

Governor's Workforce Board RI Career Pathways System Task Force (CPSTF)

February 3, 2011

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members present: Brandon Melton, Chair, Marc Amato, Rick Brooks; Andrea Castaneda, Charles Fogarty, Jill Holloway, Kevin McDevitt, William McGowan, Jeffrey Senese, Kathie Shields, Robin Smith, Bill Weedon

Committee Members absent: Ray Di Pasquale, Deborah Gist, Keith Stokes

GWB Staff present: Lisa D'Agostino, Nancy Olson, Dan Brown, Maureen Mooney

Others Present: Paul Harden, RIEDC; Judy Jones, Poverty Institute; Malcolm Baxter, United Way volunteer; Joe Winn and Jillian Salerno, Community College of RI, Sharon Lee, RI Department of Education

Call to Order

Chair Melton called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. He welcomed everyone and provided an overview of the agenda.

Introductions and Background Information

Chair Melton asked each committee member for a brief introduction. He explained there were fifteen (15) members; 9 who are appointed by the Governor and 6 ex-officio. He cited the statute from 210-S 2836 which describes the composition of the committee. Chair Melton noted that the Human Resource Investment Council (HRIC) oversees the State Career Pathways System for the purpose of increasing the skill level of Rhode Island workers in alignment with industry needs. He indicated that the CPSTF was a recommendation of the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) 21st Century Workforce Commission. A copy of the CCRI 21st Century Workforce Commission Report & Recommendations was made available to committee members in the meeting packets.

Robin Smith stated that the Commission met for approximately 18 months and was chaired by Armeather Gibbs. She noted three key conclusions and four recommendations which are referenced in pages 22-27 of the CCRI report. R. Smith noted that part of the implementation timeline included expanding and enhancing CCRI's Center for Workforce and Community Education to increase education and training services. It was recommended three individuals be hired to assist with these efforts. These positions are funded by legislation through the HRIC. She introduced Jillian Salerno, Coordinator and Joseph Winn, Sales Coordinator to the committee. R. Smith stated that Karen Fay has been hired as a grant writer.

Chair Melton referenced the Governor's Workforce Board and the mandate to provide strategic direction for workforce development efforts through the State Strategic Plan which provides a common vision and statewide goals and objectives. He noted the importance of the partnerships and collaboration among all RI agencies, educational institutions, communities and employers in achieving the goals of the strategic plan. Chair Melton noted that the State Strategic Plan complements and supports the work of the CPSTF. There was discussion and questions about the starting framework and tracking mechanisms for higher education programs, goals and credentials. A copy of the Strategic Workforce Plan for Rhode Island was provided to committee members in their packets.

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Charge of Taskforce

Chair Melton reviewed the charge of the taskforce which is to design a Career Pathways System; create a career pathways framework and process; implement a first stage initiative in one or two industries; create a sustainable and replicable model and develop a method to evaluate. There was discussion among committee members and several key points and questions were raised.

- Don't re-invent the wheel, look at what other states have done.
- Review best practices.
- Look at the scale of the framework.
- Track higher education student progress in specific programs, specifically those that lead to gainful employment.
- Define industries in Rhode Island.
- Efforts should include communications and marketing efforts.
- Is the framework a re-alignment of what already exists?
- Is the end product a creation of new entities?
- What is the outcome? Program design?
- Will the taskforce be targeting older adults?
- What are we trying to accomplish, must identify this first.
- Is the focus on basic skills that are transferable to different jobs, remedial skills, and work readiness skills?
- Is the scope broader than CCRI?
- Industry specific data is needed to consider implementing a first stage initiative in one or two industries.

Definition of Career Pathways

Chair Melton reviewed the definition of career pathways as a series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. A discussion followed. It was suggested that foundational skills are an important component of a career pathways system and should be incorporated in the definition.

Steps in Process

Chair Melton asked Andrea Castaneda of the RI Department of Education to review a draft of the possible steps for establishing a state career pathways system. She reviewed five steps which include: conducting an environmental survey, developing a state career pathway framework, aligning resources and coordinating partners, designing a pilot program and launching a pathways pilot. Several action items were discussed particularly around the topic of aligning resources and coordinating partners.

- Being cognizant of scale (determine which national and state models are appropriate).
- Is the committee doing a pilot? How much can the committee take on?
- Pull together what already exists.
- Find the gaps.
- Build models around the current One-Stop centers.
- Should there be a presentation on the GWB Industry Partnerships?
- It was noted that the Industry Partnership Skills Gap studies are on the GWB website
- There should be an alignment and integration of what already exists as we may have the foundational elements.

It was suggested that the committee review best practices and identify key stakeholders. Due to time restrictions, it was suggested that A. Castaneda review the timeline of the career pathways system steps at the next meeting.

Identification of High Growth/Emerging Industries: Criteria for Selection

Chair Melton identified the criteria for selection in the identification of high growth and emerging industries which include labor market data, a model system, leadership and the will to succeed, sustainable wages, support of key partners and education/career advancement. It was noted that small business is a driving factor for emerging industries in Rhode Island.

Next Steps

Chair Melton reviewed key discussion points and suggested the following topics and action items be addressed at the next meeting.

- Establish what already exists within the system.
- Consider on-ramps, focus, and different ways to access the system.
- Come back with ideas on objectives for the next meeting.
- Determine if an individual or industry focus should be considered for the pilot.
- Define data gathering and analysis methods.
- Determine what is going on within the state for industry and small business.
- Share data and discuss skills gaps.

In closing, Chair Melton polled committee members on preferences and availability to meet. He suggested that the committee meet monthly for the first couple of months, then every 2 months and then quarterly. It was suggested by committee members that Wednesdays or Thursdays would be preferred. GWB staff will work on the schedule for the remainder of 2011.

With no further business, Chair Melton adjourned the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney