



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Chris Christie, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2014

10 am – 12 noon

New Jersey Law Center, 1 Constitution Square, New Brunswick, NJ

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone opened the meeting at 10:05am and welcomed all attendees. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, a notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and Star Ledger and was posted on the SETC website. Chairman Bone reviewed the agenda and roundtable introductions were conducted.

The minutes of June 25, 2014 and September 16, 2014 were introduced. There were no corrections or additions. Tapas Sen made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Stephen Hornik and the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

II. In Memorium: John J. Heldrich

Chairman Bone remarked on John Heldrich's many contributions to New Jersey and its workforce system. He invited members to share their tributes to Mr. Heldrich's memory. Aaron Fichtner, Deputy Commissioner at the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), met Mr. Heldrich in 1998; he was the most decent, honorable and kind person and exemplified the greatest generation. Dr. Fichtner noted that the critical work done here by the SETC adds to Mr. Heldrich's legacy. Mr. Stephen Hornik shared that Mr. Heldrich was a tireless advocate for New Jersey's workforce and a devoted Yankees fan. Mr. Tapas Sen met Mr. Heldrich in 1989, as part of the foundational task force of the SETC. Mr. Sen was impressed with Mr. Heldrich's vision, commitment and leadership, as well as his kindness and compassion. Mr. Sen added that Mr. Heldrich never forgot to inspire us. Dana Berry shared that she was also on the foundational committee in 1989; Mr. Heldrich was a renaissance man and a personal mentor to her. Julio Sabater had known Mr. Heldrich since the days of Governor Florio and enjoyed working with him in the early days of the Commission; Mr. Heldrich was a champion for literacy and made it a priority for New Jersey. Chairman Bone concluded by saying that we stand on Mr. Heldrich's shoulders.

III. Chairman's Report

Chairman Bone reported on a recent meeting held with Senator Diane Allen, SETC Executive Director Michele Boronkas, Diane Mills-McKay, chair of the Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education, and Andrea Karsian, member of both the SETC and the Council. The meeting included a

long discussion about past misunderstandings and communication issues. A memorandum of understanding document is being drafted to help rectify these issues. Any draft document created will go to the Governance Committee for its recommendations and then will be presented to the full Commission for its approval. Chairman Bone noted that Senator Allen was very gracious and offered to assist the SETC with any legislative issues.

Chairman Bone noted the success of the recent STEM Conference, hosted by the Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education, together with the SETC. Chairman Bone invited Sally Nadler to share her feedback after attending this 7th annual conference, held on November 12, 2014 at the Mercer County Conference Center. Ms. Nadler indicated that there were approximately 80 attendees and a wealth of data on women was provided. The information shows there are some underserved women in specific areas, but progress is being made. The L'Oreal company hosted a terrific panel which included several women in various leadership roles, and at different stages on the career path. Breakout sessions on soft skills and women in leadership were well-received, as was a session on women in the trades, which Ms. Nadler moderated. Terri Boyer from the Center for Women and Work, facilitated a closing session to determine an action plan, which formulated many recommendations. Sally Nadler suggested a further action would be to have the SETC address women representation in the trades at the state level in 2015, with the excellent trade partners represented around the table.

Mr. Tapas Sen mentioned the conference was extremely well-run and the soft skills session, hosted by Ms. Boronkas and Melanie Willoughby, was excellent. He offered his kudos to Ms. Boronkas for a very successful conference. The three key elements of the conference were stakeholder engagement, especially the support of families; changing the cultural mindset, or the perception of girls in math and science; and engaging employers to acknowledge women as leaders in these roles.

Chairman Bone indicated that there are many opportunities for progress on gender parity issues in 2015, and emphasized the important role of the Council on Gender Parity as part of SETC. The agenda for these issues is alive and well, and is very much needed to close the gender gaps.

IV. Accelerate the Pace: Policy Academy Task Force Presentation

SETC Executive Director Michele Boronkas opened the PowerPoint presentation, highlighting how the Policy Academy is building on a culture of innovation in New Jersey. New Jersey has one of the most highly-skilled workforces in the country. While bachelor's degrees and advanced degrees are valuable, these may not be the "new normal" of what's needed in our economy. Credentials are becoming more important, especially those industry-recognized credentials that provide specialized skills. Ms. Boronkas noted that workforce credential programs also need to focus on high school dropouts and unskilled laborers.

