



State of Tennessee

State Workforce Development Board Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Friday June 3, 2022 - 10:00 AM – 11:37 AM CDT

Board Members Present

Martha Axford (East)	
	Commissioner Jeff McCord
Jason Bates	
Tim Berry	
	Stuart Price
Rhonnie Brewer	
Mayor Kevin Brooks	
Designee: Deputy Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street for Commissioner Clarence Carter	Kyle Spurgeon Jeff Vance Kevin Vaughn
Bill Godwin	
Marshall Graves (Southeast)	Ron Wade (Greater Memphis)
Ann Hatcher	Assistant Commissioner Kevin Wright
Christine Hopkins (Southern Middle)	

Board Members Present by Proxy

Assistant Commissioner Jay Baker –
Teresa Smith, Proxy

J. Paul Jackson – Marshall Graves, Proxy

Designee: Chief Jean Luna-Vedder for
Commissioner Penny Schwinn – Matthew
Spinella, Proxy

Ruste Via – Marshall Graves, Proxy

Members Absent

Proxy Brandy Foust for
State Senator Paul
Bailey

Proxy Sarah Noel for
State Representative
Clark Boyd

Jonathan Cantrell

Michelle Falcon

Ben Ferguson

Rick Isaacson

Vonda McDaniel

Mayor E.L. Morton

Designee: Policy
Director Tony Niknejad
for Governor Bill Lee

Barry Ray

Designee: Consultant
Jennie McCabe for
Commissioner Bob
Rolfe

Location in parenthesis represents the state board member's membership on a local workforce board.

Call to Order and Welcome

Chairman Berry called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. After a welcome and standard protocol reminders, Chairman Berry mentioned that the State Plan Modification is approx. two weeks away from being approved. Since our last meeting in March our WIOA partners have continued to revise the plan based on federal feedback.

Chairman Berry also welcomed new member Kevin Wright to the meeting. Mr. Wright is the new Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Rehabilitation Services who was unable to attend our last meeting. He is replacing

former Assistant Commissioner Mandy Johnson who took a position in the private sector. Two others have new roles: Ann Thompson, ECD Commissioner Bob Rolfe's designee, has taken a position in the private sector with the Ford Company and Chief Jean Luna who was DOE Commissioner Penny Schwinn's designee [will be taking] a position as Director of Montgomery County Schools. Although they will be missed Chairman Berry wished them well in their new roles.

Mayor Kevin Brooks and Ms. Christine Hopkins

Two board members were recognized for their faithful service: Mayor Kevin Brooks and Ms. Christine Hopkins. Mayor Brooks was a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives for approximately 12 years and has been serving on our board for several years. His was recognized for his service, time, input, and good questions. Ms. Hopkins is the Executive Director of Middle Tennessee Rural Re-entry and has been serving the state in several capacities during her career. She's been very active in the Southern Middle LWDB and as an Oversight Committee member with us. Ms. Hopkins was thanked for all her years of service to the SWDB and to the state as a whole.

Roll Call

Iler Bradley conducted the roll call and established the presence of a quorum.

Approval of Minutes (vote required)

Chairman Berry requested a motion to approve the March 25, 2022 minutes. It was moved by Jason Bates and seconded by Martha Axford to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

Workforce Advisory Overview – Dr. Jeff McCord, Commissioner – TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)

Commissioner McCord thanked those who participated in the strategy session Thursday June 2. He said we were really honest about where we are going because we are in an interesting time and continue to be in interesting times. We've gone from the highest unemployment rate in state history to the lowest. We have more people employed now than we did before the pandemic: actually, more people are working in Tennessee now than in state history. Yet we continue to struggle with the labor supply shortage, we have long-term demographic issues (our working age population is flat to declining) so we're going to be in interesting times for a while. Part of our strategy session yesterday was considering how we navigate this, where are we going, and what's our true north and he thinks we got there. The accomplishments of this board so far and navigating through the pandemic should give us all a lot of confidence going forward that we can and will navigate issues as they come up.

