

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 141
SEPTEMBER 24, 2009**

BOARD RETREAT UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

On August 12 and August 13, 2009, members of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board conducted a retreat at the Association of Washington Business. This two-day event was facilitated by Lindsey Woolsey from the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce. A summary memo from Ms. Woolsey is included in this tab. This session will provide an update on the progress of the three workgroups that emerged from discussions at the retreat:

1. **Meta-story** – Board members determined that a unifying “story,” which depicted the value of the workforce development system for policy-makers, was needed. The workgroup will present a draft of the “meta-story” for the Board’s consideration.

Board Action Requested: Guidance and/or Approval

2. **Communication Strategy** – Board members expressed an interest in actively participating in communications with policy-makers. This workgroup developed a draft communications plan for the Board’s consideration.

Board Action Requested: Approval

3. **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization** – Crystal Bridgeman, senior staff with Senator Patty Murray, reported that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has been largely absent in discussions regarding WIA Reauthorization. As the Washington liaison to the U.S. Chamber, the Association of Washington Business is in a position to advance recommendations to its national counterpart for consideration. Board members determined a framework or set of recommendations on WIA Reauthorization for the US Chamber of Commerce to use in congressional communications was needed. The workgroup will present a draft framework for the Board’s comments.

Board Action Requested: No action required

MEMORANDUM

To: Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director, Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
CC: Bryan Wilson, Deputy Director, WTB; Karla Thomas, Executive Assistant, WTB
From: Lindsey Woolsey, CSW
Date: September 8, 2009
Re: Board Retreat Follow-up

It was a pleasure working with the Board at their annual retreat. I think the discussions by Board members will set them on a promising course for achieving change, maintaining momentum and building influence of the Board in statewide workforce related issues. As board members emphasized at the end of the retreat, this is a unique time and window of opportunity for Washington State to be a strong voice in upcoming WIA reauthorization, as well as to continue leading the way nationally on cutting edge workforce issues. Please feel free to share this with board members if helpful.

This memo is intended to offer a few thoughts and some recommendations which may prove immediately useful. It should be used as a compliment to the Board's notes and summary of the Aug. 12-13 retreat, which is a much more detailed account of the discussions. I am available at 509-826-7991 or lwoolsey@skilledwork.org for any further discussion, and to help clarify any of these or your own retreat notes.

1. *Board Review of 8 Strategic Opportunities, Mission, Vision and Goals*: This small exercise proved quite useful to Board members who felt that, while well steeped in their 8 strategic opportunities, it is still easy to lose site of the broader mission and vision. This conversation also surfaced a shared concern that the Board has not effectively identified a set of 2-3 core priority areas for action in the next year that fall under the umbrella of one or more of the 8 strategic opportunities. At the next Board meeting, this should be addressed so that the Board's legislative agenda proactively reflects core priority areas.
2. *Global Market Place*: Board members overall seemed pleased with the presentation offered by Spencer Cohen, which provoked at least two major topics of discussion: 1) better connecting with the Department of Commerce to share and compare industry data; and 2) the importance of transferrable/foundational skills such as information technology and communications. Based on the level of discussion about transferrable/foundational skills, this seems to be an area for further discussion and decisions, and could be an area for the Board to be nationally influential.
3. *Board Effectiveness and Improvement*: This session covered a range of topics from survey results; recent events that concerned members (such as the system review

announcement by the Governor; relative exclusion from ARRA discussions; changes to uses of the Governor's 10% funds, etc); reflection on when the Board has felt more effective in the past; and the tools and "power tools" at the Board's disposal for improved effectiveness. Board members felt the discussion about tools was particularly useful, highlighting the advantages of the tri-partner board structure as a leverage point for expanding influence on key issues. Board members agreed that they have not been as strategic as they can be with communicating their intent and policy recommendations, and strongly emphasized a desire for some type of communications plan over the next 12 months. While this exists at some level currently, the staff should consider how they might better take advantage of member input and willingness to participate in the development and implementation of such a plan.

4. *WIA Reauthorization:* Board members received a useful overview of their November 2008 WIA recommendations, and then a candid perspective from Crystal Bridgeman of the U.S. Senate HELP Committee about the current environment for WIA reauthorization, and the current changes being discussed nationally. While the Board's November 2008 recommendations appear to align well with current national discussions, Crystal emphasized that Washington State is in a uniquely powerful position to make concrete recommendations to national policy makers, and to be a convener of other similarly-minded state workforce systems. Board members committed to their November 2008 recommendations, and to building WIA reauthorization into the communications plan for the next 12 months. After Crystal's specific mention of the US Chamber of Commerce's absence in the national discussion of WIA reauthorization, a subset of board members also agreed to work with the AWB and US Chamber of Commerce on crafting recommendations that align with the WTB's for the Chamber to consider promoting.
5. *Priorities for 2010:* This wrap-up discussion focused on the areas of action needed in the next 12 months (Aug '09-Aug 2010). Board members quickly returned to the need for a communications plan and identified a list of important elements to include in the plan. First and foremost, the group agreed that a "meta-story" is needed that provides a clear picture of why the Board's mission is so important. The "meta-story should set the stage for all policy discussions, with any audience. Board members also agreed that communications is a wise area for focus considering that any budgetary "asks" from the 2010 legislative session will be minimal and unlikely. Board members agreed to participate on two workgroups: one to craft the "meta-story" and the second to develop the communications plan, its elements, and its implementation tactics. Staff will also need to consider how certain priorities *not discussed* at this meeting should be surfaced, including digital workplace-based learning efforts, and priorities that were just touched on briefly should be incorporated, such as small business workforce support.

Again, it was great to work with you and Board members. I look forward to hearing next steps. Please let me know how I and CSW can be of further assistance.