

## **Quarterly Board Meeting**

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

10:00AM to 1:45PM

Pennsylvania School Boards Association  
400 Bent Creek Boulevard, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Attendance**

**Members:** Jeffrey Brown, Chair; Secretary Teresa Miller; Matt Yarnell; Denise Andahazy; Jodi Pace; Henry Nicholas; Dionne Wallace-Oakley; Robert Scaer; Sarah Hollister; Patrick Eiding; Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger; Nick Gilson; Timothy Bean; Marguerite Kline; Senator John Blake; Gregg Riefenstahl; Representative Ryan Mackenzie; Timothy James; Christopher Hackett; John “Ski” Sygielski; Deputy Secretary Eileen Cipriani; Deputy Secretary Allison Jones, for Governor Tom Wolf; Margie McKeivitt, for Diane Ellis-Marseglia; Deputy Secretary Kelly Evans, for Secretary John Wetzel; Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko, for Secretary Dennis Davin; Dawn Cowan, for Representative Morgan Cephas; Scott Sheely, for Secretary Russell Redding; Glenda Ebersole, for Secretary Robert Torres; Joe Lee, for Secretary Jerry Oleksiak; Tim Griffin, for Frank Sirianni

**Presenters:** Deputy Secretary of Policy and Planning Allison Jones; Staff of the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley: Nancy Dischinat, Gina Kormanik, Cindy Evans, and Michelle Young; Scott Sheely, PA Department of Agriculture; Glenda Ebersole, PA Department of Aging; Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko, Department of Community and Economic Development; Deputy Secretary Kelly Evans, PA Department of Corrections; Secretary Teresa Miller, PA Department of Human Services; Deputy Secretary Eileen Cipriani, PA Department of Labor and Industry; Ralph Roach, PA Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; Co-Chair Jeffrey Abramowitz, Reentry Ad Hoc Committee; Chair John “Ski” Sygielski, Industry Partners and Employer Engagement Committee; Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee; Amanda Harrison, PA Department of Education, Division of Adult Education

**Staff:** Executive Director James Martini, Sara Gligora, Mary Hoskins, Michelle Lengel, Tayleigh Trussell

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Brown called the Quarterly Meeting to order at 10:05.

#### **Chair’s Updates**

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the minutes from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

**MOTION:** Mr. Nicholas moved to approve the May 1, 2019 minutes. Mr. Eiding seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Governor’s Budget Update**

Allison Jones provided a brief update as to the budget that was enacted in June and the Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center. She noted that at the last quarterly board meeting, an overview was provided for the Governor's budget recommendations for education and workforce development, and several of those initiatives were included in the budget which became law. Ms. Jones also commented that the State Board worked on the PA Smart initiative last year by guiding how the resources were spent in a framework of priorities and recommendations. The Legislature increased funding for PAsmart by \$10 million. PAsmart now has \$40 million for advancing apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship, computer science and STEM education, and Next Generation Industry Partnerships. She remarked that the new investment of \$10 million is to support career and technical education and that she is glad to see a difference across the Commonwealth from this money.

For education, Ms. Jones noted that the General Assembly took the Governor's recommendation to update the Compulsory Attendance Law. It was updated from being in school by the age of 8 and leaving by the age of 17 to being in the school by the age of 6 and staying in school until the age of 18. That recommendation was made with the hope of improving the graduation rate. Also, for education, the Legislature included funding initiatives for early education and child care home visiting and early intervention.

Ms. Jones also stated that as part of the Governor's budget, he announced the creation of the Keystone Command Center. She noted that the Command Center had been convening weekly since April and that the first couple of months were information gathering and sharing across state and private partners like the Chamber, the AFL-CIO and Team Pennsylvania Foundation. The Command Center also developed a committee structure that will allow it to dive into interests of the members such as barriers to employment and barriers for employers. The Command Center would also be engaging in regional listening sessions and would publicize them. The purpose of those would be to directly hear from the community about barriers and will be similarly structure to the Middle-Class Task Force. Ms. Jones then asked other Command Center members to chime in if they had anything to add.

Secretary Teresa Miller commented that she thought that the Command Center had been a really great opportunity so far for a lot of agencies. It was being seen as a good chance to hear what everyone is working on in a space to encourage better collaboration. Secretary Miller said that one of the things that happened because of the Command Center was a meeting with DHS and the Chamber of Commerce to talk about barriers, particularly child care and transportation. DHS has also been working closely with the Department of Agriculture to develop a SNAP 50/50 program aimed at gaps in the agriculture industry in terms of training.

Chairman Brown asked if anyone had any other comments or questions and Ms. Denise Andahazy asked if the Command Center was going to be addressing the benefit cliff issues. Secretary Miller responded that the issue has come up in the Command Center and that they hope to present ideas and solutions soon. She also remarked that in Pennsylvania, that child care subsidies are where there is there is a benefits cliff but that other states have a worse one because they drop off the subsidies before a person is at 235 percent of the federal poverty level.

