

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 126
MAY 14, 2008**

**2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
INITIAL DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE AGENCY REQUESTS**

At the May meeting the Board will hold its first discussion of possible agency policy and budget requests for the 2009 legislative session. Already this year, many excellent ideas have surfaced. The purpose of the discussion is to get a sense of the Board's support for these ideas and to identify any other ideas the Board wants to explore as agency requests. Staff will then work with appropriate stakeholders to further develop the proposals the Board is interested in. Final Board action on agency policy and budget requests will occur at the September Board meeting.

Board Action Required: None. For discussion purposes only.

2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

INITIAL DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE WORKFORCE BOARD AGENCY REQUESTS

(This discussion is focused on only those bills that might be submitted by the Workforce Board itself. This is not a discussion of the Workforce Board legislative agenda, which will be much broader and will likely include request bills from any of our partner agencies.)

Possible Policy Requests (some of which would require a budgetary request)

Skills for the Next Washington: An Omnibus Bill on Coordinating Workforce and Economic Development. Parts of the bill would require a budgetary request.

Governor Gregoire's direction to the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) was to work with Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) to develop a framework for coordinating workforce and economic development, especially around industry clusters. In response to that charge, Workforce Board staff have worked with CTED and our partner agencies to develop the draft framework, entitled *Skills for the Next Washington*.

Over the coming months, Workforce Board, CTED, and many of our partners will be taking this draft on the road to gather the input of economic and workforce development practitioners and industry leaders. In addition to their input on the framework, we will be asking: In order to facilitate cluster development in your region:

- What is currently working well?
- What needs to be changed?
- What new state support is needed?

The results of this work could be the basis for agency request legislation. These parts could either be contained in an omnibus bill, or placed into separate bills.

Life Long Learning Accounts (LiLA): *Establishing LiLAs in state statute.* The Workforce Board, Association of Washington Business (AWB), State Labor Council, Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and others have been working under a foundation grant from The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), to pilot the LiLA concept, analyze the feasibility of a state-wide program, and develop a plan for scaling up if the concept proved worthwhile and feasible. Steering Committee partners believe that there is value in establishing a state-wide program. While it is too early to codify the details of the LiLA infrastructure or to develop a budget request, the establishment of LiLA in statute would be an important building block when selling the concept to Washington employers.

Youth Unemployment: The 2008 Legislature passed a bill directing the Workforce Board to conduct research on programs addressing high unemployment among young people, approximately 18-24 years of age. The bill also directs the Workforce Board to advise the Governor and Legislature regarding new policies or programs. During this interim, Workforce Board staff will be conducting this research. At this point, we do not know what recommendations will evolve from this research. An example may be recommending the creation of a state-funded summer youth employment program. It's likely that the recommendations will require a budgetary request.

Timeline for Updating *High Skills, High Wages*: In 2008, the State House of Representatives passed HB 3210 that would have lengthened the time period covered by *High Skills, High Wages* to 10 years and changed the requirement to update the plan every two years to every four years. The bill failed to pass out of the Rules Committee in the Senate. While the Board does not require statutory change to include a 10-year horizon in *High Skills, High Wages*, the Board does require a statutory change to alter the frequency with which it updates the plan. No budgetary request is required.

“In-Demand Scholars”: The 2008 Legislature passed SB 6377, the omnibus career and technical education bill. The bill contained a section directing the Workforce Board to administer the “In-Demand Scholars Program” to support students in high demand fields that require one to three years of postsecondary education or apprenticeship. The Legislature, however, did not fund this section of the bill and the Governor vetoed this section. The program was modeled after an existing program funded by a Congressional earmark and operated by the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs). The program has two major components, mentorship and financial aid. Based on initial discussions, it appears that there were concerns over the creation of an additional financial aid program administered by another agency, the Workforce Board. Current financial aid programs, with the major exception of the Opportunity Grant program, are generally administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. This proposal would require a budgetary request.

Possible Budgetary Requests (that would not require a policy request)

Green Jobs Skill Panels: The 2008 Legislature passed HB 2815, the “Green Jobs” bill. One section of the bill directs the Workforce Board to establish skill panels in Green Jobs sectors of the economy. This part of the bill was not funded. The expectation was, however, that the skill panels would be funded in the next biennial budget.

Skill Panels: The 2007 Legislature passed a budget proviso providing the Workforce Board with \$340,000 per year for the current biennium for industry skill panels. The 2008 Legislature passed SB 5254 placing skill panels into statute. This action places the \$340,000 per year funding into the agency’s base. In recent years, the Board has had a total of \$680,000 per year in WIA 10 Percent funds for skill panels. The Board could request additional state funding beyond the current level of \$340,000 per year.

Worksite Digital Learning: The 2008 Legislature passed SB 6295 directing the Workforce Board to conduct research on worksite digital learning programs conducted by colleges and employers, and to establish up to eight pilot projects. The Legislature did not provide any funding for the bill and expected the Board to proceed with the research only. The Board could request funding for the pilot projects.

Additional Research FTEs: Last year the Board submitted a budget request to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) for funds to support two additional research positions. OFM denied the request, indicating that it did not meet the criteria for the supplemental budget—such as an emergency or a caseload increase. The following summarizes last year’s request:

This is a request for \$234,000 in General Fund-State dollars to support increased research activities by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The Workforce Board is well known for conducting quantitative research into the results of workforce

development programs and the workforce training needs of employers. The Board, however, lacks the resources to conduct more in-depth research into the root causes of program results or more detailed and qualitative research into the workforce development needs of employers or the rapidly changing workforce. The proposal would fund two research staff at the Workforce Board for the purpose of conducting more in-depth research into workforce development needs and results.