



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Chris Christie, *Governor*

SETC Commission Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2012

10:00am - 12:00pm

New Jersey Law Center

One Constitution Square, New Brunswick, NJ

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:10 am. Roundtable introductions were conducted. The Chairman welcomed all members and reviewed the agenda. He announced a special meeting of the SETC on July 17, 2012 for the purpose of approving the Unified Workforce Investment Plan. Chairman Bone emphasized that the Unified Plan presents an important opportunity for the re-evaluation and improvement of New Jersey's workforce system, to align it with the economic strategies in our state, and make the system more effective in serving its customers.

II. Chairman's Report

Chairman Bone announced that he will be retiring from Verizon. He intends to continue his role as Chairman of the State Employment and Training Commission.

Chairman Bone advised that a quorum was not present at this meeting. Therefore, he was not able to ask for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 13, 2012 meeting. The minutes will be held for approval at the next Commission meeting.

III. State Plan Update

Teri Duda, co-chair of the SETC Planning Committee, reported on the progress of the Unified Workforce Investment Plan. The Planning Committee has been working with SETC and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) leadership to create the plan process and content, and ensure that it meets all USDOL requirements. Ms. Duda noted the strong partnerships formed between the agencies involved in this plan: the SETC, LWD, Department of Community Affairs, Department of Education, Higher Education, and the Department of Human Services. These partnerships were strengthened by the State Plan kick-off meeting hosted in May by Chairman Bone and LWD Commissioner Wirths.

Tapas Sen, co-chair of the Planning Committee, thanked Chairman Bone for putting the Unified Workforce Investment Plan at the forefront of this meeting. Mr. Sen gave a brief overview of the plan process and the timeline. Mr. Sen stated that the state plan is the vehicle that drives New Jersey's workforce investment system.

SETC Executive Director Michele Horst reported that the process being used to create the plan is multi-faceted. The kick-off meeting brought together the six partnering state agencies, with approximately fifty people in attendance. It was an encouraging and energizing experience.

USDOL has issued a plan guidance document that provides the required plan elements and construct. However, New Jersey's plan will go beyond the required elements, taking advantage of the opportunity to create a strategic vision across the workforce system, with an economic development connection.

Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner thanked the SETC for providing leadership on this project. He recognized the efforts of the Planning Committee co-chairs, Tapas Sen and Teri Duda, and all the other critical partners working on this effort.

Deputy Commissioner Fichtner concurred with Chairman Bone's statement that the plan represents an opportunity. New Jersey's current workforce system was largely created approximately 15 years ago, through the federal Workforce Investment Act. New Jersey was a national leader in workforce development then, but times have changed. This is a great opportunity to look at where the state is going and what needs to be done to ensure individuals have the skills they need to be successful in their careers, as well as to ensure that a skilled workforce is built for the key industries that will drive our economy.

A PowerPoint presentation was provided by Executive Director Michele Horst, Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner, Assistant Commissioner Mary Ellen Clark and Assistant Commissioner Jeffrey Stoller.

Deputy Commissioner Fichtner provided key statistics regarding unemployment, education levels and the workforce system in New Jersey. He noted the need to think differently about the challenges being addressed, and work collaboratively to find new ideas and solutions to these challenges.

Executive Director Horst discussed the workforce vision statement: New Jersey's Workforce System is an innovative and dynamic talent development engine fueling the state's 21st century success in a global economy. This statement recognizes that in New Jersey, there is a responsibility to grow New Jersey. How does New Jersey remain competitive in this market? What do job seekers need to be successful? This cohesive, unified statement will drive the plan. Core Values needed to be established for this plan to be viable for the talent development engine. The Core Values are:

- Driving investments based on industry needs
- Equipping the workforce for employment
- Meeting jobseekers where they are
- Increasing system accountability

Plan priorities include addressing high unemployment, creating system integration to maximize leveraging of resources, enabling quicker connections between jobseekers and employers, and building stronger partnerships with employers, community colleges and higher education.

