

Vermont State Workforce Development Board

Board Training Minutes

Thursday, June 7, 2018

9:30 am- 3:00 pm

Capital Plaza Hotel, Montpelier, VT

Board members in attendance: Janette Bombardier, Secretary Heather Bouchey, Steve Bryant, Chair Frank Cioffi, Senator Alison Clarkson, Diane Dalmasse, Judy Geiger, Commissioner Joan Goldstein, Melissa Hersh, Eileen Illuzzi, Representative Kathy Keenan, Commissioner Lindsay Kurrle, Dennis LaBounty, Tom Longstreth, Dick Marron, Commissioner Lisa Menard, Mayor Paul Monette, John Russell, Governor Phil Scott, Jeb Spaulding, and Dave Wheel

Board members not in attendance: Mayor David Allaire, Nate Beach, Paul Biebel, Kiersten Bourgeois Margueritte Dibble, Kent Eldridge, Pat Elmer, Don George, Gerry Ghazi, Scott Giles, Secretary Al Gobeille, Adam Grinold, Laurie Gunn, Zach Hatch, Joyce Judy, Scott Johnstone, Ellen Kahler, Brian Kerns, Vice Chair Jen Kimmich, Cathy Lambertson, Chris Loso, Greg Maguire, Carol Paquette, Brenan Riehl, Secretary Mike Schirling, Richard Schneider, Senator Dick Sears, Jostein Solheim, Grant Spates, Tom Sullivan, Representative Tristan Toleno, Lynn Vera, and Jeff Wimette

Governor's, State Agency & Department staff in attendance: Mat Barewicz, Hugh Bradshaw, Sean Brown, Kim Bushey, Sarah Buxton, Robin Castle, Dustin Degree, Jessica Gingras, Coleen Hale, Fred Jones, David Lahr, Jay Ramsey, and Sophia Yager

Guests in attendance: Seth Bowden, Jennifer Freeman, Alicia Grangent, Maureen Hebert, Tiffany Keune, Patrick Leduc, Tim Martin, and Tom McHugh

Sarah Buxton, Director of Workforce Policy and Performance for the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL), and Executive Director Dustin Degree began the event at 9:30 am with welcoming remarks.

Mr. Degree introduced Governor Phil Scott who made remarks thanking the Board for its work and stressed the Board's importance in addressing Vermont's continuing workforce challenges.

Mr. Degree, Governor Scott, Chair Frank Cioffi, and Commissioner Lindsay Kurrle (VDOL) presented Representative Kathy Keenan (who will retire at the end of this legislative session) with flowers in gratitude for her 30 years of service in the Vermont General Assembly.

Mr. Degree introduced Acting Regional Administrator for the US Department of Labor, Tim Martin, who made remarks encouraging the Board to embrace its leadership role in holding the workforce system accountable.

Ms. Buxton briefly reviewed the six goals set forth in the WIOA Unified State Plan and gave an overview of the final version of H.919 ("an act relating to workforce development") and how it will impact the Board's work moving forward.

Jennifer Freeman, Director of Jobs for the Future, introduced herself and gave a brief overview of the training agenda. Ms. Freeman discussed the responsibilities of state workforce boards in addressing ever-evolving workforce needs and challenges. She highlighted Board partners such as the Vermont Futures Project and 70x2025vt. She explained the WIOA's vision and central concepts, and the three roles of the Board (system planner, initiator, and convener) in achieving that vision. She detailed the Board's leadership responsibilities: communicating a vision, building strategic partnerships, and keeping the system accountable.

Ms. Freeman described the functions of local and state workforce boards (the Vermont SWDB is both a local and a state board as Vermont contains only one federal workforce region). These functions include leading employer engagement and career pathway development, promoting best practices, aligning core programs, etc. She highlighted the need to coordinate with partners, including the Vermont Futures Project and Vermont Talent Pipeline Management, to align, rather than duplicate, efforts.

Ms. Freeman reviewed feedback from a survey disseminated to the Board regarding areas for improvement. This feedback included needs for clear metrics for success, more frequent communication, better utilization of sub-committees, maximizing members' limited time, etc. The complete survey feedback will be provided to Mr. Degree.

Attendees participated in small group discussions on aligning efforts with partners, communicating and promoting Vermont's workforce development vision, and aligning education/training providers, career resource centers, and needs of business. Notes from that discussion can be found as an appendix to these minutes.

Ms. Freeman explained career pathways, using a model to describe the populations, entry points, services, credentials, and employment outcomes that make a successful career pathway. She provided a specific example, created by the Vermont Agency of Education, of a manufacturing employment pathway. She explained the US Department of Labor's toolkit for successful pathways, including building partnerships and clarifying roles, identifying sectors and engaging employers, designing programs, identifying funding needs and sources, aligning policies and programs, and measuring performance. She also defined sector strategies as career pathways for specific industries that meet regional needs.

Ms. Freeman showed a brief video from Real Jobs Rhode Island, an initiative to create business-led workforce solutions.

