



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Chris Christie, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) Meeting Minutes

September 16, 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 10:18 am and welcomed all to the meeting. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, a notice of this meeting was submitted to the Trenton Times and Star Ledger and posted on the SETC website. Chairman Bone reviewed the agenda and roundtable introductions were conducted.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 25, 2014 were introduced. As there was no quorum, approval of minutes was held.

II. Chairman's Report

Chairman Bone discussed the National Governor's Association conference he attended with Executive Director Michele Boronkas in Louisville, KY. The topic was workforce innovation, and alignment of educational programs with industry need. The conference focused on the manufacturing industry. Cutting edge workforce models were employed in working with companies such as General Electric, to give job seekers skills needed to obtain jobs.

Executive Director Boronkas noted that it was a great opportunity to see what is working in other states. She noted that Indiana has made a large push toward integrating apprenticeship into career and technical education. She also noted that we are doing relatively well in New Jersey, benchmarking our progress against progress in other states, and believes that we are on the cusp of greatness.

Chairman Bone then stated that he believes that the lessons learned from Indiana and Kentucky at the NGA conference ties in well to the direction we are going with regard to the NGA Policy Academy award we received this past quarter. Dennis Bone thanked all the partners who worked on the NGA application for their collaboration and great efforts to move our state forward.

III. National Governor's Association Policy Academy Grant Award

Executive Director Boronkas began her presentation on the NGA award by recognizing the partners that participating in completing the grant application. She specifically noted the contributions of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (Dr. Aaron Fichtner), the Department of Education (Marie Barry), the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (Betsy Garlatti), and the Lt. Governor's office (John Meehan).

Ms. Boronkas described each of the associated government agencies as functioning well independently, doing what they are entrusted to do. She expanded upon her analogy with the notion that there was established ferry service between the islands, for particular projects or tasks. However, sometimes ferries can break down, captains of ferries can change or leave, and sometimes ferry service between islands is discontinued. She suggested that many of our relationships are productive, but they are based on individuals, not institutionalized, regular interactions. The NGA Policy Academy will allow us to build bridges between our islands, to ensure that policy alignment long outlasts any one administration. The goal of New Jersey's Policy Academy is to increase the number of New Jersey residents with a post-secondary industry recognized credential or degree by 2025. In order to ensure we are able to reach this outcome, policy alignment at the state level is critical.

Executive Director Boronkas noted that finding synergy between current initiatives of all partners has begun.

- The Lt. Governor's Office has been conducting a Workforce Alignment Tour, working on the Partnership for Action, and the Council on Innovation
- The Department of Education is working on Career Readiness for K-12 students, and Dual Enrollment for High School students
- The Department of Labor and Workforce Development is working on a Longitudinal Data Project in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the Department of Education, as well as a Talent Supply and Demand Dashboard, and ETPL provider accountability
- And the State Employment and Training Commission is working in conjunction with the Lt. Governor's Office and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development on Skills Councils, and has already established an Employability Skills Council

The NGA grant requires a task force, for which the SETC has been selected to act as the Lead Agency. All of the partners noted above sit on the Commission as members, and as such, we will be asking the Commission to empower the Task Force to move forward. As there is not a quorum today, the vote on this Task Force will be postponed to our next meeting.

The grant is a \$170,000 technical assistance grant, which was awarded to New Jersey in August 2014. The National Kick-Off meeting with partner states will be held in Seattle, WA in October 2014. Chairman Bone stated that this is a recognition grant, indicative of all of the hard work done thus far in New Jersey, and a signal of our potential for greatness in the field of Workforce Development policy alignment.

Tapas Sen asked about what the communication channels would be to the rest of the SETC. Michele Boronkas stated that the communication and marketing plan will be fleshed out in the coming months. The initial planning will begin when the NGA visits New Jersey for a kick-off meeting on September 30th.

Bob Wise asked what talent will be needed to staff the Policy Academy Task Force. Michele Boronkas replied that we are still in the process of identifying team members and what expertise will need to be brought in to assist the team.

Paul Grzella asked what success for this project would look like in five years. Patti Moran stated that she believed that the policy alignment project would allow for better connections between departments, allowing for fewer things to be dropped through the cracks. Melanie Willoughby stated that she believed success would be seen as students and job seekers became better prepared for the business world. John Meehan stated that he believed that success would look like a higher percentage of New Jersey students being hired by New Jersey industries, rather than moving out of state. John Franklin noted that he believed that success would be to reduce the number of people in the "working poor" category, and referenced the results of the ALICE report.

