursing staff. They have lost some of the staff over the COVID pandemic. There will soon be campaigns out there to recruit correctional officers. They are trying to tout the workforce that they do have, particularly in their veteran's space. They hire a lot of veterans but that has tailed off recently. They are focusing on the veteran population and hoping to bring them in and retain them. DOC has difficult jobs, and the retention for staff tends to fall off after about year five. The DOC is actively working on that.

Ms. Schwenk then highlighted that April was reentry month. They partnered with PennDOT to do events throughout the month with the reentrants. Not only for reentry month, but DOC also helped them out of the SCI in Forest, where they are doing a lot of maintenance on the snowplows and trucks for the winter season. A lot of the reentrants helped refurbish them and get them ready for the road. Also, the workforce development specialist has been working with a lot of the different spaces within the area, particularly one for culinary this time and connecting them with the Pennsylvania Restaurant and Lodging Association.

They held some job fairs throughout the reentry month. A lot of employers participated. Ms. Schwenk was happy to report too that they are completely open now. COVID cases are extremely low and they have finally gone back to the full vocational programming so they were able to get a lot of those things up and running again within the SCI. The last thing is really focusing on CDL drivers. They have a simulator within the SCIs. They want to connect them and have the reentrants be able to hit the ground running once they exit the SCI and move into that CDL space on the outside.

Agency Report- Department of Agriculture

Secretary Redding was not available to join the meeting so Sara Gligora gave the Department of Agriculture report.

She provided an update on the agricultural apprenticeships. They currently have seven programs registered and two pre-apprenticeships registered within the state and were in the process of developing and registering three additional programs. They are very excited that two of the agriculture programs received PAsmart funding. Those are animal care sponsored by Penn State extension, and a diversified vegetable growing program. They are doing work internally to see how they can support some of the other programs that did apply for the funding but were not awarded. The Pennsylvania Commission for Agriculture Excellence is exploring ways to increase the internship opportunities in the industry and working on the marketing strategies to provide students and parents better exposure to careers in agriculture. PDA is working to provide teacher and industry training opportunities. They have been working one on one with Thaddeus Stevens, on a training for teachers on diesel, technology, and mechanics, allowing them hands-on activities to take to students. The department has been working with Team PA to collect data on H2A and seasonal farm labor. The end product from that will give them information on what the PA farm labor makeup is and who is out there in the industry. They have been working really closely with the Department of Labor and Industry on two different funding opportunities specific to agriculture. These funding opportunities come as a result of earlier collaboration with DLI and are based on industry stakeholder and feedback that was received from listening sessions and surveys. The funding will focus on HR and workforce development needs of small to mid-sized agricultural employers. A selected vendor will work with the employers to create an HR plan and educate and connect them to the workforce system.

Finally, the Department has hosted an event called Farm City Day. They will have numerous days. The first event took place last month at Longwood Gardens. Students are able to come to the events, meet different professionals within agriculture, and learn about the various opportunities. The next event will be occurring this month in the western part of the state at Vale Wood Farms. They are super excited to bring the events back. The day used take place at the Farm Show Complex and really served students in the Harrisburg area. They can now expand that and hit students across the state who typically do not get the chance to experience that.

Agency Report- Department of Education

Deputy Secretary Tanya Garcia provided the Department of Education report on behalf of Acting Secretary Eric Hagarty. She noted that they are excited that Mr. Hagarty is now the Secretary of Education as he has been one of their strongest supporters in the Governor's office. Since he joined the Governor's administration, he secured more than \$2 billion in education funding to date, including the largest single-year increase in Pennsylvania history for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. He helped to enact the Level Up program that directs \$100 million in funding to the poorest and most historically underfunded districts in PA.

She remarked that she had four updates to provide. The first one is around adult education. The second one is on PAsmart. The third is on career and technical education. The fourth, which did not quite make it in time to the briefing book, is on Career Ready PA. The adult education division within the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education that Deputy Secretary Garcia has been honored to lead has been very, very busy with three grant competitions. The first one is currently open. Funds, up to \$300,000 will be awarded to one entity for a statewide distance learning project. The other two competitions will be opening very soon. The first is a four-component family literacy programming. About \$3 million will be awarded under PA's Adult Basic and Family Literacy Education Act. The second competition that they will be opening shortly under the same act will award over \$909,000 for a tutoring program for adults.