Chairman Brown then introduced Timothy James, a new board member and asked him to introduce himself. Mr. James stated that he is an engineering manager at Google and that he is a K-12 volunteer outreach coordinator and an instructor at the University of Pittsburgh working with computer science education.

Chairman Brown then asked James Martini to go over the 2020 WIOA combined State Plan timeline and process. Mr. Martini then introduced the new Board staff; including summer intern Tayleigh Trussell, Sara Gligora, and Michelle Lengel. Mr. Martini explained that the first step in working on the plan was to convene an interagency working group of 12 different agencies that all touch workforce and there have also been committees around all of the Governor's proposed goals. That work became draft goals and then the PA WDB hosted four stakeholder engagement sessions (listening sessions) around the Commonwealth in Philadelphia, Allentown, near State College, and Canonsburg. Mr. Martini remarked that great feedback came from that effort. Mr. Martini also thanked the board members that attended the sessions for their engagement. He continued that the next steps would be to put together 300 pages of prompt responses guaranteeing the federal government of compliance and that would be presented at the November 6<sup>th</sup> board meeting. It will be brought up to a vote for the Board and then be put out to public comment for 30 days and after that needed adjustments will be made. Mr. Martini mentioned that at the February board meeting, the board will do a final vote and it would be submitted to the federal government and take effect on July 1, 2020. Mr. Martini thanked everyone that helped with the plan to that point.

Chairman Brown then asked if anyone had questions on the 2020 plan and there were none.

#### **Local Workforce Development Board Partner Updates**

Chairman Brown then introduced Nancy Dischinat, Gina Kormanik, Cindy Evans, and Michelle Young with the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley to present about their area.

Ms. Dischinat started off the presentation by giving unemployment statistics. She summarized that the unemployment rate is 3.9 percent in the Lehigh Valley, 3.8 percent in PA, and 3.7 percent in the USA. Ms. Dischinat also noted that because people do have jobs because of how good the economy is, people are using the supportive system to establish their job readiness. She also stressed that they are not a program, they are a workforce system. She stressed that everyone is involved and engaged in their workforce system. Ms. Dischinat iterated that the first customer of the system is the employer so that they can help them understand their role in the community and all of the stakeholders. From that, they contracted with the Chamber of Commerce to serve as their intermediary.

Michelle Young then noted that she works for the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce and while they cover Northampton and Lehigh Counties with the board, they also cover Monroe and Carbon counties and Warren County in NJ. She thanked Senator Blake and Representative Mackenzie for their commitment to the area. Ms. Young noted that there are 30 councils within the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Dischinat added that the Workforce Board Lehigh Valley is invited to all of those councils to talk about jobs, skills, education requirements, etc. Ms. Young continued by saying that she works part-time for the Chamber of Commerce and part time for the workforce board and for the chamber she runs public policy to follow legislation. The Chamber runs legislative orientations for the workforce board every year. She noted that transportation is one of the key industries in the Lehigh Valley and they are seeking skilled employees for it.

Ms. Dischinat announced that they have a veteran's council and it brings all veterans reps to the table to meet with the employers. She stated that they work to ensure that veterans have priority of service and that the chamber has increased the number by tenfold of employers that come to the table to talk to veterans.

Ms. Young also noted that the Chamber does a localized regional statewide report in which the data comes from CWIA and Ms. Dischinat presents it to the employers every year. Ms. Dischinat then added that they are lucky to have two community colleges and three career and technical schools in the area because the pathway to a gold collar job is through career and technical education and on to a community college. She noted that they spend dollar collectively together to put people into training programs. Ms. Dischinat also remarked that they do not do anything without economic development and then continued in saying that if a company entered they area, they made sure they had people prepared for the jobs that are coming in. She said that they are doing a \$100,000 study on talent supply and that they are also trying to explain to employers about raising wages because of people moving around for better pay. Ms. Dischinat also stated that there are 13,602 unemployed people in the Lehigh Valley and that they know what services and programs those people are using the system for, as most of those people are trying to upskill themselves or do something a little bit different. Gina Kormanik then added that employers are using wage data to do strategic planning. Ms. Dischinat continued that they make sure that all of the information is available to everyone so that they can understand the community. Cindy Evans added that it is not just about knowing the adult population, it is about knowing the youth population too. Ms. Kormanik chimed in that the most innovative partnership that they are working on was with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and their Lehigh Valley transportation study. They are helping the board with their local plan and the board has been helping them with their planning process. Ms. Dischinat added that they are working on hiring a joint person with the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Workforce Board Lehigh Valley then transitioned to talking about employer services and how they have them personalized. Ms. Dischinat commented that they partner with every employer that they can, 15,500 of them in the Lehigh Valley. She then remarked about how FedEx Ground opened a brand-new mega distribution hub and worked with the board to hire 1,500 people and after they were showed data, raised wages for their geographic managers. They also helped iHerb filter applicants to hire. Ms. Young added that all 5,000 employers are asked to use the PA CareerLink® system. Ms. Kormanik contributed that they have been convening employers especially in the Next Generation Transportation Warehousing Logistics group where they were having issues with transportation. They then had them communication with LANTA, the Lehigh Northampton Transportation Authority and are investing in a brand-new bus route.

