

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 15th, 2022

10:00AM to 2:00PM

Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- **Governor Tom Wolf**
- Chair Jeff Brown
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Will Allen
- Denise Andahazy
- Rob Bair
- Eric Kratz for Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Tim Bean
- Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba for Secretary Jennifer Berrier
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Brian Campbell
- Julene Campion
- Nick Centurione for Senator Amanda Cappelletti
- CM Robinson for Representative Morgan Cephas
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Brian Funkhouser
- Tanya Garcia for Acting Secretary Eric Hagarty
- Nick Gilson
- Bernie Hall
- James Harper, Jr.
- Ryan Hyde
- Sarah Hollister
- Timothy James
- Secretary Allison Jones
- Marguerite Kline
- Andrea McArthur
- Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- Lisa Risboskin
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- John "Ski" Sygielski
- Jessica Trybus
- Laura Wand
- Mike Wojewodka
- Deputy Secretary Tara Williams for Governor Tom Wolf
- Gwen Ross for Acting Secretary Neil Weaver
- Amy Schwenk for Acting Secretary George Little
- Billie Barnes for Commissioner Robert Harvie, Jr.
- Sara Gligora for Secretary Russel Redding
- Hoa Pham for Acting Secretary Meg Snead
- David Miles for Secretary Robert Torres

Presenters:

- Deputy Secretary Tara Williams, Governor's Office
- Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Acting Executive Director Ryan Hyde, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- Mike Wojewodka, Executive Vice President of the MRA Group
- Jessica Trybus, Founder of Simcoach Games
- Gwen Ross, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Hoa Pham, PA Department of Human Services
- Amy Schwenk, PA Department of Corrections
- Sara Gligora, PA Department of Agriculture
- Dr. Tanya Garcia for Secretary Eric Hagarty, PA Department of Education
- Brian Funkhouser, Continuous Improvement Committee
- Rob Bair, President of the PA State Building Trades

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Josh Towzey, Shauna Davis, Michelle Lengel, Shannon Austin, Rick Levis

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Brown began the meeting and welcomed everyone. Governor Tom Wolf offered some remarks and thanked the Board for their service and investments in Pennsylvania's workforce. He noted that Pennsylvania has a real opportunity with incoming funding through the Infrastructure Act to make additional investments in education and workforce development to prepare individuals for the work available. Governor Wolf noted some key accomplishments in the workforce development space including the PA Smart Initiative, expansion of apprenticeship opportunities, the manufacturing PA initiative, a record investment of \$3.7 billion in education, and a reduction in the corporate net income tax. Additionally, he emphasized the benefits people and businesses have when they come to Pennsylvania that provides a real opportunity to boost workforce development initiatives. Governor Wolf attributed the Workforce Development Board's strategic use of data, evidence, and grant making to Pennsylvania being recognized as a lead state for the Results for America's Standards of Excellence. He also pointed to the impact of the Board's recommendations on career economic standards in education, meeting healthcare workforce needs, supporting reentrants seeking work, lowering the unemployment rate, and more. Governor Wolf thanked the Board for the work that has been underway that can be built upon in the future.

Chair's Updates

Chair Brown sought a motion to approve the August 3, 2022 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Ski Sygielski made the motion. Tanya Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Introduction: Mike Wojewodka, Executive Vice President of the MRA Group

Mike Wojewodka introduced himself as the Executive Vice President of the MRA Group that is involved in real estate and based in Horsham, Montgomery County. The organization redevelops old campuses in order to attract life science and technology companies to the Commonwealth. MRA also serves as a real estate advisory company to many of the region's health systems and universities throughout southeastern PA. Chair Brown noted that there has been great opportunity in Philadelphia and a boom in clean rooms, biotech, and gene therapy and asked Mike Wojewodka if the work is starting to slow up like he has been hearing. Mike responded indicating that they have seen a bit of a slowdown over the last couple months, but have completed a project last year for the University of Pennsylvania that took 18 months to fully fill the building with startup companies and a few well-established gene therapy companies. Chair Brown asked about opportunities to expand the manufacturing and logistics of gene therapy products, to which Mike responded that they are seeing several of their developments involve international life science and farm companies looking to establish headquarters in the region. The question on the pay scale and training required for manufacturing jobs was addressed by Mike in which the pay scale is typically in the mid-to-high \$30 per hour range, though it may vary. As far as the educational component, Mike used their partnership with Jefferson University as an example due to their Institute for Bioprocessing that is the first bioprocessing training center of its kind in North America.

