



Montana Department of **LABOR & INDUSTRY**

State Workforce Investment Board

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Lifelong Learning Committee Minutes

September 25, 2014

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Gallery Room, Red Lion Colonial Inn

Helena, Montana

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Trent (Chair); Tina Bundtrock; John Cech; Al Ekblad; Tom Facey; Keith Heavyrunner; Margaret Bowles; and Billie Lee

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Kirk Hammerquist; Maureen Kenneally ; Representative Ryan Lynch; and Robert Minto

STAFF: Greg Cano

GUESTS: Lindsey Woolsey-The Woolsey Group, and Dave Crum-SWIB Chair

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Scott Trent called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He welcomed Committee members and guests.

Roll call

Greg Cano conducted roll call and established a quorum.

Agenda

Chair Trent reviewed the Agenda. The committee provided a consensus vote to approve the meeting agenda

Review Role of Career Pathways

Lindsey Woolsey, CEO of The Woolsey Group, presented information on Career Pathways.

Ms. Woolsey pointed out that career pathways traditionally focused on individual programs and institutions. This is no longer an effective strategy to use in today's workforce. Career pathways need to be built around entry, mid, and high level steps

within a specific industry. Transferrable skills should be assessed across pathways; i.e., assessing technology skills which apply to each industry.

In Montana, new grants and technology assistance from the federal government is prompting many institutions to come forward and attempt to link programs, resulting in messiness and confusion without a systematic approach.

Ms. Woolsey posed the committee to consider the following:

- What initiatives are happening currently?
- Consider the perspective Margaret Bowles brings to the committee-discussions based on basic skills, the adult population; and entry level career pathways.
- Career pathways must be done by an industry by industry basis.
- Industries need to be mapped out and evaluated-with oversaturated programs identified as well as unidentified skills/needs.

She asked the committee to share thoughts and/or questions concerning her comments.

Chair Trent commented that it would be nice to bridge the gap between resistance and healthy conversation between partners.

Ms. Woolsey asked the committee members to think about self-definition of their industry...for instance, define transportation and logistics.

Tina Bundtrock defined hers as healthcare.

Senator Tom Facey commented that industries may not know resources which change region by region. This is due to lack of coordination between programs. We need career resources for families, industry and education. What are the resources within a region that specific sectors could use...many of us are unaware.

Billie Lee stated that career pathways are historically called many things. We need to remember that kid's interests do change, so pathways should not be "strict." She wondered how we strike the balance concerning youth awareness.

Senator Facey asked: "How do we get the career pathway message to autonomous economic development committees in Montana?"

Ms. Woolsey reiterated that this is the nature of economic development. What needs to happen is locally and regionally, all entities (players) should be pulled together. The conversation should be within the framework of career pathways and ways to get involved. Participation by sitting on each other's boards isn't enough involvement. Perhaps the State could provide trainings and work with economic development folks.

Ms. Lee used the partnership of Flathead Community College and the local job service; in particular, the Business Expansion and Retention Teams (BEAR) as a model for economic development. The One-Stop Center approach incorporates many entities and includes economic development partners who are all housed together-the key to their success.

Ms. Woolsey commented that the One-Stop concept can be very powerful.

Deputy Commissioner John Cech gave another example of the power of formal and informal structures in partnership. Higher Education has a board of regents-7 members responsible for the academic/financial responsibilities for 3 community colleges. Co-location is powerful! All of the entities are housed within the same building. The ability to be able to walk down the hall to have conversations is incredible. The Office of Public Instruction is in another location, but, he still visits with them on a daily basis. The connection between Higher Education and the Montana Department of Labor is awesome-they work together on grants, policy and career pathways.

Senator Facey posed the question: "How do we keep partnerships going?"

Mr. Cech commented that this should be an expectation from the legislature, the Governor and constituents.

Ms. Woolsey reflected that if; 5 years from now, ½ dozen of the sector partnerships are still happening in Flathead, this will be a success. For example, Colorado has active learning partnerships which have made the commitment to come together once a year, but meet more frequently over the phone. SWIB could also consider this approach.

Ms. Woolsey reiterated that it is far harder to organize a public/private sector meeting. The effective way to do it is to bring the private sector together. Collectively, they know exactly what a particular industry needs to align. They can begin work in the form of conversations which identify common ground...for example: "Here are three things we all desire in our industry..." Industries need to meet first!

Ms. Woolsey's advice to the committee: "**Pick & Stick.**" Pick a project to focus on and stick with it.

Chair Trent reiterated by suggesting that he could begin by pulling other transportation industry members together and be a sounding board for one another. He wondered if there are campaigns which address Montana job seekers-are they aware of all of the resources that are available to them? He also believes that training for the economic development community is a good idea.

Ms. Lee stated that Montana Economic Development Association (MEDA) has funding systems.

