

## **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of October 21, 2003**

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Karen McGee opened the meeting at 8:40 a.m. and welcomed everyone.

#### **Consent Agenda**

Chair McGee announced that the Council deferred two action items from the August 12, 2003 meeting and the minutes of that meeting need Council approval:

- **Minutes of April 8, 2003 meeting**
- **Minutes of August 12, 2003 meeting**
- **Request for use of Special Administration Fund (Transmittal #1)**

**Emma Gebo moved the Council accept the above items as submitted, seconded by Ruth Rathbun and carried unanimously.**

#### **Report from the Chair**

Chair Karen McGee advised the Council of the need to be proactive in WIA reauthorization. She said it is important that the Governor and other stakeholders communicate Idaho's position. Chair McGee also reported on her recent visit to Europe where she serves on an advisory committee for the U.S. military. She expressed her amazement at the number of U.S. companies in Europe and the need to raise the education levels in the U.S. so that we can create the necessary skills sets to compete. The Council discussed the need for increased math and science skills and the need to expand tech prep opportunities.

#### **Council Goals And Objectives (Transmittal #5)**

David Lehman began the discussion with an overview of the Policy Academy. He explained that the Academy allowed for the opportunity to discuss best practices and allow for states systems to evolve, meeting the challenges of a new century. The State of Idaho has a good system, especially when compared to other states where agency directors do not communicate with each other. Our system allows Idaho to deal with much more forward looking issues, and David commended IDOL for its efforts.

David introduced Dr. Michael Graham as the new Administrator for Vocational Rehabilitation.

David initiated a discussion about council goals by offering a series of questions about the character and value of the workforce system. Several themes emerged from the discussion.

The system is perceived as difficult to understand from a business perspective, but has demonstrated that it can be proactive and flexible to attract business. The Council considered whether the agencies regard themselves as a partner with the business community. They concluded that it is important to increase business understanding of system offerings.

The global economy demands more rigor in our schools, especially K-12 where teachers are often distracted from their mission by larger social-economic issues. Discussions included behavioral issues in the schools, lack of parental support, in some cases due to poverty and low wage jobs, lack of support for educational rigor, and an attitude that fails to convey a work ethic to children. Work ethic is a major issue for business. K-12 must provide a solid foundation for young people to prepare for the future.

The members also discussed the tension between statewide coordination vs. flexibility in the postsecondary system. A member expressed that the education system needs to deliver skilled workers when business needs them, not at the conclusion of a four year schedule. There was a suggestion that there needs to be more opportunity for short-term training and better transitions from short-term to higher education offerings. Flexibility is key.

The Council concluded that many of the educational issues need to be a point of focus if we are to produce a high quality workforce.

David then asked what the Council could do to lend direction to the system. Ideas included expanded dialogue with stakeholders, particularly the business and educational communities and the need to focus separately on short- and long-term goals. Considerable discussion took place regarding the escalating costs of health care and how this affects workforce issues. It was agreed that this should be a future agenda item.

David also sought input from those present as to how the Council could work better with local boards and local businesses. It was suggested that local boards could be the Council's link to local businesses and serve as the mechanism for communicating the needs of those entities. Council members agreed that it would be valuable to convene a panel of local board representatives at the next meeting to discuss local needs and ideas for enhancement of the system.

The next point of discussion centered on effective ways to connect workforce development with economic development. Council members agreed that there is a natural link as the workforce development system should be the vehicle that ensures that a skilled workforce is available for businesses brought in by economic development efforts. Concern was expressed that economic development efforts need to be as concerned about the needs of existing businesses and not just new businesses.

Next the Council discussed ways to increase the responsiveness of higher education to business needs in the short term. Gary Stivers pointed out that the institutions have been involved in long-range planning and are trying to be more responsive to business, but

indicated that these institutions need a clear goal of what business needs. Some discussion followed as to the merits of long-range planning vs. the need for flexibility at the postsecondary level and the necessity to balance these two.

Council members agreed that it is important to prepare workers for the global economy and help youth gain awareness of career ladders and making gains in the workplace in increments. There followed some discussion as how best to showcase best practices at the state and local level; staff pointed out that a number of websites already exist that contain this type of information.

