

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

September 13, 2022
12:00 PM

The Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) was called to order by Chairman Kenneth Calhoun at 12:06 PM. The meeting was held at the Saline County Career & Technical Center and CEWDB Board members were given the option to either attend in person or virtually. The board meeting was also broadcast on PBS ARCAN.

A record of member attendance is as follows:

PRESENT (In-Person)

Kenneth Calhoun (Chair)
Mr. Scott Copas
Mrs. Stacy Gunderman
Mr. Hugh McDonald
Mrs. Gina Radke
Mr. Kevin Tipton

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Ms. Tracy Dowell
Mr. Solomon Graves
Dr. Andrea Henderson (Ms. Kyla Waters)
Mr. Johnny Key
Dr. Ivy Pfeffer

PRESENT (Virtually)

Mr. Michael Garner
Mr. Stephen Percival
Mr. Mike Rogers

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Mr. Cody Waits, Ex-Officio Secretary
Ms. Cindy Gillespie (Mr. Larry Crutchfield)
Dr. Maria Markham
Ms. Esperanza Massana
Mr. Ross White

ABSENT

Dr. Jeff Standridge

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Dr. Mike Hernandez
Mr. Mike Preston
Mr. J.D. Lowery

Guest

Senator Jane English

ACTION ITEM 1– Minutes from June 21, 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 Gina Radke and seconded by Hugh McDonald, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the minutes from June 21, 2022.

INFORMATION ITEM 2 – Secondary Center Rules Updates

Stephanie Issacs, Associate Director of The Office of Skills Development, provided the board members with updates to the Secondary Center Rules. The rule changes took place during the previous legislative session. It allows certain centers to use a portion of their vocational center aid for maintenance and operation. Our current rules specifically state this isn't allowed. Ms. Isaacs made a point of requesting the committee allow all centers to use vocational center aid for maintenance and operation expenditures. The expenditures will cap at 28% for the nonprogram study of expenditures.

Rules will be reviewed by Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) in October for final approval. Ms. Isaacs will provide an update to the board members at our December board meeting.

INFORMATION ITEM 3 – Little Rock Excel Center Presentation

Brian Marsh, President, and CEO of Little Rock Excel Center gave a detailed presentation on some of the advantages, plans, detailed statistics, and program details for Little Rock Excel.

This program was started by Goodwill in Indianapolis. Little Rock Excel Center is 1 of 33 excel centers. Tennessee, Idaho, and Washington DC are a few others.

The following information was given during the presentation:

- Some of the advantages of the Excel Center include:
 - Flexible schedule
 - No Cost Childcare (70% are parents; 45% are single parents)
 - Transportation Assistance
 - Life Coaching
 - College and Career Readiness
 - Expert Instructors
 - Special Education & Language Learner Support
- Within 6 months of earning a high school diploma at The Excel Center
 - 31% are first-generation high school graduates
 - 84% are pursuing college/post-secondary training
 - 64% report higher annual income, with 57% working for employers with benefits with an average wage of \$14.62 per hour.
 - Demographics – Meet “Erica”
 - 34 years old
 - Living in a household with 2 adults and 2 children
 - No HS
 - Attempted GED
 - Annual income - \$3,777
 - Upon Grad
 - Employed
 - Eligible for healthcare
 - Average income is now \$27,746
 - Reducing assistance by \$37,808
 - That's over \$61,000 gain (with just ONE student success story)
- Future Plans
 - 229 Students
 - 31 Graduates
 - 16 Job Placement confirmed
 - 8-week Sessions – they are a charter school

- 27 Industry Credentials earned by graduates
- 13 enrolled in college/post-secondary placement
- ABC's of Work... A job; A Better Job; A Career
- Expanding to 350 students in LR and another 350 in Springdale
- The Academy
 - Licensed Trades
 - Industry Credentials
 - No or Low Cost
 - Condensed Curriculum
 - Externship
 - Job Placement
- 16-week program
- Intensive case management 1:1
- Employment assessment
- Barrier assessment and removal strategies
- Soft skills training
- Career planning and job search assistance
- 5% recidivate rate

INFORMATION ITEM 4 – Arkansas Correctional Education Presentation

Tracy Dowell, Deputy Superintendent, Arkansas Department of Corrections, presented on career and technical education.