Unemployment Insurance Overview – Rusty Felts, UI Assistant Commissioner – TN Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)

UI Assistant Commissioner Rusty Felts gave the update, noting that UI is reaching timeliness in unemployment in several areas they have not seen in over two years. They are meeting their federal timeliness standard in appeals - nobody is working overtime in their appeals unit. In claims operations, while they continue to work through a series of clean-up of older claims that were caused from the different programs that had never existed before, they're getting extremely close to being current and working every day to improve their federal timeliness standards there. The unemployment division still has approx. two or three more years of cleanup work. For example, they had to suspend some tasks such as employer cross matches where they match up wages that were drawn from an employee at the same possible time that they could have been drawing unemployment. UI just sent out the first quarter of 2020 - as they put staff members back on their regular responsibilities - and they had as many as 400,000 hits in that one effort that will have to be investigated. They also have monies that need to be recovered that people could have drawn but were not entitled to, but they are making progress. At the same time, they need employees just like all the employers around the state. They are now a customer looking to [WFS Assistant Commissioner] Steve Playl and his group and this partnership to help them. Lastly, because the UI division supplies the customers for Workforce Services, they want to start expressing to claimants that unemployment insurance is a benefit of work (not just a benefit to draw), and to shorten that length of time to protect the health of the trust fund. There are whisperings of a possible recession and we need to be ready for that. Mr. Felts thanked us for our support. Chairman Berry noted that he was happy to see the low numbers for unemployment.

Committee Updates

Prior to the committee updates, Chairman Berry noted that our attendance at committees was not stellar today. He wanted us to understand our role on the committees is very important. Previously, we talked about a policy that will allow us to make a lot of the decisions in the committees and then just report to the board but if we don't have that same participation in the committees as we do on the board that's not going to do us any good. He encouraged us to take our role on our committee seriously and make sure that attendance is what it needs to be prior to each of our board meetings.

Oversight Committee – Presented by Vice Chair Rhonnie Brewer

The Oversight committee had a great presentation from Justin Attkisson about structure organizationally from the state all the way down to our local workforce boards. They are planning as a committee continue that conversation each time they meet and go over that structure. They believe it's important because if they're going to be helping to provide oversight for the Governor, we need to make sure that they understand what we're providing oversight for. Ms. Brewer noted that she was sure Mr. Attkisson would not mind sharing that with others as well.

They also discussed Smart Simple, a program that has recently rolled out in the last three weeks that reviews our sub grantee and executive dashboards regarding the grants that we provide as a state. The committee is really looking forward to that because that process will provide us with real-time data. In the past we've had conversations about seeing reports without knowing whether the information was up to date. This tool will provide this information: Workforce Services and Adult Education will both use this tool, and AE will go live in July.

Their Joint Monitoring and Compliance Workgroup has a policy that's looking at all our statewide policy making updates. That information will be going public soon and out for public comment for 60 days. Ms. Brewer encouraged everyone to look at it and asked if we can spread the word that this information is out there.

Operations Committee – Presented by Chair Stuart Price

The Operations Committee had a lot of robust discussion starting with a presentation on the interagency agreement report - DHS and SNAP Employment and Training. They got an update on the structure, and some detail on the fact that they've served 2,900 individuals and their funding is a little over \$2 million and so they have a target of a thousand dollars per participant and they're very close to it.

Job Seeker Workgroup - The presentation by Carla Garrett and Michelle Joyner included an update that they've created a workforce resilience plan that will outline the objectives and action steps to be taken by the work group. They have circulated this plan which they've created with the other agency inputs as part of their work group. It will be presented to the committee for review in the coming days if not today, and Mr. Price will circulate it to the committee via email for comment and feedback.

They are also in the midst of conducting a gap analysis, fundamentally establishing the journey a job seeker goes through when engaging with our systems which is very much in alignment with the some of the thoughts and outcomes and ideas shared yesterday in our strategic planning session. They're expecting an outcome in April of next year with a fully integrated plan in place.

Business Services Workgroup - Teresa Smith and Eric Horton admitted that they need to come to a stop and reassess their strategic goal statement and their charter to confirm that what they're doing is in alignment with what the board expects from them. They have made the observation that they feel there needs to be greater collaboration between the work groups to avoid redundant efforts. It takes some courage when you're in the midst of an effort to say we need to come to an all stop and we need to realign ourselves. The committee appreciates them for doing that and we look forward to them having a redefined strategic vision statement for their group at our next meeting. Also, with the turnover their group has experienced they hope to be fully staffed with all the necessary agencies represented.

Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Workgroup: Matthew Spinella and Holly Free-Ollard gave their report and the committee is really excited about what they've accomplished. They are over-achievers, setting ambitious goals and exceeding them. They had a lot of detail around that in their presentation. Perhaps most significantly they're recognizing the need to conduct an exploratory effort around the potential benefits of a policy in place defining how our LWDA's engage with school districts and providing some guidance and expectations to them.

Innovation Committee – Presented by Chair Kevin Vaughn

Committee meeting highlights include the following:

Mr. Ben Passino reviewed the achievements of the existing 12 KPIs up through March of this year against the goals they set back in July 2021. Even though Tennessee just came out of a pandemic, we're on course to achieve 8 out of our 12 goals for this year. There are some areas of improvement, and these areas are Re-employment Services, Senior Employment, Trade, and Wagner-Peyser. The staff and local boards seek to uncover best practices and address systematic concerns in many cases.