Betsy Garlatti, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, invoked John Heldrich, noting that the workforce has to bring along everyone and accelerate the pace of moving people into the job market. This enables people to contribute to the economy and to take advantage of better employment opportunities. Not everyone needs to go to college, but workers need more than a high school diploma in our new economy.

Christina Herzog, SETC Policy Analyst, discussed achievement gaps with specific populations, noting there are 182,000 job postings on Jobs4Jersey. This seems to indicate that some employers are not finding workers with the skills they need. A better pathway needs to be built.

Marie Barry, Director of Career and Technical Education at the NJ Department of Education (DOE), discussed the achievement gaps relating to secondary graduation rates, and Betsy Garlatti discussed the post-secondary graduation rates, and the need for students to graduate “on-time” in four years.

John Meehan, Senior Policy Advisor at the NJ Department of State-Business Action Center, introduced the team’s 21st Century Vision for New Jersey’s workforce: *Accelerate the Pace* of New Jersey’s competitiveness in the 21st Century global market.

The mission statement is: We will increase the number of New Jersey residents with an industry valued credential or degree through high quality partnerships and integrated investments. Mr. Meehan noted that the manufacturing model with Trenton tiles, textiles and cars made in Edison is no longer viable. We need to identify global demand and start building a workforce to meet it.

Mr. Meehan then announced the Accelerate the Pace goal: **Increase the percentage of New Jersey residents with a postsecondary industry-valued credential or degree to __% by 2025.** (The percentage to be achieved is still being formulated.) Partnerships with the private sector, the higher education community and public schools will be critical to this effort. Mr. Meehan noted the importance of employers as true invested partners. The primary step to attain this goal includes convening skills councils and industry roundtables hosted by the Lt. Governor. These efforts are already underway.

LWD Deputy Commissioner Fichtner discussed the next step, expanding industry-education partnerships that get results. He noted that we first have to define “high-quality partnership”. First steps include making an asset map of investments, and identifying existing partnerships. Dr. Fichtner indicated that high-quality partnerships already exist at many levels; PSE&G’s partnership with the community colleges is a great example. These partnerships need to be supported and expanded. To that end, the Policy Academy seeks to create annual programs to provide partnership awards and corporate citizenship awards, and convene prosperity summits to celebrate and build these partnerships.

Ms. Barry discussed student and jobseeker access to career information, noting it was a critical step in bringing all partners efforts together, to share our combined education and labor market data. This data needs to be pushed to the high schools and even down to the middle school level, to help students and their parents make better choices about their fields of study.

Dr. Fichtner then discussed measuring progress, starting with the goal to increase the percentage of NJ workers with an industry-recognized credential or a degree. The team needs to explore labor market data identify the current levels of credential holders before setting a target number. The target should be realistic but ambitious. The team will report back to Commission on setting that goal. They also will explore performance measures across departments and develop dashboards to report on progress.

Ms. Boronkas wrapped up the presentation by focusing on the value of partner member participation and asked all SETC members to come forward and participate in this groundbreaking initiative as well.

Chairman Bone opened the floor for member discussion and feedback. Members discussed outreach to small and mid-size companies through better marketing. They noted the team’s groundbreaking efforts to combine employability skills with work specific skills and industry-related credentials. This signals a recognition of the importance of human development skills in the workforce. It was noted that public school guidance counselors are critical to spreading the message.

Ms. Nadler indicated that she is thrilled to see career awareness as part of this initiative. She offered the energy/utility industry as a model for this effort: they focus on competency models, stackable credentials and career awareness materials that support credential attainment; and they utilize education programs and pre-apprenticeship training to fill the pipeline. This model has been developed over the last eight years and can be replicated easily. Members noted that the apprenticeship model should be highlighted in this initiative, as a valuable career pathway.

Dr. Fichtner remarked that this was the first time that LWD, DOE, Higher Education, and the SETC have given a joint presentation with a commitment to work together in a new way. In addition, the team has the support of the Lt. Governor's office, which is key. He noted that the partners are setting the ambitious goal of increasing the number of New Jerseyans with a credential; the partners are holding themselves accountable to ensuring that all their significant investments support that goal. The effort is going forward without any new funding; but these agencies have responsibility for a significant amount of resources. The partners are committed to ensuring that funding goes to providing credentials that result in employment.