Sally Nadler asked whether there were any other key industries mentioned at the NGA Kentucky conference besides manufacturing. Dennis Bone responded that the conference sponsors used manufacturing in particular as an opportunity to showcase the collaboration that had occurred in Kentucky, between all partners working together. He noted that in this example, educators had been particularly focused on, and engaged in, getting students “job ready.” Their intention is to have students prepared to leave college with a job or career plan.

Dennis Bone noted that at this time there was not a quorum at the meeting to vote to empower the Task Force. He did note at this time that the SETC had submitted the grant to the NGA on behalf of the Department of Education, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, all of which have members serving on the SETC. The Commission needs to ensure that the SETC has the ability to act as the lead for this grant, to ensure execution.

IV. Update: Employability Skills Task Force

Melanie Willoughby, Task Force Leader, thanked the members of the Commission and the SETC staff for their participation in focus groups over the summer. She reported that nearly all of the Task Force sub-groups have met, and that all summaries of their events will be due on October 6th. Based on feedback from these meetings, she reported that the number one reason employers stated that they do not hire, or terminate employment, is due to a lack of employability skills on the part of the job candidate or employee. The SETC Task Force will be meeting in October to develop a campaign, identify specific actions to ensure the engagement of all partners, and to create a statewide standard for all stakeholder groups and businesses. Ms. Willoughby also noted that there are a few good practices already underway, such as a Community College conducting a pilot in Camden with Accenture. She specifically thanked Tyler Seville from the NJBIA for all of his hard work to make this effort happen.

Dana Berry noted that introducing students to the world of work, and connecting this to their learning and education was a very exciting prospect.

Betsy Garlatti stated that they had 30 representatives at their Higher Education Task Force sub group meeting. They were excited to be asked to participate, and were supportive of the effort. Ms. Garlatti noted that the Secretary of Higher Education, Rochelle Hendricks, would be issuing a survey to students this fall regarding their perceptions of guidance and career counselling services they had received. She believes that this will align well with the goals of the Employability Skills Task Force initiative.

Melanie Willoughby noted that they had met with the State College Association, which has put together an Association of Colleges and Employers. Bridges are already being built. She mentioned that SETC member Sally Nadler participates in this Association.

Sally Nadler stated that a recent Rutgers study, completed in August 2014, showed that PSEG was operating as an economic engine in infrastructure construction, projecting the creation of 6,000 jobs annually from 2011-2021. She also noted that PSEG is currently working with Workforce Investment Board’s and local areas on their “Energy Strong” project to get electric and gas distribution services strengthened, which is projected to add 300 positions at PSEG. Chairman Bone asked if there were candidates ready for the jobs. Ms. Nadler stated that all of the jobs have pre-requisite testing, and PSEG will utilize resources like customer service training, and On the Job Training to help in preparing job candidates.

Bob Wise asked about whether there was an effort underway to measure core skills to ease the transition for cross-career moves. Melanie Willoughby replied that the Task Force has defined employability skills, and identified the top five skills for each Task Force sub group that has met. She expects that this will morph into a statewide definition, noting that it is hard to measure, but we will know it when we see it.

Chairman Bone asked Jeff Stoller if he had any observations from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development regarding jobs that we need to fill, but for which we cannot find qualified candidates. Jeff Stoller responded that on their Jobs4Jersey web site, there is up to date information on key skill areas and credentials required for specific occupational titles in our state's key industry sectors. He mentioned tools on the site which include core employment and technical skills which cross-over between industries. He also stated that the Skills Councils which will be forthcoming, will help to keep key job titles in need current on the site.

Jody Levinson noted a concern about the number of the positions posted which were relatively low pay. Jeff Stoller agreed that this was true for the entry-level positions, but that they are working diligently to build career path information for job seekers and students to assist them in growing their careers, and wages. Patti Moran stated that in the Manufacturing industry, there were very specific needs for high-paying, skilled labor, such as welders and blue print readers.

Steve Hornik asked if there was labor representation in the Employability Skills meetings. Chairman Bone responded that yes, organized labor is a key partner in this effort.

V. Update: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Christina Herzog, SETC Policy Analyst, provided a PowerPoint overview of WIOA. She indicated that USDOL is doing a good job of engaging states and local areas. However, there will be a steep learning curve. Although the Act is very similar in structure to the WIA law it replaces, there are some key changes. She outlined key areas of focus in the new act, and introduced the SETC staff who will be focusing on specific areas. Timelines for implementation, a key changes document, and today's presentation will be available on the SETC web site. Draft regulations will not be released from USDOL until January 2015.

