



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS

2009 ANNUAL MEETING

AUGUST 2-5, 2009

CHARLESTON PLACE, CHARLESTON, SC

----- NOTES -----

Introductions

Pat Hudson, Chair, South Carolina, Chair of the Association

- Pat welcomed the group to South Carolina and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

Presentation of the Slate of Candidates for Election of Officers

Terri Cole, Chair, New Mexico, Chair of the Nominating Committee

- Terri Cole presented the Nominating Committee's slate of candidates. They were:
 - Chair: Steve Hendrickson (Oklahoma Chair)
 - Vice Chair: Phil Dionne (Maine Chair)

Legislative and NGA Update with Q&A

Martin Simon, Program Director, Workforce Development, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

- The National Governors Association held their Annual Meeting in July 2009. At the meeting Governor Douglas of Vermont was named as the new chair of the association and Governor Manchin of West Virginia was named as the new vice chair.
- The NGA Center for Best Practices current projects include some of the following:
 - [Common Core Standards in Math and Language Arts](#) (Education Division)
 - [Green Economy](#) (Joint between the Social, Economic and Workforce Programs Division and the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Division)
 - Adult Learner Project (Joint between the Social, Economic and Workforce Programs Division and the Education Division)
 - Intergovernmental Workforce Collaborative between NGA and 6 other national intergovernmental groups (Social, Economic and Workforce Programs Division)

Linda Lawson, Legislative Director, Education, Early Childhood & Workforce Committee, NGA

- [Legislative Update Document](#)

Opening Keynote Session: Opportunities for States: The Post Recession Workforce System

A New Vision for the workforce in a Post Recession Era is the thread that ties multiple federal education and training programs together towards common goals. In this session, the speaker explored

opportunities for bold reforms to the post recession education and workforce systems that will prepare every individual for employment and advancement.

Speaker:

Louis Soares, *Director of the Economic Mobility Program, Center for American Progress*

- Louis presented on his paper that was released June 2009 entitled, [**“Working Learners: Education our Entire Workforce for Success in the 21st Century.”**](#) The report addresses the issues facing the current postsecondary system. In the report the following recommended changes to the postsecondary education system are made:
 - Create a new Micro-Pell Grant;
 - Invest in community colleges; and,
 - Modify workforce development programs.
- Louis’s presentation is located at the following link: [**PRESENTATION 1: SOARES**](#)

Green Jobs: How to Count, Grow and Prepare for Them

The Pew Center for the States released state data on the green economy in June. This session provided an overview of these state reports and how states can use this information to prepare for the green jobs of the future. A representative from California also gave an update on how the state was using this information to help with their green initiatives.

Speakers:

Mary Jo Waits, *Director, Social, Economic and Workforce Programs Division, National Governors Association*

- Mary Jo’s presentation is located at the following link: [**PRESENTATION 2: WAITS**](#)

Kil Huh, *Project Director, Pew Center on the States at Pew Charitable Trusts*

- Kil’s presentation is located at the following link: [**PRESENTATION 3: HUH**](#)

Barbara Halsey, *Executive Director, California Workforce Board*

- The [**State of California’s Green Jobs Council**](#) was created as part of the Green Collar Jobs Act, signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger on September 26, 2008. The act established the Green Collar Jobs Council (the Council) under the purview of the California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB). The CWIB is charged with developing a comprehensive workforce development plan for the State as described in the Workforce Training Act of 2008 and with federal responsibilities outlined in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
- The Green Collar Jobs Council is tasked with understanding the current and future workforce needs of the Green/Clean economy, developing a comprehensive strategy to prepare California’s workforce to meet the needs of businesses supporting the economy and ensure that efforts aimed at improving worker’s skills are coordinated and effective.
- The Council has a variety of members, bringing a diversity of perspectives and opinions to the green economy taking shape in the State of California. The Council has met six times since its inception and on July 28th announced California’s Green Workforce Initiative.
- The Council will be supporting two green forums in Southern and Northern California and they are releasing regional economic data on the green economy in the state.
- In the fall the state is convening a forum for the projects funded under CA’s Green Workforce Initiative. The state is also releasing technical assistance grants around the state. These grants are funded by \$20 million for the next three years from the Energy Commission. The initiative is also funded by state funds, ARRA funds and from the Governor’s 15% discretionary funds.