Presentation: Rob Bair, President of the PA State Building Trades

Rob Bair introduced himself and indicated that he has been in the power generation industry, natural gas, and hydro business in the last 14 years and has the pleasure of being elected president of the state building trades. He noted that Pennsylvania is one of the leaders in the country on apprenticeship programs, bringing a number of apprenticing occupations we haven't seen before that is consistent with the Governor's commitment. Rob pointed to Drexel University that is doing an apprenticeship program in partnership with two employers in the Philadelphia region for cybersecurity. He noted that they got the grants and guaranteed young men and women jobs along with 36 credits from Drexel University when they complete the program to make their Associate or Bachelor degree attainable. Rob emphasized that workforce development hinges on tax credits and making Pennsylvania business friendly with partnerships between the public sector, private sector, and higher education learning institutions. He noted the satisfaction that comes with seeing young men and women complete apprenticeship programs and attain a well-paying career with no debt and full family care.

Chair Brown inquired about the number of job openings statewide for the trades, to which Rob responded that their regional developments create jobs that need trained workers. Rob noted that we need to do a better job preparing applicants for these jobs and for aptitude tests when applicable.. Rob noted that they will have to work with community colleges for the apprenticeship programs to prepare young men and women for the diverse jobs in the trades, recruiting from the whole population. However, given the limited funding of trades and apprenticeship programs, they need to partner up with professional institutions that can help prepare skilled workers to address the statewide shortage. Chair Brown inquired about the use of the aptitude test, to which Rob responded that we need to continue reaching out to school districts to inform them of the requirements they need for young men and women to pass the aptitude tests, like reading comprehension. He also used the example of a UA pipefitter and welder that needs a good grasp of geometry for the angles that need made on all the pipes before welded together. Rob noted that we could use more basic education subsidies to show the schools the opportunities that exist in apprenticeship programs. We need to continue doing more to prepare individuals to pass the aptitude tests, land interviews, and become skilled tradesmen.

Chair Brown raised the issue of school counselors focusing on the top and bottom 10% of students, leaving the gap in the middle unreached along with some BIPOC communities. Rob noted that it is important to educate students about the opportunities to obtain family sustaining careers with retirement and healthcare plans.

Introduction: Bernie Hall, United Steelworkers District 10 Director

Bernie Hall introduced himself and indicated that his organization represents 50,000 members in the state with thousands of more retirees. He noted that they are currently the largest representative of folks in the steel industry, rural industry, paper industry, chemical, aluminum, nonferrous metals, glass, and cement. They also represent a couple thousand folks in healthcare, technical workers, professional workers, and higher education workers throughout the state. Bernie indicated that his organization has dozens of apprenticeships with employer partners along with numerous training programs. He noted that he is excited to be part of this group and looks forward to working with everyone in the future.

Chair Brown affirmed the size of the operation and the diversity of workers involved.

Introduction: Rick Levis, Executive Policy Specialist at the Workforce Development Board

Rick Levis introduced himself as having his hands on a bunch of different areas with the group. His wife is a public school teacher, which influences his commitment to never lose track of what it is like to be on the ground with workers. Prior to the WDB, Rick worked at the Department of Education (PDE) for 4.5 years, at which he earned the proud nickname of “average Rick.” He noted that the nickname reflects the on-the-ground perspective he brings to his work so he can actually address the obstacles businesses face. Rick is an advocate in the workforce space now and reflected personally on his son that he thinks would do really well in an apprenticeship program. Rick plans to bring a strong work ethic to the Board and thanked them for having him.