Ms. Dischinat stated that she is not opposed to hustling employers as they have rooms for sale in the workforce system and they see their guiding principle as being relevant. She then briefly outlined all of their centers including one in a major hospital. Ms. Kormanik commented that they do resumes, cover letters, job fairs, apprenticeships, internships, and more. Ms. Evans stated they do career pathways, career exploration, and referrals to early resource centers. They want to make sure that their job seekers can say I am job ready.

Ms. Dischinat then discussed how she has had a hard time of explaining the workforce system, but they made it into the analogy of a cupcake. They consider the legislators the cherry on the top because they provide the ability to move the system forward. The customers are then the waffle cracker and they can serve the universal population. She commented that some people just need icing and look at jobs and get a job themselves, but some people need more services. The crust of the cupcake is if someone needs training or GED classes. Ms. Dischinat commented that other groups and people come in to study their system and they are very proud of it.

Ms. Kormanik then stated that they had 266 job fairs in one year and through a Strategic Innovation Grant from the Department of Labor and Industry, they have an employer and education center where employers and educators can interact with the Chamber.

Ms. Young remarked that there had been a stigma about the workforce area that people didn't want to go there but now the space is professional and businesses want to use the space. Ms. Dischinat added that they are finding is that employers are becoming the new training vendor and using onsite training with help from community college and career technical schools. The Workforce Board Lehigh Valley also participates on every guidance plan committee in the Lehigh Valley and they developed an employability skills curriculum and gave it to every school district. Ms. Evans stated that they are working with youth, educators, and parents to help them understand what career pathways look like in workforce and went through the chamber to understand what people need to do to get from Point A to the end of their career. An example that they shared was employers using a resource directory from businesses, so workforce efforts would have a record of how they would be willing to participate in programs.

Ms. Evans shared that because they feel strongly about career and technical education being the pathway to a gold collar career that they do signing days for career and technical education students to sign onto their workplace or education provider and they got county executives and legislators involved.

Ms. Dischinat then moved onto talking about the Teacher in the Workplace grant and expressed that it has been extremely successful. They also created a film called Lehigh Valley, The Best of Education about the good things that education does. They even had a PA CareerLink® partner with the Northampton County jail and the recidivism rate dropped and they have created a pathway in the system for people with criminal backgrounds. She also stated that there is a LANTA bus that goes to every center that they have and that they go for discretionary grants.

Ms. Dischinat finished her remarks by saying that they are a system of workforce development leading people to say that they are job ready.

Chairman Brown then asked if anybody had any questions.

Representative Ryan Mackenzie thanked them for everything that the workforce development system and the Chamber do in the Lehigh Valley. He said that what they are doing in the community is paying off. Ms. Dischinat thanked him.

Mr. Nick Gilson then asked if they work with the Ben Franklin Technology Partners. Ms. Dischinat replied that they do as they do workshops together. They also do entrepreneurship workshops for young adults that have an interest in it. Mr. Gilson then followed up asking if they see them playing a crucial role in start-up businesses in the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Dischinat replied yes, they are in charge of the team in economic development. Mr. Gilson finished his remark by saying fantastic presentation.

Ms. Wendy DiMatteo Holsinger then asked of how to take the best practices from WIBS that are doing fantastically and then spreading the best of work and making sure it gets out to workforce boards. Chairman Brown asked if there is an inventory of what everyone is doing. Mr. Martini responded in the negative and Ms. DiMatteo Holsinger added that that was probably a rhetorical question.

Chairman Brown then thanked the Lehigh Valley for their presentation and announced that they would move onto agency reports so that it would help in understanding what everyone is working on.

### **Agency Reports- Agriculture**

Mr. Scott Sheely, the Special Assistant for Workforce Development at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, commented that he would give quick highlights of his report in the briefing book. Mr. Sheely then continued by saying that there are three buckets that they have been working on for at least the last six months. One of them is that they have been trying to be supportive to the agriculture and food industry in a variety of ways including providing worker training and employer training so that people can more fully participate in the food system. They also have a number of initiatives in the Pennsylvania Farm Bill that was passed recently that support the growth of meat processors and will bring new kind of employer opportunities. Mr. Sheely also said that they keep hearing from employers that there are not enough people. After talking to an employer in Bedford County, the employer had concluded that there was nobody left to go into the agriculture industry. Mr. Sheely commented that they see part of the problem as if people want to do the job. From that idea, they have been doing career pathway work and engaged in four active apprenticeships in the industry. He continued that the Pennsylvania Commission on Agriculture Education, a joint commission with the Department of Education, has been working on issues related to the agriculture education system. Mr. Sheely also said that he appreciates what the Workforce Command Center has been doing and the collaborations going on.

Chairman Brown then asked if anyone had questions.