The Innovation committee commended a couple of areas: Northern Middle reached their highest achievement board. Upper Cumberland was recognized for the most improved. Those who work with justice-involved individuals achieved their enrollment goal a full quarter ahead of schedule: they had 2,787 new enrollments.

TANF/Family First has expressed interest in joining us through the development of two pilot KPI measures. We're glad to see that they would like to be a partner.

In addition to those program-specific goals staffed to the state board, the committee has heard feedback about creating outcome-based KPIs that span across the WIOA programs. Some of these KPIs that are in the draft stage form are 1) local workforce participation which focuses on getting Tennesseans back to work, particularly those with significant barriers to employment, 2) family sustaining wage attainment - families that earn these wages with proven skills in employer demand fields and have gained independence with government supports and 3) education attainment, which is high school equivalencies or post-secondary credentials which help keep Tennessee's labor pool competitive for tomorrow's jobs. The staff is still working to keep these innovation measures dubbed KPI 2.0 online as soon as they can. They don't foresee it happening in this coming month but as soon as they can they'll get that online.

[2022 Regional and Local Plan Modification Approvals – James Roberson, Workforce Services Assistant Administrator - TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development \(TDLWD\)](#)

About three weeks ago the Workforce Services (WFS) division provided twelve (12) one-page draft documents to the SWDB: three (3) regional planning council recommendations and nine (9) local board recommendations for SWDB approval. Once these documents are approved, WFS will send the final documents to the regional planning councils and the local boards. The intent was to present the highlights and give us an opportunity for questions.

To keep these regional and local plans as living documents, WFS will use the commendations and the recommendations as an opportunity to provide technical assistance. The WFS team has talked extensively about ensuring that they put a lot more emphasis on regionalism. Mr. Roberson presented these recommendations by region: West, Middle, and East, and Chairman Berry noted that we will vote on these modifications the same way.

Overall Commendations included:

- Improvements in the way the local boards came together to develop the regional plans and a lot more strategy behind the regional approaches.
- Identified opportunities to streamline policies across local areas
- More detailed business employer strategies in the regional plans than they have been in the past
- The utilization of access points/satellites across the local areas to be addressed at the regional level (so when the regional planning councils are working and meeting with each other they're actually taking the advice and the best practices of the local boards and applying that at the regional level)
- Organized regional planning council meetings with measurable strategies and goals (particularly in the West and Middle regions)
- Regionals and locals making efforts to acquire more funding to support regional and local activities

Overall Recommendations included:

- The need for further development and more consistent service delivery and operations approaches across the region
 - "Buy-in" from all the locals in respective regions - the framework is there for strong regional approaches (but in some cases you may see more buy-in from two of the three rather than all three of the local boards)
 - The need for further developed strategies to ensure alignment and success of new regional initiatives
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- The need for identifying strategies and resources to measure the health of the region including the regional investments, meeting emerging workforce needs, and creating programming and strategies to reach vulnerable populations across the region (Internally WFS is going to do some evaluation of programs to work with their Office of Programs and Workforce Solutions, and Oversight, and collectively put together some evaluated type measures on the return of investment not only at the local level but at the regional level.)
- From a local perspective
 - o Focus on budget related overviews – need for budgeting over a two-year period
 - o Spend time across the 14 Significant Barriers to Employment – need for diversification of partnerships to serve those respective barriers

Ann Hatcher: The piece about the budgeting – the 2nd to the last bullet – was the one that jumped out to me: that was on every single one. Can you just talk about that a little bit more: is it that detailed budgets aren't there, they just weren't explained very fully in the plans?

James Roberson: I may need to lean on Ivan and his group because they did the actual review of those budgets but basically the request was to provide a two-year budget since we had a two-year modification to the plan, and most came back with a one-year budget. Technically you could multiply it twice but that's not exact right because they they've got all the career service providers, the one stop operators, and a lot of the local areas are considering either moving their affiliate sites to satellite sites or even closing some of the affiliate sites which will impact their budgets on infrastructure so they may not have planned from a standpoint of a two year out. We've got more areas that are making access points which are do not have infrastructure costs so where they may have infrastructure costs in several of their affiliate sites this year they may not have them next year. That's more of just a work in progress from the standpoint of ensuring that when you provide a two-year budget that you're giving us an idea of what your plans are for two years... We want to spend more time with them with each local board respectively to say what are your plans for potentially creating less affiliate sites and more access points.

