

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

October 12, 2021
11:30 AM

The Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB)) was called to order by Chairman Gina Radke. As a result of another conflict, Chairman Radke asked Mr. Hugh McDonald to run the meeting in her absence, and he accepted. The meeting was held at the Rockefeller Room at the Arkansas Department of Commerce and CEWDB Board members were given the option to either attend in-person, or virtually. The meeting was also broadcast on PBS.

A record of member attendance is as follows:

PRESENT (In-Person)

Mr. Kenneth Calhoun
Mr. Scott Copas
Mr. Hugh McDonald
Mr. Mike Rogers

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Mr. Cody Waits, Ex-Officio Secretary
Dr. Charisse Childers
Dr. Maria Markham
Ms. Esperanza Massana

PRESENT (Virtually)

Ms. Gina Radke (Chair)
Ms. Stacy Gunderman
Mr. Stephen Percival
Dr. Keith Vire

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Dr. Mike Hernandez
Ms. Cindy Gillespie (Mr. Larry Crutchfield)
Dr. Andrea Henderson (Ms. Kyla Waters)

ABSENT

Mr. Michael Garner
Dr. Jeff Standridge

Ex-Officio Nonvoting Members

Mr. Solomon Graves (Mr. Richard Cooper)
Mr. Johnny Key
Mr. Ross White
Mr. J.D. Lowery

Guests

Mr. Jay Bassett
Senator Jane English

ACTION ITEM 1- Minutes from June 8, 2021

Mr. Hugh McDonald asked for questions/comments from the board, and upon hearing none, asked for a motion to accept the minutes.

On a motion made by Mr. Scott Copas, and second by Mr. Kenneth Calhoun, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) unanimously approved the minutes from June 8, 2021.

ACTION ITEM 2 – SATC Rule Change due to New Legislation

Ms. Stephanie Isaacs explained the changes that were made to the rules for the secondary technical centers in Section IV: Operations, Part A: Secondary Technical Center Responsibility. Language in

A.1 was stricken and what remained specified that vocational center aid funds could be used for the management, maintenance, and operation of a secondary technical center.

An additional statement was also added to the rules, which clarified that in order to prioritize high quality technical programs, non-program related expenses (as defined in these rules) “shall not exceed 28% of a secondary center’s total annual expenditures.” As a result of adding this rule, the third item listed in Section A, was renumbered, making the total number of items listed under Section A change from 3 to 4 items.

Since “high quality” was not clearly defined in the rules, a motion was made to strike that term on page 6, and again on page 8, as referenced in the Definition section of V. A suggestion was also made to emphasize that it is the “instruction” of the technical programs, and not the technical programs themselves, that should be the priority.

On a motion made by Mr. Mike Rogers, and seconded by Mr. Scott Copas, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) approved the Secondary Technical Center Rules, with the following changes made: the term “high quality” will be stricken from pages 6 (Section A) and 8 (V: Definitions), and the verbiage in Section B will also change from “technical programs” to the “instruction of technical programs.”

ACTION ITEM 3 – Shark Tank Application/Rules

Ms. Isaacs began by pointing out that the board packet included a copy of the Request for Proposals for the new “Shark Tank” grant initiative. The proposal included a list of eligible recipients, along with a list of grant activities that would be eligible for funding. Ms. Isaacs went on to explain the process, including the fact that a series of webinars outlining the workforce project parameters would begin next week and that OSD communications and staff would be working to market this initiative to local chambers of commerce, workforce partnerships, community college workforce divisions and AEDC.

Once grant applications are submitted, Ms. Isaacs explained that the applications would be vetted by OSD, once a determination had been made on which grants would be recommended to the CEWD Board, then those presentations would be done in front of board members at a later date.

Ms. Isaacs and Mr. Waits also pointed out that their vision was to be able to move the needle with regards to workforce development across multiple industry sectors in a way that is different from what they can now achieve through the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet Committee, which meets bi-weekly.

Ms. Isaacs requested that the board take action on how they would like to proceed, with the choices being to either have the full board hear the grant presentations recommended by OSD’s vetting process, or to have a select committee of board members hear those presentations instead. A suggestion was made by the board that since the funding opportunities from these grants might be substantial, that it might be best if the presentations were made to the whole board, rather than a subcommittee.

