



# New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Philip D. Murphy, *Governor*

## State Employment and Training Commission Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2021 ~ 10am – 12pm  
Online (GoTo Meeting Platform)

### **I. Welcome & Introductions**

Chairman Dennis Bone called the meeting to order at 10:05am 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 the Star-Ledger and was posted on the SETC website, [njsetc.net](http://njsetc.net). In place of round-table introductions, members and guests were asked to place their names in the Chat feature for attendance purposes. The agenda was reviewed; time will be made available for public comment, if needed.

### ***Approval of Minutes:***

The draft minutes of the June 2, 2021 meeting and the September 15, 2021 meeting were provided to the members in advance of today's meeting. The minutes for the June 2, 2021 meeting was first for approval. Sally Nadler made a motion to approve the minutes from June 2, 2021; Carolyn Wade seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote. Tapas Sen made a motion to approve the minutes from September 15, 2021; Carolyn Wade seconded the motion. The September minutes were also unanimously approved by voice vote.

### **II. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Bone noted that it was National Apprenticeship Week and acknowledged the growth of Apprenticeship programs in New Jersey. He also acknowledged the work of Maureen O'Brien Murphy, who is leaving the SETC, and thanked her for her many contributions over the years.

Acting Director Gary Altman discussed the next round of local and regional planning to be done by local workforce development boards (LWDBs). Local and regional plans are created every four years, with updates every 2 years, as required under WIOA. These plans are compliance-based, but also should serve as a playbook for the local workforce area. Focus will be given in this round to building local staff capacity to access and analyze local labor market and economic data. Work-based learning opportunities will also be a key element in the planning discussions. The impacts of the COVID pandemic, and the implementation of virtual services, will also be a critical element in these new plans.

Acting Director Altman also provided updates to information shared by John Sarno, Employers Association of New Jersey (EANJ) at prior meetings. An invitation was shared for the upcoming EANJ briefing, to be

held on December 1, 2021, focused on Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Emergency standards in the Workplace. This is a no-cost event and all were encouraged to attend.

Finally, Acting Director Altman reported that the SETC offices were recently moved from the 4<sup>th</sup> floor to the 7<sup>th</sup> floor in the NJDOL Building in Trenton. Mr. Altman asked for everyone's patience as the staff are still getting settled into new offices and while technology and other arrangements are being worked out.

### **III. Strengthening Pathways into the Workforce for All Students**

Dr. Brian Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education, and Karen Bussey, Policy Advisor, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) thanked Chairman Bone and the Commission for this opportunity to share important information on Strengthening Pathways into the Workforce for all students.

The program design entails an integration of education and workforce to create an "ecosystem". The goal is to ensure students successfully transition from education to careers. In this model, academic programs are informed by labor market information, and all students in the program have access to work-based career opportunities. Ms. Bussey noted that it is Apprenticeship Week; this critical aspect of the model supports the value of work-based learning in New Jersey.

OSHE looks to support this education-workforce alignment by working with businesses to identify talent needs; working with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and other education providers to align their programs with these needs, and to support clear credential pathways, skill development opportunities, and seamless education to career transitions for all New Jerseyans.

The [Jobs NJ Plan](#) (published in January 2020) outlines the priorities to develop talent and grow business in our state. The new grant program – Opportunity Meets Innovation Challenge (OMIC) – focuses on removing roadblocks and expanding access to opportunities for students in our state. The Governor has provided pandemic funding to support this effort; NJ Department of Education is a partner in supporting transition programs. OMIC grants range from \$500,000 to \$1.5 million and focus on sustainable best practices centered around the five key areas of the state plan for higher education, [Where Opportunity Meets Innovation](#) (published February 2019).

Key tenets of the grant program include:

- *Expanding Access to Experiential Learning:* Focus on promoting safe and inclusive learning environments that cultivate research, innovation, and talent. These opportunities include internships, fellowships, and cooperative learning. There is a statewide internship program now housed under OSHE.
- *Training Individuals for In-Demand Careers:* Atlantic Cape Community College was awarded the Offshore Wind Safety Training Grant, and is establishing an industry-recognized safety training program and facility to prepare New Jersey workers for these high paying careers. Rowan College also received a grant to establish a Wind Turbine Technician training program.
- *Mapping Pathways to High-Quality Careers:* Develop clear and transparent career pathways, informed by the industry that considers on- and off-ramps at any point for students. OSHE is working with NJ Council of County Colleges on this effort. It includes upskilling and reskilling opportunities for adult students, and working with employers to create stackable credentials.

