



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Philip D. Murphy, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission Draft Meeting Minutes

Online TEAMS Meeting Platform

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/394439821>

July 26, 2023

10 am – 12 pm

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:07 am and welcomed members and guests. Chairman Bone announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1978, notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and Star Ledger, shared with the Secretary of State's office, and was posted on the SETC website. Introductions were conducted. Chairman Bone noted that as a quorum was not available at the time, we would move forward with the agenda and return to minutes should time allow. Chairman Bone welcomed Kevin Dehmer, Executive Director, with the Heldrich Center for Workforce and Development.

II. Chairman's Report

Chairman Bone opened the meeting with an introduction regarding expanding our membership of the SETC. We are happy to report we were approved by the Governor's office of four new members and approved by the legislative office. Chairman Bone introduced the four new members: John Gagliano, John Sarno, Hosea Johnson, and Gregg DeBaere. Each new member introduced themselves to the commission. Chairman Dennis Bone noted he would be attending the National Governor's Association Summer Symposium. He then asked Gary Altman to

provide updates regarding the progress of regional and local plans. We have received a combined 12 documents and are in the process of review.

We are seeing a higher level of maturation/evolution in the process, with direct links and sharing. There are commonalities in discussions within regions and focus on joint needs. In the local plans we see strengths in how these documents align with the regional and state plans. We will provide updates with the in future meetings.

III. John Gagliano, Governance Committee - WDB Certifications - Union and Essex County

John Gagliano discussed the certification process for local boards and explained the importance of having the boxes checked. It is an ongoing process, and we are to consider two requests linked to 2018. Approval for the 2018 effort for Union County and Essex County is being recommended. Both were pending and all had been resolved. The Governance Committee has recommended both certifications for approval and asks the commission to approve.

A vote on these will be held until our next quorum. The next round of certifications will take place in 2023/2024.

IV. Evaluation: Transition to Virtual Services – Heldrich Center for Workforce Development – Laurie Harrington, Liana Volpe, Brittany Donovan, Marjory Palius, Grace Maruska & Assistant Commissioner Leslie Hirsch – NJDOL

NJDOL Assistant Commissioner Leslie Hirsch opened the discussion regarding the evaluation of virtual services. Its purpose is to help satisfy WIOA requirements that highlights evaluations as a method towards continuous improvement and provide better services. COVID-19 had a major impact on service provision and resulted in a major upswing in the use of virtual practices. NJDOL moved to create ways to help job seekers.

NJDOL asked the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers to conduct an evaluation of the effort and document a system's ability to determine if there are different and better ways to work virtually. Assistant Commissioner Hirsch thanked her team for their involvement in the evaluation. She then turned it over to the Heldrich staff for their report.

Laurie Harrington opened the presentation. Research questions were drafted to better understand the period and to have recommendations that may better improve the public workforce system for now and any future recurrences.

Liana Volpe discussed two recommendations, one short term and one long. Brittany Donovan explained how they reached out to WIOA customers including youth and dislocated customers. A significant number of the findings indicated that dislocated workers' earnings were increased but that the pandemic significantly lowered service numbers Marjory Palius discussed survey

provisions. including outreach and response. Each section of the survey asked specific information regarding how remote, virtual, and in-person mode of services were utilized.

In late June and July of 2022 researchers interviewed staff and administration of WIOA including three researchers at NJDOL and one staff member at the SETC. The evaluation process included personal interviews and focus groups.

Regarding results of the effort, Title I service levels under WIOA in 2020 did not differ from 2018 which was a full non-pandemic year and 2019 was a partial pandemic year. There were some key findings in that study. The credential rate with regards to race, with African Americans increasing their credentials. Also, measurable skill gained within the Hispanic race in 2020. White customers increased measurably to sixty five percent in 2020. This provides a snapshot of the findings and interviews.

Grace Maruska indicated that a full range of evaluations was conducted regarding training and individualized career services. Most services were provided in a virtual environment and new technology was purchased and software licensees and platforms were modified to use digital forms including DocuSign. New webinar topics and metrics learning services were created and conducted. Local workforce areas could transfer customers to an appropriate virtual environment.

Customers were able to utilize technology, and local staff were able to utilize hybrid services. One Stops felt they could operate, and local areas were able to process sensitive information and upfront services in-person in terms of service provisions, many interviews were cited as using many online platforms. In closing there were nine recommendations short term and nine long terms. Some key takeaways local areas felt they could reach more people with the ability to offer services via a range of service delivery models; in-person, hybrid, virtual, and remote. Recommendations are there needs to be an investment in technology tools and consistency across the local areas should be the next frontier of investment for NJDOL. NJDOL should invest in modernization, technology tools, and ideas for innovation and strengthen virtual service delivery infrastructure. And lastly, NJDOL could invest in technology solutions, to standardize the virtual front door for customers across all local areas. Laurie Harrington thanked everyone for participating in the evaluation.