Mr. Eiding then asked if Mr. Sheely could expand on the certain areas where it has been hard to fill in jobs like day labor or more technical work. Mr. Sheely said that it has been both and that there is a big gap in the technical aspect because a lot of jobs have been reinvented by technology and there is not the training capacity for it. They have been working with CT systems and other various community colleges to try to get that going. Mr. Sheely also remarked that the workforce is largely comprised of immigrants and the industry is dependent on that labor. Mr. Eiding further commented that a lot of city folks don't understand the technical aspect to the agriculture industry and that attending the meeting expanded his knowledge on the issue. Mr. Sheely responded that it is always something they are working on in terms of expanding awareness about career information because it is not all low skill, low wage jobs.

### **Agency Reports- Aging**

Ms. Glenda Ebersole of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging remarked that she did not have anything to add beyond what was included in the briefing book.

### **Agency Reports- Community and Economic Development**

Deputy Secretary for Business Financing, Ms. Carol Kilko noted that DCED works with L&I on the Next Generation Industry Partnerships and that funding has been released for them. They have been seeing that in the partnerships that they are assigned to, they have been addressing the things that the Board is talking about and that in Bedford, they were conversing about how they need more people to train. Another push of the partnerships is working together and figuring out ways to promote their areas so that people will stay and that will attract people to live and work there. The other thing that Deputy Secretary Kilko mentioned was that Pennsylvania applied to join the State Science Technology Institute (SSTI) and were accepted.

Chairman Brown asked if there were any questions. There were none.

### **Agency Reports- Corrections**

Deputy Secretary for Office of Reentry PBPP, Ms. Kelly Evans that in addition to the report in the briefing book, the webinars for PA CareerLink® staff, OVR were beginning on how to sell reentrants to employers and they had 85 people signed up. She also reported that an employer went to them saying that they need employees and that the Department of Corrections is going to look into a work release program for inmates to fill in the gap. The DOC also noted that compared to statewide national statistics, the unemployment rate of able-bodied parolees was very high in certain counties and the DOC workforce development administrator, Dorenda Hamarlund, is going to look into it. Chairman Brown asked what the obstacles there was to having a work release program. Deputy Secretary Evans responded that she hasn't asked their chief legal yet, so they do not know if it requires a legislative update. She said that safety is also a consideration because they haven't done it before so there would be a lot of barriers but nothing they could not overcome.

Chairman Brown asked if there were any other questions and Ms. Denise Andahazy responded that she is the employer that the DOC met with and they have done a similar program in Alabama and that she appreciates the consideration and that there are pros and cons. Chairman Brown said that it is an interesting idea especially if the inmates are developing a skills and that the Board stay informed on the idea.

### **Agency Reports- Education**

Chairman Brown announced that Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary Pedro Rivera could not be in attendance and that their report was in the briefing book.

### **Agency Reports- Human Services**

Secretary Miller commented that she wanted to highlight a couple of things in the report. Secretary Miller noted that per the Governor's announcement in January about redesigning the Department of Human Services employer and training programs that focus on SNAP and TANF clients, they are trying to do a better job at individualizing services so that people can get longer lasting jobs. From that, they wanted to break down barriers that customers would be facing, and they have decided to delay their competitive procurement to really look at changes that can be made in existing contracts and then look sat data to help inform a competitive procurement in the future. Secretary Miller noted that they planned on brining their workforce partners together in September to talk about the redesign and the approach.

Secretary Miller continued in saying that they are also looking at the Medicaid program in working with managed care organizations to identify people who are prime for workforce supports. Secretary Miller said that her final comment is about their SNAP E&T. They have been working on their 2020 E&T plan to address goal assisting SNAP participants and one of their main concerns is that many areas around the state have been waived for work requirements for SNAP because of the economy but they believe that the federal government may be changing the waivers. She commented that they are working to expand and grow programming for skills training because people are facing losing their access to SNAP if they are not engaged in the workforce.

Chairman Brown then asked for questions and when no one answered he asked if there will be progress reports on whether they are contracting with the workforce system and how it is going. Secretary Miller responded that the goal is to collect as much data, so they can see how it is going and then they would be

happy to share it publicly. Chairman Brown then asked if there was anything more specific to allow people to continue to get their SNAP and for clarification on how it works. Secretary Miller responded that there are specific requirements about looking for work or being in the workforce. She continued in saying that their concern was the federal government indicating that they plan to change the ability of the state to waive those requirements. Secretary Miller said that a lot of the policies coming out of Washington, they are pushing back on but that they are still having to implement that policies that are hurting people across the board. She remarked that they will also be commenting on the public charge rule but are still concerned because access to SNAP is access to food on people's tables.

Ms. DiMatteo Holsinger then added that the counterpoint to that is that her HR team reports that sometimes people don't want to upwardly advance because they don't want to lose their benefits. She said that she wishes that it was that people get still some support as they move up and don't lose 100 percent of their benefits.

Mr. Eiding jumped in that he is glad to see the research and if the Department of Human Services knew if they would entertain discussion with just the board or if they would have general sessions. Secretary Miller commented that they have talked about bringing in the boards for discussions and they have started reaching out with their community action agencies because of the fact that they most administer the Work Ready program. She said that she didn't know if they had thought about a general public session, but she will continue to update the Board.