The next update is on PAsmart Advancing grants. PDE received more than 150 applications, including a record 30 applications from the postsecondary sector. They are awarding of up to \$500,000 which will be announced very shortly to support programs with increasing access and improving equity in access to computer science and STEM education locally and statewide to learners of all ages. The third update is on career and technical education. In the 2020-2021 school year, 227 schools ran PDE-approved CTE programs. 176 of these schools, about 80%, of them reported that almost 21,000 students in the commonwealth participated in work-based learning. Work-based learning can take the form of certificates of apprenticeship, internships, cooperative education agreements, job exploration, agriculture experience, school-sponsored enterprises for small businesses, work-based experiences off campus, and simulated work environments.

Deputy Secretary Garcia noted she had a small update on the adult grants. The direct service and tutoring program for adults opened on May 2nd. For the work-based learning, almost 14,000 students participated in simulated work environments. That was the largest participation among the work-based learning experiences that their career and technical education students were engaged in. Last but not least, the Career Ready PA update. For 2022, the coalition identified employability skills and industry credentials as its education and workforce priorities. In February, the meeting of the Career Ready PA coalition highlighted the partnership among Career Ready Lancaster, Stevens College of Technology, and the Pequea Valley School District. In the March meeting, the coalition featured the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of State Parks, as well as a K-12 champion. The final update on Career Ready PA is about the annual learning days Career Ready PA backpack challenge. The backpack challenge is going to take place May 12th to 23rd. Events in Pennsylvania range from participating in a youth-run radio station, illustrating with a cartoonist, flying a drone, or doing a stream study with a state ranger, and much more.

PA WDB Recommendations Update

James Martini then gave an update on the recommendations report that the PA WDB is compiling to review the recommendations made so see where they are at, what got implemented, what is in process and what is not feasible. Mr. Martini noted that not counting

the recommendations being voted on at the end of the meeting, there have been over 25 recommendations made from the Board in the last two years. Mr. Martini said the importance is to make sure that the Board members know the value of the work they do and how much their contributions are appreciated while knowing that people are listening. Mr. Martini noted that back in 2018, the former PAsmart Ad Hoc committee put together the framework and principles for all of the PA smart grants. That includes the tens of millions of dollars invested around apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship. It also includes the industry partnerships grants that fall under the PAsmart umbrella that help support businesses and workers in sectors across the PA economy including healthcare, IT, manufacturing, construction, hospitality, agriculture, and the logistics and transportation industry. There are also the hundreds of new STEM and computer science programs that PDE has put out through their PAsmart investments to prepare the next generation. Mr. Martini then commented on recommendations from the Employer Engagement and Industry Partnership committee. He noted that the committee has been meeting with business to get feedback about the programs around the Commonwealth. The committee was the driving force behind creating the industry partnership dashboard. He then noted that the Continuous Improvement committee has been very engaged around the concept of publicly reporting data. There was a couple of places where that showed. The first was a recommendation to develop a dashboard around the common measures for workforce development system performance. Those originally found a home on the Governor's Workforce and Economic Development Command Center dashboard but are now becoming more interactive and moving to the DLI site. Mr. Martini then noted that the One-Stop Service Delivery System committee had made a recommendation around building up the staff development of the individuals that are interacting with customers in the PA CareerLink® around Pennsylvania. The chair of the committee prioritized finding ways to increase the professionalization of the individuals in the roles and making sure they have the tools and opportunities for growth.

Mr. Martini then moved onto the Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc committee. He noted that in pre-pandemic the committee started to engage around the direct care workforce crisis. That turned out to be pressing with the challenges that they have been seeing over the last two and a half years with not being able to find the individuals to do such critical work throughout the pandemic. There has also been a lot of work done around the individuals that stepped up to be temporary nursing assistants during the crisis. He noted that they invested \$4.8 million in January 2021 in direct care worker training funds. Mr. Martini then touched on a joint venture from the Youth and Continuous Improvement committees in adopting evidence definitions in the use of Commonwealth grant making. They came up with four tiers. That includes everything from pre-preliminary evidence to rigorous evidence and evaluation for programs so that they can get a better idea of what impact and effectiveness the investments Pennsylvania makes in the workforce are having. That work translated into a continued partnership with Results For America. Mr. Martini then mentioned a recommendation that the Career Pathways and Apprenticeship made about elements they would like to see incorporated into grant making. That included barrier remediation and inclusion of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Mr. Martini then moved onto the recommendations from the Reentry Ad Hoc committee. He remarked that the committee partnered with the Department of Corrections around issues of ensuring that those coming back from serving time have access to government issued IDs. Another one that he flagged was around the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Federal Bonding Program. They put together a brand new suite of marketing materials for the website to ensure that all of the employer community can take advantage of the additional resources to support the hiring of individuals that may be criminal justice involved previously but are now seeking gainful employment. He specifically thanked Chair Brown for his continued work in that space.