Presentation: Tara Williams, Deputy Secretary of Policy and Planning in the Governor’s Office

Tara Williams thanked the Board for letting her talk about advancing digital skills in the plan and recommendations for Pennsylvania. She noted in the August meeting it was shared that they finished the planning process and wanted to embark on sharing and presenting their plan over the next few months. She brought some team members to share about the plan and progress they have made along with some materials and tools she hoped the group would find helpful. Tara emphasized that having the skills to use technology effectively is pretty much a need in everyone’s daily lives, particularly when it comes to education and work. However, the National Skills Coalition has found that one in three workers have low or no digital skills, many of which are people who are responsible for supervising others. Tara also noted that the lower an individual’s digital skills are, the lower the earnings tend to be. She expressed the importance of having a plan to increase digital skills across the state to address the digital divide and equity gaps that exist. Tara turned the conversation over to Erin Donohoe and PDE’s Policy Office to talk through some of the guiding pieces of the plan.

Erin Donohoe began by discussing the process they followed by gathering evidence, listening to people involved in conducting training, and relying on data about people in the workforce that need to use digital skills to inform the overall vision for Pennsylvania workers. The vision involves a five-year timeframe for all Pennsylvanians to learn additional skills, from children to the aging

population. The plan captures various life domains and how technology can be used confidently, safely, and responsibly to address real concerns with using technology so folks acquire the skill to continue learning additional skills. Erin noted that we all need to evolve our digital skills if we want to advance in our careers and remain full participants in society. A gap analysis led to a recommendation to focus on the working age population to start, since this population captures both young and older workers. The immediate goal is to enhance foundational digital literacy that involves baseline technical skills like typing, basic computer functions, using the Internet, and business applications that are used in various jobs. She noted that the ten broad recommendations developed by the group were broken down into specific policy recommendations that Tara Williams would elaborate on further.

Tara Williams began by informing about goal one to elevate the foundational digital literacy skills as a priority across system partners, which is accomplished by sharing with the Board. Goal two is to ensure that training options are readily available and accessible to people. Goal three is to develop a communication strategy to make sure people know about the training options that become available. Goal four is to increase staffing capacity, so trained staff are available in provider locations to educate folks in various fields, which involves a training the trainer model. Goal number five is to establish performance measures and data outcomes, which is consistent with the assessment tools the group has been discussing for use across training programs so an annual or biannual survey of employers can be conducted. Tara turned the floor to Christine Houck to talk in detail about the progress made on goal one.

Christine Houck recalled that goal one is to elevate the foundational digital literacy skills across system partners. She noted that the group thought it was important to first establish a common vocabulary in which different industries and partners could agree on the concepts at hand. They developed a glossary within the plan that narrows down the different definitions that exist across industries and system partners. Christine offered the example of digital literacy as defined by the ability to use different communication technologies to find, create, and communicate information, involving both cognitive and technical skills. She noted that it is important to consider the audience and potential stigma when determining which terms to use, such as asking someone if they need help with the Internet instead of asking if they need help with their digital literacy. The group developed a set of competencies and adult standards that looks at the skill competency frameworks across the board, including business and education sectors.

Tara Williams noted that the slides being shown reflect a snapshot of the digital plan that is included in an appendix for reference. Tara also informed the group that they now have a publicly available interactive map of where digital skills training exist in the state, with the purpose being to serve as a usable tool for Pennsylvanians to find training options. The map has various filters so folks can search by county or workforce area and the kind of training that is offered along with details. The map will endure continuous improvement to make it optimally functional for everyone and ensure that more providers are represented. The digital map progress addresses goal number two.

For goal three, Tara noted that the map helps to accomplish the education of workers about the digital skills training opportunities available to them. She also indicated that they will continue presenting to various networks over the next two months so people are aware of the resources available. The group continues to work on progress on goals four and five and Tara thanked everyone who completed the employer survey, which they hope to adapt and use on an ongoing basis to understand what employers are needing in the workplace.