Steve Playl: If I can add to that I think there was a little bit of confusion at the local board level: where they're only receiving one-year funds their budget is received on a one-year basis. They submit a one-year budget so we were asking them to project out what that would look like over two years based on the modifications so that's an area for technical assistance it's not an area of non-compliance.

Mr. Roberson presented highlights from each regional and local plan. He also noted that their intent in the next process of the regional and local planning is to have a regional plan that contains the local board plans that support that regional plan rather than have them separate and then trying to make them connect. This will streamline their approach so two years from now we should see a difference in the presentations: the local boards will have a regional approach and will be able to show how the local board is supporting that regional plan.

West Region (includes the Northwest, Southwest, and Greater Memphis local boards)

Commendations - Expansion of access points across the region and those were the ones that were previously implemented in the Greater Memphis area where they have 80+ access points (this creates an opportunity to really get the American Job Center system out there in the public); Northwest and Southwest boards working together to form a more robust consolidated business services team to create consistency for employer engagement

Recommendation - Ensure that they're leveraging external partners to provide supportive services across the region

Northwest TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendation - Multiple initiatives that you'd heard of in the past including the Re-Entry Advance Manufacturing Program (RAMP), the Registered Electric Apprenticeship Program (REAP), the Orchard House for Re-Entry, and the Mock It Till You Rock It high school program

Recommendation - Ensure strong implementation of identified strategies which support apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and other customized training programs

Southwest TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendation - Regional and Local partnership with the Tennessee Home Builders training in the local area jails including plans to scale the initiative to the construction needs with the Blue Oval City project

Recommendation - Opportunities to continue programmatic development of career pathways and expand access to education and training with K-12 and post-secondary partners

Greater Memphis TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendation – Identified nearly \$60 million in additional grant funding opportunities outside of WIOA funding to develop a network of access points and a new “opportunity center” in Memphis which will bring together multiple core WIOA and additional partners in one location to improve jobseeker experience

Recommendation - Plan lacks some specific strategies around addressing barriers including access to employment training and supportive services for those in the rural areas

Per Mr. Roberson, the West Tennessee regional and local plan modifications have satisfied the minimum compliance criteria outlined in the 2022 regional and local plan guidance that was released in January and the Division of Workforce Services recommended the approval of their regional and local plan modifications.

Chairman Berry noted that every four years we do an extensive review and this is the midpoint check-in.

It was moved and seconded to accept the recommendation for West Tennessee which includes the region and the three local boards.

When Chairman Berry called for discussion, Rhonnie Brewer noted that she appreciated the recommendation regarding the rural areas because Greater Memphis has a huge focus on the urban areas and this was something that stood out to her as well. Jason Bates appreciated the Southwest and the Northwest districts working together on improving efficiencies. He thought it was a good approach because those two areas are so close: it's a great idea to look at how we can make that area more efficient and robust, so he appreciated that insight.

The vote was taken and the motion passed.

Middle Region (includes the Northern Middle, Southern Middle, and Upper Cumberland local boards)

Commendation - Identified opportunities to streamline processes including a review of each of the local board supportive services policies with the intent to create a

consistent regional policy that aligns needs to rural, urban, and suburban situations (Their approach may be a promising practice or maybe a best practice across the state for supportive services.)

Recommendation - Ensure consistent communication across core WIOA

and additional workforce partners in the region to clearly inform all workforce partners of the regional initiatives

Northern Middle TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendation – Their effort to expand delivery through a comprehensive service model pilot with a centralized hub and multiple franchises across a local area to better connect businesses with well-trained and qualified applicants; their involvement with multiple partners such as the Martha O'Brien Center, Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; seeking additional funds beyond that allocated in WIOA, including applying for funding from the Good Jobs Challenge, Pathways Home, YouthBuild, TANF Community and TANF Opportunity Act

Recommendation - Identify specific strategies to support justice-involved individuals and leverage the department's Office of Re-entry for additional technical assistance and training

Southern Middle TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendations - Focus on serving justice-involved individuals was very consistent throughout the plan and demonstrated through multiple initiatives to support re-entry across the local area; Prioritization of service delivery in the rural and economically at-risk or distressed counties through multiple specialized centers that they set up and other participant engagement strategies that they presented

Recommendation - Encouraged to leverage the department's Office of Re-entry for additional technical assistance and training regarding the implementation and alignment with state level re-entry strategies

Upper Cumberland TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendation - Identified “Work First” initiative and strategy to improve employer engagement and connect job seekers with employers through aligned work-readiness training, Jobs4TN postings, etc. and also incorporated a “Work First” performance metric at the local level; Prioritization of service delivery in the rural and economic distressed counties through the multiple specialized centers and other partner engagement strategies which included significant detail of how the effectiveness of service delivery in the areas will be monitored

Recommendation – Identify specific strategies to support co-enrollments including co-enrollment with SNAP E&T and RESEA where training expenditures and enrollment is low (The other recommendation to “develop career pathways such as training employment pathway for individual expressing interest in their respective occupations and industries” needs to be removed because it was outlined very well in their 2022 local plan.)

