

Career Education and Workforce Development Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: February 11, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Department of Commerce, with some attending via Zoom

Board Members in attendance:

Voting Members

Danny Games, Vice-Chairman
Jeff Marcussen
Kris Carson
Cat Hamilton
Butch Rice
Len Pitcock

Ex-Officio Members

Ross White
Mike Rogers
Stephanie Isaacs
Dr. Charisse Childers
Kyla Waters (proxy for Dr. Collin Callaway)
Tina Moore (proxy for Dr. Ken Warden)
Tracy Dowell

Members absent:

Voting Members

Kevin Tipton, Chairman

Ex-Officio Members

Hugh McDonald
Jacob Olivia
Clint O'Neal
Dr. Mike Hernandez
Esperanza Crane
Kristi Putnum
Cody Waits

Guests

Glen Howie, AR State Broadband Office
Dr. Trenia Miles, Office of Adult Education

Nick Ryburn, NWTI

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Danny Games called the February 2025 meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

Approval of Minutes

Vice-Chairman Games asked members review the minutes from the previous meeting. Tina Moore pointed out a typo for correction in the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Butch Rice and seconded by Len Pitcock. The amended minutes were approved.

Agenda Item 2 - Board Reimbursement/Stipend Approval

Vice-Chairman Games and Director Isaacs explained the need for the Board to approve, through a motion, to allow voting members of the Board to receive reimbursement of

expenses incurred in 2025 for performing official board duties as outlined at A.C.A. §25-16-902. Len Pitcock made a motion to approve reimbursement of expenses to voting members; Jeff Marcussen seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Office of Skills Development Director's Report

Director Isaacs presented an overview and update of activity of the Office of Skills Development.

- OSD will be hosting forums in March in Hope. Attendance will be limited based on the size of the venue, but Isaacs will send a registration link to Board members. She requested that board members to share with interested parties.
- Issue 1 - Representative Lundstrum and Senator English are leading the work to finalize Issue 1. The fine details will be completed through the administrative rule promulgation process. The expansion in funding for Lottery Scholarship funds will be a game changer for many programs around the state. There may be a possibility for funding of RTI hours for technical instruction.
- Transition to a SAA state - Director Isaacs gave a presentation the benefits on transitioning Arkansas's Apprenticeship efforts to a SAA structure. Tina Moore stated the legislation has been filed. Pitcock stated the current political climate should help move the approvals from the federal level to the state. Director Isaacs asked board members to include her, and Cody Waits in discussion they may have about the bill to ensure any concerns are addressed and questions are answered.

Broadband BEAD Funding for Workforce Training

Glen Howie, Director of the Arkansas State Broadband Office, presented an update on federal BEAD funding for workforce training. Howie said any funding not allocated to projects in the initial phase of build-out could be used on broadband or internet related project at a later date. Discussion was held on NTIA approval of the Arkansas plan. Howie believes there may be some revisions to provide some clarity to the submitted plan, but the Office is moving forward until notice is received. Discussion was held among board members on area of focus with any remaining funds.

Statewide Adult Education

Dr. Trenia Miles, Director of the Office of Adult Education, and Nick Ryburn, Northwest Technical Institute (NWTI) made a presentation on the Office of Adult Education and efforts in adult education statewide. Dr. Miles mentioned the skill disparity in Arkansas among the adult learners that interact with the Office. Dr. Miles discussed the importance of Integrated Education and Training Programs (IET) and Ryburn discussed specific IET programs related to NWTI. A video was shown of Twyla Porter, a NWTI adult graduate, and the impact adult education programs had on her life. Discussion was held by board members on funding of adult education programs with scholarship lottery funds. Isaacs said it might be a possibility if they lead to a certificate.

Overview of Workforce Connections

Director Isaacs gave an overview of the Division of Workforce Connections on behalf of Executive Director Waits. Secretary McDonald saw the value in breaking down silos of those working in adult education, rehab services, WIOA, and OSD. The creation of Workforce Connections has brought these together under an umbrella to collaborate better connect businesses and workers with those who provide services to assist them.

Old Business

None

New Business

- Director Issacs asked members if they see an opportunity for OSD or another organization represented on the Board to reach out and help make those connections.

Adjournment

With no further business, Vice Chairman Games called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Len Pitcock and seconded by Cat Hamilton. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 11:29 AM.

Next Meeting: April 8, 2025, 10:00 AM, in the Rockefeller Conference Room of the Commerce building.