Finally, Mr. Martini moved onto the Youth committee. They are recommending the addition of new requirements for the local youth committees to ensure that all of the different youth stakeholder voices are heard. Those were issued into local planning guidance.

Chair Brown said that the government does not necessarily move quickly. He thanked the committee chairs and members for their efforts that will help Pennsylvanians going forward.

Zach Zobrist then noted that the report from DHS showed that they are a step ahead of some of the recommendations from the healthcare committee. They are investing in one-time wage offerings, long-term funding to try to lift those jobs while also providing money for training and credentialing. He noted that he just wanted to appreciate the work that DHS is doing.

Committee Update- Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement

Executive Director Martini then gave the update for the Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement committee as Chair Sygielski was not able to be on. The committee has been doing work on engaging with businesses around the Commonwealth. Through the industry partnership program, they have been identifying industry sectors to invite employers to listen to their concerns to find out when the state can be supportive and maybe times when the state can get out of the way. He noted that representatives from the business and information technology sector met with the committee. They talked about some of the challenges they were facing which was finding and retaining talent. They were very interested in increasing apprenticeships and registered programs in the information technology space. The second group that spoke to the committee was the hospitality industry. That group also is having challenges in finding, recruiting, and retaining talent. They talked a lot about the challenges around transportation for individuals that work in the sector. Another issue for that sector is childcare and the hours childcare typically runs. Over the summer the committee plans to talk to representatives from the construction and manufacturing industries.

Committee Update- Career Pathways and Apprenticeship

Richard Bloomingdale presented the Career Pathways and Apprenticeship report. He remarked that there has been great work done by the Apprenticeship and Training Office. They are continuing to try to encourage people to promote nontraditional apprenticeships.

Committee Update- One-Stop Service Delivery System

Chair Sarah Hollister presented the One-Stop Service Delivery System committee report. The committee has been focusing every meeting on receiving updates on the professional development recommendation from 2021. The career advisor work that DLI is doing is phenomenal. The committee is also continuing to try to seek the right quantitative data about older worker trends. They were working with the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis on that project. They get regular updates on the National Governor's Association WIN grant about the digital literacy skills work being done. They also received a memo from the National Governor's Association about other states that have done similar benefit access streamlining in their one-stops. They are examining best practices around the country. The committee has also been looking into some policies such as the ETPL list.

Committee Update- Reentry Ad Hoc

Mr. Martini then gave the Reentry Ad Hoc committee update on behalf of co-chair Jeff Abramowitz. He noted the committee was able to engage with a group looking to put on a conference called the International Conference on Decreasing Recidivism and how the committee can help support that work. The committee also had a in depth conversation with people from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. One of the items that came out of the conversation with PennDOT was that their hands are somewhat tied with current statute around individuals losing their licenses for offenses that may not have been related to traffic violations. The work is also ongoing to get up and running a web page within the PA WDB website to support employers looking to engage with the reentry population.

Committee Update- Continuous Improvement

Brian Funkhouser, chair of the Continuous Improvement committee noted that at the last committee meeting they had a presentation on the common digital intake project and the advancement of that.

Committee Update- Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc

Zach Zobrist presented the Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc report. He noted that the committee had two recommendations to present

to the PA WDB. The first recommendation calls out and notes the great resignation. He noted that the retail industry was able to raise wages and it deepened the crisis for direct care workers. The committee asks that all efforts be made to increase funding to all services that require professional care workers to help facilitate competitive and family sustaining wages to help alleviate the staffing crisis.

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

MOTION: Rick Bloomingdale made a motion to approve the recommendation. Senator Camera Bartolotta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The second recommendation from the committee focuses on the need for additional workforce development dollars to help with credentialing and training so that workers can be upskilling into direct care roles.