Bob Wise remarked that this was an exciting project and asked for a hierarchy chart to show the task force relationships and illuminate the key partnerships and communication channels being formed. Members also discussed highlighting literacy skills development, along with credential attainment. It may be helpful in the dashboard reporting to show breakdowns of credential improvement by target groups, including those with low literacy levels and other populations with barriers to employment. Dr. Fichtner indicated that the task force is committed to bringing everyone along, and literacy is major part of this effort.

LWD Assistant Commissioner Jeff Stoller noted the new engagement of employers, who are very much aware of the cost of finding skilled workers; he noted the high level of engagement of the NJ Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) with the Commission on the employability skills initiative. This signals a new partnership with employers to develop talent for the new economy. Chairman Bone noted that the NJ State Chamber of Commerce and other business and association partners should also be engaged in this effort.

Chairman Bone thanked the Policy Academy task force for the presentation. He remarked that it is refreshing and unprecedented to see this high level of coordination among these key state agencies. Career awareness and credential attainment are critically important to our state. New Jersey has the opportunity to gain some visibility and resources that it has not had before.

Chairman Bone indicated that the task force is asking the SETC to endorse this initiative. Julio Sabater made a motion that the SETC authorizes the task force to move forward with the Accelerate the Pace initiative. Harvey Nutter seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by voice vote.

V. Shared Youth Vision Council

Kirk Lew presented a PowerPoint on the Youth Symposia on Career Exploration in Key Industry Sectors. This effort was sponsored by the Department of Education (DOE), which provided \$185,000 for local area workforce boards to offer youth symposia and follow-up activities, linking local schools with One-Stop Career Centers. The SETC and DOE Office of Career and Technical Education partnered to award six grants of up to \$32,500. Mr. Lew reported on the feedback and outcomes from these symposia; they were very positively received by the local areas and school districts.

Felix Mickens, Deputy Director of Operations, Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), offered his congratulations on this effort. Approximately 80 youth graduate from the JJC's high school program each year. The JJC program hosted a youth symposia and it was very successful. Mr. Mickens noted that it costs more to incarcerate a young person than to send them to Princeton University. Unfortunately, these young people have to go to jail to get educated and then get linked up with the One-Stop Career Centers to find their career path. Additional funds for these types of programs save public dollars in the long term. However, he noted that it is critical to start career awareness efforts in the 3rd or 4th grade, rather than waiting until middle or high school. Chairman Bone indicated that Kentucky starts career development in 3rd grade and agreed this is a great opportunity that New Jersey should explore.

VI. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

LWD Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner presented a PowerPoint on the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that takes effect on July 1, 2015. The priorities for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development focus on four areas:

1. Reemployment – Meeting Jobseekers Where They Are
2. Opportunity – Equipping the Workforce for Employment
3. Alignment – Driving Investments Based on Industry Needs
4. Accountability – Increasing System Accountability

Dr. Fichtner noted this is a significant opportunity for New Jersey, not to re-invent the wheel but to re-examine decisions made in 1998 (WIA). He reviewed the development of a WIOA blueprint for New Jersey, for implementation starting in July. LWD is responsible for all titles of WIOA and embarks in a spirit of partnership with the key state agencies, many of whom are represented at this table.

Seven workgroups are being formed to review the legislation and formulate recommendations for WIOA implementation: Governance, Planning, Performance Accountability, One-Stop Operations, Career Pathways and Industry Partnerships, Services to Individuals with Disabilities, and Services to Youth. The groups will work with the SETC's committees and policy recommendations will be provided to the Commission. A summit will be held in Spring 2015, with state and national experts to guide the blueprint development. LWD and SETC are working together to launch a new WIOA website, which will provide resources to all stakeholders. In addition, LWD and SETC will host webinars in February on the key topic areas, to gather additional stakeholder input and public feedback.

Julio Sabater asked if One-Stop Operators would be included in the development of the blueprint. Deputy Commissioner Fichtner indicated that local WIB Chairs, WIB Directors and One-Stop Operators are well-represented on the work groups; they are critical to this process, as is the partnership with the SETC.