There was also discussion centered around the RFP due date of December 1, 2021. Several board members were in agreement that December is not only such a busy time of year, but that a December 1st deadline would not give applicants or OSD much time to submit information and go through the vetting process. As a result, the recommendation was made that the RFP due date be changed to January 14, 2022, with the understanding that the subsequent deadlines that were also listed on Ms. Isaacs PowerPoint slide, would be adjusted at a later time.

On a motion made by Scott Capas, and a second by Kenneth Calhoun, the Career Education and Workforce Development Board (CEWDB) approved the Shark Tank Application/Rules, with the

understanding the entire board would be invited to hear the vetted presentations, and that the original due date of December 1, 2021, would be changed to January 14, 2022.

ACTION ITEM 4 – OSD Rules

Mr. Cody Waits explained that the OSD rules would be tabled until the next CEWD board meeting.

INFORMATION ITEM 5 – TransfrVR Grant Awards Update & Director’s Report

Ms. Isaacs began by giving an update on the progress made by TransfrVR, including the fact that training was already being offered in a variety of Arkansas cities and that most of the trainings scheduled opted for full-access labs.

Ms. Isaacs reminded the board that they heard a presentation from TransfrVR when representatives of the company presented at the June 8, 2021, meeting and shared the capabilities of their virtual reality technology and how it could positively impact the career exploration, training, and employment opportunities for K-12, and post-secondary students, across the state. OSD made a 500,000 investment and out of the 5 industry labs offered, the automotive and diesel labs were so far the most popular.

The Board then asked for Mr. Waits to give his Director’s Report. Mr. Waits began by sharing the success of OSD’s apprenticeship expansion efforts, including some current figures from Q1 which showed increases in the number of new apprentices served, the number of completers, and the increase seen in the total number of apprentices in Arkansas, which currently is 7,400 statewide.

Mr. Waits went on to explain that since the last board meeting, that OSD has continued their conversation on investigating the pros/cons of moving from an OA state to a State Approving Agency and that several staff members had the opportunity to attend the NASTAD virtual conference, which is a national conference made of the members of all of the SAA states and territories and is focused on sharing updates and best practices.

There are currently 30 states and territories that are members of the SAA organization and 7 states, including Arkansas, that are considering making this change. At a recent AACSC meeting, 4 SAA State Directors were invited as guests to present a brief history of apprenticeship in their states, to share the pros/cons of the SAA system, and to answer the questions that were submitted by the AACSC committee. Those states included Alabama, Arizona, Montana and Washington State.

Mr. Waits pointed out that the AACSC also had the opportunity to ask additional questions as they came up during the presentations, and that a concerted effort had been made to give the State of Alabama additional time during the meeting to address any concerns, since they were the only OA state in recent years to successfully make the transition from OA to SAA.

Mr. Waits mentioned that although questions and concerns were addressed at that meeting, the AACSC concluded that transitioning to an SAA state would not be in the best interest of Arkansas apprenticeship, resulting in a motion to be made to submit a letter to the Governor’s Office asking OSD to discontinue their efforts. Mr. Waits stated that asking OSD to discontinue this pursuit was premature and in response to their motion, sent a letter to the AACSC rejecting their recommendation.

Board members commented that they had been lobbied by various businesses and apprenticeship organizations who did not share OSD’s position, were not in support of this change, and, as a result, would like to hear both sides of this issue. Some board members also stated that making this change could affect certain industries and Mr. Waits agreed that addressing these concerns would be important and invited board members to be part of future SAA conversations and provide feedback.

Mr. Waits also updated the board on the sector review visits, mentioning that the HVACR visits had concluded, and that a final report was being prepared and would be shared at the next board meeting.

Ms. Isaacs mentioned that in addition to valuable insight gained from visiting the various schools across the state, the main takeaway was that inconsistencies in curriculum and instruction could be identified, along with best practices. As a result, the HVACR association put together much needed training for their instructors as a means of improving the quality of HVACR instruction and its standardization. Additionally, OSD was able to fund a set of trainers for each instructor that completed the training, which was a direct result of the HVACR sector review visits.

Steps are now being taken to focus on Industrial Maintenance next, with Tyson, Inc, taking the lead in putting together an evaluation team committee by November.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon the conclusion of Mr. Wait's Director's Report, and with no other comments, questions or concerns from the Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:48 PM.

Mr. Cody Waits, Director
Office of Skills Development

Mr. Hugh McDonald, (sitting in for Chair Radke)
Career Education and Workforce
Development Board