#### **Agency Reports- Labor and Industry**

PA Department of Labor and Industry Deputy Secretary of Workforce Development Eileen Cipriani noted that the Labor and Industry report is in the briefing book but that that wanted to highlight a few things. She said that they were wrapping up the summer local internship program and that they had over 1,100 students and 618 businesses involved. Along with the help of board members and business, they put together a summer internship media day and reached almost a quarter of a million people in one day through social media to talk about the benefits of internships. The rebranding campaign was also completed at the end of June and they are waiting for final numbers from Commonwealth media Services to let them know how it went but they are happy with the preliminary numbers. A Notice of Grant Availability was put out to the local boards for \$2.5 million for youth reentry projects. The Department also was wrapping up the first year of Teacher in the Workplace and they served over 1,200 teachers in the first one with a really positive response. Dep. Secretary Cipriani noted that they would like to open it up next year to postsecondary teachers and community colleges so that they can also see what is happening in their community. She also commented that there were two events coming up, The Apprenticeship and Training Office having its second annual summit on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> and two labor market summits on both sides of the state with the first being November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Chairman Brown asked if there were questions and there was none.

#### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Refresher: Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation**

Mr. Ralph Roach, the Business Services and Outreach Division Chief for OVR began his presentation by bringing greetings from the new Executive Director, Shannon Austin. He remarked that the goal of OVR as a workforce partner was to help Pennsylvanians with disabilities to obtain a career, to secure and maintain employment, and as an end result to achieve greater independence. He emphasized that they enjoy working with everyone at the local workforce level. Mr. Roach then continued with the history of



VR the program. He remarked that in 1919, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was inspired by the work being done at national and local levels to develop and help veterans returning from World War 1, decided to launch its own state public VR program and from that, the Smith-Fess Act of 1920, the national public VR program was created. There are 78 public VR units across the US and all territories. There are approximately 25,000 public VR counselors who deliver direct services to persons with disabilities who understand each person's impairments to working, who then assist customers to become gainfully employed in a career of choice and to become a self-sufficient citizen. Nationally the VR program annually achieves approximately 250,000 to 300,000 outcomes of citizens achieving competitive integrative employment. Mr. Roach continued saying that current authority of public VR is derived from the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and was amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. He remarked that Workforce Board Lehigh Valley raised innovation to a new standard in their presentation today. Mr. Roach continued that OVR is regulated at the federal level by the Rehab Services Administration of the US Department of Education. OVR receives about 80 percent of annual funding from them and there is a state match and in Pennsylvania our legislative branch and the Governor fully fund the state match for the program. OVR in PA is housed within the PA Department of Labor and Industry and is PA's Title IV partner under WIOA. There are four bureaus. There is the general VR program which is called the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRS). BVRS serves people with disabilities other than those blind or having a visual impairment. There is the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) that services anyone who is legally blind or has low vision. There is also our state-operated comprehensive vocational rehabilitation facility in Johnstown known as the Hiram G. Andres Center (HGAC). There are 15 district offices in the general VR program, 6 Blindness and Visual Services co-located offices, and the stand-alone Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown, PA.

Mr. Roach continued his presentation by saying that individuals seek OVR on a voluntary basis. Depending on the type of service and the individuals combined gross income, they might make a financial contribution. Vocational Rehabilitation Services are provided by approximately 440 VR counselors working on a case-by-case basis to develop an individualized plan to achieve a career and greater self-sufficiency. Mr. Roach then addressed how OVR is now operating on a wait list basis and continues to accept applications but if they determine that someone is not significantly enough impaired, that they will refer those individuals, and all wait list eligible customers, based on guidelines from the federal government, to other workforce partners. Once the wait list is reopened, OVR will serve eligible customers on a first come first serve basis.

Mr. Roach then elaborated on the actual services of the programs. For students with disabilities, OVR uses several approaches including staff participating in school districts to discuss what OVR is and what services OVR provides. Also, based on legislation from WIOA, all public VR programs are required to provide pre-employment-transition that includes five mandated services. The idea is that there may be students with disabilities who are in secondary education or entering postsecondary institutions who may benefit from the VR program. WIOA legislation allows VR programs to provide these services without students becoming a regular VR eligible customer. All state public VR programs, including OVR must set aside at least 15% of their annual budget to provide pre-employment transition services.

Mr. Roach continued that once someone applies to and is determined eligible for OVR, a OVR counselor and customer determine an appropriate individual plan for employment that considers limitations and work capacities. Together they evaluate needed skill sets to achieve an employment outcome. VR counselors provide counseling and guidance to determine and authorize services and supports that move customers towards employment goals and career outcomes. This is the same process for blindness and visual service customers. OVR also operates a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) which is

