



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Philip D. Murphy, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2020 ~ 10am – 12pm
Online (GoTo Meeting Platform)

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:04am and welcomed members and guests. He 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 and was posted on the SETC website, njsetc.net. Mr. Bone stated that with more than 80 attendees now joined in the meeting, no roundtable introductions will take place; members were asked to place their names in the Chat feature instead.

The draft minutes of the September 17, 2020 meeting were presented. Sally Nadler made a motion to approve the minutes; the motion was seconded by Catherine Milone. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

II. Chairman's Update

Chairman Dennis Bone provided updates to the Commission. The NJ Combined State Plan for WIOA (2020) was accepted by the US Department of Labor (USDOL) and the US Department of Ed (USED) on October 2, 2020 and the final plan is posted on the SETC Website homepage. The final required edits were submitted at the end of September to USDOL/USED. These included compliance changes to SETC membership to meet WIOA and state law requirements. The membership of the SETC will be updated with new board members; the conditional federal approval status of the State Plan will continue until the new members are seated. The membership priorities include WIOA requirements for a business member majority, representation of organized labor and community group members, and representation of required partner agencies, as outlined under WIOA rules and state law.

Chairman Bone and Acting Executive Director Gary Altman thanked the members of the Reimagine Workforce Preparation grant team; while this USED grant was not awarded to New Jersey, the broad array of talented partner agencies were able to create new ideas for future collaboration that will support stronger integration of workforce, education and economic development activities for our state. In particular, NJDOL Assistant Commissioner Lesley Hirsch was lauded for her outstanding efforts to bring this team together.

Chairman Bone noted that he and NJDOL Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo will host an online meeting with local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Chairpersons on December 2, 2020. This

is an opportunity for sharing of best practices among LWDB Chairs, updates on Department initiatives, and to ask questions in an open forum.

Mr. Altman shared that Intel Corporation made a presentation on October 14, 2020 to the LWDB Directors, to outline Intel's AI for Workforce – Artificial Intelligence Readiness Program, that currently operates with partners in a number of other states, most notably Arizona. There is interest among local workforce areas and community colleges to bring this program to New Jersey; further discussions are planned with local and state partners to explore this opportunity.

III. NJ Workforce Evaluation: WIOA Title I and Title II Integration

NJDOL Evaluation Efforts

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Lesley Hirsch discussed the NJDOL evaluation efforts that are being conducted to support a learning agenda, to examine performance and other program outcomes, and build evaluation capacity within NJDOL. The team will present the preliminary findings of the Title I and Title II Integration evaluation today. A separate and concurrent evaluation is being conducted for PY 2018 workforce activities; this evaluation report will be shared with the Commission as well. The NJDOL Evaluation Workgroup is also partnering with the SETC Performance Committee to build local capacity for evaluation activities within local WDBs; a peer learning group is being created to support this effort.

The Title I and Title II evaluation benefits from a national best practice review and a grasp of real-world conditions in New Jersey. It builds on the foundation created by the SCALES council and the excellent work done by Dr. Danielle Jubanyik, NJDOL Director for Adult Education & Literacy Services and her team. This evaluation focuses on ways our system can better help adult education graduates achieve positive employment outcomes.

Integration of Title I and Title II Services in NJ

Laurie Harrington, Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation for the Heldrich Center, thanked all the program managers and local area personnel who facilitated and participated in the study. Ms. Harrington and Brittney Donovan, Heldrich Research Project Assistant, presented a PowerPoint outlining the research questions, methodology, and findings of the evaluation.

As part of the evaluation, surveys and structured interviews were conducted during the summer of 2020. Structural tension in the system was noted during the expert interviews; also, the survey results may have a bias, since it was released as a "DOL" survey.

A number of key results were shared with the Commission, including:

- Title I and Title II integration is seen as beneficial and there was high agreement that integration is a priority;
- Most respondents indicated that they are integrated, but could do more;
- One of the most common practices is co-enrollment, however this needs more exploration;
- Gathering input from business is also a common practice, as is shared intake and providing Title I orientation to Title II participants; gathering input from business is seen as effective, not difficult to do, and replicable.
- Communication between staff and agency partners is indicated as very important;

- Funding constraints, access to technology, and data system issues were all reported as major challenges.

