**Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Meeting**

Monday, June 11, 2018

9:30 A.M to 12:00 Noon

Worcester Technical High School  
1 Skyline Drive  
Worcester, MA 01605

**Meeting Minutes**

***Members Present:***

*Rosalin Acosta, Jesse Brown, Tricia Canavan, James Cassetta, Kathleen Cullen-Cote, Donna Cupelo, , Pam Eddinger, Pamela Everhart, Robert LePage, Susan Mailman, Juliette Mayers, Jeffrey McCue, Warren Pepicelli, Joanne Pokaski, Elizabeth Skidmore*

***Members Absent:***

*Aixa Beauchamp, Joanne Berwald, Anne Broholm, Sherry Dong, Cassius Johnson, John Mann, Dan Rivera, Juan Vega, Joseph Wagner, Beth Williams, Ray Wrobel*

***Staff and Guests:***

*Kyle Brenner (Worcester Technical High School), Ruben Colon (Westover JobCorps Center), Larry Elgert (Morgan Memorial Goodwill), Kelly French (North Central Workforce Investment Board), Amy Kershaw (Department of Transitional Assistance), Rebekah Lashman (Commonwealth Corporation), William McKinney (Department of Labor Standards),Michael Moore (Massachusetts Senate), Jessica Muradian (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Jennifer James (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Nathan Pham (Verizon), Tim Sappington (North Central Workforce Investment Board), Cheryl Scott (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development), Sacha Stadhard (Department of Career Services), Alice Sweeney (Department of Career Services), Jeffrey Turgeon (Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board), Marina Zhavoronkova (Exec. Office of Labor and Workforce Development).*

**Welcome & Introductions**

Donna Cupelo called the meeting to order, and welcomed board members and guests. Ms. Cupelo extended a thank you to Sue Mailman and Worcester Technical High School for hosting today’s meeting. All members and guests introduced themselves.

Donna Cupelo introduced Patricia Suomala, Director of Vocational Training at Worcester Technical High School. Ms. Suomala welcomed the Board and guests, and provided an overview of the career training opportunities at the school to prepare students academically and to be citizens that are prepared for careers. Worcester Technical High School has various programs including those in carpentry, electrical, allied health, veterinary medicine, HVAC, painting and design, and hotel and tourism management, programming and web development. Students engage in hands-on learning through working on projects. For example, the school does not have a formal IT Department, instead IT needs are handled by students. Worcester Tech places students in coop opportunities with businesses throughout the community such as CVS One Health, St. Vincent’s, and Tufts Veterinary school. Due to the improving economy there has been an uptick in the number of businesses that are interested in hosting a coop. Students also engage in a number of community-building activities such as helping to create the [World War II Citizens of Color memorial](http://www.telegram.com/news/20171207/replica-of-missing-wwii-veterans-monument-to-worcester-citizens-of-color-dedicated-at-lincoln-square) that was recently unveiled in Worcester’s Lincoln Square. Ms. Suomala also shared upcoming projects that are currently in development.

Sue Mailman added that Worcester Technical High does not receive the same type of funding as other regional vocational technical high schools. Yet, despite this, the school is a top performer. They have also found innovative ways to generate resources to run their programs and engage the community to support the school. Ms. Mailman commended Principal Kyle Brenner and Ms. Suomala for their great work.

Warren Pepicelli asked about the 365Z signs around the school. Kyle Brenner explained that this is a partnership with the [365 Z Foundation](http://www.365z.org/), a local organization to inspire spreading kindness and being part of a larger community. This was an effort to address the social-emotional crises the school found present in their community. Mr. Brenner also shared this is related to another program at Worcester Tech called the TED Awards. TED stands for Thoughtful, Exceptional Deeds. Students are nominated and recognized for their thoughtful acts on TED Thursdays. TED Awards are also a tribute to the late Ted Coughlin (Board member Sue Mailman’s father) who is considered to be a “godfather” of the school due to his steadfast support of the school for over fifty years.

Sue Mailman shared the importance of businesses partnering with their community. As an employer who engages with Worcester Tech and its students, she recognizes the value of students seeing a business owner, especially a non-traditional business owner.

Donna Cupelo mentioned that the Board will be spending the next few months re-assessing the Board and its work as the Board moves forward. Ms. Cupelo encouraged Board members to reach out to Donna or Cheryl with their insights, thoughts, ideas, and questions about the board.

**Workforce Development Update**

Secretary Acosta shared the trends and priorities that are being pursued by the Baker-Polito administration. The economy is on a fairly similar track as when the Board last met in March. Unemployment remains low (3.5%), the labor force is growing, and the economy has gained 178,000 jobs. There are more employed in Massachusetts than there ever have been before. Yet, unemployment for Black and Latino populations is above 6%, so the administration is working hard to take advantage of the favorable economic conditions to solve these economic disparities.

A major strategy to help people in need find opportunity is through the Governor’s FY19 budget which include $18M in workforce funding to support a robust talent pipeline for high-demand jobs in priority middle wage industries like informational technology, health care, and manufacturing. Secretary Acosta provided an overview of the items included in the Governor’s Workforce Skills Cabinet budget to expand employability skills for youth, and creating new education and training models for adult workers.

Massachusetts continues to work with those who were displaced from the hurricanes impacting Puerto Rico. The career center in Holyoke recently received a $2.5M grant to connect individuals who have lost employment as a result of hurricanes to training and educational opportunities that will help them secure high demand jobs in the Commonwealth. 1,328 individuals from Puerto Rico have registered with our career centers, and 193 individuals have reported employment. Massachusetts is currently at 70% of our enrollment goal of 300 individuals. EOLWD has also been working to connect individuals and families to much-needed resources, such as mental health counseling, and assisting with transferring licenses and credentials from Puerto Rico to Massachusetts. Massachusetts is also sending a delegation of workforce partners from Massachusetts to Puerto Rico to provide technical assistance to Puerto Rico’s workforce system.