Tara turned it over to Gwen Ross to mention how the digital plan fits into the state's broader digital equity efforts, which also speaks to goal one. Gwen noted that the Broadband Development Authority is responsible for the Infrastructure Act's projects coming to the state which are reflected in the general broadband plan to be completed next month. As broadband access comes to new communities, Gwen emphasized the importance for people to be aware of how they can get support for using this technology. Gwen noted that they are excited to continue working with the team to develop the overarching state digital equity plan so no Pennsylvanian is left behind.

Presentation: Jessica Trybus, Founder of Simcoach Games

Jessica Trybus began by describing how games have been a big part of our culture for thousands of years. She founded Simcoach games in 2005 out of Carnegie Mellon because of the realization of how powerful a communication medium that games are. Jessica noted that our brains are wired to learn from play, which makes well-designed games excellent learning mechanisms. By developing interactive games with clear rules, clear roles, and consequences from choices made, people can learn a great deal. Jessica noted

that they have worked in the industry for 15 years building training games, safety games, and productivity games for manufacturing, retail, construction, and healthcare. She discovered that games could be used for training before individuals secure jobs or determine what career is best for them to affirm aptitudes and explore interests. Jessica pointed to her time on the Board since 2015 that allowed her to identify the problems and opportunities for workforce development that could be addressed through Simcoach games. Over the past few years, Simcoach games and an apprenticeship program was developed so high school students could experience the benefit of games along with apprentices that contributed to the ideas that go into the development of the games that focus on climate change problems, diversity problems, and other challenges. The apprentices work in groups to conduct planning that involves trial and effort so they understand how to practice and hone their skills. Simcoach games not only recruits folks to become game developers, but teaches skills that apply to many different areas and leads to different interests, aptitudes, and potential career pathways.

It was noted that virtual reality and training is expanding, which makes it exciting to see the apprenticeship program so successful as it trains folks ahead of time and cuts down training costs for employers. The question was asked what may lead us to produce designers of technology for the future on a national level. Jessica responded with the importance of providing opportunities for kids as early as possible to build things on teams and exercise a designer role. She referred to the parable of the pots that describes a teacher that divides a class into two groups with 1,000 pounds of clay that each are graded. Group A is graded on the quantity of the pots it produces and Group B is graded on the quality of pots produced. While Group A may not have produced as good of quality of pots since they focused on quantity, they still learned by jumping headfirst into building and designing to solve a problem.

Remarks: Allison Jones, Secretary of Policy and Planning in the Governor's Office

Allison Jones thanked the group for their partnership and collaborative efforts during her time working with the Board. She noted that thanks to the vision of the Governor and her predecessor over the years, the role of the Board has been elevated to drive workforce development policy that leans on the expertise of the people in the room. Voices are represented from building and construction trades, technology, retail, and higher education. After the Governor's reflection on the progress made in workforce development, she hoped the group is very proud of the recommendations that have been implemented to address on-the-ground issues. Allison expressed her gratitude with being part of the group that is laying a strong foundation for the Board to continue to thrive as we transition to the next administration.

Remarks: Ryan Hyde, Acting Executive Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Ryan Hyde began by discussing the mission of OVR as to serve people with disabilities in gaining meaningful employment and independence. Last year, OVR successfully rehabilitated over 5,000 individuals, though they recognize they still have a lot of work to do coming out of the pandemic. Ryan noted that OVR is trying to hire counselors who have updated their minimum education and training events to include more master's degrees and they recommend that statewide outreach plans focus on the schools in the Center for Independent Living. He pointed to OVR's rapid engagement process that is intended to reduce the timeframes to implement services for customers. This past summer, OVR offered 300 students with disabilities work-based learning experiences through a partnership between OVR, local municipalities, and a third-party vendor. Ryan noted that they plan to expand work-based learning opportunities to any employer, school, or college. The Commonwealth hosted 30 interns this past summer, all college students with disabilities from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Johnstown, and Harrisburg. These opportunities benefit the students and the employer, as four of the interns were asked to stay on through the fall as they complete their courses. Employers and state agencies interested in hosting interns can contact Ryan Hyde so further investments can be made in students. OVR spent \$10 million just in September supporting over 2,000 individual colleges and students with disabilities with tuition costs and housing reimbursement. Ryan also noted that OVR recently had a career transition fair at the Hiram G. Andrews Center that's a comprehensive rehab facility in Johnstown with programs that serve students post-high school. Ryan announced that OVR has received a \$13 million grant from the federal disability innovation fund focusing on individuals considering entering subminimum wage employment so they and their families can be educated about competitive integrated employment opportunities. The grant proposal is looking for rural manufacturers and distribution centers to participate so OVR can implement at least two sites per year for four years, the first focusing on the Philadelphia area. OVR plans to