Guest-Chair Dave Crum interjected that there is great collaboration between Higher Education and the Department of Labor. Commerce and Economic Development need to be part of this discussion. Private industry members typically drop off. We need to have meetings in our own communities. Once they meet, they discover they can help each other out. If we tell them what we can do to help: deliver services to them-show commitment and start at the local level.

Senator Facey suggested that perhaps we should dissolve the Youth Council and reassign SWIB members to other committees. Under current WIA law the Youth Council is required.

Ms. Woolsey stated that with Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA), the requirement to have a youth council is removed but highly encouraged, especially with the changes to the Youth Program. The question is one to have as committee structures and on-going strategic planning conversations continue.

OCHE-MT Education System Initiatives

John Cech, Deputy Commissioner of Two-Year and Community College Education made a presentation to the Lifelong Learning Committee addressing several topics of importance to the SWIB.

First, he gave an update regarding the US Department of Labor Grant ,Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana's Manufacturing and Energy Industries (SWAMMEI). A complete update can be found on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) website at www.swib.mt.gov.

SWAMMEI is a 25 million dollar, four year grant focused on Advanced Manufacturing and Energy workforce development.

The grant award was finalized from the US Department of Labor in December of 2013. Thirteen consortium member campuses have been working with industry to make fundamental shifts in the way 2-year colleges offer training and how they collaborate with Montana Department of Labor's workforce development efforts. Those fundamental shifts have included replacing traditional **C**ouncils for the **A**dvancement of **S**tandards in Higher Education (CAS) and Associates in Applied Science (AAS) programs with stacked credential programs aimed to provide more on-ramps and off-ramps into and out of training programs. For example, a student completing one semester in welding will receive a Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS) degree and National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER)) industry-recognized credentials allowing tangible tools to compete for jobs after just 16 weeks (more designed off-ramps). That same industry recognized credential can be used to definitively

demonstrate that a student has the skills to enter stacked credential programs in higher tiers (on-ramps).

The 7 occupational programs that are aligned at SWAMMEI colleges include:

- Welding/Welding Fabrication;
- Machining;
- Industrial Electronics;
- Industrial Safety;
- Industrial Maintenance;
- Entrepreneurship; and
- Diesel Technology

Four industry recognized credentials are in place:

- National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER);
- National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS);
- Electronics Technicians Associations (ETA-1); and
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

These programs have been aligned across the participating colleges in order to provide a consistent core of learning outcomes and industry-recognized credentials in programs throughout the state. This will also increase opportunities for transfer between colleges.

Mr. Cech also discussed Dual Credit. In late May, the Governor's office and Montana University System (MUS) launched a major effort to grow Dual Credit offered in Montana high schools.

The Credit-for-Credit Program rewards Montana teachers for teaching concurrent enrollment courses in their high schools.

- For every college credit taught, teachers get a transferrable coupon that is good for in-state undergraduate or graduate tuition at any MUS campus.
- The first coupons will be issued in December and can be utilized to pay for courses as early as Spring of 2015.
- The continual communication of Credit-for-Credit to over 170 high schools and 11 post-secondary campuses is a vital component of coordinating this program.
- The MUS dual credit website is being augmented. Phase one included construction of a new comprehensive resource for teachers, administrators, and others to learn about concurrent enrollment, the Credit-for-Credit program, and connect with the necessary resources.

- A preliminary survey of dual credit coordinators on the 11 MUS campuses, as well as the tribal colleges engaging in concurrent enrollment, indicate that the 2014-15 school year will see the addition of 70-80 or more new concurrent courses across the state.
- The Dual Credit Incentive Program is being promoted to Tribal colleges and facilitation is being made between the colleges and local secondary schools.
- OCHE will be advocating and educating at the State's two major teacher conferences in October, MEA/MFT and MT ACTE (Montana Association for Career and Technical Education). By reaching out to both academic and Career & Technical educators, the goal is to facilitate opportunities for Montana students that cover a wide range of career and post-secondary educational options.

Mr. Cech responded to questions and/or comments made by committee members:

Ms. Lee wondered about the entrepreneur cluster outlined in the Your Guide-Montana's Two-Year College Workforce Development pamphlet distributed by Mr. Cech. What will this course provide to students? Mr. Cech explained that with the increase in small businesses-especially in Montana, people entertaining the thought of starting their own business need a "toolbox" or access to resources/education. He further explained that the course was not designed to earn a B.S. degree, rather, Just "in-the-trenches" information.

Ms. Lee commented that she loved the concept and that the critical thinking piece is being taken into consideration.

OPI-Moving Pathways Forward Project

Margaret Bowles, Director of Adult Basic Education from the Office of Public Instruction, presented the Moving Pathways Forward Project.

Ms. Bowles began by saying that the term-"Adult Basic Education" (ABE) may soon be changed to "Adult Education" because the word "Basic" has had negative connotations.