a state set-aside system where a state office that has a cafeteria vender, can train an individual who is blind to be the operator. OVR like workforce partners, serve a dual customer. OVR has a talent pipeline preparing persons with a disability for jobs in the commonwealth and OVR provides outreach to help employers access that talent pipeline. Mr. Roach expressed that WIOA emphasizes four areas for public VR programs including; working more intensely with students with disabilities with local educational authorities (LEA's), being engaged with businesses/employers, participating in cross-agency collaboration, use of assisted technology to level the playing field for people with disabilities in the workforce, and to have a sole focus on achieving competitive integrated employment as an outcome of the VR process. The public VR specialty niche is in providing disability talent and consultation on disability topics that employers may need to know about. OVR is committed to working as a partner in cross system collaboration to bring VR talent that meets a business's workforce needs, while looking at how technology has leveled the playing field in allowing people with disabilities to access highly skilled IT careers. OVR also emphasizes that they want employment outcomes to be competitive and integrated so that people with disabilities are not segregated and are fully included in an employer's workforce. Mr. Roach also added that they are working with the Dept. of Human Services (DHS), Bureau of Juvenile Justice Systems (BJJS), jointly providing services to adjudicated students with disabilities, in residential treatment facilities to create paid work experiences and career exploration academies for these students over the summer. This was started in the Erie region in 2017 and is being expanded to other areas of PA.

Mr. Roach then added that the other part of the VR program is focused on business/employer engagement to better understand and respond to their needs. OVR is also pursuing this through cross-agency collaboration. After WIOA was enacted in 2014, OVR is now part of a Combined State WF Plan and are working on common measures of business engagement. OVR, in a response to an employer's demand side needs, can suggest a talent recruitment process of qualified people with disabilities. This is important because in a state with 12.7 million individuals, there are about 1.4 to 1.5 million with disabilities and about 70 percent of these individuals between the ages of 18 to 65 are not working. Mr. Roach commented that qualified persons with disability maybe the talent solution that businesses need who are strapped to find workers and talent. OVR works with customers to make sure that they have the right skill sets each employer needs. VR also has about 40 embedded business service reps across district offices that reach out locally to businesses/employers who function as a single point of contact. OVR is part of a national talent network through the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehab called the VR National Employment Team. The VR-NET introduces many national corporate business customers to PA OVR.

WIOA identified six indicators of Title I-WF, Title III-American Job Center/CareerLink's and Title IV public VR business engagement including: employment information support services, workforce recruitment assistance, strategic planning and economic development activities, untapped labor pool activities, training services, rapid response and layoff response. OVR is currently working to collect and report these common measures as indicators of business engagement. Mr. Roach continued that the goals of WIOA common measures are to improve accountability and transparency within the workforce system, to measure key employment and educational outcomes for their talent pipeline, to measure the VR program's effectiveness using a variety of approaches to achieve an employment outcome that meets the needs of an employer, and to ensure WIOA core partners are customer focused and support an integrated service delivery model. Mr. Roach then talked about how they worked with Syncreon, a Cumberland Valley PA logistics company to employ individuals with disabilities. OVR engaged the South-Central PA Workforce Board, the Office of Apprenticeship, and Goodwill Industries to develop a pre-apprenticeship program called the Talent Academy. All graduates of the academy if hired at Syncreon

could participate in a linked registered ATO warehouse apprentice or pursue employment in another logistics operation having achieved a transferable micro credential. Since the start of the program approximately 30 percent of the workforce at Syncreon now include qualified persons with disabilities. Mr. Roach gave credit to Jesse McCree of the South-Central Pennsylvania Workforce Board, Mike Barber, Sue Casto, Carol Kilko from DCED, DHS Secretary Miller and staff from ODP and OLTL whose agencies all participate in the success of recruiting qualified candidates for the Talent Academy. OVR hopes to replicate the model across different industries sectors.

Recent state legislation impacting OVR includes Act 26. This requires OVR to track participation in IEP meetings of students with a disability. OVR collaboration with the Department of Education collects and reports data about special education students and provides public website reports on OVR staff attendance at IEP meetings of special education students at the end of each quarter. There are over 105,000 students with IEPs in the commonwealth and OVR is working to build capacity to meet this requirement. Also impacting OVR is Act 36, Employment First, (EF) that promotes policies to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment as the preferred choice for people with disabilities across Commonwealth agencies and programs. The EF act, created a Governor's cabinet to help implement the law as well as an Employment First Oversight Commission to provide measurement and review of progress with implementation.

Mr. Roach then once again touched on the Order of Section and elaborated as to how a waiting list works for individuals that apply for OVR services. Following creation of the waiting list, OVR staff reached out to all PA CareerLink's® to offer training about disability etiquette and information on disability communication strategies for CL staff, and that could also be offered as best practices to employers working with each CL office. Mr. Roach said that OVR is currently serving approximately 54,000 individuals.

Chairman Brown then opened the presentation for questions and Mr. Yarnell asked how many people were on the wait list. Mr. Roach replied that he didn't know the current number noting it had just closed on July 1<sup>st</sup>, however, before it did, OVR counselors worked aggressively to get everyone into a plan status who were determined eligible. He believed that the wait list maybe under 1,000 people.

Chairman Brown then announced the break for lunch.

### **Committee Updates- Reentry Ad Hoc Committee**

Chairman Brown asked co-chair of the Reentry Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Jeff Abramowitz to report on the work of the group. Mr. Abramowitz remarked that he also sits on the Pennsylvania Reentry Council and chairs the employment subcommittee for that. He reported that the committee has been very active and that they have come up with some action items to pursue. The first is that the group decided to move forward with the roundtable employer discussions across the Commonwealth. They planned on four sessions possibly five where employers would come to the table and be educated about what it was like to hire a returning citizen, what they should know, and best practices. The committee also engaged in a reentry inventory survey of the Commonwealth. The purpose of that project was to look at all workforce development boards, the reentry coalitions, and Chamber of Commerce to try and identify what is happening in the reentry space in the Commonwealth. The committee was also reportedly working on an

employer toolkit that would be launched within the next year. Mr. Abramowitz said that they are excited about the work that is being done.

Chairman Brown asked for questions and Ms. Dionne Wallace-Oakley asked if there was dates for the sessions. Mr. Abramowitz replied that there was and that the date for Philadelphia was October 2<sup>nd</sup> and the other areas would also be within that week. Ms. Wallace Oakley asked if the locations and times would be public. Mr. Abramowitz said that they would be advertised through partners in the event like SHRM, Chambers of Commerce, and local workforce development boards. Mr. “Ski” Sygielski asked where the Lancaster Hershey event would be, and Mr. Abramowitz said that he wasn’t sure yet. Mr. Sygielski said that HACC had a Lancaster campus and would like to host the event. Mr. Abramowitz said that that would be great. Mr. Martini added that similar to the advertising for the WIOA listening session that it would be blasted out to everybody and additional stakeholders. Mr. Abramowitz added that that kind of roundtable is not something that happens very often. Chairman Brown thanked Mr. Abramowitz for the report.

### **Committee Updates- Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement Committee**

Chair Mr. John “Ski” Sygielski began his report by thanking Mr. Martini and the team at the board for the work and support they provide the board. He continued on to highlight several things in the report. Regarding employer engagement surveys, they got a good response thanks to their industry partnership conveners. Mr. Sygielski continued that a second area was their dashboard as the committee recommended that the information be mobile friendly. The last highlight was that they have started to look at goal two of the WIOA State Plan and that they have provided insightful information to the goal two committee, according to Mr. Martini. Finally, Mr. Sygielski said that they will continually reevaluate the purpose and mission of the committee. Chairman Brown asked if there were questions and there was none.

### **Committee Updates- Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee**

Chair Mr. Matt Yarnell reported that he was going to give highlights of the report in the briefing book. The committee was going to be meeting right after the board meeting to explore areas including expanding the scope into child development and early learning as another area of caregiving or development. He also remarked that the committee was initially created to talk about home care, nursing care, personal care, adult day care, but they also want to look into mental health techs and work. From that they were looking into bringing the board a broad crisis statement to get approval and then give to the Governor’s office. He also added that they need to add that caregivers needed to earn a living wage so that they could stay in the caregiving realm. Chairman Brown asked if there were any questions and there were none.

Chairman Brown then asked Mr. Martini to summarize the reports of the Youth, Continuous Improvement, and Career Pathways and Apprenticeship committees as the chairs of those committees were unable to attend.

### **Committee Updates- Youth Committee**

Mr. Martini noted that at the beginning of the year, the committee put forth a definition of career readiness and has been working through the Combined State Plan goals. He continued that one of the big priorities for the Youth Committee in the future is focusing on strategies to properly engage and serve opportunity youth or out-of-school youth. The Youth Committee has also talked about coordinating with

the Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee about engaging with youth as there is a lot of overlap of work.

#### **Committee Updates- Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee**

Mr. Martini stated that for this committee, besides coordinating with the Youth Committee, and working through all of the sub goals related to career pathway and apprenticeship, they had contracted with a private vendor to do research on career pathways and work around the state. Mr. Martini continued that they were going to reach out to all of the local boards and partners to ask them for their opinions on career pathways and members of both Career Pathways and Youth agreed to also be interviewed.

#### **Committee Updates- Continuous Improvement Committee**

Mr. Martini commented that the committee had two primary efforts. The first one was to make sure that the state was doing a better job at publicly displaying outcomes for the workforce system. The other possible priority of the committee was possibly looking into the information gap on how best to handle medical marijuana for employers.

Chairman Brown then asked if anyone had questions. Mr. Sygielski stated that he would be interested in the conversation as they have nursing students being turned away from hospitals and there was a possible lawsuit in regard to the whole situation. Chairman Brown then commented that the body's purpose is to advise the Governor on policy and that he would like to see all subcommittees and ad hoc committees plan to have a date for giving their recommendations.

Mr. Eiding then commented that he had a question about the Youth Committee's work. He asked if there had been coordination between Education and the Youth Committee about addressing pathways in the education system at a much younger age. Mr. Martini responded that all committees try to have multiagency representation on every committee and that people from education are participating on youth and career pathways and are working to ensure that those efforts are happening.

#### **WIOA Refresher: Title II- Adult Basic Education**

Chairman Brown then introduced Ms. Amanda Harrison to give the WIOA Refresher on Adult Basic Education.