Per Mr. Roberson, the Middle Tennessee regional and local plan modifications have satisfied the minimum compliance criteria outlined in the 2022 regional and local plan guidance that was released in January 2022 and the Division of Workforce Services recommended the approval of their regional and local plan modifications.

It was moved and seconded to accept the recommendation for Middle Tennessee which includes the region and the three local boards.

When Chairman Berry called for discussion, Commissioner McCord asked for a quick overview of the Office of Re-entry (OOR). Assistant Commissioner Steve Playl noted that the office was established through state funding and is led by Dr. William Arnold. The primary focus is three-fold:

1. Looking at the data around justice-involved individuals who are re-entering society after being incarcerated. We have 95 counties and each one has a county jail, and we also have the TN Department of Correction which operates our prison system. The OOR coordinates all of that data across all of those different structures and different facilities
 2. Bringing awareness to the fact that 95% of individuals who are currently incarcerated in TN will return to their communities and helping to support those individuals as they transition from incarceration to employment
 3. Providing funding to support the local areas and local boards that are supporting this work on the ground.
- There continues to be a need for a greater focus on this population. Since OOR is a new office they are trying to emphasize collaboration and utilization of this resource.

Commissioner McCord added that there is a resource in the local areas and an investment has been made. He encouraged leveraging and getting a return on that investment.

Christine Hopkins mentioned a video on Upper Cumberland and what they were doing with in the field of re-entry through apprenticeship. They had a trucking company up there that established apprenticeships and it was a great idea that could work in a lot of different career paths.

Deputy Commissioner Cherrell Campbell Street noted that she was excited to hear about the OOR. She also mentioned that embedded in the Department of Human Services is a newly created re-entry unit that is attached to the child support division so she would love to maybe spend some time collaborating.

The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

East Region (includes the Northeast, Southeast, and East local boards)

Commendations - The “Five Rivers Partnership” and “Future Ready Pathway” programs were highlighted as a local area initiative that branched out from East over into the Northeast area that could potentially be a regional approach and strategy to engage youth and provide additional career services and pathways; Utilization of specialized American Job Centers in the rural, at-risk, and distressed counties to support justice-involved individuals in state and local correctional facilities

Recommendation - Modifications remained high level and overarching, and did not specifically mention the detail around regional partnerships and strategies which would drive alignment for the East region local boards; Strategies could be strengthened through technical assistance calls - several strategies were identified and appear to be implemented more at the local area than at the regional area

Northeast TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendations - Multiple partner engagement strategies, including the Education-2-Employment (E2E) Summit, which helped to inform program development and service delivery; Partnerships to support justice-involved individual reentry, such as with the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC) Day Reporting Center/Community Resource Center to engage participants up to six (6) months prior to release date and develop a detailed plan post-incarceration

Recommendation - Work with the Office of Re-entry for additional technical assistance and training regarding implementation and alignment with other state level resources and strategies; coordinate and align strategies across core and additional WIOA partners to connect a broader range of employers with business services

Southeast TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendation - Partnerships with educational providers, including Hamilton County Schools with the "Future Ready Institute," the use of virtual reality headsets in K-12 schools to explore in-demand occupations, and with Title II – Adult Education providers with Project Return and to offer training programs which support justice-involved individual reentry

Recommendation - Coordinate and align strategies with core and WIOA additional partners to connect a broader range of employers with business services including engagement strategies

East TN Local Workforce Development Board

Commendations - Utilization of new technology features and solutions to actively engage job seekers and employers; gathering feedback through stakeholder surveys both including the employer and the job seekers to better inform delivery of programs and services

Recommendation: The "Work First" initiative -- the way it was written -- could inadvertently exclude participants from training - follow-up to ensure that individuals are also trained and provide technical assistance as necessary to ensure compliance; expand and ensure equitable access to education and training for eligible individuals

Per Mr. Roberson, the East Tennessee regional and local plan modifications have satisfied the minimum compliance criteria outlined in the 2022 regional and local plan guidance that was released in January and the Division of Workforce Services recommended the approval of their regional and local plan modifications.

