



Workforce Board

Electronic Newsletter

Volume 7, Number 1

January 21, 2005

**FEBRUARY 13-19 IS NATIONAL CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION WEEK**

From the desk of Ellen O'Brien Saunders, Executive Director

What's inside?

- **Customer Satisfaction, Local Strategic Plans on Board Agenda**
- **Workforce Training Results – 2004 Available**
- **Opening Volleys Fired in Perkins Reauthorization**
- **Still More Workforce Investment Act Fine-tuning**
- **Next Generation Performance Management System Almost Final**
- **Now You Too Can Have AYES**
- **Briefly**
 - **Legislative Agenda**
 - **WAVE Applications**
- **Upcoming Meetings and Conferences**
- **Funding Opportunities**
- **Resources**

Customer Satisfaction, Local Strategic Plans on Board Agenda

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board will hold a Board Meeting on January 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the Percival Room, South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia.

Items on the agenda include:

- Processes for advising the Governor and Legislature on pending changes in national legislation,
- Processes for reviewing and approving local strategic plans,
- Support for the six-state Integrated Performance Information project,
- Research to improve Workforce Investment Act customer satisfaction, and
- Progress on the Health Care Personnel Shortage Task Force plan.

The Board will adjourn early to participate in a special joint meeting with the Higher Education Coordinating Board at the State Investment Board, 2100 Evergreen Park Drive, Olympia.

People needing special accommodations should contact Darlene Bartlett at 360-753-5677, dbartlett@wtb.wa.gov.

Workforce Training Results – 2004 Available

The Executive Summary of the *2004 Workforce Training Results* is now available.

Among the key findings:

- Participant satisfaction remains high, but employment and earnings declined in some programs from their level two years ago.
- Wage outcomes for women continue to be substantially lower than for men.
- Substantial numbers of participants report their need for information on job openings are still not being met.

For more information on the report, or to obtain a full copy of the report's findings, contact Bryan Wilson at 360-753-0891, bwilson@wtb.wa.gov.

Opening Volleys Fired in Perkins Reauthorization

President Bush's latest high school reform initiative is causing 'angst' among career and technical educators.

In a preview of his FY 2006 budget request, the President indicated that he would be seeking \$1.5 billion to fund a new High School Initiative. Almost all of this money would be used, according to a White House fact sheet, "to hold high schools accountable for teaching all students and to provide effective interventions for those students who are not learning at grade level. In return for a commitment to improve academic achievement and graduation rates for secondary school students, states will receive the flexibility to choose which programs will be most effective in serving the needs of their high school students."

Also, to make taxpayer dollars more effective and still provide funding for states under the High School Initiative, the President wants to consolidate programs with a narrow focus and those that have not been effective in improving secondary students' academic achievement.

The President said, "To support intervention plans, I believe we need to improve the way the federal government funds high schools. The federal government -- oh, we've got a lot of programs designed to help high school students; over the years, programs have developed. The problem is they're like silos. They're prescriptions that may not meet the needs of the local high school, or the local school district -- you know, a program to promote vocational education, or to prepare for college preparation, or to encourage school restructuring. They all sound fine, and they're all important. But they may not be what is necessary for a particular school district or a high school to achieve the objective of teaching every child to read and write and add and subtract. So I believe we ought to

consolidate the high school improvement programs so that states have the flexibility to choose the program that works best for their students."

The belief among those in career and technical education (CTE) is that this consolidation effort would amount to a high school block grant. This could mean the elimination of individual funding streams and dedicated funding for programs like Perkins. While it is still early and the President's budget request far from approved, this will be a tight budget year for Congress. Cuts in CTE program funding therefore should be considered a strong possibility.

Meanwhile over at the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, the Department is set to mandate that states use their state No Child Left Behind assessments as the academic attainment measure(s) for Perkins. It's unclear whether they will mandate two measures for reading and math, or just one aggregating the two assessment results.