Tom Dalton, from USDOL, commented that the state plan should not be overly affected by the regulations. The law will affect local areas and regulations more than it will the plan, as the regulations are more operational in nature. He stated that there will be an opportunity for public comment, and town hall meetings this fall.

Melanie Willoughby asked if there was a deadline for the completion of New Jersey legislation. Tom Dalton responded that the regulations will not be finalized until January 2016, so there is plenty of time. Greg Williams, from the Office of Legislative Services, stated that no one is yet discussing the incorporation of WIOA into the New Jersey statute, but it appears that there will be time to adjust as needed.

Christina Herzog asked Commission and audience members to think about where they might be able to contribute to key areas, and requested that they contact staff directly to state their areas of interest.

VI. Update: Moving Pathways Forward Project

Patti Moran, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, spoke about a new grant received by the Department. She stated that they had applied for a grant to support their career pathway effort under WIA Title II. There is no monetary allotment for the grant, however their department is being provided a Technical Assistance "coach" to help them to create a career path for both adults and youth. She noted that career assessment is critical for students. Individuals are often not aware of their own skills and sometimes have dreams about their future that are not based in reality. She mentioned that Jeff Stoller's team at LWD has created career brochures which can greatly assist with student decision making. She emphasized that the new WIOA law now gives us additional opportunities for career path development.

Marie Barry noted the importance of including all students, including CTE students, struggling students, and out of school youth, in discussions about career pathways.

Bob Wise asked if they had developed a definition for what “well-articulated” means in describing a sequence of education. Patti Moran responded that well-articulated means that it would be clearly defined and transparent.

Tom Dalton stated that there can be no “finish” in education. There are always continuing pathways, and sub-pathways within career paths, which could be supplemented with community colleges courses to allow students and job seekers to continue to build their credentials and skills over time.

Ms. Moran also noted that valid career assessments are absolutely critical and must be done continuously. Dana Berry asked whether WIA Title II could pay for career assessments. Patti Moran responded that it was a possibility. Maureen O’Brien Murphy noted that under WIOA, there is the opportunity to expand registered apprenticeships, internships, and industry recognized credentials.

Executive Director Boronkas stated that the next steps for the Commission will include moving forward with a more in-depth examination of WIOA. Experiential learning will be key not just to apprenticeships, but a larger employer-driven model. She stated that we will discuss this topic more at the November meeting.

VII. Public Comment

The floor was opened for public comment. Nils Richardson highlighted the importance of experiential learning. He stated that WIA Title IV supports this. He noted that it is time to start talking to kids earlier, in third grade, and to have assessments throughout High School. He stated that this should be inclusive of all students, which would lead to better results, and less kids falling through the cracks.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am. *Minutes submitted by Christina Herzog.*

Next SETC Meeting

Tuesday, November 18, 2014

10 am – 12 pm

NJ Law Center, One Constitution Square, New Brunswick

STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION MEETING ATTENDEES – SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

<u>PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES</u>	
Barry, Marie (for Hesper)	McAndrew, Brian
Berry, Dana	Moran, Patti (for Wirths)
Bone, Dennis	Nadler, Sally
Frye, Daniel (for Velez)	Nutter, Harvey
Garlatti, Betsy (for Hendricks)	Sen, Tapas
Garcia, Manuel (for Constable)	Willoughby, Melanie
Hornik, Stephen	Wise, Robert
Levinson, Jody	
<u>ABSENT MEMBERS</u>	
Brown, Kevin	McNamara, Joe
Brown, Michele	Reisser, Clifford
Carey, Michael	Sabater, Julio
Donnadio, John	Stout, Bruce
Duda, Teri	Trezza, JoAnn
Gacos, Nicholas	Wade, Carolyn
Karsian, Andrea	Wowkanech, Charles
<u>OTHER ATTENDEES</u>	
Agudelo, Adriene	Milone, Catherine
Butler, Kate	Richardson, Nils
DeHaven, Hugh	Seville, Tyler
Ford, Robin	Stoller, Jeff
Franklin, John	Trombetta, Jessica
Jones, SanDonna	Virella, Marie
Meehan, John	Williams, Greg
Melcher, Robert	
<u>LOCAL WIB REPRESENTATIVES</u>	
Blumenthal, Steven	Kurdziel, Kevin
DeBaere, Gregg	Janz, Greg
Grzella, Paul	Miller, Cynthia
Higgins, Eileen	Piano, Julie
Hollowell, David	
Irving, Christopher	
<u>SETC STAFF</u>	
Boronkas, Michele	Hutchison, Sheryl
Davis, Lansing	Lew, Kirk
Herzog, Christina	O'Brien-Murphy, Maureen