It was moved and seconded to accept the recommendation for East Tennessee which includes the region and the three local boards.

When Chairman Berry called for discussion, Matthew Spinella noted that the East Tennessee educational partnerships noted in the commendations (i.e. Education-2-Employment (E2E) Summit, Future Ready Pathways, VR Headset Utilization) provide an opportunity for mentorship between those in the East specifically Northeast and Southeast to provide guidance for the rest of the state. It's almost a mirror image: DOE's participation in those regions outpaces the rest of the state because of those intentional partnerships. A discussion related to perhaps codifying how LEAs/K-12 districts engage with the local areas is of great importance and can further move the needle. Speaking specifically for work-based learning and the Department of Education, there's plenty of opportunity as evidenced in the numbers in Northeast and Southeast and the continuing partnerships among businesses. DOE has students that can perform the work and can really contribute to help build TN communities, but Northeast and Southeast seem to know how to do it well to provide that engagement and through that intentional planning. He thinks this could be probably scaled greatly if those same strategies are applied elsewhere.

The vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Chairman Berry noted that he was pleased with the way the information was summarized into one-pagers: it was well organized and easy to digest, and he thanked Assistant Administrator Roberson for all the pre-work.

SWDB Certification Update - Steve Playl, Workforce Services Assistant Commissioner - TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Assistant Commissioner Playl noted that the summer board meeting last year was his first in his new role as Assistant Commissioner. At that time, the board wanted to evaluate the workforce system as a whole, including certification or some type of external third-party process to evaluate the work of the state workforce board and our local boards. Workforce Services (WFS) has been working over the course of the first six months or so to identify what that was going to look like and who they wanted to work with.

The University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services was identified as the partner to lead that work and to help them establish the framework for evaluation. WFS officially partnered with them earlier this spring and they have already conducted 11 interview sessions with multiple members of TDLWD and other core partners across WIOA. Additional partners included in those interviews have been our One-Stop operators from the local level and some of our executive directors from the local boards. That process is still ongoing and in the coming weeks they will be interviewing some SWDB members on your perception of the TN workforce system. They've also been reviewing previous TN evaluations that have been conducted. At the end of 2019 Ernst & Young completed an evaluation of the local boards. UTCIS has been reviewing that information to see if those recommendations still make sense and where updates are needed.

Mr. Playl is excited about this process and mentioned at our last board meeting that UTCIS has leaned very heavily on the Baldrige Excellence Framework. They administer training on that for different groups across the state so using that framework is very natural for them. Paul Jennings and his staff will be here to make a presentation to the board at the August board meeting on their evaluation and recommendations for moving forward.

Ann Hatcher: What would the certification be?

Steve Playl: Great question: we talked about this a little bit in the March board meeting. There's not a certification for state workforce boards: this is a new endeavor that we're trying to set ourselves apart as a state and figure out what that even looks like. We know that we have great performance metrics, established KPIs, and established federal measures that evaluate how we perform so we can compare ourselves to other states on those performance components. But as far as the programmatic aspects - how we operate, the culture of our board, and the focuses of a board, there's not one out there: it's never been established so we are really rolling out far ahead of the pack. This has kind of gained some publicity nationally: there have been other states that have reached out to say hey what are you doing, what does this look like, how can we piggyback on this. I had a conversation with Colorado, and I have another conversation with Florida this afternoon asking about some of these types of questions. I credit the board's leadership, Chairman your leadership, on how can we validate that the work. We can pat ourselves on the back with these performance metrics but how do we validate that the work we're actually doing is making a difference here in Tennessee. That is the intent behind what this certification looks like.

Chairman Berry: I think for me it's about identifying best practices to hold ourselves accountable. What are we doing as a board to make sure that what we're doing is making a difference? Like Steve said, instead of patting ourselves on the back, let's have a third party look and say yes, here are the benchmarks for you, here's the benchmarks compared to other states, and so yes you're doing well or no you're not. We can hold ourselves accountable so that we can then in turn hold our regional and local boards accountable to say okay this is what we are setting as the standard for ourselves and so we also expect that of you.

Steve Playl: I will add, the categories related to Baldrige include performance measures, leadership strategy, customer focus, operations, and results.

Rhonnie Brewer: In this process as this is newly developed, we're having conversations at all levels to make sure that we're getting input from even the local boards and folks at the AJCs and things like that to inform this?

Steve Playl: Absolutely: UTCIS has already conducted 11 interview sessions so those are sessions with multiple individuals as a part of that - all the way from department leadership to AJC staff. One-Stop operators, local board executive directors, and local board members have all been included. From a statewide perspective obviously it would take a much longer time to interview everyone, but they are trying to get a cast a very wide net to get a lot of insight and direction here.