Ms. Freeman provided an example of sector partnerships in New Hampshire, in which the state workforce board acted as the convener to bring together businesses to identify industry needs and create informed partnerships. She also explained the role of sector intermediaries in bridging the gap between employers, workers, and the workforce development system. The Board can serve as an intermediary and work with other intermediaries such as state agencies or independent programs.

Attendees participated in small group discussions on organizing career pathways by sector and coordinating career pathways statewide and regionally. Notes from that discussion can be found as an appendix to these minutes.

Ms. Freeman discussed employer engagement, including the need to involve employers early to create training programs that align the needs of employers and workers. She stressed the importance of a unified voice when contacting employers to promote coordination. She described the five levels of employer engagement: advising, capacity building, co-designing, convening, and leading.

Attendees participated in small group discussions on expanding the pool of engaged employers, how business members of the Board can act as champions in their communities, and designing effective employer engagement strategies. Attendees were encouraged to email ideas from this discussion to Mr. Degree.

Ms. Freeman explained how to determine a set of metrics by which the success of Board activities may be measured. These metrics keep the system accountable and inform decisions for continuous improvement. She provided an example from Missouri in which the state workforce board created a data warehouse for sharing information between state agencies and education and training programs. She also gave an example from Wisconsin in which a data warehouse was used to define and display metrics specifically relating to career pathways.

Attendees participated in small group discussions on the information needed to make decisions about the workforce system and the key indicators by which to measure success. Notes from that discussion can be found as an appendix to these minutes.

Ms. Freeman concluded her presentation and invited Chair Cioffi and Commissioner Kurrle to make closing remarks and discuss next steps.

The event concluded at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Dustin Degree.

Dustin Degree, Executive Director, Vermont State Workforce Development Board

Appendices

Appendix 1: Small group discussion notes re: aligning efforts with partners, communicating and promoting Vermont's workforce development vision, and aligning education/training providers, career resource centers, and needs of business

- Not all members are familiar with initiatives like the VT Futures Project and 70x2025vt- need to communicate and share information so Board members know how the initiatives' work connects with Board work
- Create a "guide to state government" for Board members/employers/workers
 - Which agency does what, what services are available, etc.
 - Written guide and/or short videos
- Need to connect with local/regional boards and development corporations to communicate the state vision to local actors and vice versa
- Importance of connecting ex-offenders with training programs to prevent recidivism
- Board members need more information re: jobs available now vs. jobs that will be available in the future- possibly disseminate Mat Barewicz's presentation on this subject
- Consistent and equitable (geographically and by sector) employer engagement
- "Making individual knowledge collective"
- De-stigmatize CTE and be more inclusionary when discussing post-secondary options (college is not the only post-secondary option)
- Make communication solutions-focused, rather than challenges-focused
- Identify regional needs and prepare workers for those needs
- Board needs to act as a convener to identify all of these needs
- Board needs to support various initiatives and ensure that the whole system is moving in the same direction
- Identify what is not being done that needs to be done
- Does the Board respond to initiatives or do initiatives respond to the Board?
- Use the knowledge of Board members who are involved with different initiatives to inform other members
- Specific example of interagency communication: DOC and VDOL work together to get a waiver to use out of school youth WIOA funds for Community High School of VT students
- Share success stories with Board members so they can be champions in their communities

Appendix 2: Small group discussion notes re: organizing career pathways by sector and coordinating career pathways statewide and regionally

- Career pathways should also be organized around jobs that transcend sectors
 - Career clusters vs. sectors
 - Allowing workers to be mobile across sectors
- Employers can help identify the most important careers within a sector
 - Board can then coordinate and communicate the pathway
- Form follows function
 - Determine skill sets to foster and focus less on specific careers/job title
 - Look to credentials that already have set pathways
- Look to existing regional models so we're not recreating the wheel
 - Example: healthcare pathways in the Northeast Kingdom
- Career pathways should be fluid
 - Workers can enter and exit pathways at points that work for them
- Pay attention to seasonal workforce
 - Discuss with employers in retail, hospitality, etc. how to build pathways for skills that seasonal workers can transfer to year-round employment

Appendix 3: Small group discussion notes re: information needed to make decisions about the workforce system and the key indicators by which to measure success

- Leading vs. lagging indicators: looking at "best guesses" for practices that will get us to the lag indicators that show us how we've done
 - Lead indicators may be more valuable in informing policy and process

- Number of post-secondary graduates/ industry-recognized credential earners who gained employment is more valuable than just the number of graduates or earners
- Number of employers who have used the workforce development system with a positive experience- possibly conduct a survey?
- Does a reduction in job openings correlate with an increase in training program completion?
- Job vacancy rates by industry and average time to fill those vacancies
- Number of career pathways available, duration of the pathways, number of those who complete the pathway, and number of those who gain employment
- Number of job listings and percentage of full- and part-time listings
- Quality metric for K-12 readiness (reading and math), not just graduation rates
- Hours worked per week
- Average wages over time
- Provide a one-page metrics dashboard to Board members quarterly?
- Correlation of metrics with the six WIOA Unified State Plan goals
- Is it better to set the goals first and then select metrics that measure those aims? Or should we select the most important metrics first and construct goals around those indicators?
- Labor force participation rates
- Number of young people in the workforce