

# Consent Agenda

**PRESENTER NAME:** Eleni Papadakis

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** 11/2/2016

**BOARD MEMBER SPONSOR NAME:**

**DISCUSSION TIME ALLOTTED:** 30 Min

<p><b>ISSUE/SITUATION:</b> Be concise- 1 or 2 sentences that get to the heart of the situation, problem or opportunity being addressed.</p>	<p><b>THE ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY IS:</b>  The Board has substantial administrative and procedural responsibilities under State and Federal law and regulation. These responsibilities consume a significant share of Board meeting time, even though the action is often simply continuing a current policy or validating a consensus among agencies and/or stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>TAP STRATEGIC PRIORITY:</b> Which TAP strategic priority or priorities does this recommendation support? Can you tie to specific goals and objectives in TAP? Briefly describe these connections. If the connection is unclear, describe why this is of consequence to the Workforce Board and/or workforce system.</p>	<p><b>SUPPORTS TAP STRATEGIC PRIORITY:</b>  Freeing Board time from routine administrative matters would allow more concentration on the Strategic Priorities.</p>
<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACT:</b> Effect on people, businesses, communities. What is better or different from other existing strategies?</p>	<p><b>IT IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE:</b>  Having set a very ambitious and challenging agenda in the TAP plan, the Board needs to be able to concentrate on issues that arise from a major increase in interagency collaboration.</p>
<p><b>OPTIMAL NEXT STEPS:</b> What do you really want to happen as a result of this discussion with the Workforce Board?</p>	<p><b>MY IDEAL OUTCOME OF THIS DISCUSSION IS:</b>  The Board establishes direction for developing a process to reduce the amount of meeting time spent on routine administrative matters.</p>
<p><b>BACKGROUND:</b> Short history of how this recommendation came to be. What has been tried, to what result? What evidence exists to support this recommendation?</p>	<p><b>RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:</b>  The Board retreat this summer kicked off a process of looking for ways to make the Board a more effective institution. Among other concerns, Board members expressed both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire for more extended discussion of major issues, and</li> <li>• Frustration with the amount relatively unimportant items on the meeting agendas.</li> </ul>

<p><b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, PROS AND CONS:</b>          Which stakeholders have been engaged in the development of this recommendation? What are the pros and cons of this recommendation? According to whom (which stakeholder groups)? Are there viable alternatives to consider?</p>	<p><b>STAKEHOLDERS HAVE PROVIDED INPUT AND THEY THINK:</b></p> <p>This discussion proposal is a result of input from Board members and agency staff.</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL ANALYSIS AND IMPACT:</b>          What will it cost to enact this recommendation? What resources will be used? Are new resources required? How much? Where will existing or new resources come from? Are there savings to be gained from this investment? Over what period? Are there other returns on investment to consider?</p>	<p><b>THE COST AND RESOURCE NEEDS OF THIS RECOMMENDATION ARE:</b></p> <p>The necessary investment of Board member and staff time in developing and perfecting a consent agenda process is expected to be modest.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:</b>          What specific result do you want from the Board? Is this recommendation for discussion or action? If for discussion, will action be required at a later date? What next steps are expected after this discussion?</p>	<p><b>THE RECOMMENDATION AND/OR REQUESTED ACTION IS:</b></p> <p>For Discussion          If there is sufficient interest among Board Members, direction for Board and/or staff work group to develop an actionable proposal could be a next step.</p>

## **Workforce Board Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda is an efficiency tool commonly used by boards. The consent agenda is a way to group a number of either routine, or already well deliberated items, into one action item. This leaves more time for the meaningful discussion the Board often can't get to. Only one action need be taken on a number of motions, rather than taking them one at a time.

Boards will often include their meeting minutes, subcommittee updates, meeting calendar, program information, and relevant announcements as standing items on their consent agenda. As the Board Chair is responsible for setting each board meeting agenda, generally it is the Chair who decides if additional items should go onto a consent agenda for a particular meeting. The Board could establish some basic criteria, but allow for Chair discretion.

Examples of criteria include:

- The Board has already discussed the item at a previous meeting, and there was no expressed dissent on the general direction or proposed solution.
- The recommendation has been through a comprehensive stakeholder review process, and there is broad consensus.
- A similar item has come up before, and the differences are not substantial. The same recommendation is being made as in prior cases.
- The degree of detail to be included in the board packet about consent items.

The Workforce Board has many responsibilities and has to prioritize which issues warrant significant time for Board deliberation. Often, administrative responsibilities have pre-empted strategic policy issues because administrative actions are required by either statute or regulation. The Board can choose to rely more heavily on Board staff to speed up the decision-making process and/or the stakeholder review process, when administrative issues unlikely to result in significant change or impact must be addressed by the Board. Some examples of such administrative issues include:

- Eligible Training Provider List criteria determination—Since the initial establishment of the ETPL, the Board has usually made only minor adjustments to criteria developed by staff in consultation with stakeholders, for example re-align earnings criteria to changes in the state minimum wage level.
- Carl Perkins funding split between OSPI and SBCTC—unchanged in 10+ years.
- Local Board Recertification—Board has not changed the approval criteria in many years.
- WIOA Target Setting—The proposals brought to the Board result from staff-led negotiations with local WDCs. The Board has not taken an active role in the negotiation process since the intensive local negotiations process was implemented.

In each of these cases, the Board could choose to engage in a discussion about the criteria for the staff's work, but put staff recommendations from applying those criteria on the consent agenda. For example, given the new TAP plan, the Board might want to spend time on discussing the standards for approval of local board certification, then direct staff to review all local board

applications, and move the staff's recommendation to the consent agenda unless significant issues arise.

#### Consent Agenda Rules:

Board members have the right to pull an item off the consent agenda onto the regular agenda. A Board member may have a question about the recommendation or the process by which the recommendation was developed, or a disagreement with the recommendation. A clarifying question is not a reason for pulling an item onto the main agenda, and should be addressed directly with the staff. However, staff will share clarifying questions and corresponding answers with the full Board prior to Board's action on the consent agenda.

#### Questions to consider in establishing a Consent Agenda process:

1. Board establishes a standing list of items for the consent agenda.
2. Board may establish general guidelines for moving additional items to the consent agenda, and for pulling items off the consent agenda to the regular meeting agenda. A guideline might be that Board members must notify the chair prior to the start of the meeting, as an example.
3. Chair makes decision to move additional items to the consent agenda for each meeting.
4. Consent agenda materials are sent out in advance of meetings for Board member review. What is the format and level of detail for different types of consent agenda items in the Board packet? Is it different than for items up for full discussion?
5. What is the stakeholder role in the consent agenda process for items that do not result from an explicit stakeholder process?
6. How is consent agenda represented in the minutes or reflected to the public?

The challenge is developing a method that makes more efficient use of the collective time of Board members, without loss of either public transparency or Board member cognizance of agency activities and responsibilities. Judicious use of the consent agenda is one of the available tools that has helped achieve this for other boards.