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

MOTION: Rick Bloomingdale made a motion to approve the recommendation. Idayat Adewunmi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Zach Zobrist then noted his appreciation of the efforts of the Governor's Office and the Department of Education on their efforts to get temporary nurse aides credentials to become CNAs.

Committee Update- Youth

Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, gave the Youth committee report. The Youth committee has been exploring the WIOA sub-goals to promote early career exposure and exploration, as well as the development of employability skills through work-based learning opportunities. They then narrowed their focus on ways to promote STEM skills in learning. The committee had a presentation on the economic outlook for STEM jobs, as well as the opportunity to review great work happening outside of the commonwealth, including work done in Ohio and Georgia. The committee was recommending that the Department of Education explore the adoption of mechanisms to validate the STEM skills acquired in K-12 education. The committee's ask was that they want to underscore and integrate STEM learning and the validation of those skills as part of the process. Chair Townsend then highlighted some of the rationale for the recommendation. The first is that there are currently a significant number of vacant STEM and computer science jobs with family-sustaining wages in Pennsylvania. They want the next generation to apply and be prepared for the jobs. She also highlighted that the US has fallen off the top ten list of innovative countries. There is not enough home grown STEM talent. Chair Townsend then thanked the members of the committee for their dedicated and thorough exploration. She then thanked everyone that had provided information to the committee about work in the space.

Chair Brown then sought a motion to approve the recommendation.

MOTION: James Harper Jr. made a motion to approve the recommendation. Representative Melissa Shusterman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

PA CareerLink® ADA Accessibility presentation

Michael White then introduced himself as the Division Chief within the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA)

and Rob Hodapp is a business services specialist within the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). He noted that the project has been a collaborative effort between OVR, the Office of Equal Opportunity, and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. The project began in 2019 when staff from OVR met with BWDA to review each of Pennsylvania's 62 PA CareerLink® centers for the purpose of ensuring that each center was fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Even with the COVID pandemic, which paused visits for a while, OVR staff have been able to complete nearly 30 visits and they anticipated to have all of the reviews completed by the end of July.

Mr. Hodapp noted that whenever they do ADA reviews they keep in mind the priorities outlined by the 2010 ADA accessibility guidelines. He then noted some of the things they look for are accessible entrances, accessible public restrooms, and access to things like TTY and water fountains. OVR added a fifth priority and that is electronic accessibility for people that mind need assistive technology. For the first priority, they were looking at how people were getting to the location, i.e.. accessible parking, unloading areas, a route to the door. They then look at how wide the entrance door is and if the door pressure is too hard. He then noted about space and clearance in walkways and hallways and the height of tables. He then noted about the importance of braille signage and the position of wall-mounted objects. Mr. Hodapp then touched on computer accessibility.

Mr. White then remarked on some of the efforts and resolutions that occurred due to the visits. They are also creating a sustainability plan as part of the effort so that local workforce development board will have the resources and training to continue the reviews once OVR has completed the assessments of each of the centers. He noted that the centers were able to buy new CCTVs and TTY phones. OVR also made sure to identify that JAWS and ZoomText software is on the ADA accessible computers in each of the PA CareerLink®.

Mr. White then talked about positives outcomes form the effort. First, the citizenry of PA will be better served by the collaborative effort. Second, not only will the PA CareerLink® center be fully accessible, but there will also be a plan in place to keep the centers up to date moving forward. Third, positive relationships have been enhanced. Finally, the PA CareerLink® are in a better position to successfully meet the statutory and regulatory requirements when the required reviews occur. Mr. White then noted that with the common digital intake form that is in development, they have also been collaborating to ensure that the design of the form is accessible to any customer that walks through the door.

Senator Amanda Cappelletti then asked if the idea of adult changing stations was added to the project. They noted that they have advocates talking to them about that. Mr. Hodapp said they had not seen a changing station so far at any of the PA CareerLink®.

Representative Melissa Shusterman then asked about resistance for making changes especially to the physical property outside. Mr. Hodapp noted that all of the PA CareerLink® followed through on the recommendations. He said the barrier would be if a center is renting the property and the landlord stops them.

Adjournment

Chair Brown sought a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend made the motion. Tim Bean seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.