Communicating Workforce System and ARRA Successes

This session highlighted communication strategies for the workforce system and ARRA. A media specialist discussed the public perspective on the workforce system, the impact of the recession and retraining efforts and how states should communicate with the media to highlight successes from ARRA funding.

Speaker:

Jennifer Hahn, Principal, Douglas Gould and Company, Communications for Change

- Jennifer's presentation is located at the following link: [PRESENTATION 4: HAHN](#)

Keynote Session – The President's Perspective: Building a Strong Education and Training System Designed for the Jobs of the Future

This session focused on the Administration's plans for reforming the nation's education and training systems – addressing the continuum of learners from preschool, through k-12 and post secondary education, to building a career through life-long learning and skill development. It also touched on the reforms underway in both the Departments of Education and Labor to prepare current and future workers for jobs in the post recession economy. The session also addressed the Administration's plans for reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act and its place in the overall reform plan in addition to [President Obama's American Graduation Initiative](#) for reforming the community college system. The initiative was based on a [paper](#) created by the President's Council of Economic Advisors.

Speaker:

Martha Coven, Director of the White House Office of Mobility and Opportunities

- *Summary:* Coven discussed the Administration's plans for reforming the nation's education and training systems and highlighted key features of the America's Graduate Initiative announced by the President last month. She indicated that goals of the initiative include having an additional 5 million community college graduates and moving the United States to # 1 in post secondary graduates by 2020. Key components of the initiative discussed by Coven include: grants to modernize community college facilities that have become outdated; developing the next generation of online education that is free and of high quality; providing innovation grants to community colleges to partner with business and the workforce system to design programs that meet labor market needs and that lead to a job.
- Coven also discussed areas being considered for reauthorizing WIA, these include: providing tools to break through the program silos and encourage innovation; improving accountability and transparency by identifying the "right" measures and providing good information; moving to a more regional approach recognizing that labor market are regional; and providing "truly one-stop shopping" through consistent and high quality services across the one-stop system and making better use of technology and considering a recognizable "brand".
- Coven detailed comments covered three main topics including: the President's view on education and training, The President's Community College Initiative and WIA Reauthorization.
- ***The President's view on education and training.***
 - The President believes education and training are both pillars for a more prosperous era and he supports the concept of "cradle to career" learning. He also feels very strongly about the value of good parenting and its role in education.
 - By 2020 the President wants America to be the first in the world in graduation rates. This is highlighted in the President's American Graduation Initiative mentioned above. He would like to see 5 million additional graduates by 2020 and believes the community colleges are critical to achieving this goal. Under this initiative he is asking every American to commit to at least one year of post secondary education.

- Jobs requiring at least an associate's degree are growing at higher rates and supporting mechanisms to help Americans achieve high educational opportunities is critical to moving the economy forward.
- To achieve this goal the President has proposed the following:
 - *Early Learning Challenge Grants*. The Obama Administration's Early Learning Challenge Grant proposal challenges states to develop effective, innovative models that promote high standards of quality and a focus on outcomes across early learning settings, and dedicate \$10 billion over ten years toward this effort.
 - *Expanding Pell Grants and College Tax Credits and the American Opportunity Tax Credits*: The Recovery Act increased Pell Grants by \$500 to \$5,350 and created the \$2,500 American Opportunity Tax Credit for four years of college tuition. Now, the Administration is working to make these policies permanent and ensure the Pell Grant continues to grow faster than inflation. Together, the Recovery Act and President's Budget call for nearly \$200 billion in college scholarships and tax credits over the next decade.
 - *Simplifying the Student Aid Application*: The application for federal student aid has as many as 153 questions, creating major obstacle in the path of aspiring college students. More than a million students fail to apply for aid because of the application's complexity. Coven explained that the Administration is simplifying the financial aid process by modernizing the online application, seeking legislation that will eliminate unnecessary questions, and creating an easy process for students to use tax data to apply. The end result will be a modernized application that requests only easily obtainable personal information.
 - *Unemployed Workforce Initiative*. NEED HELP HERE – Coven said many colleges don't think they have discretion to assess unemployed workers income, but they do and they should be using it appropriately. She also said state should guide the unemployed to get education and training through the Pell grant initiative for UI recipients.
- **Community Colleges**
 - Coven said it is important to the President that everyone have a job at the end of a training or educational program. Currently there are 6 million people going through community colleges, however the completion rates in community colleges are very low with more than half of the students not graduating. She also said there should be a focus on college graduation rates, not college enrollment rates. Under this area the President is proposing the following:
 - *Training facilities*. President Obama is proposing a new \$2.5 billion fund to catalyze \$10 billion in community college facility investments that will expand the colleges' ability to meet employer and student needs. The resources could be used to pay the interest on bonds or other debt, seed capital campaigns, or create state revolving loan funds.
 - *Online learning*. Invest and create next generation of online classes and partner with entities to offer a wide range of courses. There is research out of Carnegie Mellon University citing the impact of online learning.
 - *Community College Innovation Grants*. States and institutions can compete for these grants by demonstrating a partnership with the workforce system. The grant focus on the following:
 - Programs designed jointly with employers;
 - Community college programs that blend basic skills with occupational training (WA's I-BEST is a good example);
 - Building better transitions between high schools and community colleges; and