Rhonnie Brewer: That was kind of my question because when you said 11 interviews I'm like who are these 11? I just want to make sure that at least there was representation at different levels within that 11.

Steve Playl: Yes and that's just 11 to date: they're still conducting these interviews which will continue to happen over the next couple months.

Fiscal Update - Ivan Greenfield, Workforce Services Assistant Administrator - TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development - Workforce Services

Ivan Greenfield gave a quick overview of the fiscal data.

When we look at our overall funding for the third quarter this year (March 31) for our combined partner programs we're looking at \$150 million in authorized funding, and expenditures of about \$119 million for the same period.

For our three partner programs - Workforce Services, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation - \$88 million of that was associated with Workforce Services and about \$62 million in expenditures. When we look at enrollments on the expenditures we're looking at flat enrollments quarter on quarter of just under 13,000 at 12,966.

Looking at Adult Education we're seeing \$13.9 million in authorized funding and \$8.9 million in expenditures. Total enrollments through three quarters are a little below compared to last year at 6,422.

For Vocational Rehabilitation, remembering that when we talk about how they're tracking their numbers basically their authorized funding equates to the amount of reimbursements and that's why \$48 million is consistent across allocations and expenditures. Enrollments are up at 10,203 compared to all of last year.

State Dashboards on Performance

Looking at a couple of our state dashboards on performance, remembering that there are 12 total Key Performance Indicators that we're looking at, most of them are enrollment based.

This dashboard is looking at the achievement and there are six rankings: zero through five, with zero being unacceptable and five being a best practice. For us, anything that is below a three we use to provide technical assistance to local boards not meeting those achievement targets. There are three that are below that, but nine that are three and above. For the Office of Reentry, their actual to target is about three-fold: 1,180 compared to a target of 425 so some really good performance there. (A slide was shown of observations and a scale that talks about the rankings and the percentages associated with those rankings.)

Federal Performance Measures

Federal Performance Metrics are based on our Title I and Title III programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner Peyser. There are categories of Pass/Fail, Pass, Negotiated, Actual, and Percent of Goal. It's important to note that passing for these metrics is 90 percent of the target. For the five metrics that we look at per program – in Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth – there is the Entered Employment Rates (Second and Fourth Quarters), Med. Earnings, Credentials Attained, and Measured Skill Gains. For Wagner Peyser, they're just three so there are a total of 18 metrics that we look at federally.

For the red numbers, five of them did meet the 90 percent but were below the target. In the instance of Adult measures, the target was 82.5: we were below that at 81.3 but we were above the 90 percent requirement to pass or fail. We did have one failing metric under Wagner Peyser: Entered Employment Rate Second Quarter After Exit and that cohort is during the pandemic years and you saw a lot of reduced foot traffic in the facilities and that's why that's where it is.

Marshall Graves: Ivan I understand those numbers - just from our committee - those numbers trail months back: maybe as far as a year and a half back. They're current, but they're not really a statement of today as much as they are statement of a year or a year and a half ago.

Ivan Greenfield: That's correct, yes sir - great point.

Ivan noted that Marshall Graves asked for a comparison to what Tennessee looks like compared to other states in the nation. Ivan showed a chart and explained that for those 18 metrics, Tennessee is based on four quartiles. We're in the third and fourth quartile for 14 of the 18 metrics that the state uses. The EER second quarter after exit was discussed for Wagner Peyser. The chart is annual and was based on last year's information.

Challenges

- Ivan noted that the numbers around low or flat enrollments, and low utilizations, that may potentially lead to funding reversion. This was seen in Adult Ed and will continue to be monitored.
- They are also seeing a significant shift from affiliates to access points as the funding declinations continue. Local boards are submitting requests to close some of the AJCs and open access points. Access points are like non-certified affiliates, but they allow those partner entities like TCATs and CBOs to use their own infrastructure to help continue to allow for access in those respective communities to the services that are offered.

Opportunities

- The Smart Simple integration that was discussed in the Oversight Committee will allow us to track and report better on our grant fundings and the activities under those fundings.
- For the Youth Initiative, an award of 450,000 was put out for an eight-week career exploration for youth to look at career opportunities.
- Regarding reentry, the tablet initiative is expanding. Last year we had a pilot program that had 72 tablets: 24 in each grand region in county facilities. That number grew this year to 363 and we expect that number to grow to 10,000 by July 1 and past. We've seen more positive outcomes for those participants, greater access to credentialing through a digital platform, and increased service provisions from our respective Adult Ed, Workforce Services, and Vocational Rehabilitation program partners.