V. Related Comments – Assistant Commissioner - Dr. Yolanda Allen – NJDOL

Assistant Commissioner Dr. Yolanda Allen discussed how NJDOL is fully committed to staffing issues and hiring individuals which is an ongoing effort due to an economic which may be coming and so that we have the staff necessary to overcome some of our challenges after the pandemic. The next level of the evaluations is to break down silos and go beyond our future evaluations and it is essential to dig deeper to see how we are serving our customers in the One Stops such as our Apprenticeship customers. There are wonderful opportunities on the apprenticeship side to create a higher income level and new training to make sure that this pipeline to allow for underserved communities we can find ways to enhance these pipelines and it is essential and will provide for a valuable workforce.

VI. NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities – NJBIA/NJCCC – Dr. Aaron Fitchner & Kyle Sullender

Kyle Sullender kicked off the discussion with the NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities program and why NJCCC and NJBIA have enjoyed it together. The Pathways Initiative is a collaboration with the community colleges and has received national recognition. ITS purpose is to create a workforce system and to meet the economy need of today and the economy of the future. In addition to educational partners there are also industry leaders, unions, and training providers. The goal is to bring all of them together where they are and bring them where they need to go.

Dr. Fichtner discussed the program from the college perspective. Related programs are led by the colleges so students will seek to be successful in their fields and where they land in the workforce. They have identified the critical industries and the growth needs for the economy of the future. The colleges are seeing broad trends in technology and a need to learn new terms and new occupations as industries continue to grow. The 2024 State budget will hopefully provide funding and the colleges are excited about the successes.

Twenty-two pathways have been developed in the statewide pathways and the colleges are proud that nationally they are seeing many accomplishments now and for the future. As compared to during the pandemic, two and a half years later unemployment is under four percent. Dr. Fitchner discussed how they have collaborated with over twelve hundred industry and education partners, had forty-three collaborative meetings, and one summit which has been unprecedented. The Pathways program has given a seat at the table. Industries have been able to communicate where they see their industry and where we are going. It has been a joint effort to prescribe solutions for the future to come together for our workforce system. Chairman Bone thanked both Kyle and Aaron for their presentation.

VII. Public Comment – Open

No questions from the public.

VII. Closing Remarks – SETC Chairman, Dennis Bone

Chairman Bone mentioned his appreciation and how incredibly powerful this work is and thanked everyone for their presentations and we will see everyone at the next meeting. The motion to close the meeting was at 11:57.

Next SETC Meeting

SETC Commission Meeting on Wednesday, 7/26:

To join the meeting: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/394439821>

PRESENT MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

Bone, Dennis
John Gagliano
Gregg DeBaere
Hosea Johnson
Nadler, Sally

Drakeford, Shamira
Sarno, John
Duda, Teri
John Franklin

ABSENT MEMBERS

Donnadio, John
Wade, Carolyn Carter
Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo
Ferrara, Anthony
Allen-McMillan, Angela
Adelman, Sarah
Sullivan, Tim)
Franklin, John
Robert Wise

Allen, Dr. Yolanda
Alpart, Davidene
Apple, Emily
Anochi, Eva
Arango, Oswaldo
Barracato, Meredith
Belin, Jacki
Bicica, John
Blanco, Francis
Bogert, Duwan
Bollhardt, Victoria
Brown, Melissa
Burkhardt, Ron
Buteas, Chrissy
Carvajal, Allyson
Caramelo, JoAnne
Carrol, Karen
Carter, Jean
Case, Kim
Celestin, Sancia
Choudhury, Mitra
Custard, Donna
Czar, Dianne
Demmellash, Alfa
Drakeford, Shamira
Emigholz, Chris
Enright, Patricia
Everett, Kaitlin
Feldman, Eliot
Fichtner, Aaron
Gaylord, Karen
Gehrke, David

OTHER ATTENDEES

Giordano, Timothy
Gietka, Jennifer
Grzella, Paul
Harris-Kuiper, Stephanie
Hartman, Sharon
Hiller, Nanci
Hirsch, Lesley
Hunt, Stacy
Jainarine, Diane
Jordan, Dana
Jubanyik, Danielle
Kikkert, Becky
Kuiper, Mark
Kurdziel, Kevin
Levandowski, Andrea
Levitt, Jill
Knight, Braheim
Kuhn, Fran
Kurdziel, Kevin
Liu, Helen
Mader, Pamela
Martin, Michelle
Mazzagatti, Pete
McPartlan, Dennis
Mirasol, Catherina
Moody, Melissa
Morrison, Angelique
Murphy, Lauren
Meyer, Cheryl
Odeneye, Jobi
Philp, Amanda
Polack, Carol
Pierre, Eric
Rodgers, Beth
Reyes, Maritza
Sabater, Julio
Safrin, Michele
Sabir, Zahira

Satchell, Brigitte
Schaeffer, Janine
Schuster, Manuela
Seith, David
Seavers, Diane
Singer-Quast, Sarah
Soto, Luis
Sternbach, Larry
Sullender, Kyle
Staub, Stephanie
Strothers, Sandra
Swartz, Jeffrey
Tabassum, Zainab
Taguwa, Denise
Taylor, Sherwood
Taylor, Yolanda
Vail, Les
Vaidyanathan S.
Weir, Barbara
West, Kelly
Williams, Albert
Zahirah, Sabir
SETC STAFF:
G. Altman
C. Lamarca
K. Robinson

SETC- July 26, 2023