The evaluation team noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had created new challenges, changed the needs of participants and staff; and impacted services. These include:

- Challenges related to digital technology access and participant skills;
- Stress-related participation decline seen in multiple programs;
- Professional development needs changed; staff needed time to get comfortable with delivering services online; it was a challenge to get resources and time to train staff in virtual service delivery.

Recommendations from the evaluation were also shared:

- NJDOL should examine the quantitative data to provide evidence (or not) on workforce outcomes for those utilizing integrated services;
- NJDOL should provide support for professional development needed for local area Title I staff and Title II staff on virtual learning platforms and the ability to deliver services virtually;
- Local areas should find ways to connect their customers to supports in the communities to help alleviate stress brought on from COVID-related challenges to learning and work;
- Local WDBs should increase emphasis and effort into business engagement for soliciting input into adult learning programs and for raising awareness about opportunities to collaborate for integrated learning that teaches basic skills and work readiness skills needed by local employers; and
- SETC should consider convening a regular forum of local staff to share best practices and promote strategies on how best to integrate services, especially in light of fewer resources.

AC Lesley Hirsch asked for examples of promising practices from the evaluation; Ms. Harrington cited one local area that provides an adult language program with real input from the casino industry; this is a certificate program that links Title II participants with local casino employers who value the certificate and agree to hire successful graduates. Brittney Donovan, Heldrich Research Project Assistant, cited a non-credit peer recovery specialist certificate program that combines workforce training with Title II literacy services.

The floor was opened for discussion and questions from Commission members. Members discussed costs of and the levels of funding available to make testing affordable for participants. Dr. Jubanyik noted that high school equivalency (HSE) attainment is a priority, but indicated this must be balanced with many demands on limited resources. She commended Title II partners for quickly adopting and adapting to online testing; this helps provide greater access during the pandemic, but does not work for all participants. To that end, Dr. Jubanyik indicated support for blending and braiding services and resources to strengthen the efforts of the Title II team.

Members discussed sharing results of the evaluation and related performance outcomes with the Title I and Title II partners. AC Hirsch indicated that the evaluation is a statewide aggregate; however, she and Dr. Jubanyik agreed that any evaluation results that can be built into the Title II performance report cards will be shared. Members also discussed the different kinds of integration and impacts that could be examined, and the evaluation model used. Members noted that high school graduates are an important recruitment pool for Title I programs. AC Lesley Hirsch indicated that this evaluation was an important first step to examine program integration; building cooperation would be the next step; full collaboration with integrated data systems and co-determination of performance targets would be an even higher level.

With the expected congressional reauthorization of WIOA, there may be a new focus on this aspect of Titles I and II.

Chairman Dennis Bone thanked AC Lesley Hirsch, Ms. Harrington and Ms. Donovan for their presentation; he noted that Titles I and II are a big part of the SETC's mission to oversee the workforce system and ensure quality and continuous improvement in the services being delivered in New Jersey. He also thanked the Commission members for their thoughtful discussion on the important topic of policy integration.

IV. SETC Policy Actions

NJ Local WDB Certification Process for 2020-2022

SETC Deputy Executive Director Sheryl Hutchison reviewed the new Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Certification Policy Resolution #2020-02; the policy document was emailed to members and stakeholders in advance of the meeting, for their review. Local WDB certification is required every two years under WIOA. The current cycle application covers the time period from 2020 through 2022. The SETC Governance Committee reviewed this draft policy document on November 5, 2020 and recommended it for the Commission's consideration.

The application outlines the documents to be submitted by local WDBs to the SETC for review. The main goal of the certification process is to support continuous improvement in local board governance and operations. The SETC staff works directly with boards to provide technical assistance and ensure compliance, with a focus on quality.