pay for the wages of participating individuals and supportive employment or job coaching staff from a third party to help train the employer's staff and work with individuals. Ryan is open to folks contacting him if they want to participate.

Remarks: Department of Labor and Industry

Deputy Secretary Dan Kuba remarked that the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) continues to implement a grant program to further digital literacy skill development in light of broadband issues and the impacts of the pandemic. Also, outreach efforts remain a focus to ensure partners are aware of the resources available and so their voices are heard so we can address rising issues and concerns. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is also a lens L&I uses to ensure that all communities receive the specialized support they need so a positive relationship can be established between the people of Pennsylvania and their government. Relationships are also being strengthened between legislative members as town halls are held so legislative aides can participate in training and engagement sessions. L&I has reinvented the training program around the one-stop-shop system, in which over 113 legislative aides participated. In building on OVR's internship program, L&I plans to hire five disability interns to work in the PA CareerLink® along with filling 23 positions across the commonwealth.

Remarks: Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services (DHS) noted that the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM) oversees workforce programming across the Commonwealth. In July 2022, DHS completed its second full year of implementation of its redesigned employment and training system that serves some of the Commonwealth's most disadvantaged workers. In partnership with local workforce development boards, assistance is offered to families of those with disabilities to improve employment outcomes through robust case management services, education, and training opportunities. Since the system's redesign, their partners have increased the enrollment by 17% with an increased success rate of 5% over the last year. As they are starting to see pre-pandemic pre-system redesign levels of demand, DHS offered kudos to the system partners and local workforce development partners to deliver these outcomes. Regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), DHS has made one of the largest benefit increases in decades along with raising the income limits for eligibility for SNAP benefits beginning October 1, 2022. This policy change reaches close to 420,000 food insecure Pennsylvanians and strengthens the work workforce partners can do with on-the-job training without negatively impacting SNAP benefits. SNAP recipients can now receive competitive wages even during training, stabilizing their transition into the workforce. DHS offered a graphic indicating that individuals can be paid \$13-\$14 an hour for fulltime work without negatively impacting their SNAP benefits.

DHS turned their attention to their resettlement programs given the 9,000 refugees that are expected from Ukraine as of November 3. DHS noted that they are looking for opportunities to connect their network of refugee resettlement experts with local boards and education institutions. Workforce partners that have a capacity to provide English as a second language training to the folks relocating to the Commonwealth can help build on the credentials that they come here with. DHS also offered kudos to Governor Wolf for signing Act 54 of 2022 that authorized millions of dollars to help stabilize a wide range of long-term care facilities and other care providers. DHS continues working across multiple offices, including Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) and developmental programs to invest the federal American Rescue Plan dollars to Medicaid recipients through home and community-based services. These investments help to offset the cost for providers during a significant period of demand while assisting with recruitment and ongoing support for direct care workers.

DHS's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has been hard at work in distributing approximately \$1.2 billion in federal rescue plan dollars to stabilize the childcare workforce throughout the Commonwealth. These investments have spanned from payments directly to childcare providers, payments to workers, and incentives to expand providers offering services during nontraditional hours. While these investments have served to stabilize the childcare sector, they also impact other industries that rely on these services to folks can show up to work every day. DHS also noted that they are investing approximately \$8.3 million to train early learning professionals specializing in developmental disabilities along with other investments for mental health support.