- *Matching Talent to Jobs*: OSHE is piloting the collection of labor market information with 7 institutions of higher education to align programs with in-demand careers. This includes gathering data about how students are faring after they complete their education and move into the workforce.

The SETC members and audience members discussed the impacts and outcomes of this education and learning model. In response to questions, Ms. Bussey indicated that the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) will include parents and indeed the whole family in their consideration of the impacts of higher education, especially when the parents are the students. OSHE is piloting a number of performance metrics, to determine the success of the programs. These metrics will focus on three key areas:

- Graduation/completion: this data is already reported to the state longitudinal data system, NJEEDS, along with cohort information.
- Post-collegiate success: including employment and earnings outcomes.
- Return on Investment (ROI): what a student paid for the education, and how it matches their earnings, which could be a percentage match.

Dr. Bridges and Ms. Bussey noted that many schools are interested in piloting this effort; OSHE is working closely with education providers to determine best practices and get input on how to measure success.

Chairman Bone thanked Dr. Bridges and Ms. Bussey for this impressive presentation; this initiative resonates with the Commission with its specific focus on all the critical areas for workforce development and education integration in our state.

#### **IV. NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative: Aligning Education to Build an Innovative Workforce**

Dr. Aaron Fichtner and Catherine Starghill, NJ Council of County Colleges, opened the presentation and recognized partners around the table. Dr. Fichtner next introduced Chrissy Buteas, Chief Government Affairs Officer with NJBIA, a cornerstone partner in this effort, to share opening remarks.

Dr. Fichtner discussed the challenges caused by the pandemic and how New Jersey residents have been affected. There is an urgency to coordinate the workforce preparation efforts for all those that are separately engaged in this important work. *NJ's Pathways to Career Opportunities* will position the state to recover from this public health and economic crisis by (1) building strong industry-driven education and training pathways that will be the foundation of the state's economy for years to come, (2) building a skilled workforce that can adapt to the changing economy, and (3) providing adults the opportunity to obtain new skills and careers.

This initiative focuses on 4 larger industries: Health Services; Technology & Transformation; Infrastructure & Energy; and Manufacturing & Supply Chain Management. Within these are 10 sub-industries detailed in the PowerPoint presentation. The initiative has two critical components: the creation of four (4) statewide Collaboratives in key industries and ten (10) Centers of Workforce Innovation (CWIs) will be developed in conjunction with their partners and held at an appropriate location in consideration of the nature of the training. The Collaboratives will be comprised of an industry leadership team and education ecosystem partners who will meet monthly. A statewide convening is planned for January 2022, and partners are encouraged to contact NJCCC to join this effort. The Centers of Workforce Innovation (CWIs) will develop new aligned and improve existing curriculum, give priority to industry-valued credentials, and develop

transfer agreements, and other key activities, to build stronger connections and effective and efficient pathways statewide. Ms. Starghill discussed the timeline and shared new details on the CWI partnerships, specifically the higher education institutions that will collaborate in each Center. Dr. Aaron Fichtner concluded by stating that more substantial partnerships between industry and education resulted in sustainable pilots and programs that will benefit traditional students, adult learners, and workers.

SETC members and guests discussed the integration of this effort with the new [Good Jobs Challenge](#). Dr. Fichtner stated that he was proud to work with NJDOL; this pathways initiative and related partnerships supports New Jersey's *Good Jobs* proposal to the US Economic Development Administration. He also noted the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation efforts to create [talent pipeline management \(TPM\)](#) around the country. The NJCCC looks forward to working with NJDOL and the NJ Chamber of Commerce in all these efforts.

Further discussion included measurement of success, the inclusion of adult learners, and the inclusion of local workforce development boards in this initiative, with a focus on opening the doors to credentials and credit programs for non-degree learners. Dr. Fichtner noted that there are approximately 11,000 community college Opportunity Grant students enrolled now, and the NJ Opportunity Grant program is now permanently embedded in state law. The majority of these students are adult learners. Karen Bussey of OSHE noted that affordability is critical when creating these pathways.

