

MINUTES – MEETING OF THE
CAREER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (CEWD)

March 15, 2022
11:30 AM

The Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) was called to order by Chairman Kenneth Calhoun at 11:36 AM. The meeting was held at the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce and CEWDB Board members were given the option to either attend in-person or virtually. The board meeting was also broadcast on PBS.

A record of member attendance is as follows:

PRESENT (In-Person)

Kenneth Calhoun (Chair)
Mr. Scott Copas
Mr. Michael Garner
Mrs. Stacy Gunderman
Mr. Hugh McDonald
Dr. Jeff Standridge

Mr. Ross White (Dr. Ivy Pfeffer)

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Mr. Cody Waits, Ex-Officio Secretary
Dr. Charisse Childers
Mr. Solomon Graves (Ms. Tracy Dowell)
Dr. Andrea Henderson (Ms. Kyla Waters)
Dr. Mike Hernandez
Mr. Johnny Key
Dr. Maria Markham

PRESENT (Virtually)

Mr. Mike Rogers
Mr. Stephen Percival
Mrs. Gina Radke

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Ms. Cindy Gillespie
Ms. Esperanza Massana

ABSENT

Dr. Keith Vire

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Mr. J.D. Lowery
Mr. Mike Preston

Guest

Senator Jane English

ACTION ITEM 1– Minutes from December 14, 2022

Chairman Kenneth Calhoun asked for questions/comments from the board, and upon hearing none, asked for a motion to accept the minutes.

On a motion made by Scott Copas and second by Stacy Gunderman, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the minutes from December 14, 2022.

ACTION ITEM 2 – State Electrical Apprenticeship Committee (SEAC) Board Appointment

Cody Waits, OSD Director, updated the board members on the current status of the State Electrical Apprenticeship Committee (SEAC) Board. Mr. Waits stated that there is currently one position that needs to be filled within this board. The requirement for this position is that the board member represents a company that employs electrical apprentices in the State of

Arkansas. No one has been nominated for the position yet. However, Derrick Daniels, Apprenticeship Program Advisor, is coordinating with the SEAC Board members to collect nominations. Once received, the nominations will be presented to the CEWD Board at the June board meeting for further discussion and approval.

Scott Copas stated that he will gather names of candidates for this position.

On a motion made by Stacy Gunderman and seconded by Scott Copas, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the State Electrical Apprenticeship Committee Board Appointment.

ACTION ITEM 3 – State Plumbing Apprenticeship Committee (SPAC) Board Appointment

Mr. Waits stated there is one board member vacancy for the State Plumbing Apprenticeship Committee (SPAC). We currently have one journeyman plumber. Requirements mandate that a total of two journeyman plumbers be on the board, and we currently have one.

Mr. Daniels will be working with stakeholders to compile a list of candidates in order to fill that second position.

Mr. Copas stated he will gather candidates for this vacancy as well.

On a motion made by Stacy Gunderman and seconded by Scott Copas, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the State Plumbing Apprenticeship Committee Board Appointment.

ACTION ITEM 4 – Transfer of Jefferson Area Technical Center (JATC) to Southeast Arkansas College (SEARK)

Stephanie Isaacs, Associate Director, began by explaining some of the benefits associated with JATC transferring to SEARK. There are 30 secondary career centers. Of the secondary centers, we currently have 24 centers on a post-secondary campus. The goal is to give as many students as possible access to a post-secondary campus.

JATC is currently the LEA. However, all classes are offered on the SEARK campus. Concerned parties, including the education cooperative, the community, local superintendents, and SEARK, met to consider the benefits of transferring financial control from JATC to SEARK.

Dr. Steven Bloomberg, President of SEARK, discussed the plan for the new center. The plan will align with the needs of the workforce within this area and allow high school students to obtain concurrent credit.

The SEARK Career Center will consist of 5 programs of study:

1. Health Sciences
2. Industrial Technology
3. Computer Information Systems, Networking, & Cybersecurity
4. Criminal Justice

Each discipline will start with a survey course. The survey course will introduce students to various disciplines.

If approved, the college plans to make the transition on July 1, 2022, from JATC to SEARK. The first high school student under the colleges' leadership will take place the fall semester of 2022.