A question was raised on whether there is a certain percentage inflation adjustment that has been authorized for the SNAP program. Hoa Pham responded by indicating that for a family of one, the benefits rate is moving from about \$218 to \$250 per month. The income eligibility guidelines were increased by 200% to connect more Pennsylvanians to the benefits as well.

Remarks: Department of Aging

Chair Brown turned to the Department of Aging for remarks, to which there were none to be provided.

Remarks: Gwen Ross, Department of Community and Economic Development

Gwen Ross began by noting that the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Planning Fund Application has been completed and submitted to the U.S. Department of Treasury under the Capital Project Funds Program. A contract is underway with a higher education institution to build out a statewide broadband map to be accessible and housed on their website. DCED has been having a lot of interest in starting pre-apprenticeship programs, the manufacturing to training career program being of note to highlight. In the current fiscal year, Gwen noted that DCED has funded nine grant programs and on average they are about \$200,000 each. These span from being awareness programs teaching individuals about the benefits of working in an industry to short term training programs. Gwen particularly noted a grant awarded to the Bedford County Technical Center to bring awareness to the manufacturing industry to their community through video contests in school districts and community campaigns about remote opportunities in the manufacturing sector. In promoting high-tech career opportunities within a region that has companies looking to hire benefits youth, recent high school graduates, and underserved populations as the evolution of manufacturing creates more jobs.

Remarks: Amy Schwenk, Department of Corrections

DOC noted their work in collaboration with PennDOT to assist inmates with receiving their CDL licenses before they are released to the community. DOC has also established a partnership with the Department of Agriculture to implement a pre-apprenticeship program at Rockview farm.

Remarks: Sara Gligora, Department of Agriculture

Sara introduced herself on behalf of Secretary Redding and noted that Agriculture has continued their focus on apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. The agency has three new programs in development, two of which they hope to present to the Apprenticeship and Training Council in December or January. These include an Animal Science Apprenticeship Program and a Dairy Herds Manager Program which have gained a lot of interest from the industry and relevant stakeholders. Sara also mentioned that on October 12th, a final rule to amend the H2A regulations was published in the Federal Register which went into effect November 14th. The new rule focuses on strengthening worker protections and program integrity, modernizing the education process and prevailing wage surveys, and expanding employer access and flexibilities to the program. Sara noted these changes will have an effect on some of the employers that use the H2A program, so the department is working to host an employer engagement information session next month with Penn State to communicate relevant information about the changes. Last month, Agriculture in partnership with Corrections hosted an information session to discuss the hiring of reentrants and the resulting benefits. Sara also made note of Agriculture's Agricultural Workforce Week that just concluded in which a number of employers and schools were visited to discuss workforce initiatives underway. Two of the locations have received a PA Smart Industry Partnership Grant, so Agriculture was able to highlight the importance of work orders within the agricultural industry.

Remarks: Dr. Tanya Garcia, Department of Education

Dr. Tanya Garcia introduced herself and noted that Acting Secretary Hagarty sent his regards. She began by informing that PDE has worked with L&I to train over 889 staff on the PA CareerLink® system and the WIA programs for best practices. She noted that the digital skills map underway can serve as an opportunity for post-secondary institutions to help support the digital literacy skills building effort. PDE's Office of Commonwealth Libraries recently featured a case study between the Cambria County Library system and it's co-located PA CareerLink® in Johnstown, highlighting the

public library's role in workforce and small business development. Tanya moved on to note that the Career and Technical Education Team and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education have received 132 applications from school districts for supplemental equipment grants. By investing in the upkeep of equipment, learners and career technical education programs can be ready for the workforce when they complete their high school education. Tanya also mentioned that Act 55 of 2022 offers that secondary schools will now include in the high school transcripts of students any industry certifications that they earn. PDE has recently hired a chief talent officer that is a former superintendent to lead the work of the committee on education and recruitment which represents educator groups and nonprofit organizations. Tanya encouraged the group to take a look at PDE's educator workforce strategy located at the top of their website. Tanya noted in the month of October, PDE chaired the PA Council of the Arts and its work with DCNR to highlight careers in parks and environments through coalition meetings that increase industry credentials and portability skills in those career areas. PDE is also working on new academic standards for career education, economics, and family and consumer sciences to be reviewed in partnership with the State Board of Education's Committee on Academic Standards. The update of Pennsylvania's Master Plan for Higher Education took into consideration the critical thinking and other skills necessary to prepare PA's economy to increase talent across the Commonwealth. Tanya thanked the Board and her colleagues at PDE for all the investments that make the Commonwealth stronger than ever.

