



New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Dennis M. Bone, *Chairman*

Chris Christie, *Governor*

State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2015

10 am – 12 noon

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

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Dennis Bone opened the meeting at 10:03 a.m. 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 November 18, 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 Andrea Karsian and the minutes were unanimously approved by voice vote.

II. Chairman's Report – Gender Parity Council

Chairman Bone remarked that in the past three meetings of the SETC the Commission has been working to try to find a path forward that could be a win for everyone, while preserving the work of the Gender Parity Council. Chairman Bone had asked the Governance Committee to explore options and a draft resolution was created, which is included in the packets today. Since this draft resolution was generated, there were some concerns voiced by Commission members, particularly related to discussion of legislation which has not yet been seen. Chairman Bone then opened the floor to members for discussion.

Deputy Commissioner Fichtner stated that the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is careful not to take a public position on pending legislation until it has passed. He stated that he did not feel comfortable voting on the resolution at this time, but would feel more comfortable if the legislation language was removed. Betsy Garlatti concurred with Dr. Fichtner, noting that if it were to come to a vote today, she would need to abstain.

JoAnn Trezza, speaking on behalf of the Governance Committee, stated that the resolution was drafted to help guide the relationship between the Commission and the Gender Parity Council until legislation could be reviewed and adopted, in order to seek an amicable solution. Marie Barry commented that she too had a concern with the reference to legislation in the resolution, and agreed with Dr. Fichtner's suggestion that the legislation language simply be removed.

Melanie Willoughby concurred with her colleagues, and stated that as she understands it, the Gender Parity Council is currently a part of the SETC now, and that it is the Commission's responsibility to

follow the present law. She feels that without the resolution, there would be the need to wait for new legislation, and that the SETC would not be able to act without direction from the new law. Bob Wise asked what the situation of the Gender Parity Council is with regard to the resolution. Chairman Bone responded that the resolution would allow the Council to be more autonomous, with the SETC still responsible for funding, and accountability with regard to the work of the Council, under the law.

Andrea Karsian, representing the Gender Parity Council, stated that she had reviewed the resolution, and found it to be acceptable, with the inclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding to guide the process. She stated that it was never the intent of the Council to be separate from the Commission, but rather that despite the current controversy simply wants the Council to operate as it has since its inception. She restated that the Council does agree to the resolution, but understands the problem with the legislation.

Andrea Karsian asked how membership will be able to move forward without the resolution. She stated that she believed that every member of the Council's terms had expired as of December 31, 2014. She stated that the Division on Women had promised to move forward with appointments in December, which did not occur, and again by February 28th, which also did not occur. Michele Boronkas responded that those on the Council may serve in perpetuity until they are replaced. She also noted that all of the SETC positions have been filled, with the last SETC vacancy filled in January 2015 by Sally Nadler.

Discussion ensued about how to encourage the Division on Women to move forward with their appointments to the Council. Chairman Bone then asked if there was a motion to table the vote. Melanie Willoughby made a motion to table the vote. The motion was seconded by Bob Wise and the motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

III. WIOA Blueprint – Shared Youth Vision Council

Kirk Lew opened a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the changes in the new WIOA law, which has ramifications for the Youth population, and the associated recommendations of the Shared Youth Vision Council. Mr. Lew reported on the key themes and requirements under the new WIOA law, new program elements, and noted the large shift in focus to services for Out of School Youth. He stated that youth recruitment will need to be a focus of efforts moving forward, and the system will need to build extensive internal and external capacity to reach new targets.

Shannon Lazare, speaking on behalf of the Shared Youth Vision Council, stated that how we engage youth will be critical to success, and is a key area of focus for Bergen County. They are currently looking to best practices to identify new solutions. She stated that while Youth Investment Councils (YICs) are no longer required under WIOA law, it is the recommendation of the Shared Youth Vision Council that YICs should be mandated by the State of New Jersey.

Bob Wise asked if each county has identified the category of focus by age, and where the concentrations of the population fall. Kirk Lew responded that an environmental scan is underway now. Bob Wise further asked about parental involvement. Shannon Lazare stated that in Bergen County they are currently speaking with the schools to determine the best ways in which to reach the parents.

Julio Sabater stated that in some local areas schools are not willing to provide community partners, including One-Stop Operators, with a list of students who drop out. He recommended that the State intervene to make the communication more effective between schools and communities, so that drop-outs can be engaged as soon as they leave school.