- Offering more than a course catalog – providing more opportunities for career pathways.
- **WIA Reauthorization**
 - The Administration has not made an announcement on their policy for WIA Reauthorization. However, the President has said there will be reauthorization soon and he wants to continue to streamline the system so everything works better together. He also wants to wait until the full impact of the ARRA funds is seen.
 - The Departments of Education and Labor are working very closely to look at reauthorization and changes to the system. This is supported by Jane Oates', the Assistant Secretary of ETA, and her strong background in education.
 - Coven also highlighted the following areas of focus for reauthorization:
 - A need for tools to break through silos and cut things that stifle innovation
 - Experimentation with program rules and the consolidation of programs
 - A need for better accountability and transparency
 - Bringing more of a regional perspective to the workforce system
 - The WIRED grants were a good attempt at doing this and the Innovation Cluster in ME is another good example of things that are currently working.
 - Providing true one-stop shopping. Currently there is no consistency to the one-stop and no sufficient branding.
 - Technology helped elect the president and there is an interest in investing in more technology for the workforce system.
- **Questions**
 - *Why has the President not laid out an agenda for WIA Reauthorization?*
 - *Answer:* He wants to better understand the impact of ARRA on workforce. He is also working on healthcare reform which is taking up a lot of time and similar resources. The Community College initiative came up because there was an opportunity for funding in Congress.
 - *A lot of people are using waivers right now to get around some of the issues with the workforce system. Would the administration be open to looking at ways to improve the system where current waivers exist?*
 - *Answer:* Yes, the Administration is open and welcomes suggestions from associations such as the National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs (Chairs Association).
 - *What does the President think about access to Basic Skills Education on the route to a career?*
 - *Answer:* There are two routes: 1) Adult Education through reforming the community colleges; and, 2) The Administration sees both routes as imperative to fixing the system. A large number of Americans that would rather go to community college than get a four year degree and it is important that our educational and workforce system support this.
 - *Maryland recently merged Title I and Title II, will the Administration look at merging these on a federal level?*
 - *Answer:* The Administration has not made a decision on this yet.
 - *NJ also recently combined Title I and Title II. Will there be collaboration of federal agencies to do this and would it be easier to have states do this if it starts on the federal level?*
 - *Answer:* A good example of something that has worked on this topic is the existence of literacy Centers at one-stops that are connected to work ready credentials.