Assistant Commissioner Stoller discussed the "open door" service delivery system, which allows customers to be met and served where they are, as opposed to the traditional one-size-fits-all workforce delivery system. This delivery system will be employer-driven, and focused on the needs of the key industry sectors identified in New Jersey. Included in this system is a potential innovation fund, which LWD is hoping to establish as a flexible resource available for new training opportunities to target employers' needs. The overarching goal of this delivery system

is to provide targeted services to meet job seekers where they are, based on the customers' needs, with clear metrics that measure what really works.

Chairman Bone asked for comments or questions from the Commission. Members suggested that the open door service delivery system outline be updated to clearly show the connectivity between each area, and to include apprenticeship programs. Members noted that partnerships with training providers are important, in order to avoid individuals being trained for jobs that don't exist and leaving unfilled jobs that need skilled workers. Members asked about the Innovation Fund; Assistant Commissioner Stoller explained that the purpose is to have flexible dollars available for new and innovative training needs. The creation of this innovation fund is dependent upon the Workforce Innovation Fund grant application submitted to USDOL.

Members discussed the concept of a workforce opportunity index, linking jobseeker customers to available jobs in a specific industry, and allowing individuals to explore areas where jobs are or will be available. This would also assist with training and re-tooling skill sets. Members also discussed work readiness and the required basic skills.

Executive Director Horst continued the presentation, outlining Core Value 1 - Driving Investments Based on Industry Needs. This focuses on responding to employer needs by asking the business customers what they need. The Talent Networks established for seven key industries in New Jersey assist in this goal by gathering intelligence from employers, supporting career paths in those sectors, and linking jobseekers and employers.

Assistant Commissioner Clark presented information regarding Core Value 2 - Equipping the Workforce for Employment and Core Value 3 - Meeting Jobseekers Where They Are. Jobseekers are met where they are in the physical sense when they visit the One-Stop offices and receive services. Many jobseekers also self-serve, using computers from their homes and accessing services through partner locations, such as the local libraries and community colleges.

Meeting jobseekers where they are also refers to an individual's career trajectory. Jobs 4 Jersey University will educate LWD personnel in 21st century job search tools. Jersey Job Clubs are networking groups that will be expanded so more people can access networking opportunities. Assistant Commissioner Clark also noted that many companies now exclusively use online application processes. It is critical that jobseekers and staff are comfortable and familiar with this new job application method. The Jobs4Jersey.com website, with the OnRamp tool, has greatly expanded LWD's online offerings to customers. Assistant Commissioner Clark also reported that LWD is creating a fact sheet outlining supportive services available to jobseekers; partners would be welcomed to assist in this project.

Regarding Core Value 2 - Equipping the Workforce for Employment, Assistant Commissioner Clark indicated that workplace readiness requires a higher level of reading and math, as well as common sense workplace judgment. She acknowledged the literacy partners in the room, and indicated that LWD is working to make its literacy dollars go farther. Assistant Commissioner Clark also noted the need to review work readiness skills and ensure the credentials are recognized by employers.

Assistant Commissioner Clark and Deputy Commissioner Fichtner discussed the vital efforts under Core Value 4 - Increasing System Accountability. Enhanced performance metrics and processes must be established. These metrics will support rigorous system evaluations. In

addition, best practices must be identified and applied to ensure our training dollars are being used efficiently.

Chairman Bone asked members for questions regarding the Core Values that will drive the workforce plan. Members discussed ways to ensure jobseekers are encouraged to use the system. Unemployment Insurance (UI) can ultimately help people get back to work through broader connections of UI claimants to LWD services. Members emphasized the need for empathy when providing workforce services and support to customers who have lost their jobs. Members also discussed providing greater support to potential entrepreneurs, and the possibility that unemployment regulations may limit jobseekers exploration of starting their own business. The challenge of serving underemployed workers can be addressed through the Jobs4Jersey.com OnRamp tool, which focuses on skills rather than job titles, and Jersey Job Clubs, which provide peer networking opportunities.