Chairman Bone thanked Dr. Fichtner and Ms. Starghill, and NJBIA for their outstanding work in this arena. He noted this is an impactful workforce strategy that can create many opportunities for our state and our workforce.

#### **V. Public Comment and Adjournment**

No public comments were made. Chairman Bone noted that the information shared today showcases excellent platforms for the SETC and its partners to pursue; there are significant changes that can be made to our workforce system to stoke our future economy. He asked SETC members to consider the future roles of the Commission and further ways to positively impact the workforce, education and economic ecosystem in our state.

The 2022 calendar of meetings for the Commission and its councils and committees will be announced soon. The Commission will continue to meet on Wednesdays, and will continue using the online platform for virtual meetings, for now.

Chairman Bone thanked all who attended for their continued support, with a special thanks to the distinguished presenters for sharing their expertise with the SETC. The meeting was adjourned at 11:34am.

**Next SETC Meeting:**  
**Wednesday, February 2, 2022**  
**10am – 12pm**  
**(online Go To Meeting)**

## **ATTENDEES: November 17, 2021**

### **PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES**

Bone, Dennis	Milone, Catherine
Bridges, Brian	Nadler, Sally
Brown, Melissa (for Adelman)	Paquette, Kathleen (for Allen-McMillan)
Butler, Kate (for Oliver)	Sen, Tapas
Colton, Tara (for Sullivan)	Soberanis, Roberto (for Asaro-Angelo)
Drakeford, Shamira (for Duda)	Wade, Carolyn Carter
Hala, Joanne (for Franklin)	Wise, Robert

### **ABSENT MEMBERS**

Blake, Allison	Hornik, Stephen
Brown, Kevin	Reisser, Clifford
Carey, Michael	Rice, Ronald
Donnadio, John	Wilson, McKenzie A.
Ferrera, Anthony	Wimberly, Benjie
Gacos, Nicholas	Wowkanech, Charles

### **OTHER ATTENDEES**

Alpart, Davidene	Feldman, Eliot	Mirasol, Catherina	Sternbach, Larry
Apple, Emily	Fichtner, Aaron	Morrison, Angelique	Sullivan, Sabrina
Anochi, Eva	Gagliano, John	Murphy, Lauren	Staub, Stephanie
Arango, Oswaldo	Gatling, Kerri	Meyer, Cheryl	Starghill, Catherine
Armstrong, Jane	Gaylord, Karen	Ochse, Maureen	Strothers, Sandra
Belin, Jacki	Gehrke, David	Odeneye, Jobi	Taylor, Sherwood
Bicica, John	Giordano, Timothy	Polack, Carol	Taylor, Yolanda
Brown, Melissa	Grzella, Paul	Pierre, Eric	Thomas, Katrice
Burkhardt, Ron	Hartman, Sharon	Rodgers, Beth	Vail, Les
Bussey, Karen	Howard, Donald	Reyes, Maritza	Vaidyanathan, S.
Buteas, Chrissy	Johnson, Hosea	Sabater, Julio	West, Kelly
Carvajal, Allyson	Jubanyik, Danielle	Sabir, Zahira	Zahirah, Sabir
Caramelo, JoAnne	Levandowski, Andrea	Sarno, John	
Carter, Jean	Levitt, Jill	Satchell, Brigitte	<b>SETC STAFF:</b>
Case, Kim	Knight, Braheim	Scalia, Donna	G. Altman
Choudhury, Mitra	Kuhn, Fran	Schaeffer, Janine	S. Hutchison
Custard, Donna	Kurdziel, Kevin	Schuster, Manuela	C. Lamarca
Czar, Dianne	Kvarantan, Alexandra	Seavers, Diane	M. O'Brien Murphy
DeBaere, Gregg	Liu, Helen	Shamsid-Dean, Veda	K. Robinson
Demellash, Alfa	Martin, Michelle	Siekerka, Michele	C. Santarsiero
Emigholz, Chris	McPartlan, Dennis	Smith, Dawn	
Enright, Patricia	Milone, Catherine		
Everett, Kaitlin			