Massachusetts is also a part of the Skillful State Network, a project of the Markle Foundation. The Skillful initiative promotes transitioning to a skills-based labor market where a person without a four-year college degree is able to achieve the right skills and competencies to be qualified for in-demand jobs. Massachusetts is sharing best practices on how to use data and technology tools in connection with the value of our educational and training programs, including the regional planning initiative.

Secretary concluded by sharing that the Commission on Digital Innovation and Lifelong Learning is a follow-on to the Governor’s convening on digital learning in November of 2017. The charge for this commission is to really think about the needs of the next generation of learners in Massachusetts, and come up with new ideas on how to best serve those needs.

Pam Everhart asked about the Pay Equity Law and whether it applied to small businesses. Secretary Acosta guessed that it applied to businesses with 10 or more employees, but she would need to verify this.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Donna Cupelo asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board meeting on March 6, 2018. The motion was made, and passed unanimously.

**MassHire Implementation Update**

Marina Zhavoronkova provided an update on preparation towards launching [the MassHire brand](https://www.mass.gov/topics/masshire). Local areas, through the Brand Ambassadors, have been engaged in enculturation training. EOLWD has been preparing branded assets, including web templates, brochures, and signage.

Ms. Zhavoronkova announced that the statewide MassHire launch will be on August 29th at launch events in New Bedford and Fall River. Other local areas will be launching their local MassHire brand after the statewide launch through October. Board members should expect to receive invitations to these launch events, and are encouraged to attend.

Ms. Zhavoronkova then gave Board members and guests a preview of the [brand launch video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkNCO61_kc8), which will be officially unveiled at the statewide launch in August.

**Regional Planning**

Jennifer James provided an overview of the Regional Planning, an initiative of the Workforce Skills Cabinet. Ms. James detailed how regional planning was structured in the seven regions, the stakeholders that were represented on the regional planning teams (including some State Workforce Board members), and the content of the regional blueprints, which are to be completed by June 2018. The Regional Planning blueprints will include a data analysis of labor market supply and demand; the vision, mission and measurable goals for the region; priority industries and occupations for the region; an asset map of programs for priority industries and occupations; and regional strategies to achieve the goals.

The Workforce Skills Cabinet projected there to be skill gaps in critical industries like manufacturing, health, and tech, and structured their FY 19 budget priorities to address these skill gaps by aligning, expanding, and creating new resources for talent pipeline development programs funded through the state. In total, the Governor is requesting $18M in funding for the Workforce Skills Cabinet budget. Ms. James encouraged Board members to advocate for the FY 19 budget, and assist organizations who are working in workforce recruitment and training.

Jeffrey Turgeon of the Central Mass Workforce Investment Board and Tim Sappington of the North Central Investment Board presented on the Central Mass Regional Blueprint. At the outset of the process, the region conducted a survey of businesses who identified that finding talent is their #1 top challenge. This was due to an aging workforce, lack of work-ready job candidates, increased need for technical skills, and other barriers to employment, such as English language skills or a criminal background. There are, however, opportunities in the region, such as a growing populations of refugees and immigrants who increase the labor force, and strong higher education institutions. Within that landscape, Central Mass have centered on Healthcare & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics as their priority industries with related priority occupations. Professional and Technical Services, Construction, Retail/Hospitality and Education were identified as critical, but not prioritized industries, therefore efforts to fulfil skill needs in these industries will continue. Over the next 4 years, Central Mass’ regional team will pursue various strategies such as articulation agreements between educational and training institutions to streamline training and credentialing, expanding Adult Basic Education and English Language offerings, and creating apprenticeship opportunities.

**Youth Committee Update and Discussion**

Kathy Cullen-Cote provided an update on the State Board’s Youth Committee. The Committee met recently in order to review progress toward meeting committee goals, including launching a Grads of Life – Massachusetts Campaign. While progress has been made toward mobilizing employers & youth training providers, building system capacity, and enhancing policy, the committee has learned that it does not have the depth to realize its goals. Through discussions with key stakeholders, such as business leaders, the committee been encouraged to focus on aligning and coordinating with existing resources, rather than create a new body of work. Based on the lessons learned the committee is proposing to expand the committee membership to non-Board members, and focus on two the three key priorities that are additive to existing efforts.

Joanne Pokaski suggested that the committee focus be identified early on, perhaps before the committee starts meeting so there is a clear direction from the beginning.

**Promoting Economic Mobility and Work**

Jeffrey McCue presented on the Department of Transitional Assistance’s (DTA) efforts toward assistance low-income individuals and families reach economic self-sufficiency. DTA is doing this through leveraging WIOA to ensure shared investments in the workforce system benefit DTA client, engaging in the Learn-to-Earn initiative to address cliff effects, and forging new partnerships to help clients access an expanded network of resources. Internally, DTA is also transforming from a compliance to an economic mobility culture with a goal-oriented, family focused coaching model. Governor Baker also included items in his budget to help families support economic mobility, such as structuring programs to reduce the disincentive to work, and allowing workers to earn more income before their benefits are decreased, which helps benefit recipients save enough to offset the value of public benefits.

Board members expressed interest in learning more about this work. They also asked EOLWD to provide more information about the Governor’s budget and what they could do to support it’s passage, particularly on the items that were discussed in today’s meeting. One Board member asked whether the Board could vote to endorse the Governor’s budget. Donna Cupelo and Secretary Acosta responded that the Board is not prepared to take this action today and directed Cheryl Scott to receive guidance from legal counsel as to the Board’s scope of decision, and whether the Board could take a vote like this moving forward.

Donna Cupelo adjourned the meeting at 12:09pm.