

July 2012 Minutes

Northeast Minnesota
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING
Iron Range Resources – Eveleth MN
Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Regularly scheduled meeting called to order by Chair Stone at 10:07 a.m.

WIB members present:

Bud Stone, Sue Collins, Dave Hart, Tom Jamar, Allen Rasmussen, Roland Root, Mike Valentine, Kelly Zink

Excused: Janet Eichholz, John Grahek, Betsy Harmon, Terri Nystrom, Kevin Pietrini, Al Rudeck, Dennis Marchetti

Absent: Mark Adams, Paul Carlson, Craig Pagel, Mitch Robertson, Stacy Sinele

Guests: Roy Smith, Drew Digby, Jill Anderson

Staff: Ray Garmaker, Renee' Marconett

Motion made by Hart, supported by Valentine to approve the May 23, 2012 minutes as written; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Stone informed WIB members the election of officers will take place at the August meeting. Jill Anderson from Manpower in Duluth was introduced as a potential new WIB member.

Benchmarking "All Hands on Deck"- (Continuation)

Chair Stone updated board members on the Benchmarking "All Hands on Deck" Handbook outlining 15 recommendations for strengthening Minnesota's workforce. The WIB will focus their attention on benchmarking how the Northeast Region measures up to these recommendations. The first two topics were discussed at the May 2012 meeting.

Root began discussion on the third topic "**Expanding Work Opportunities for Minnesotan's with Disabilities**". The proportion of State employees with disabilities has steadily declined over the past nine years, from 7.8% in 2001 to 5.1% in 2009. A handout was distributed outlining Disability and Work Characteristics for NE Minnesota-Carlton, Itasca and St Louis counties. The survey includes 18-64 year olds with hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living disabilities. Out of the 3,000 State employees in our region, 140 are disabled. Root noted that many employees do not disclose their disability due to issues of discrimination in the workplace.

Workforce Centers must ensure they are accessible and usable to all disabled customers. The Virginia Workforce Center includes a small population of disabled individuals according to the Customer Registration System. Root mentioned that based on observation and working with other partners, disabled individuals receive the same quality and quantity of services as any other person visiting the Workforce Center.

Chair Stone mentioned the Itasca Strategic Alliance, which includes ODC, MDI, Hired Hands, and Access to Employment. This group indicated that business communities shy away from hiring disabled people. Root and Stone would like the WIB to research what impact could be made for more accessible opportunities to retrofit businesses in serving this population. They feel the WIB could potentially play a role in educating employers on a workforce that is substantially underutilized.

"Ensuring All High School Graduates are Ready for Success" is the fourth topic of discussion.

The Northeast Career EdVenture Project

The Northeast Career EdVenture pilot project is funded by the state legislature. This project will result in the expansion of career planning and guidance expertise available through the Office of Job Training to local K12 institutions. Career counselors will assist youth with work experience/internship opportunities, resume and application development, mock interviewing, job search/career laddering, college/post-secondary planning, financial aid/scholarship guidance, access to community resources, and transition planning.

Another component of this project is better connecting the business community to their local schools in the areas of eMentoring (an online mentoring model), hands-on demonstrations, class presentations, participating in

job/career fairs and mock interview events, and providing work experience opportunities for students. This project proposes to create a database of employers willing to work with schools in certain capacities.

Rehabilitation Transition Services

Department of Rehabilitation Services provides services to all high schools in the state with one third of the consumers being school-to-work transition students. Counselors work with disabled students in making the transition from school to work or post-secondary education.

Roadmap for Success

Chair Stone distributed a handout outlining the Roadway to Success project. This is a partnership between the Blandin Foundation and community stakeholders in Itasca County. This pathway aligns the collective focus and action to create a future in which all students and their families regardless of background, income, or geographic location, the resources, knowledge, relationships, support and skills needed to ensure a healthy future. This program does require every student to have some type of post-secondary certification/education/training, including military service.

Post-Secondary Education Opportunities (PSEO)

The two most accessed opportunities for students are either with PSEO or concurrent enrollments. Most of the technical programs offered in the high school are concurrently enrolled where the class takes place in the college or the high school and the high school teacher is mentored by a college instructor. PSEO is a statewide program for eligible junior and senior students to attend college level programs. Collins added that a good relationship needs to be developed between high school faculty and college campus instructors to ensure the best interest of students. K12 and upper division faculty need to meet and discuss who is teaching the foundational and pre-professional curriculum to develop trust between instructors to transcend mentoring and credential ideas.

Applied Learning Institute

Smith informed the Board the Applied Learning Institute is in its sixth year of operation. The mission of the ALI is to prepare students to be highly trained, knowledgeable workers who are equipped with the technical and problem-solving skills needed by employers everywhere. There are currently over 1,400 students enrolled in ALI courses with 17 northeast Minnesota school districts. College credits are received from either taking classes in high school through concurrent agreements and post-secondary education options through college campuses mainly in healthcare programs. Smith feels there is a very good structure in place for career and technical education across the region. Collins suggested WIB members visit schools participating in ALI to see the relationship which has developed between students and instructors, equipment investment, and what students are learning.

