

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

**June 21, 2022**  
**12:00 PM**

The Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) was called to order by Chairman Kenneth Calhoun at 12:05 PM. The meeting was held at the Port of Little Rock 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  
Mrs. Stacy Gunderman  
Mr. Hugh McDonald  
Mr. Kevin Tipton

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Mr. Cody Waits, Ex-Officio Secretary  
Ms. Tracy Dowell (Mr. Solomon Graves)  
Dr. Andrea Henderson (Ms. Kyla Waters)  
Mr. Johnny Key  
Dr. Maria Markham  
Dr. Ivy Pfeffer (Mr. Ross White)

PRESENT (Virtually)

Mr. Stephen Percival  
Dr. Jeff Standridge

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Dr. Charisse Childers  
Mr. Solomon Graves

ABSENT

Mr. Michael Garner  
Mrs. Gina Radke  
Mr. Mike Rogers

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Ms. Cindy Gillespie  
Dr. Mike Hernandez  
Mr. Mike Preston  
Mr. J. D. Lowery

Guest

Senator Jane English

Mr. Chad Brown (Dr. Charisse Childers)

**ACTION ITEM 1– Minutes from March 15, 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 Hugh McDonald and second by Stacy Gunderman, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the minutes from March 15, 2022.

**INFORMATION ITEM 2 – LPN Discussion with Hospitals**

Ashley Davis, Executive Director of the Arkansas Center for Nursing, discussed some of the

significant challenges facing today's nursing educators and practitioners. Ms. Davis stated that although the presentation was created to focus more so on registered nurses, the challenges faced by LPNs and unlicensed nurses would be highlighted throughout the presentation as well.

The presentation discussed critical areas that affect the workforce in today's medical occupation, such as workforce demand, nursing licensure growth, number of RN graduates, RN licensure growth, nursing faculty shortage, faculty salaries, and possible solutions. Of the critical areas, the major challenges that could affect the workforce for today's nurses most are:

- **Increased Demand**
  - There is a gap between the demand for Registered Nurses and the availability of Registered Nurses to fill those vacancies.
  
- **Faculty Shortages**
  - There aren't enough faculty members to teach nursing students.
  - The salary gap is widening between clinical nurses and nurse faculty members.
  - On the list of Post-Secondary Faculty Salaries for 2020, nursing instructors are listed very close to the bottom of the pay scale.
  
- **Practice Gap**
  - Graduate nurses are incapable of working by themselves directly after graduation. They need training which makes them inadequate to fill the gap between the demand for, and supply of, qualified nurses.
  - The nurses coming out of the current teaching structure are not able to go fully into work after graduation which has increased the on-the-job training time.
  - Ms. Davis discussed transition to practice. This will help to speed up the process of getting newly graduated nurses ready for the workplace.

Ms. Davis discussed collaborating with the Office of Skills Development (OSD) to come up with an apprenticeship model to offset some of the costs that are prohibiting faculty from being paid adequately. As a result, the shortage of faculty in the clinical role will decrease, while also addressing the skills gap issues among nursing graduates.

After much discussion, the committee decided to have a separate meeting to thoroughly discuss the issue and come up with possible solutions.

### **ACTION ITEM 3 – Approval of Black River Technical College SATC-Piggott Satellite**

Dr. Martin Eggensperger, President of Black River Technical College (BRTC) presented detailed information through a Power Point Presentation on his strategy for growth with regards to their plans for their satellite locations.

According to their Spring 2022 enrollment numbers, they have since a 43% increase in student enrollment and have established the Pocahontas campus as their primary location. Through various partnerships with surrounding schools, this satellite would be able to serve students from Greene County Technical High School, Marmaduke High School, Rector High School, and Piggott High School, just to name a few. In addition to Auto Service Technology, which was recently approved for the Fall 2022 schedule, other programs offered include Medical

Professions, Industrial Electronics, Welding, Machine Tool Technology, and Auto Collision Repair.

Students also have the opportunity to earn stackable industry credentials including CPR, Career Readiness Certification, OSHA-10, First Responder-Disaster Preparedness, along with program certifications such as AWS for Welding and Licensure in both Phlebotomy and Certified Nursing.

On a motion made by Scott Copas and second by Stacy Gunderman, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the Black River Technical College SATC-Piggott Satellite.

#### **INFORMATION ITEM 4 – Plastics Manufacturing/Automation Training Discussion**

Marsha Guffey, Grants/Special Project for the Port of Little Rock, discussed the importance of manufacturing training, and in particular, The Good Job Challenge Grant, which would not only benefit their organization, but key manufacturing companies in Central Arkansas such as George Fischer, HMS, and Kohler, as well.

The funding requested would be set aside for two purposes: (1) to pay for the engineer (s) upfront to do the work needed, and (2) to obtain the appropriate facility to house the training equipment.

Chairman Kenneth Calhoun stated that the Board would be willing to review their proposal at a future meeting; however, that proposal would need to provide the necessary details.

#### **INFORMATION ITEM 5 – Director’s Report**

As part of his Director’s Report, Director of OSD Cody Waits provided a recap of some of the most significant projects OSD funded during FY22:

##### **Funding Awarded.**

- Agency awarded almost \$17 million dollars in workforce development grants across the state of Arkansas.