### **Performance Evaluation Committee**

Committee Chair Emma Gebo presented the Committee's charge and summarized past efforts. She reported that the Committee focused on issues related to Title I funds and incentive grants, including accountability standards for Eligible Training Providers. The state has not developed system measures. Some states have adopted common measures or other processes to measure system performance. Much of the information collected by most states is administrative in nature. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is emphasizing cross-program/common measures, which several states appear to have implemented. Texas has a three-tiered measuring process, Oregon's system looks at "big picture" goals, while Washington and California have an outcomes goals measuring process.

Emma requested direction from the Council on how they wished to broaden the accountability system.

The Council wanted to expand beyond the current measures. There was interest in measuring the results of the education system, for example, seeing where students were six months out of high school. Some members wanted to make the process market driven with a suggestion to measure responsiveness to business needs. The Council will continue the discussion of measurement systems at its next meeting.

### **Workforce Development Training Fund**

Jay Engstrom from the Department of Commerce presented an overview of the Workforce Development Training Fund. To date, the training fund has achieved the following accomplishments:

Workforce Development Training Fund Revenues – \$26,527,047

Workforce Development Training Fund Award – \$19,264,497

Number of Employers – 99

Planned Number of New Employees – 12,299

Average Wage – \$10.47 + Benefits

Average Training Cost Per Employee – \$1,556

## **Report from External Committee on UI**

Dwight Johnson, Department of Labor, provided a report on the establishment and progress of the External Committee on Unemployment Insurance, which has been formed to review legislative recommendations developed by an internal committee from the Department of Labor to ensure an adequate UI trust fund. This Committee includes legislative representatives, business, and labor. The UI Trust Fund is under serious pressure due to the recession. Beginning in 2001, benefit payouts began to exceed tax receipts. This trend forces consideration of potential tax increases and/or benefit cuts during the 2004 legislative session in order to protect the solvency of the UI Trust Fund. Dwight provided the Council with the internal committee's recommendation paper and a variety of models/proposals being considered by the external committee.

Chair McGee thanked Dwight and invited Council members to contact Dwight if they were interested in being involved.

## **Report from Workforce Investment Area**

### **➤ Region III Presentation**

Bob Barber, Director of WorkSOURCE, took the lead in updating the Council on Area III's economic situation and workforce development activities. Bob showcased the One Stop's Extended Hours Pilot, the *IdahoWorks* Day open house and marketing, which kicked off on Labor Day, and the Continuous Improvement - Partnering Training they held this year.

Susan Choate presented project strategies and photos of Area III's youth council projects and park murals completed in the summer and updated the Council on other projects underway.

Cheryl Korn provided an overview of Area III's Improving Services to Business project, designed to convene a Health Care BIC to identify critical workforce training gaps within the market and develop training plans to mediate the gaps. Area III plans to replicate these endeavors with other high growth, high opportunity industries.

Bob noted that he is seeing a local board role develop of bringing industry leaders together who are frustrated with turnover and wanting to retain employees to discuss issues and share best practices.

Chair McGee thanked Area III staff for their presentations.

## **New Business/Set Date for next meeting**

Roger Madsen informed the Council that 2020 Task Force information is available on disc. If interested, please contact John McAllister.

There being no further business, Chair McGee noted the Council will be notified of the next Council meeting, which will be held in January or February. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Attendance:

Workforce Development Council  
October 21, 2003

Council Members:

Steve Ahrens  
Janet Aikele  
Lois Bauer  
Jerry Beck  
Coleen Erickson  
Millie Flandro  
Emma Gebo  
Cindy Hedge  
Marilyn Howard  
Jay Engstrom for LaMoyne Hyde  
Karl Kurtz (absent)  
Roger Madsen  
Karen McGee  
Ruth Rathbun  
Jim Soyk (absent)  
Shirley Stensgar (absent)  
Gary Stivers  
Dene Thomas  
Dave Whaley

Bob Perky  
Michelle Phipps  
Dania Rivers  
Angela Roan  
Tim Rubio  
Gerald Sedrick  
Shirley Spencer  
Ann Stephens  
Kris Suiter  
Alice Taylor  
Roy Valdez  
Kay Vaughan  
Nancy Vazquez  
Betty Wilson

Guests:

Toni Acarregui-Gable  
Melinda Adams  
Bob Barber  
Rico Barrera  
Cheryl Brush  
Leandra Burns  
Susan Choate  
Laura Gleason  
Michael Graham  
Sam Greer  
Jeanie Irvine  
Dwight Johnson  
David Lehman  
John McAllister  
Candy McElfresh  
Chuck Mollerup  
Sue Payne