Chairman Bone indicated this was an opportunity to propel New Jersey's workforce system forward. Members discussed staffing needs for the blueprint development and implementation of WIOA. The need for marketing to promote these changes to the wider audience was also discussed. Deputy Commissioner Fichtner indicated that LWD and SETC staff are being identified to lead this effort, and it will be a priority for all staff. With regards to marketing, partner input will be vital to achieve buy-in and celebrate the vision for this generational change to New Jersey's workforce system.

VII. State Ethics Training: Documents and Schedule

Sheryl Hutchison reviewed the State Ethics Commission training requirements for Special State Officers. SETC members and designates are considered special state officers and must follow these training guidelines. A calendar of training benchmarks and a binder of state ethics resource materials was provided to each member or their designate. The SETC will schedule yearly in-person training sessions for members and designates with the State Ethics Commission staff. Online training updates may be done at a member's convenience, through the State Ethics Commission website.

VIII. Public Comment and Adjournment

Anthony Jimenez from Department of Children and Families (DCF) indicated his agency's interest in partnership with the SETC and its partners on the Accelerate the Pace initiative.

Donna Scalia, USDOL Office of Apprenticeship, announced that USDOL will be releasing a Notice of Grant Opportunity for the American Apprenticeship Initiative in the next few weeks, to launch apprenticeship models in new and high growth fields and align apprenticeships to pathways for further learning and career advancement. There are close to 1,000 occupational titles in diverse industry sectors under apprenticeship.

Greg Janz, Bergen County WIB Director, commented on the Accelerate the Pace timeframe; he suggested that a five year timeframe may be more effective than a 10 year timeframe.

Jeffrey Swartz, Camden County WIB Director, commended the partners on the inclusion of local WIB representatives in the WIOA effort and requested additional information about the re-branding of One-Stop Career Centers to "American Job Centers". Deputy Commissioner Fichtner indicated that USDOL is expected to provide additional guidance about any new national identifier for the One-Stop system, and there will be an opportunity for us to discuss what the New Jersey brand should be.

Eileen Higgins, Monmouth County WIB Director, noted that Monmouth County had hosted its own youth symposia, although they did not have time to formally request grant funds under the DOE/SETC initiative. She requested that these additional symposia be included in the summary results. Also, Ms. Higgins announced that Monmouth County WIB's "Go for the Gold" program was recognized as a best practice by the Governor's Economic Development Task Force. Ms. Higgins offered to share that best practice model and its outcomes with the partners.

The next meeting date will be February 17, 2015. The full calendar of 2015 Commission meeting dates will be sent to all members shortly.

Chairman Bone thanked all attendees for their participation, and especially the partner agencies for their support of the major initiatives now underway. He wished everyone a wonderful holiday season.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 pm.

Next SETC Meeting

Tuesday, February 17, 2015

10 am – 12 pm

NJ Law Center, One Constitution Square, New Brunswick

**STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION MEETING ATTENDEES
NOVEMBER 18, 2014**

<u>PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES</u>	
Apgar, Dawn (for Velez) Barry, Marie (for Hesper) Berry, Dana Bone, Dennis Butler, Kate (for Constable) Fichtner, Aaron (for Wirths) Garlatti, Betsy (for Hendricks) Hornik, Stephen	Howard, Donald (for McNamara) Karsian, Andrea McAndrew, Brian Mickens, Felix (for Brown) Nadler, Sally Nutter, Harvey Sabater, Julio Sen, Tapas Wise, Robert
<u>ABSENT MEMBERS</u>	
Brown, Michele Carey, Michael Donnadio, John Duda, Teri Gacos, Nicholas Levinson, Jody	Reisser, Clifford Stout, Bruce Trezza, JoAnn Wade, Carolyn Willoughby, Melanie Wowkanech, Charles
<u>OTHER ATTENDEES</u>	
Ielmini, Pete Meehan, John Melcher, Robert Richardson, Nils	Scalia, Donna Scrozynski, Ed Stoller, Jeffrey Williams, Greg
<u>LOCAL WIB REPRESENTATIVES</u>	
DeBaere, Gregg Higgins, Eileen Kurdziel, Kevin Janz, Greg	Lowery, Rhonda Piano, Julie Schu, Bill Swartz, Jeffrey
<u>SETC STAFF</u>	
Boronkas, Michele Davis, Lansing Herzog, Christina Hutchison, Sheryl Lew, Kirk	