Ms. Bowles also discussed HiSET and the GED. For a complete explanation about HiSET, go the following link: www.hiset.ets.org. The test developers of the HiSET: Educational Testing Service (ETS) and Iowa Testing Programs are two highly respected non-profit assessment organizations addressing the needs of states, educators, policymakers, employers, and test-takers. The exam offers the same content areas as the 2002 GED series, but is more accessible and more affordable. The GED is a for-profit organization and less affordable.

In regards to the Moving Pathways Forward Project, Ms. Bowles pointed out the definition of Career Pathways as written in a Joint letter from the U. S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, 2012:

“Career pathways is a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.”

To meet the need in the U.S. for a better skilled and credentialed 21st century workforce, career pathways has emerged as a promising approach for increasing the number of individuals who gain the skills and academic and industry-recognized credentials needed for work in high-demand occupations. In April, 2012, the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human services issued a joint policy memorandum in which each agency acknowledged the need for better alignment of education, training, and employment services among public agencies to facilitate the delivery of career pathways.

The Moving Pathways Forward: Supporting Career Pathways Integration project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) assists states in advancing career pathways systems to transition low-skilled adults to postsecondary education and employment. The project provides technical assistance to states to further integrate adult education into broader career pathways systems development at the state and local levels. The project addresses barriers to the implementation of cross-system policies that support transitions for adult learners into postsecondary education and employment. Moving Pathways Forward supports state and local activities to create career pathways systems involving business; career and technical, adult, and postsecondary education; and workforce and economic development.

The Moving Pathways Forward project provides technical assistance services to states in accelerating the development and implementation of their career pathways systems. States have access to resources and guidance to support their work on addressing key components of career pathways systems including:

- Cross-agency Partnerships and Industry Engagement;
- State Vision of a Career Pathways System and Communications about this Vision;
- Alignment of policies and Programs;
- Education, training, and Support Services;
- Professional Development and Technical Assistance;
- Data Systems and Evaluation; and
- Funding and Sustainability

The project provides two forms of technical assistance to states;

1. Intensive Technical Assistance to selected state inter-agency teams. These state teams, representing adult, career and technical and postsecondary education; workforce and economic development; and business, are guided by state coaches and subject matter experts in expanding their existing career pathways system components or developing new system components. Participating states include: Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.
2. General Technical Assistance to states not receiving intensive technical assistance. The project team offers virtual mentoring support to states to examine their current activities in career pathways implementation and identify priority components of career pathways systems for further development.

Ms. Bowles revealed that the technical assistance piece allows her to connect with the ‘best of the best’ in regards to the other states involved in the project.

Montana is unique because it is a small state without lots of big businesses. So, in regard to ABE programs within the state, they are dividing into regions and starting to identify industry/postsecondary partners in order to transition students into career pathways.

Ms. Bowles report that her group has fantastic agency connections! When they last met, the local programs did a gap analysis with low skilled adults targeted.

Committee members had no questions.

Discussion: Next Steps /Next Meeting

Chair Trent announced that Career Pathways-area of focus was open for discussion.

Ms. Bowles reiterated the “pick and stick” plan. What should the committee plan or support?

Mr. Trent wondered what kind of action the committee would like to see happen.

Ms. Bowles pointed out: The words pathways and partnerships are used within WIOA.

Mr. Cech pointed out that the word pathways is broad enough to embody the dual credit piece; which would be a benefit if the SWIB embraced Career Pathways. This in turn would give Mr. Cech and Ms. Bowles extra support when working with high schools, colleges and industries.

Ms. Bowles agreed that SWIB recognition would be very helpful in their endeavors.

Senator Facey wondered if the committee should endorse the concept.

Mr. Ekblad considered the idea of branding a model which reaches out farther than high school...perhaps middle school and the elementary school level. Perhaps it would provide motivation to attend school as well as provide opportunities for older adults.

Ms. Bundtrock agreed that the branding could be tied to the Main Street Montana Meeting-expose it to middle school age students so they can identify the brand.

Mr. Heavyrunner stated that there is a trend in colleges for adults to make career changes and earn different certifications. He also mentioned the concern of including Veterans in the discussion.

Mr. Cech said that there is hard work being done to build that bridge for the Veterans of Montana.

Chair Trent: Next Steps? He made a motion to endorse/support laws that focus on Career Pathways. Mr. Ekblad supported the motion and Ms. Bowles seconded the motion. The vote was cast and all were in favor-the motion passed.

Senator Facey commented that this was a very positive endorsement to the providers and their constituents.

Mr. Ekblad stated that work will get done at the committee level, but the committee needs to put a meeting schedule together and prioritize their tasks.

With no further comment or discussion, Chair Trent adjourned the committee at 10:00 a.m.