Marie Barry responded, first by thanking Shannon and Kirk for their work which has elevated the level of attention being paid to Youth. Ms. Barry then noted that it is against the federal law, FERPA, requirements to require the provision of personal, identifiable information, and that in fact the Department of Education cannot direct school districts to release data.

Chairman Bone stated that the SETC will continue to focus on this topic, as it is the responsibility of the Commission to oversee the policy. He recognized that WIOA will change the allocation of money and resources by prioritizing services to Out of School Youth, and this topic area will continue to be an important part of the Commission's policy oversight obligations. Michele Boronkas stated that the work of the Shared Youth Vision Council (SYVC) on policy recommendations is significant, and that the vote today to adopt the SYVC recommendations will allow the SYVC to move forward with the work of the WIOA Youth Blueprint work group.

Chairman Bone then asked if there was a motion to approve the SYVC recommendations. Melanie Willoughby made a motion to approve; it was seconded by Julio Sabater and the motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

IV. WIOA Blueprint – Blueprint Progress Report

Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Deputy Commissioner Aaron Fichtner began by commending the work done by the Shared Youth Vision Council. He stated that WIOA will take effect on July 1, 2015. WIOA will be the cornerstone of the workforce development system. He noted that the Commission has a tremendous opportunity to have a fresh conversation about how we can collectively build a workforce system of which we are all proud, and invited the members to join in developing an improved workforce system.

Aaron Fichtner announced that a WIOA Blueprint will be presented to the SETC at the June meeting. He noted that there are currently six workgroups, with representatives from both internal and external constituencies, focused on key functional areas within the legislation. These groups have been meeting every other week since January.

On March 31 and April 1, the SETC and LWD will co-host a conference on Pathways and Partnerships. National experts will lead breakout sessions on each of the six key WIOA topic areas. Panel discussions will include representatives from the National Governor's Association, NASWA, the National Skills Coalition, and others. This conference will serve as a critical opportunity to get feedback from a wide array of stakeholders, along with the public webinars held in February, and the website which invites continuous feedback. The workgroups will incorporate this feedback into their work to create a draft Blueprint to bring back to the Commission in June.

The SETC will continue to work with LWD and other state agencies throughout the next year to create a new Unified State Plan. The Blueprint will serve as a foundational document to create the plan.

V. Accelerate the Pace – New Jersey Policy Academy – Employability Skills Task Force

Melanie Willoughby began her report by thanking the Commission for the opportunity to work as the Chair of the Employability Skills Task Force as they develop a statewide call to action. The Task Force was formed about a year ago and recognized the current crisis around Employability Skills in the workforce. The Task Force includes sub-groups from constituencies such as education, employers, government, higher education, local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and non-profit organizations. She stated that as the Task Force has identified and defined Employability

Skills, this information now needs to be communicated to students, parents, educators, and job seekers, to ensure that we have a well-qualified workforce.

Ms. Willoughby, on behalf of the Task Force, asked the Commission to approve the Call to Action included in their packets, so that each stakeholder group can launch the work detailed within the framework. Chairman Bone noted that these are the skills that employers constantly tell us are necessary, and that it cuts across huge bandwidths of society. He applauded Ms. Willoughby and the Task Force for their work. Michele Boronkas noted that when the Task Force was created, data suggested that in 74-78% of student and job seeker cases where they were either not hired, or fired, employability skills were a factor.

Chairman Bone then asked if there was a motion to approve on the Employability Skills Task Force recommendations. John Franklin made a motion to approve; seconded by Andrea Karsian and the motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Bob Wise commented that in the Health Care Workforce Council meeting last week, an idea was discussed that it might be possible to bridge the gap between basic skills and employability skills with simple curriculum modifications so that students and parents might better understand how they are connected. Marie Barry offered that after the October 2014 approval of Career Ready Practices by the State Board of Education, the Department of Education immediately began working with teachers on this very topic. Ms. Willoughby commended Marie Barry and NJDOE, and Career and Technical Education in particular, for the new legislation that opened the door for this work, and noted that they had come a long way. Chairman Bone commented on the strong overlap between youth and employability skills, and thanked Melanie Willoughby for her work.

VI. Accelerate the Pace – New Jersey Policy Academy – Update

Michele Boronkas began with a PowerPoint slide which detailed an example of how the Policy Academy model has helped to bring together alignment around Employability Skills Task Force (ESTF), with each actor aligning their work to bring to bear their resources to solve a common problem, while speaking directly to the needs of their individual audiences.



Betsy Garlatti began by stating that as a part of the ESTF effort, they had brought together Higher Education Counselors, and they came to the conclusion that Employability Skills are in fact essentially Academic Success Skills. She noted that the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education recently surveyed 5,000 students about their experiential learning and internship experiences. Interestingly, those surveyed that worked nearly 30 hours per week did not identify (or were not

aware) that through that process, they were actually developing employability skills which could be included on a resume. In a Community College private sector project, the company Accenture has been identifying volunteers and corporate partners to work with Mercer County College students and faculty to make the connection between education and Employability Skills.

Michele Boronkas added that LWD was considering how Employability Skills (ES) Training can be included in contracts for future grant funding with training providers, to be included as training-investment criteria. She noted also that NJBIA is working to create a virtual resource center for ES Training with employer investment, and there is talk of a statewide boot camp from industry to industry on how to help workers develop Employability Skills.

VII. Presentation: ALICE Report: United Way of Northern New Jersey

John Franklin and Stephanie Hoopes Halpin presented the findings of the ALICE Report with a PowerPoint presentation. John Franklin stated that the report is very much germane to the work of the SETC, and introduces new measures of success for the workforce. He commented that the United Way uses the data from the report to develop their strategy to address the needs of their community.

Mr. Franklin shared that he has found a living wage to higher in New Jersey than in other places. Stephanie Hoopes Halpin stated that more than half of the jobs in their sample paid less than \$20 per hour. At this rate, she notes that government assistance will not cover enough costs to make ends meet. She noted a gap between ALICE households and the cost of living, wherein families in New Jersey need to make a minimum of \$60,000 a year to be sustainable. The report recommends additional help to ALICE families in the form of quality daycare for young children, and scholarships for needy families.

Paul Grzella stated that there is great value to this becoming a statewide conversation. John Franklin responded that they are working with Senator Corey Booker to make it both a statewide and a national conversation. He also suggested the ALICE definition, project and its data could be adopted by the SETC. Julio Sabater commented that career pathways projects give us hope for upgrading skills. Dan Frye shared that he absolutely supports the living wage objective, and that ALICE is a great effort. Felix Mickens and Tapas Sen thanked John Franklin for his presentation, and noted that their work is powerful in making people understand the structural problems in our state.

VIII. Public Comment, Addendum to Chair Report, and Adjournment

Eileen Higgins expressed her thanks to Melanie Willoughby, the SETC, and United Way, and suggested that the ALICE presentation be provided to all WIB Directors.

As an Addendum to the Chair's Report, Dennis Bone requested that the Governance Committee take the Gender Parity Council Resolution back under consideration, and JoAnn Trezza agreed.

Chairman Bone thanked all attendees for their participation, and especially the partner agencies for their support of the major initiatives now underway.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Next SETC Meeting:
Thursday, April 30, 2015
10 am – 12 pm
PSEG Training Center, Pierson's Lane, Edison, NJ

**STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION MEETING ATTENDEES
MARCH 17, 2014**

<u>PRESENT MEMBERS and ALTERNATES</u>	
Barry, Marie (for Hespe) Bone, Dennis Donnadio, John Fichtner, Aaron (for Wirths) Frye, Dan (for Connolly) Garlatti, Betsy (for Hendricks) Howard, Donald (for McNamara) Karsian, Andrea	McAndrew, Brian Mickens, Felix (for Brown) Nutter, Harvey Sabater, Julio Sen, Tapas Trezza, JoAnn Willoughby, Melanie Wise, Robert
<u>ABSENT MEMBERS</u>	
Berry, Dana Carey, Michael Constable, Richard Duda, Teri Gacos, Nicholas Hornik, Stephen	Levinson, Jody Nadler, Sally Reisser, Clifford Stout, Bruce Wade, Carolyn Wowkanech, Charles
<u>OTHER ATTENDEES</u>	
Anderson, Linda Barwell, Leslie Breedon, Larry Cooper, Belinda Felder, Sarita Franklin, John Gaudioso, Kiran Hoopes Halpin, Stephanie Jean-Baptiste, Jecrois Lazare, Shannon McCloughan, Roger	Treml, Bernard Scalia, Donna Seville, Tyler Sheft, Judith Stoller, Jeffrey Zundl, Elaine
<u>LOCAL WIB REPRESENTATIVES</u>	
DeBaere, Gregg Grzella, Paul	Higgins, Eileen Molinelli, Tammy
<u>SETC STAFF</u>	
Boronkas, Michele Herzog, Christina	Hutchison, Sheryl Lew, Kirk O'Brien-Murphy, Maureen