Executive Director Horst reviewed the plan construct. USDOL requires a five year plan. It will be finite and strategic. In Years One to Three, the plan will be executed and the benchmarked. At the end of Year Three, the results will be measured. Based on these results, modifications to the plan can be made in Years Four and Five. Ms. Horst recognized the partners and task force leaders involved in the project and thanked everyone for their hard work. The timeline for the project was reviewed. Several members also congratulated the team for their efforts on this project. Chairman Bone announced the special SETC meeting to be held on July 17 for the purpose of approving the plan and noted that participation through a conference call would be permitted to ensure a quorum.

Executive Director Horst noted that the resolution for the Balanced Scorecard provided in the meeting packets will not be considered today because there is not a quorum. The proposed resolution asks the SETC to approve the Balanced Scorecard framework, through which SETC will fulfill its legislative mandate to set performance standards for the workforce system.

Deputy Commissioner Fichtner reviewed the Balanced Scorecard. He indicated that increasing accountability is a critical priority in any workforce system and especially to LWD. Currently LWD uses a set of Common Measures metrics required by USDOL. The Balanced Scorecard model outlines a broader set of metrics for all programs administered through LWD and its partners. The Balanced Scorecard supports accountability for workforce partners and grantees. It encourages continuous improvement with the use of workforce dashboards and ensures transparency through metrics reporting. It also enables better system analysis and assists in system evaluation efforts, to provide a better return on investment.

Chairman Bone advised that the Commission would take action on this resolution at the next Commission meeting. Members commended the work on the Balanced Scorecard and the Unified Plan. It was noted that the WIB Certification process begun this year should be included in the state plan; Executive Director Horst indicated that WIB Certification is linked to the state plan section that deals with state oversight and governance.

IV. State Council for Adult Literacy Education (SCALES)

Barry Semple, Hal Beder and Lansing Davis provided an overview of the draft executive summary of the SCALES literacy report. Since the last presentation to the SETC, additional data has been included in the report. The draft executive summary and a PowerPoint presentation are in the packets. This report will be approved at the next SCALES meeting and then provided to the SETC for final approval.

The initial conclusion of this report is that a significant portion of New Jersey's population could benefit from literacy and English language programs. Currently, only three percent of those without a high school diploma are being served, and the same is true for those who need to improve their English language skills. Furthermore, 12% of the state's population lacks a high school credential, while 17% of state residents are estimated to lack basic literacy. Increasing basic skills, literacy and workforce readiness are critical to strengthening the State's economy. Additionally, higher levels of literacy and education allow parents to better help their children and increase the level of civic participation. The recommendations provide strategies to improve the literacy system so it can better respond to the needs of those who would benefit by improving their literacy skills. The seventeen recommendations, which can be found in the executive summary, are broken down into four categories: state leadership, access, intensity and articulation.

Several of the recommendations were highlighted. In the category of state leadership, it is recommended that the SETC should adopt a vision for the adult education system which focuses on its foundation for workforce development which would provide adult learners with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their roles as family members, citizens and workers. This system should support skill development and credential attainment while providing a continuum of instruction services from basic adult education and beginning ESL through transitioning to postsecondary education and career/work readiness. The state should articulate a governing philosophy on service provision and explain budget decisions in light of that philosophy. This recommendation will ensure that learners who wish to take on an intensive level of study have the opportunity to do so. Learners who cannot make that commitment should have flexible options available to them. LWD should establish within the adult education office a professional development and information resource center that would support innovation and capacity-building within the system. SCALES should prepare a series of information briefs to facilitate planning and policy development in technology-based resources that can be used for literacy, components of a clear career and educational pathway and contextualized learning principles. Finally, to address the particular needs of highly skilled immigrants and potential entrepreneurs, the State should support efforts that bring together public/private funds with the goal of targeting resources and training.

In the category of Access, the need to advocate for increased State and Federal funding was discussed. The loss of Adult High School funding has left a big gap in service and resulted in the closure of most of these programs. The report speaks to targeting the use of WIA Title II state leadership funds to spur innovations.

