

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING No. 139
JUNE 25, 2009**

RETREAT PLANNING

On June 25, 2009, board members will be asked to identify one or more topics on which to focus during the retreat scheduled for August 15, 2009. In the past, topics have fallen into three general categories of:

- 1) Board Effectiveness
- 2) System Effectiveness
- 3) Specific Program or Policy Areas

Last year the board chose to explore items 1 and 3, but afterwards attendees felt that there was not enough time to discuss either topic sufficiently. However, at the 2008 Retreat, attendees did identify a number of topics for future consideration. A brief discussion of these topics follows:

Report from the year 2013: Actions that Raised More Washingtonians above the 200 Percent Poverty Level

The specific policy area of focus was poverty elimination in Washington. At the retreat, attendees were asked to visualize 5 years into the future, in a Washington that had reduced its poverty rate significantly. The premise for the exercise was that 5% more citizens had risen above 200% of the poverty level than in the year 2008. Attendees were then asked to wind back the clock and describe what programs or policies had been instituted to achieve such positive results. The discussion was quite broad, but the group was able to come to consensus on a short list of ideas for future consideration:

Top Actions Accomplished by 2013
<p>“GI Bill” for Washington Workers</p> <p>Created a “(Community Service) GI Bill for Washington Workers” for all workers that covers full tuition, living costs and supportive services including transportation and child care for a 13th year. This is Washington state’s commitment to success. Postsecondary education scholarships plus wraparound support services. Features could include stipends and scholarships for community service.</p>
<p>Cluster-Based Employment & Education Resource Centers</p> <p>Building employment/education resource centers supporting industry clusters such as the public/private Boeing Employment Resource Center (BERC). Cluster targeted features would include codification of Career Lattices and pathways across the clusters; assessments and testing to identify missing skills, cluster specific career counseling and training, on line support, and award of portable credentials.</p>

Employee Training Incentives & Fund Development

Creation of training fund drawn from employer contributions and/or creation of an incentive or reward for employers sponsoring their own employees' training. Other options: B&O taxes are reformed so that there are employer incentives for training low wage workers; use of UI Trust funds.

The New American Dream

Public campaign aimed at broadening the "American Dream" by promoting the variety and diversity of education, training, and career choices. A campaign to increase the awareness of all postsecondary options combined with high quality guidance and counseling opportunities for youth and working adults to reach their personal and professional goals.

Workplace Distance Learning

Huge expansion in the use of technology such as online/distance learning with incentives to businesses and community and technical colleges to offer more workplace learning. Expansion of professional development so that teachers can keep pace with technology including methods tied to workplace learning.

Reformed higher education system so that people can advance educationally at the workplace through workplace-based learning.

Transforming Correctional Systems to Educational Systems

Washington state prisons become their own school district with authority to grant high school diplomas. Progress toward high school graduation becomes a factor in parole board decisions.

Public school teachers in juvenile detention centers are granted financial incentives when youth make clear progress in credit retrieval.

Career Counselors Prepared for the Next Washington

Increased emphasis on counseling and career advising with counselors at all levels exposed to opportunities in the world of work and trained about the current economies. Better equipped career counselors (including H.S. counselors) who understand and promote high demand and emerging occupations and associated skill sets.

Created a continuing education annual requirement and program for all career counselors employed by K-12, higher education, WorkSource, L&I, etc. so counselors understand the cyclical and structural changes in the economy and the workforce development services available in their region.

Board Effectiveness

The Board was given a result sheet of evaluations for the past two years. The results showed enthusiasm, good attendance, and overall satisfaction with both discussion and action items. The retreat discussion then focused on keeping board members from all constituencies engaged, acknowledging that some board responsibilities are not as engaging as others—some statutory responsibilities being administrative in nature. Topic areas that emerged included:

1. Including more high level policy discussions, with a focus on the role of the Board in making a positive impact.
2. Find ways to create a more coherent flow from one meeting to another, and ensure that there is opportunity for progress updates and follow-up.
3. Re-evaluate the role and composition of the Interagency Committee, as well as the commitment of partners to contribute to IC effectiveness.
4. Consider opportunities for deeper exploration of pertinent issues between board meetings and over a longer period of time. For example, establish ad hoc subcommittees comprised of Board and IC members, as well as others who are not usually involved in the work of the Board.

RETREAT 2009

The ideas that emerged from the 2008 retreat are worth consideration as topics for the 2009 retreat. Since that time, however, the economy has changed dramatically, and so the burdens on all aspects of our workforce development system have increased dramatically; new legislative and executive directives have emerged; and the future funding picture for our programs and services is being considered at the national level. Given this current context, the board might instead consider re-evaluating the priorities established in *High Skills, High Wages 2008-2018*. The eight current Strategic Opportunities are:

- 1) *Increase high school graduation rates with programs such as Navigation 101 that provide students with supportive career guidance and planning.*
- 2) *Expand career and technical education programs that give students a real-world context for what they learn.*
- 3) *Increase the skilled workers Washington businesses need by boosting capacity at community and technical colleges, private career schools, and apprenticeship programs.*
- 4) *Expand financial aid to help more low-income Washingtonians reach a “13th year” of education that leads to living wage jobs.*
- 5) *Boost the employability of workers through programs that roll basic skills, English language instruction and job skills into one complete package.*
- 6) *Focus on industry clusters that drive regional economies so that Washington communities build on their strengths and grow even stronger.*
- 7) *Expand workplace based learning, online courses and other flexible education options to help workers move ahead and expand their careers.*
- 8) *Continue to identify and remove barriers to employment, education and training so that workers have a clear path to reach their career goals.*

Since *High Skills, High Wages 2008-2018* was approved, a number of other issues have arisen that might also be considered as retreat topics:

1. Advancing Bill #1323: Coordinating Workforce and Economic Development.

2. The 10-year drift: Washington's 18-28 year-olds loss of economic ground expected to worsen in economic decline.
3. A coordinated information technology infrastructure for the state's workforce development system: better, faster, cheaper?

The above listing of potential topics is offered to the board as a starting place only. Are there other topics that you feel the board should be tackling? Are there any aspects of the above topics that you feel have been overlooked? Do you have a preference for how a retreat should be organized? We hope to reach consensus among board members on a primary retreat topic on June 25.