##### **RFP.**

- Over 20 applications were received. Out of the 20 applications, 12-15 presentations occurred.
- The funding awarded was \$8 million dollars. It was awarded to nine different organizations including areas such as cybersecurity, trucking, manufacturing, and healthcare.

##### **Transfr Virtual Reality.**

- Since their initial presentation to the Board in June 2021, funding has been awarded through the Association of Community Colleges. Mr. Waits thanked Dr. Andrea Henderson and Ms. Kyla Waters for their partnership in the process.
- There are 15 different organization and out of the 15 organizations, 14 of them are located on community colleges and/or post-secondary centers.
- NW AR Council, for example, has thousands going through simulation training on a consistent basis (daily, weekly, monthly) throughout the State of Arkansas.
- OSD has done a number of press releases centered around the success of this program

and has also received numerous requests for interviews to discuss Transfr VR in Arkansas. We hope to keep these partnerships but that will be up to the community colleges and the groups that have utilized the Transfr VR services and equipment.

### **Event at ASU Beebe Searcy**

- Promoted Automotive Service Excellence. It is the accrediting arm of NATEF, the National Automotive Training and Education Foundation
- Number of trucking companies involved such as Maverick, Walmart, and Entergy. This yielded a positive result.
- Launching some youth apprenticeship programs in Arkansas at ASC accredited institutions. Currently there are only two of those, ASU Beebe-Searcy and NWTI.

### **PeopleShores**

- The IT company PeopleShores recently established a location in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.
- OSD has awarded funding to help with the startup process.
- The company will teach and train the basic IT concepts and processes such as robot processing, automation, etc.
- Mr. Waits stated that board members should receive a calendar invitation for an event hosted by PeopleShores in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, on August 26, 2022. The meeting will discuss some of the successes and expansion efforts that could take place in the future.

### **Be Pro Be Proud**

- OSD was able to fund a \$1.4 million dollar grant to put a second truck on the road, which was a direct result of the high demand of Be Pro Be Proud. Typically, trucks are booked out 6 months in advance.
- The second truck should be ready for operation Fall 2022.
- Their annual meeting will be held June 28-30, 2022.

### **Build My Future Event**

- The Build My Future event was the first of its kind in Northwest Arkansas and created in order to expand apprenticeship awareness and job opportunities in the construction industry.
- A number of employers such as Multi-Craft Contractors, Nabholz, Association of Builders and Contractors, NW Arkansas Council, and Mr. Bill Roachell all came together to make this event happen for over 1,000 high school students.

### **Apprenticeship Expansion**

- 7,500 active apprentices (a number of this can be attributed to traditional CTE fields, such as Electrical and Plumbing).
- Close to 100 active apprentices in the health care field through nursing residency programs
- 75 apprentices in the manufacturing field
- Organizations and companies are realizing the value of utilizing the apprenticeship programs.

- Partnership with Arkansas Center for Data Sciences (ACDS) has yielded a lot of positive opportunity. Out of 119 students, 111 completed the program to become active apprentices.
- On average, 17% wage increase associated across the board for all new apprentices in all areas.
- Over 70+ companies who are utilizing the apprenticeship model through ACDS

### **OSD Grants**

- Over 360 grants were awarded FY 22.
- Awarded close to \$3 million in funding which is a \$9,000 per grant average. (This is down from previous years, \$12,000).
- Average cost of about \$750 per trainee.

This past fiscal year also marks the first year that OSD has been operation its first USDOL apprenticeship grant of \$450,000 grant.

We have been able to hire additional personnel through these funds to help with our expansion efforts, which included the creation of two videos that focused on the following two points:

- 1.) discussing apprenticeship from the employer standpoint. It explains why an employer decides to utilize the program. Organizations such as First Orion, Nabholz, and Multi-Craft participated.
- 2.) discussing apprenticeship as a whole. This video will be taken to the classroom for students to view. This video highlights what apprenticeship can do for the individual learner.

Discussed some of the things in progress for FY 23:

- Announcing the award of a grant to help support the Fiber Broadband telecommunication space in coordination with three community colleges in Arkansas. We are still waiting for final approvals. This will be a significant opportunity to train close to 300 people on an annual basis at three different locations. The training will include aerial lineman, underground fiber technicians, and telecommunications tower climbers.
- Will be announcing the discussion around Robotics and Manufacturing Center

One of our biggest opportunities as an agency is to operate apprenticeships differently. Currently there are two way of operating apprenticeship program

- 1.) As an Office of Apprenticeship (OA) State
- 2.) State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) State

We are creating a registered apprenticeship portal that allows program sponsors to enter their information into the database. This will provide us with much better capabilities to operate, report, and provide numbers.

After much discussion around apprenticeship, the committee decided to have a special meeting to discuss it further. This meeting will allow any questions or concerns to be discussed in more detailed manner. Mr. Waits stated he is willing to bring in the regional director to speak from their perspective, 2 or 3 different states who operate state apprenticeship agencies, members of the AACSC, and a few others.

On a motion made by Scott Copas and a second by Stacy Gunderman, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWD) unanimously approved having a special board meeting to discuss registered apprenticeship further.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:12 PM.

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Cody Waits, Director  
Office of Skills Development

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Kenneth Calhoun, Chair  
Career Education and Workforce  
Development Board