



Bay Area Workforce Development Board

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STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board **Meeting Summary** **September 20, 2007**

Present: Joe Hilke, Mike Troyer, Brian Pelon, Gwen Schuyler, Heidi Schaible, Brian Ognacevic, Terri Luebke
Others: Betty Gregory-Paasch, Ann Franz, Karen Flood, Jim Golembeski

Mr. Hilke called the meeting to order at the NWTC Center for Business and Industry at 11 AM. A quorum was present along with several guests. The Summary of the previous meeting was approved as submitted.

Mr. Hilke provided a presentation on "Spaceport Sheboygan" on a DVD and gave a history of the project. There is an effort to raise funds to create a space science center in Sheboygan that would tie into math and science education in the Sheboygan and other area schools. The fact that there is restricted air space around the city, one of only a few such areas in the country, opens the possibility of developing an actual space launch site there in the future. The committee agreed to ask the project manager, James Testwuide, to give a formal presentation to the full Bay Area WDB at the first opportunity. Mr. Troyer noted that there was a space project funded at UWGB a few years ago and that the faculty member hired for that project was still teaching there. He will try to make a contact to see if there is a connection with this project.

Ms. Franz and Mr. Golembeski had developed a draft plan to address the work readiness training need for underemployed workers that the committee has been discussing. A handout was provided. The draft paper outlined a five step process that utilized existing resources, incorporated the *Work Certified* program developed in Florida, and put forward some innovative developments in a five-step process. The training would focus on four industry sectors that provide significant employment in NE Wisconsin. These are: manufacturing, transportation, customer service, and health care.

Step one would use existing resources to provide a solid career assessment and help a job seeker select one of the occupational areas. Step two involves the use of the Florida *Work Certified* program or a similar model as foundational training in all four career areas. There are a number of models and programs available. The Florida program provides a certification that is nationally recognized and the curriculum has a validity gained from field usage. It was noted, however, that the *Work Certified* program does not include a section on safety and health, an area that shows up quite a bit in discussions of 21st century skill sets.

Step three would require the development of short term training curricula in each of the occupational areas (similar to what we have already done in welding, CNC, and Basic

Industrial Skills), that incorporated training in basic reading and math skills as well as in vocational English as appropriate. Currently these two elements are treated separately in most training programs. Step four would move an individual into employment at \$13+ per hour, but also provide a longer term career development plan that would take the individual beyond the entry level position into higher skilled employment in the chosen occupational area. Such a plan could include additional training leading to an associate or bachelor's degree.

The final step involves on-going mentoring, preferably employer sponsored. This longer term partnership will work to implement the career development plan.

It was suggested that we could do a pilot with the Department of Corrections, but concern was raised that such a narrow participant base might give the program a reputation that we might not want to have at the outset. We might also want to tweak the training given the occupational areas chosen. For example, over-the-road truck driving requires some family systems training due to the unique stress of the job. There was discussion about whether to purchase the Florida curriculum, another available product, or perhaps develop our own. Ms. Luebke, a training consultant, suggested that the cost of this last option would be prohibitive. Purchasing an established program would give us a tested product and, in the case of the Florida product, a nationally recognized certification.

Next steps for this process are to work out some of the details for each step and build partnerships with employers. What is currently being used in the Bay Area? What would an employer-sponsored mentoring program look like? How might we express the ROI to employers to get their buy-in? For example, employee retention improvement is a huge cost savings to employers. Employers will have to understand the coming labor shortages and be willing to act more proactively to meet their long term workforce needs. There will have to be training materials developed for both mentors and mentees. Generational differences will impact how this model works as well—can Gen Xers become effective mentors?

The meeting adjourned at 12:15.