Ms. Amanda Harrison began her presentation as introducing herself as the Chief of the Division of Adult Education in the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education. She commented that at the last Board meeting in May, Secretary Rivera gave an overview of the education programs in Pennsylvania for workforce development, but her presentation would specifically be about the adult basic and family literacy programming. She stressed that there are many programs across the state that provide services regarding adult basic education but she that she would only be talking about programs that specifically got funding from the state for the programs. Ms. Harrison then continued that adult basic education in Pennsylvania is funded through two funding streams, federal and state and federal rules most guide all of the work that the funded programs do. Their funded is through Title II of the Workforce innovation and Opportunity Act. Unlike the previous law, Workforce Investment Act, adult basic education and the five other core programs all have the same six performance outcome measures. The state law that authorizes them is Pennsylvania Act 143 of 1986. It outlines that adult basic education services assist adults in acquiring the basic academic knowledge and skills. The emphasis is educating

adults and ensuring that they have the skills necessary to gain employment and retain it and progress into family sustaining wages and take advantage of training or educational opportunities so that they can move along a career pathway.

Ms. Harrison stated that a total of 54 grants go to 43 grantees and that the grants total about \$26.8 million. There is at least one funded program in each local workforce area. She also noted that the assumption of adult basic education is that is teaching people to read and helping them get their GED. She expressed that that is not the totality of their services and they can help people develop skills if they are strong in reading but struggle with math, for example. Also, in areas of English language learners, the programs provide English as a second language services called English language acquisition. The purpose of those is to help individuals get beyond basic English and earn high school equivalency credential or move onto postsecondary education and training. Ms. Harrison also called attention to the fact that a lot of immigrants come to the US with significant employment and education so part of the purpose of the English Language Acquisition programs is to help them with the academic skills so that they can back to a career that was similar to what they had before. All programs also have to teach employability skills. Another unique aspect to the program is a statewide distance learning project for people that cannot participate in face-to-face instruction. Ms. Harrison also stressed that one of the key components of WIOA is collaboration across the system. Ms. Harrison also noted that about 28 percent of participants in adult basic education programs were between age 16 to 24. She also stated that she was excited about the accessibility of the programs whether they be in a PA CareerLink® or out in the community, or even in the evening. She also thanked people that scored the grants for funding and the local board staff that committed to review applications for alignment with the local plan.

Ms. Harrison also commented that the state is still working to break down silos between agencies but that she feels like progress has been made in the area of professional development and training. There will cross-training opportunities to ensure that everyone in the workforce development system knows what is available and what they can share with clients. Another offering of adult basic education is that there is workplace adult education where places take classes at workplaces to assist people in the context of their job. There is also integrated education and training where adult basic education services, workforce preparation activities, and occupational training occur concurrently which is taking off in the pre-apprenticeship area. Employers also support adult basic education program through attending programs to help students understand interviewing skills and giving the employer perspective on how students will use the skills they are learning. Ms. Harrison also recommended expanding Teacher in the Workplace to adult basic education programs because about 40 percent of the individuals in programs are currently employed.

Ms. Harrison noted that eligibility for services begins at 16 or 17 years old and not enrolled in secondary school and have to have a basic skill need. Ms. Harrison also explained the two ways to earn the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma. They are passing a high school equivalency test or to get 30 semester hours of postsecondary level education and submit a transcript and application.

Chairman Brown then asked if anyone had questions. Ms. Sarah Hollister commented that she supports what Ms. Harrison said about expanding Teacher in the Workplace but she also wanted to ask if there had been any conversation about alignment in the 30-credit option. She noted that Gateway to College had been wonderful for the youth pathway and if TANF participants could do the same. Ms. Harrison responded that she had a meeting scheduled to talk about working together.

Chairman Brown thanked Ms. Harrison for the presentation.

### **Other Announcements and Ideas**

Chairman Brown asked that Mr. Robert Scaer talk about an effort that he has been involved in to address the lack of transportation for workers. Mr. Scaer commented that he is with Gannett Fleming, an engineering firm. They had reached out to Representative Patty Kim and got Secretary of Transportation Richards and Rep. Greg Rothman and created a common idea of what transportation innovations could mean. The mission is to use mobility as a service to make safe, alternative transportation solutions available. Specific goals include providing safe, reliable, and affordable multigoal transportation options to get to work, access healthcare and education. They also hope to develop a mobility transportation ecosystem that make sit easy for safe transportation innovators to do business, support existing employers, and support the Governor's workforce development initiative, among creating a model for transportation innovation. The ideas revolve around autonomous vehicles and House Bill 1078 allows for autonomous buses to run on roads. He said that there would be a hearing on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Brown thanked him for the update and mentioned that Board members have talked about transportation as a barrier to employment.

Chairman Brown then announced that there were no public commenters.

Mr. Martini then announced that due to overflow, there would be another WIOA Listening session on August 16<sup>th</sup> at Reading Area Community College. Mr. Martini also announced that he would reach out to the presenters and get their presentations on the PA Workforce Development Board website for internet link purposes.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Brown announced that he was looking for motion to adjourn.

**MOTION:** Mr. Nicholas moved to adjourn, and Mr. Yarnell seconded.

The meeting concluded at 1:45pm.