Presentation: Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance

Tara Toms introduced the Keystone Apprenticeship Alliance as a community practice for those who graduate from the program to keep them connected to peers to strengthen partnerships, job innovation, and responds to the changing workforce. Through 2,000 hours of on-the-job training and 144 hours of related technical instruction, individuals learn skills that can be applicable across workforce, education, government, and more. The alliance relies on their network of partners and contributions of mentors through employer engagement to see the apprenticeship program succeed. They have 78 apprentices and four cohorts and will retain 98% of those either through graduation or as current and active apprentices. They have also trained 30 apprentices to work in the PA CareerLink® in OVR, putting individuals with specialized knowledge at the forefront of service delivery. As the alliance looks to expand apprenticeships, they plan to keep high standards and partnerships at the center to ensure a legacy of quality in workforce development. Hands-on guidance and technical assistance are offered through all phases of the partnership implementation process so individuals learn from one another through in-person and virtual engagements, continuing education, guest lectures, and other opportunities. They seek to involve a variety of early training opportunities that span a wide range of demanded occupations so individuals are connected to career making opportunities that bring paychecks home. Ms. Toms noted that the success of apprenticeships can be attributed to the contribution of partners, Governor Wolf, and the PA Smart community.

Youth Committee Update

The Youth Committee continues to partner with different agencies to be well informed and consider how their policy efforts can reinforce the common goal to help young people be prepared for the next generation of employment.

One-Stop-Service Delivery System Update: Sarah Hollister

Sarah noted that the One-Stop Committee has met several times and received a presentation on post-secondary education. She indicated that the biggest takeaway was to think through more data analysis and data sharing with post-secondary education institutions given their importance and level-setting the work order system. The committee has been doing a deep-dive into data to understand what data they might want to recommend, all in light of a new Governor coming on board.

Continuous Improvement Update: Chair Brian Funkhouser

Chair Funkhouser noted that they received an update on Act 31 of 2022, commonly known as the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Act. The changes primarily focus on bringing Pennsylvania into alignment with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). He noted a specific aspect that the Governor and partnership for the state board shall establish a criteria for use by chief elected officials and local workforce development areas for

appointment of members of local workforce development boards. The committee evaluated this change and came up with a recommendation for the Board to take action today. The recommendation of the Continuous Improvement Committee in consultation with workforce development stakeholders is that no additional required members are necessary for local workforce development boards to meet the mission and believe that the membership requirements resulting from additional required nonbusiness members would cause unnecessary compliance issues that would make fulfilling the mission more difficult.

MOTION: Chair Brown requested a motion to approve the recommendation. Ski Sygielski made the first motion. Nick Centurione made the second motion. The motion carried and was approved.

Presentation: Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Competitiveness by Gwen Ross and Dan Fogarty

Gwen thanked the Board for the opportunity to present an overview of Pennsylvania's Manufacturing Advisory Council as well as the playbook that was developed for the manufacturing industry. Gwen Ross reminded the group that she works on workforce development initiatives with DCED and she will be co-presenting with Dan Fogarty, the Director of the Berks County Workforce Development Board who has served on the Industry Partnership Committee. She indicated that their experience has shown that clear engagement in workforce development is best conducted by an industry sector, so within that spirit Gwen shared some current information from the manufacturing sector with the group. The Pennsylvania Manufacturing Advisory Council launched in July 2021 and is made up of neighbors and partners from across the Commonwealth. For the past decade, Gwen noted that Pennsylvania's manufacturing sector has consistently driven Pennsylvania's economic activity and brought value that cannot be taken for granted, so it is critical to focus attention on the sector for years to come. The Council reached out to manufacturers to gauge significant industry knowledge to determine a long-term playbook for manufacturing growth across the Commonwealth.