In 2009-2010 a group of superintendents and provosts were convened to discuss education innovation partnering and what should be done across the region for education as a whole to increase educational attainment, graduate rates, and career readiness. Three areas were defined by the group – concentrate on the student with individualized learning plans that helps plan out their education careers beyond high school; look at regional teaching and learning academies and how to collaborate and allow teachers time to develop curriculum and help define a career pathway; and link the technology from one school to another so students have access to curriculum and available to everybody. Plans are being developed in these areas with a working team and Smith expressed the challenges and our call to action of creating a more seamless education system.

Collins noted over 50% of students are not ready for college level learning and lack remedial reading/math skills. As a region, attainment and achievement is an issue and K12 needs to work together and focus on the assessment of learning outcomes. There is too much emphasis on grades and not enough about competency based learning.

Strengthening assessments to identify off-track students

Garmaker outlined various programs available through the NE MN Office of Job Training. The Summer and Year Round Job Training Program offers supportive, ambition-inspiring employment and training options to economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 21. Currently, there are 225 summer youth employment workers enrolled throughout the seven counties. Career counselors visit high schools to assist youth in providing positive attention, personal counseling and mentoring, building self-esteem to help develop and reach attainable career goals and assist in obtaining a GED or high school diploma and/or continuing post-secondary education.

Root complimented the NE MN Office of Job Training Summer Youth Program for assisting vocational rehabilitation youth to find work experience opportunities that are compatible with their disability.

TeenWorks

The TeenWorks Program is funded by Itasca Health and Human Services and is intended for students entering 9th or 10th grade. The program is designed to help prepare teens for the future by learning how to build self-confidence and social capital, make good choices, hone math and reading skills, and be effective in teamwork to achieve success in life and in work. Between 10-12 students participate each year for the two week session that runs from July 30th – August 10th.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Initiative

The STEM initiative is a new effort to create a regional network through the coordination of appropriate stakeholders to ensure the region has a cohesive system for supporting and promoting STEM occupations. It's designed to connect educators with the business community, establish common goals and metrics, and promote programming and value of STEM to students, families and community leaders.

Regional Applied Math Project (RAMP)

\$275,000 was received from the State to put together the RAMP initiative to increase the foundational math skills of students in our schools, through a teacher internship project. Educators were placed in internships with host businesses in order to identify how math is applied in a variety of career and technical occupations. The participants gained insight into desired work attitudes, habits, and occupational preparation, where they, in turn, imparted to students. This was a very successful project and WIB members discussed doing something regionally for less cost.

Successful Worker Job Description

The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, along with Itasca Economic Development Corporation and Maven Perspectives coordinated and facilitated three separate meetings with retail, core, and secondary employers from Itasca County. The meetings revealed a listing of specific skills, attributes, and education requirements fundamental to all jobs ranging from entry to top level positions and in all sectors from retail, to manufacturing and healthcare. The collective input of participating employers formed a comprehensive job description for a Successful Worker. The job description can help educators and educational administrators to form lesson plans in core curricular areas that will build the indicated competencies, generating a workforce that will lead to healthy businesses, communities and families.

Future Workers

The Future Workers Program is sponsored by the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and funded in part by the Blandin Foundation. The annual 2 hour event allows businesses to engage with 9th grade students in helping learn about jobs in the community, hiring practices, expectations, and what businesses look for in great employees. In groups of up to 10, students visit up to 3 businesses, leaving with a clear snapshot of what is expected of them in the workplace. Teachers, parents, community leaders, businesses, school administrators and students all benefit by learning firsthand what area employers required of their employees.

CEO's in the Classroom

The CEO's in the Classroom is coordinated through the efforts of Office of Job Training staff, for local business leaders to introduce concepts of career planning and academic readiness through the delivery of standard presentations to 8th graders across the region. Over 1,300 students have received presentations with the participating 20 schools. Jamar has been in contact with the Hibbing Chamber of Commerce to participate in this program. The Hibbing High School runs a similar program entitled Choices, so cost is an issue with administering two programs for students.

Miscellaneous

Digby gave a report on the flooding damage in Carlton County. Over \$106 million in damage was caused by the flash flood in June. This does not include damage to Sappi Paper, USD, or to tourism losses because of the floods and the long-term closure of Jay Cooke State Park. Out of 13,500 occupied homes, 4,800 had some damage. Out of that, 800 homes had significant damage. Between 800-1,000 homes need new furnaces, with only

2% having flood insurance. The timeframe is a very big issue in getting the massive repairs completed prior to the winter months.

Chair Stone distributed a handout explaining the GRAND Works project in Grand Rapids. This program is for low income adult residents of Itasca County who need to overcome employment barriers. Workshops are 3–4 hour sessions, most of which is work-at-your-own pace. The program focuses on positioning an individual in meaningful wage employment, up-to-date job search and applying strategies in today's electronic employment world, resume updates and interview skills, and meeting key people in the community who can open doors of opportunity. Twelve out of fourteen attendees received jobs from the last workshop held. Stone is anticipating this project be transferrable across the region.

WIB members gave brief updates of activities and ongoing projects in their area.

Due to time restraints, Chair Stone informed the Board they will discuss the next steps to be taken in developing a plan from recommendations in the "All Hands on Deck" Handbook at the August meeting.

The next WIB meeting will be Wednesday, August 22, 2012.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Posted: Oct 9th, 2012 8:00 AM