Ms. Dowell gave the following details in her presentation:

- A brief history of how education became a requirement among the prison systems.
 - 1968 was the first time formal educational programs were first introduced in AR
 - 1970 – Vocational Education began
 - 2005 – Riverside Vocational Technical School and the Arkansas Correctional School were placed under the same umbrella.
 - 2021- Acts 493 and 497 dissolved Riverside and renamed Arkansas Correctional School System to ACSD – the Arkansas Correctional School District
 - Act 497 also recognized the importance of coordination with the Division of Career and Technical Education and the Office of Skills Development.
- Emphasized change, major changes include:
 - CTE programs are standardized
 - Minimum hours reduced from 1440 to 600
 - Curriculum guides and Skills Checklist created
 - New programs added, including:
 - Agricultural Equipment Technician
 - Building Trades
 - Future Fit
- CTE Stats 2021-2022 (this took place during the COVID pandemic):
 - 204 Completions
 - 172 Industry Credentials
 - Served 600 Students

- Updates for 2022-2023
 - New 600 + hour programs
 - Barbering
 - Computer Science
 - Heavy Equipment Operator
 - New Short Programs
 - Pet care program
 - Keyboarding
 - Increased Use of Technology
 - Online programs – Southwest Airlines communications is one of their most popular programs

INFORMATION ITEM 5 – ForwARd Arkansas Presentation

Ben Kutyllo, Executive Director, and staff took us through the presentation information that was included in the packet, emphasizing the importance of their partnerships and key statistics based on the surveys conducted.

- The data showed for example that although the graduation rate was 88%, only 27% of graduates were proficient or greater on their 8th-grade reading assessment, showing that there could be key gaps in academic areas.
- When compared to CTE completers, the graduation rate is 95%, compared to 88%.
- Future areas of opportunity that were emphasized included:
 - Early childhood education
 - Early literacy
 - 21st century and durable skills
 - CTE and Early College Pathways

INFORMATION ITEM 6 – Arkansas Department of Education Report

Johnny Key, Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education, gave an update on the ACT WorkKeys Data:

- So far, 5,169 individual tests were administered in the Fall, with 19,084 administered in the Spring. Out of the 306 schools, 184 were tested (60%). Commissioner Key is expecting an even higher turnout for next year's data.
- Out of that total, 75% of those tested earned an NCRC, with the following breakdown:
 - 726 Platinum
 - 1,205 Gold
 - 2,148 Silver
 - 2,019 Bronze
- Compared to 2021, 126 MORE high schools had students earning NCRCs in 2022.

INFORMATION ITEM 7 – Director’s Report

Mr. Cody Waits, Director of the Office of Skills Development, gave the following updates:

- Recognition of appreciation was given to Secretary Key for his report on the Apprenticeship Program’s Teacher Residency Model. During Mr. Waits’ travel to the National Association State Apprenticeship Directors Meeting, he was proud to announce that our state was recognized as one of the few states to implement this model.
- Next steps were discussed on how Arkansas will transition to a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA). Mr. Waits is anticipating a finalized plan within the next few weeks to present to Secretary Mike Preston and other stakeholders associated with the transitional phase.
- A special meeting will be held in October. During this meeting, the plan for the SAA transition will be presented to board members to either approve or deny.
- There has been discussion about the development of an Automation Robotic Center in the State of Arkansas. There have been meetings with the Department of Commerce to figure out how the center will be funded, how to acquire the property, the construction phases, the design phase, etc. The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) have approved for OSD to utilize certain funding to transfer to Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) for property expenditures.
- In October, Mr. Waits will request approval from the legislature for temporary appropriation funds to ADFA for the procurement of the land. Also, a financial method for the architectural phase will be requested as well.
- Board members will be updated on the plan and process for the Automation Robotic Center during the December 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 Stacy Gunderman to adjourn the meeting, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWD) adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:17 PM.

Cody Waits, Director
Office of Skills Development

Kenneth Calhoun, Chair
Career Education and Workforce
Development Board