Gwen began providing an overview of the playbook by noting that manufacturing has contributed to over \$113.2 billion of Pennsylvania's GDP, which is 13% of the Commonwealth's economy and more than any other sector. Manufacturing employees add up to nearly 563,000, which is about 10% of Pennsylvania's entire workforce and makes it the third largest employment sector. Gwen added that manufacturing fuels the growth of other sectors by buying extensively from Pennsylvania businesses. In 2020, Pennsylvania manufacturers bought \$52 billion worth of in-state goods and services. Additionally, Gwen noted that there are great employee benefits from working within the manufacturing industry, as they earn 37% more than the average worker and 90% have healthcare coverage with 78% receiving retirement contributions. Gwen indicated that manufacturing employment has decreased by half a percent over the past decade when it should have increased by 7.4% due to the mix of industries in the Commonwealth and their national success. Many people and jobs have left Pennsylvania between 1994 and 2020 in response to either global outsourcing or out-of-state expansions.

To address the issue, the Manufacturing Advisory Council looked at the available data from professional economists and the U.S. Department of Commerce to analyze industry competitiveness. Next, they conducted policy research on the top issue identified by manufacturers: workforce, technology and innovation, supply chain, and the business environment. The council then gathered input from 150 companies across 13 industry focus groups along with a survey of nearly 400 manufacturers to better understand industry needs and challenges.

Gwen turned it over to Dan to discuss the results of the information and further action. Dan noted that the directors at the local boards across the state wanted to thank DCED for the unwavering support and prioritization of the manufacturing sector over the past five years. Dan indicated that they talked to 500 manufacturers with the first issue being workforce, in which 9 out of 10 manufacturers stated that they needed workers immediately. Dan referenced the report based on feedback from manufacturers that proposes three game-changes Pennsylvania manufacturing, the first being to recapture Pennsylvania's manufacturing competitive advantage that has weathered over the past ten years. To accomplish this, Dan stated that investments are needed in the factory of the future, as the jobs will continue to evolve as better paying and more exciting career paths. Dan noted that ten recommendations were developed in total, but that he would name just a few that are pertinent to the work of the Workforce Development Board.

To begin, Dan surveyed the group to determine how many people knew that manufacturing was the largest economic sector in terms of impact in the Commonwealth. He noted that many individuals believe it is Agriculture, which does a great job through the Farm Show in presenting itself to the Commonwealth that the manufacturing industry can learn from. Dan referenced the a recommendation for the incoming Governor to ensure that the Manufacturing Advisory Council is made up of primarily industry representatives so that voice is represented going forward. Dan turned the group's attention to two particular recommendations that are the most important policy levers that need to take place in the next five years. Given the impact of retiring baby boomers and under-investment in training, the manufacturing industry's workforce is struggling to meet the needs of employers to achieve a return on investment. Literacy and other skill development needs to remain a focus in ensuring that workers are trained and prepared to meet employer needs in the manufacturing industry. Dan noted that manufacturers need to be supported who are taking the lead in transitioning folks to work environments and attaining optimal skill development. The issue remains to retain workers and upscale them so the sector can thrive.

Dan closed the presentation by reinforcing the message that the next five years hinge on the importance of prioritizing manufacturing and workforce strategies given its scale of impact and benefit to workers.

Chair Brown posed the question as to why there is high turnover and whether employees are making common mistakes to cause the turnover. Dan responded by mentioning that the turn in a post-pandemic era presents unprecedented challenges that all kinds of industries are experiencing. He mentioned his home county where there is head-to-head competition between transportation, warehousing sectors, and manufacturing. Amazon facilities and large distribution centers are by nature designed to have very high turnover that reinforces the competition for jobs.

Final Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Brown inquired if there were any comments from the group, to which there were none. He offered the announcement that lunch would take place at the student center.

MOTION: Chair Brown made a motion to adjourn. [inaudible] made a second. The meeting was adjourned.