This is the fourth cycle of WDB Certifications conducted in New Jersey. The application and process are similar to past cycles; due to the current pandemic, the process has been revised slightly to adjust for the re-deployment of resources at both state and local levels. The pandemic has placed a heavy burden on staff time and other resources to support virtual service delivery. Therefore, items which are already on file and unchanged from past cycles will not be collected in this round; this includes some memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and board by-laws. The evaluation activity was changed to focus on local capacity building; a peer learning group will be established to support local evaluation activities and statewide evaluations. Additionally, evaluation tools currently in use in local areas are being collected to be used as a baseline for future efforts. Guidance documents will be available on the SETC website. The policy and document requirements were reviewed with the WDB Directors on September 24, 2020, with an opportunity to provide feedback on the process and the timeline.

Members discussed the policy and the effort to certify WDBs during the pandemic. The signed application and required documentation are to be provided by each local WDB by February 15, 2021, for review and certification by the SETC. Tapas Sen made a motion to approve SETC Policy Resolution #2020-02; it was seconded by Erskine Glover and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Update to Local WDB Member Appointments and Process

Ms. Hutchison reviewed the updated SETC Policy Resolution # 2015-01, which was emailed to members and stakeholders in advance of the meeting, for their review. This is an update to the original policy approved in October 2015; the edits are shown in blue font. The policy language is being updated to close a loophole, and ensure the intent of WIOA to have diverse representation of key industries and small businesses, at the local board level. This change is made to clarify that local boards may not have

multiple business members from the same entity. The other changes made to the policy reflect updated regulatory citations, since the original policy was passed before the USDOL and USED regulations were finalized. There were no questions or further discussion by members. A motion to approve the updated SETC Policy Resolution #2015-01 was made by Erskine Glover; it was seconded by Tapas San and unanimously approved by voice vote.

V. Public Comment

No public comments were offered during the meeting. The 2021 calendar of meetings will be announced soon. The next Commission meeting will likely be held in February 2021. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38am.

Next SETC Meeting:

Wednesday, February 3, 2021 – online meeting

10am – 12pm

Use GoTo Meeting Webinar Platform to join on 2/3:

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

ATTENDEES: November 17, 2020

PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES

Bone, Dennis	Lee, Edwin (for Brown)
Butler, Kate (for Oliver)	Milone, Catherine
Colton, Tara (for Sullivan)	Moody, Melissa (for Johnson)
Drakeford, Shamira (for Duda)	Nadler, Sally
Ferrera Anthony	Safrin, Michele (for Blake)
Franklin, John	Sen, Tapas
Glover, Erskine (for Dehmer)	Wise, Robert
Hilliard, Tom (for Bridges)	Yuen, Paul (for Asaro-Angelo)

ABSENT MEMBERS

Carey, Michael	Rice, Ronald
Donnadio, John	Wade, Carolyn Carter
Gacos, Nicholas	Wilson, McKenzie A.
Hornik, Stephen	Wimberly, Benjie
Reisser, Clifford	Wowkanech, Charles

OTHER ATTENDEES

Allen, Yolanda	Hiller, Nanci	Ochse, Maureen
Alpart, Davidene	Hirsch, Lesley	Quast, Sarah Singer
Apple, Emily	Howard, Donald	Ramsay, David
Bica, John	Jubanyik, Danielle	Rodgers, Beth
Bogert, Duwan	Kennedy, John	Sabater, Julio
Bonanno, Lisa	King, Kia	Sandelier, Nikki
Brown, Melissa	Kuhn, Francis	Schimanski, Torsten
Cohen, Jonathan	Kurdziel, Kevin	Schuster, Manuela
Custard, Donna	Kvarantan, Alexandra	Seavers, Diane
DeBaere, Gregg	Levitt, Jill	Secrest, Keith
DeFilippo, Michelle	Lopez, Adalberto	Swartz, Jeffrey
Donovan, Brittney	Levandowski, Andrea	Taguwa, Denise
Gallo, Eileen	McDougle, Ahmad	Taylor, Bhavna
Gaylord, Karen	McLean, Michael	Taylor, Yolanda
Gehrke, David	Molinelli, Tammy	Vaidyanathan, Seetha
Gerson, Amanda	Moran, Patricia	Williams, Leslie
Harrington, Laurie	Morrison, Angelique	Wolf, Lynda
Hartman, Sharon	Murphy, Lauren	

SETC STAFF

Gary Altman	Sheryl Hutchison	Courtney Santarsiero
JoAnn Brooks	Maureen O'Brien Murphy	