- *There is no community college system in the Virgin Islands. How will the President's recent community college initiative impact other entities with no community college system?*
 - *Answer:* There needs to be a more detailed look at the legislation to identify issues such as this and also to make sure the funds cannot be accessed without the existence of a community college system.
- *With the new restrictions in ARRA, is there a concern of moving back to income eligibility? Will there ever be a move to skill eligibility?*
 - *Answer:* The Administration wants to see how the ARRA funds work and there is no move to change eligibility right now, but the Administration is open to suggestions like that in future decisions.
- *How can the workforce system convince the community colleges that a degree should lead to a career?*
 - *Answer:* There might be a shift in eligibility funding that goes to states from a focus from enrollment rates to graduation rates.
- *How is the administration measuring how the ARRA funds are working?*
 - *Answer:* The Administration is still measuring the impact of the ARRA funds. An immediate factor that shows success is the take up of WIA funded services.
- *What can private sector entities take away from this discussion and the President's recommendations?*
 - *Answer:* It is imperative for the private sector to take every opportunity to connect with the workforce system. Employers in areas that have skill shortages should be working directly with the system. However, it is important for the private sector to give input on improvements to the system because it must be something that is attractive for employers to use.
- *How will partnerships and transformation occur at scale? There are a lot of pilot initiatives supported by the federal government and things need to be taken to scale. President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that states leading the way on school reform will be eligible to compete for \$4.35 billion in Race to the Top competitive grants to support education reform and innovation in classrooms. Between the 2009 budget and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), more than \$10 billion in grant money will be available to states and districts that are driving reform. The states were at the table to help bring this to scale. If states are at the table, they can help bring workforce initiatives to scale through efforts with the NGA.*
 - *Answer:* Initiatives like this will help and the Administration welcomes the input from states moving reforms to the workforce system forward.
- *How can the association be relevant in WIA Reauthorization*
 - *Answer:* There are many ways, but two big suggestions are: 1) share thoughts and comments with your members of Congress; and, 2) have the workforce community speak as one voice because often if the message is organized and on point, it will be easier to garner support from Congress and the Administration.
- *Participant Statement: Performance indicators for workforce programs aren't applied to community colleges and high schools. DOL should develop performance metrics with outcomes that align the indicators from community colleges and high schools. It is also important to have the community college system take into account employment indicators.*
- *Participant Statement: There are a lot of states moving toward sector strategies because it is important to look at employers with and existing workforce. It is important for the Administration to continue with these efforts and not lose employers who are already at the table. It is important to look at those that need the most help, but also continue to help others that benefit from having existing employers at the table – don't forget the incumbent worker.*

A New Vision for the Workforce System in a Post Recession Economy

This session examined and provided recommendations for the transformation of states' approaches to basic skills development to better meet the needs of adult learners, employers, and the state in an ever-changing economy. The speaker provided data on the impact of middle skill credentialing on the greater workforce system.

Speaker:

Robert I. Lerman, Professor of Economics, American University and Institute Fellow, Urban Institute

- Robert's presentation is located at the following link: [PRESENTATION 5: LERMAN](#)

South Carolina Business and Industry Showcase

The State of South Carolina provided a tour of the Trident Technical College's Complex for Economic Development featuring their culinary, aerospace and state apprenticeship initiatives. Also featured was the Trident Workforce Investment Boards partnership with Lowcountry Manufacturing Council in creating the Manufacturing Training Program. This program has played an important role in training workers for the Boeing 787 Dreamliner program which includes the assembly of the structures and systems installation of the 787 aft-fuselage sections at the Global Aeronautical plant in Charleston. The meeting participants also were treated to the first public tour of the plant.

Separate Chairs and Staff Directors' Breakouts

Chairs Notes:

What are the big issues you heard over the last few days?

- The Chairs Association can act as the leader for state WIBs and should have a voice with new legislation and changes to the workforce system.
- There was discussion around the right role for employers in the workforce system: Is it to communicate job and skill needs?
- It is important to re-examine the majority role of employers on SWIBs.
- The Administration needs to understand a continuum of K-12 to post secondary and beyond – jobs – careers.
- There are large percentages of high school students who need remediation to succeed in college.
- It is critical to support communication between workforce and education.
- The state boards help bring the pieces of the workforce system together. They bring together education, identify prep work to enter the workforce and identify employer needs. They also identify the gaps between these entities.
- Community college and education leaders must move education to be better connected to the needs of the new economy.
- There is still a disconnect between high schools and community colleges.
- The Chairs Association should look at “career pathway” model for law schools as a good model for other occupations.
- It is a time of transformation (Louis Soares).
- Employers can rely on work readiness certification – the model should be taken nationwide.
- It is important to train for a job that is ready to be filled.
- It is important to blend occupational skills with academic skills.
- Currently there is a transition with high school and junior colleges.

Why are state WIBs important?

- They provide guidance/leadership on high performance.
- They bring business together around skills and knowledge required by the workforce.
- They focus on “big picture” issues and can be advisory.

- They promote the value of community colleges to students.
- What is the board's role in the continuum of education to jobs? Careers?
- It is important to evaluate boards' agendas to find out if they are doing what they should be doing because there are inconsistencies across boards.