On a motion made by Scott Copas and seconded by Kenneth Calhoun the Career Education and Workforce Development Board approved the transfer of Jefferson Area Technical Center (JATC) to Southeast Arkansas College (SEARK) contingent pending upon receipt of official letter from Cathi Swain.

INFORMATION ITEM 5 – Black River Technical College Career & Technical Center Piggott Satellite

Ms. Isaacs gave a brief summary of the events that have taken place prior to the meeting. Piggott School District is currently the only school district in Arkansas not served by a secondary center. Ms. Isaacs stated she met with Piggott on 2 separate occasions. During the initial meeting, Ms. Isaacs spoke with the superintendent of Piggott School District to discuss building the partnership with BRTC to allow this transition to take place. The superintendent was in favor of building this partnership. The second meeting consisted of looking for locations where the center could be housed. Ms. Isaacs stated that the biggest concern is finding the right building to house the center. The center will need assistance to finance the building. Office of Skills Development (OSD) will not be able to assist with this funding. However, the center will generate enrollment funding the first year.

Dr. Martin Eggensperger, President of Black River Technical College, stated that he met with the some of the industry partners, community members, and healthcare professionals to discuss their needs. Medical Professions and Welding are the two areas that would be most beneficial to meet workforce needs.

Dr. Eggensperger also updated the committee on their search for a location. He stated they have recently viewed closed funeral homes in the area. These facilities are fairly spacious and can accommodate a large number of students. Also, Rector has offered a location for the satellite. Dr. Eggensperger stated they are still looking for the perfect location, one that will accommodate students and is affordable.

Ms. Isaacs stated that at the next meeting approval will be sought for the approval of the satellite.

INFORMATION ITEM 6 – Nursing Workforce Discussion

Mr. Waits gave some background as to how this partnership was created. During the Shark Tank proposals, numerous funding requests centered around the needs in the nursing field. This later brought about more discussion, which led to the need for in depth conversation centered around healthcare needs. Mr. Waits stated that he first engaged with Lisa Wallace, National Park Medical Center Chief Nursing Officer, regarding the Nurse Residency Apprenticeship Program. National Park partners with TruMont for this program. The Medical Park program was the first nursing apprenticeship in the State of Arkansas. Since creating this partnership, TruMont has also partnered with Saline Memorial and Ashley County Medical Center.

Ms. Wallace provided insight on the issues the healthcare field is currently facing. She stated that there is a deficit of healthcare workers which did not stem from the pandemic. The pandemic gave more insight into the real issues existing in the healthcare workforce. However, the pandemic did worsen the conditions.

Some of the issue highlighted during the discussion were:

- Limited instructors due to salary
- The need for more LPNs
- An increase in retirement rate by 20% due to the pandemic
- Clinical limitations due to space
- LPNs being paid the same or more than RNs when working in long term care facilities and outpatient clinics
- Nurses transitioning from hospital role to travel nurse
- The lack of younger adults in the nursing workforce (The average of an RN is 50+ years old)
- Bedside roles of LPN in comparison to RN

Statistics state that by year 2030, the nursing field could be short of about 3 million nurses worldwide.

INFORMATION ITEM 7 – TransfrVR Report

TransfrVR partnered with 14 community colleges around the state of Arkansas. During their presentation to the board, the representatives for TransfrVR, Katelyn Cutshall Elrod and Taj Mecham, discussed their mission, history with Alabama partnership, training success, simulations available, and an overview of their results.

TransfrVR had significant results. Below is a list of just some of their accomplishments:

- 782 Arkansans were impacted by the use of TransfrVR learning.
- 680 Arkansas were exposed to career pathways to help their future work endeavors.
- 102 Arkansans have developed skills needed to be employable through the training offered.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Waits gave the following announcements before the adjournment of the meeting:

- The next board meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2022, at the Saline County Career Center. There may be a tour of the facility prior to the meeting.
- Mr. Waits will be in communication with the President of Black River Technical College, Dr. Martin Eggensperger, for the information that the board requested.
- There will be an additional healthcare meeting scheduled before the next board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon the conclusion of Mr. Waits’ announcement, and with no other comments, questions, or concerns from the Board, on a motion made by Scott Copas, and second by Hugh McDonald to adjourn the meeting, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWD) adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 1:24 PM.

Cody Waits, Director
Office of Skills Development

Kenneth Calhoun, Chair
Career Education and Workforce
Development Board