Jason Bates: Just one question: the challenge is lower, flat enrollments or participation. Has there been any analysis done as to why that is happening?

Ivan Greenfield: A lot of has to do with this shift where in-person traffic has been down. There's also been capacity issues at the local boards: we see people leaving so we're trying to utilize these relationships with the affiliate partners and shift to virtual to touch more participants but it's kind of been a slow uptick.

Commissioner McCord: It would seem if employment goes up or unemployment goes down then that number is positively correlated. With low unemployment there would be low enrollments and participation.

Christine Hopkins: In the re-entry tablet initiative, am I hearing you say that it has shown positive results for what they're used for? Because I know there hasn't been that many out there yet.

Ivan Greenfield: Yes ma'am - we approved 363. I don't know the rate in which they're going into the facilities but there was the purchase and distribution of whatever that number may be.

LaToya Newson: With the partnership with the Office of Criminal Justice Programs and in the Office of Reentry through some evidence-based programs and grants, 363 tablets have been delivered to 17 additional counties. The initial counties that received the 72 were Gibson, Blunt, and Grundy counties and each one of those received 24 tablets. We've seen over 10 million minutes of engagement. We've seen more access to those individuals engaging in the educational and workforce exploration programming as well as cognitive behavioral therapy programming when we didn't have access to those individuals at the height of COVID.

Commissioner McCord: This is not just data based on Tennessee: these tablets are in other states, and they have data around that too, is that correct?

LaToya Newson: Absolutely. One of the things that I am excited to share is that the investment that Tennessee is doing in our local jails is the first across the nation. Most of these tablets are in prison facilities in other states like Minnesota, Utah, Maryland, D.C. We are the first state in the nation to do this investment in our jail system.

Christine Hopkins: That's great because most local jails house TDOC people that stay for a longer time than a local-sentence individual. As these individuals are granted access to the tablet, it is possible to obtain a bachelor's degree. One of the concerns of local jails again was the security part of having access to a tablet. I know it's a good initiative and I'm just hoping it works out great because it is something that we need to continue to look at new and innovative ways to rehabilitate incarcerated individuals.

LaToya Newson: Yes, and the vendors are working with the IT departments at the local jails. We have some that are building additional wi-fi tunnels. No one can access those tunnels but the tablets. Any other device that comes on cannot get online and it is monitored 24/7. The jail facilities can also turn them off if anything happens: if there is some type of breach or a messaging goes wrong, they can disable that individual's account without disrupting the services of others. They have wi-fi access, and they also have cellular access depending on the infrastructure in that local facility.

Christine Hopkins: Along with that, as more and more Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technologies appear to be moving into our jail facilities, I could see the tablets just becoming invaluable.

LaToya Newson: Absolutely: that's one of the goals: we look to expand to the TBR institutions to get programming with that, and with employers because employers have the opportunity in those local areas to customize their own program and upload those on the tablet as well with no additional cost to the state.

Christine Hopkins: Wonderful.

Marshall Graves: This slide about our state - the way we compare to other states. I haven't seen that before and I was interested in that last time. So this four is good - we're in the top 25 percent - is that the way I understand that?

Ivan Greenfield: Four and three - so we're averaging when you look at 14 over 18 we're averaging in the fourth quartile.

Marshall Graves: So first means we're in the lower 25 percent?

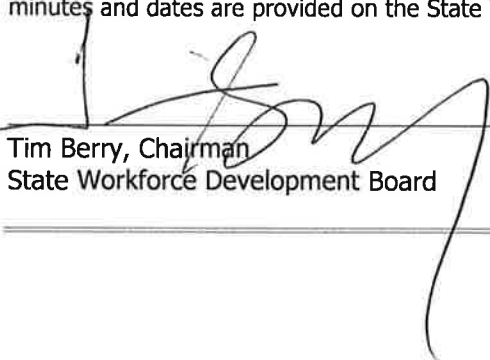
Ivan Greenfield: Yes

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Chairman Berry noted a lot of people referencing the strategy session that we had Thursday June 2. He appreciated everyone who was able to participate in that: there was a lot of good discussion and there will be a lot of action steps that come out of it that we can put into place either by way of policy or action steps that the workforce folks can implement. He hopes that it's not just discussion: that it will turn into action, and he's confident that will be the case with the team that was there.

The meeting adjourned at approx. 11:37 a.m. CST.

Note: An audio recording of this meeting is on file at the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. All meeting minutes and dates are provided on the State Workforce Development Board website.



Tim Berry, Chairman
State Workforce Development Board

8-26-22
Date