In the third category of the SCALES recommendations, Intensity, one of the recommendations is to provide a highly intensive instructional option. Research has indicated that it takes approximately 100 to 120 hours of instruction to improve a grade level. Many of the existing programs are reporting they are providing learners with 4 to 12 hours of instruction per week, which is insufficient for learners to make meaningful progress within a program year. As a consequence, students become discouraged. Students typically do no more than 80 hours of instruction. Each workforce area should create a system with one program to provide intensive instruction, at least 20 hours per week for those individuals who can spend that much time. The report also recommends having at least one adult district diploma program in each WIB area. Research has shown that there are some situations where preference is given to those who have a high school diploma rather than a GED.

The fourth category, Articulation, discusses the need for the WIBs to revise their local adult literacy plans. The existing system is fragmented across all programs, with different processes and reporting requirements. The report also calls for better collaboration and oversight to ensure that programs operate as part of a system instead of as individual programs.

The goal of adult literacy in New Jersey is not just high school completion, which provides only minimal economic and social benefit to learners and society. However, with an expanded focus on transitioning to and completion of at least one year of postsecondary education/training plus an industry recognized certificate, significant economic benefits accrue to learners and society. We must look at the system differently. There must be partnerships between higher education and literacy. There should be better articulation between the elements of the system so the emphasis is on moving from one part to the next rather than a silo.

Chairman Bone indicated his understanding of the need versus the available resources. The system is not doing a service to those who really need the services. He asked how we could incorporate literacy in the Unified State Plan. Information is being pulled from various sources to discuss literacy. Parts of these recommendations will be incorporated into the Unified State Plan. Chairman Bone would like to see some tool the local WIBs could use to assess the effect of local literacy system.

The report recommends that the SETC develop guidance and provide components and design elements that literacy programs should include, but allow the WIBs the flexibility to address local needs.

SETC members continued the discussion about the importance of adult literacy. There was a consensus among the members regarding the importance of improving adult literacy and allowing the local WIBs to develop their own plans with guidance from the SETC. A suggestion was made to incorporate literacy into technical training programs.

V. Director's Report

Ms. Horst reported that preliminary approval was received to proceed with the NJ PLACE program for another year, with modifications. More information will be provided at the next meeting.

Judy Formalarie reported that 250 people registered for 6th Annual NJ Women in Science and Technology Workforce Summit, taking place on June 15. Registration is available on the SETC website. Ms. Formalarie recognized the efforts of the conference volunteers to put together a successful program that includes distinguished speakers and robust discussion opportunities for all participants.

VI. Public Comment

Chairman Bone asked for comment from the public. No public comment was received.

VII. Adjournment

Chairman Bone adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Next SETC Meeting:
Tuesday, July 17, 2012
Rutgers Labor Education Center, New Brunswick, NJ

**STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION MEETING
ATTENDEES – JUNE 12, 2012**

PRESENT MEMBERS or ALTERNATES

Barry, Marie (for Cerf)
Berry, Dana
Bone, Dennis
Duda, Teri
Fichtner, Aaron (for Wirths)
Gacos, Nicholas
Garlatti, Betsy
Hornik, Stephen
Howard, Donald (for McNamara)
Levinson, Jody
McAndrew, Brian
Mickens, Felix (for Lawson)
Sabater, Julio
Sen, Tapas
Trezza, Joann

ABSENT MEMBERS

Carey, Michael
Carter-Wade, Carolyn
Constable, Richard
Davis, Gail
Franzini, Caren
Henderson, Henry
Karsian, Andrea
Linder, Msgr. William
Munyan, Robert
Nutter, Harvey
Reisser, Clifford
Santare, Robert
Stout, Bruce
Velez, Jennifer
Wowkanech, Charles

OTHER ATTENDEES

Beder, Hal	Melcher, Robert	Stoller, Jeffrey
Clark, Mary Ellen	Scalia, Donna	Trombetta, Jessica
Ford, Robin	Semple, Barry	Weaver, Kathy
Guillard, Jane	Smith, Tiffany	Wise, Robert

SETC STAFF

Davis, Lansing
Formalarie, Judy
Horst, Michele
Hutchison, Sheryl
Vetterl, Susan