What do you want to communicate on the importance of state workforce boards? (and local boards)

- It is important to align education and workforce and to focus on training for a job that is there.
- The Administration and Congress should evaluate the oversight role of WIBs (state and local) and also revisit the number of WIBs that exist.
- It is important to give structure and shape to community colleges and to also connect with state and local WIBs.
- During the reauthorization of WIA there should be changes to transform/update system and build on the best of WIA.
- SWIBs' role is about matching supply and demand - demand issues that need to be met (out of community colleges).
- The role of state boards is to create a state plan to guide local plans.
- It is important to solve remedial role of community colleges.
- The state chairs need clear expectations from the Administration.
- There is a gap with high school students and the average age of community college students.

Staff Notes:

What are the big issues you heard over the last few days?

- The Administration is putting a big emphasis on community colleges, but there is still no clear understanding of what the Administration wants the system to do and be in the future.
- The Administration wants to wait to see how the system handles ARRA and those results will drive a decision on changes to the workforce system.
- There is still a need to clarify the definition of green jobs.
- There was discussion around how to simplify the system, but stop short of consolidation of the system.
- The work state boards do with incumbent workers interacts with working with the larger population.
- There was discussion around adult basic skills – specifically the linkage between adult learners and community colleges is growing. States are supporting moving these entities together.
- Sector strategies address the regional needs that were discussed during the meeting.
- The Administration wants to serve individuals with the most need. There was concern that this shift in focus will hurt the progress towards demand driven methods.
- It is important to message career ladder/pathways as best practices models in the system to business.
- There is concern there is a shift to income eligibility instead of skills under the new Administration.
- Branding the system is critical to help communicate with Congress and the Administration.
- There should be common outcomes between DOL and the Department of Education (Education) and the chairs should be a part of the conversation.
- The Administration is paying attention to the Florida example of data sharing.
- There are different performance metrics for colleges vs. the workforce system and this should be rectified because it causes problems.

What do you want to communicate on the importance of state workforce boards? (and local boards)

- Jane Oates is concerned about the quality of training providers. She is also committed to serving economically challenged individuals and she is also concerned with the continuum of credentials and college credit. It is important to make the role of state boards clear to her.

- A consistent and useful measurement for graduation rates is needed.
- The state chairs can help to match the graduation rate indicators and workforce system metrics by taking an intermediary role and providing guidance. They also can ensure the relevance with industry.
- It is important to build accountability that is not driven by money.
- It is important to continue “demand-driven” thinking.
- State systems don’t usually run programs.
- States must be “Demand-driven, supply-savvy.”
- The state WIB is the voice of the employer and can also act as an incubator of new ideas.
- An important role of the state WIB is to work with other systems (education, etc). The state WIB has roles that reach beyond WIA and it has the ability to make connections across state government.
- It is important to shift back to strong career counselors in the education and workforce systems.
- The promise of the state WIB hasn’t been actualized in every state and there are inconsistencies.
- The development of systems and policy should occur with the interaction between other systems.
- The right metrics for education and workforce are critical for strong and consistent results.
- The state WIB can align with the Administration to help with the community college initiative

What are the major messages for the Administration and for Jane Oates?

- State WIBs can help the Administration carry out their goals with community colleges while meeting the needs of industry. State WIBs can also help the Administration make connections with industry.
- The state chairs can help to break down silos with efforts of the community colleges.
- Give examples of how state WIBs helped with WIRED efforts.
- USDOL can leverage authority through state WIBs.
- Flexibility needs to occur in order to help incumbent workers.
- The Summer Youth program and classroom training should both be included in WIA Reauthorization.
- The state chairs support removing barriers between Title I and Title II.
- It will be important to explain the complexities of I-Best and why it is hard for most states to implement.
- Ask about the role for state WIBs in the Administration’s efforts for online training?
- The systems needs to be streamlined and it should be easier to access (“if you’re poor, you shouldn’t have to prove it”).
- The chairs need more information on trade and dislocated worker funding.
- There should be increased flexibility of membership on state boards.
- Maintaining Governors’ reserve – remove politics
- It is important to give governors options to integrate WIA funds.
- There should be a wiki or website to share information between chairs and staff.

Business Meeting

A quorum was established based on the provision in the by-laws that allows those present to reach quorum. This motion was made by the Chair of New Mexico (Terri Cole) and seconded by the Chair from Massachusetts (Joe Bevilacqua).

- Areas of focus for the next 6 months
 - It was decided that the incoming chair and vice chair will work with NGA to create letters based on the suggestions from the Chairs Only and Staff Only Sessions. The letters will be addressed to Jan Oates and Martha Coven.