There is concern that the assessments show the academic characteristics of students who become CTE students, not the performance of CTE. Equally, CTE will look bad unless the students who choose to become CTE concentrators are as academically proficient in the 10th grade as students who do not choose to become CTE concentrators.

A third problem is inconsistency with Perkins historical emphasis on special populations. If states attempt to increase their academic assessment results by taking only the best academic students into CTE, this would decrease the prevalence of special populations.

Contact Terri Colbert at 360-753-5680, terri.colbert@wtb.wa.gov, or Bryan Wilson at 360-753-0891, bryan.wilson@wtb.wa.gov for additional information.

Still More Workforce Investment Act Fine-tuning

Just days after House Republicans proposed a Job Training Improvement Act (House Bill 27) which would reauthorize and reform the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Bush administration has indicated it would go even further and include additional proposals.

The Administration's proposals include: eliminating duplication and waste by consolidating funding streams; increasing flexibility in tailoring service delivery; directing more of the available resources toward training; increasing fiscal and performance accountability; moving towards common performance measures; raising the focus on a demand-driven workforce development system; and strengthening One-Stop service integration.

According to the President, a new workforce investment system could double the number of people trained for the same amount of money as the current WIA legislation given "reasonable reforms, some flexibility in the program, and less proscription by the United States Congress on how the program is administered."

Expect an announcement on the administration's WIA reform package at the beginning of February.

For more information on WIA, contact Martin McCallum at 360-586-0151, mmccallum@wtb.wa.gov.

Next Generation Performance Management System Almost Final

A next generation performance management system for workforce development systems is about to become final.

The Workforce Board, working with five other states (Oregon, Florida, Texas, Michigan, and Montana), the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices, and the Ray Marshall Center at the University of Texas, have drafted a "Blueprint" for creating and maintaining an integrated performance information (IPI) system. Such a system will increase accountability, improve strategic planning, provide better research and efficiency, and develop a sense of shared responsibility among workforce development programs.

Available for distribution later this winter, the Blueprint consists of three sections:

- **Challenges and Responses** that discusses: (1) establishing authority for IPI, (2) creating a culture of shared accountability, (3) building capacity—including funding and addressing privacy issues, and (4) reaching consensus on goals and measures.
- **IPI Performance Measures** that discusses what measures best respond to the performance questions commonly posed by policy leaders.
- **Shared Information Systems** that discusses the steps and decisions involved in establishing a data warehouse that links administrative records from multiple programs with other data sets, such as unemployment insurance wage records. Creating a data warehouse requires states to make decisions regarding: authorization; leadership; funding; scope; data ownership, confidentiality, and access; information flows; reporting; and quality assurance, among other issues.

The Employment and Training Division of the U.S. Department of Labor asked the Workforce Board in June 2003 to lead this nationwide effort.

For additional information, contact Bryan Wilson, 360-753-0891, bwilson@wtb.wa.gov.

Now You Too Can Have AYES

The Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES) has developed an online education and training process that opens the doors of automotive technician training and employment to interested learners of all ages. The new delivery model is the organization's next step towards creating a national automotive curriculum and has the potential for more than doubling the number of new technicians earning degrees each year.

By aggregating three leading curriculums into a single learning process, the AYES online system allows each learner to study every aspect of each topic in more than one way. Should a student not gain proficiency in one topic as presented in the lead presentation, he/she automatically moves to the same topic using the second presentation method or the third.

A SmartCard security process ensures that each user has authentication access, a secure pathway, and a recorded measurement of success. The Card could also become a lifetime learning passport that could print into a current résumé if needed.

The benefits to the new training initiative are numerous — from being available to every dealership in the country to engaging community colleges and assisting instructors with lesson planning and curriculum presentation. It also has potential as a model for other workforce-challenged industries.

More information available at www.ayes.org.

Briefly

Legislative Agenda: The Workforce Board has expanded its legislative coverage for the 2005 session. In addition to a weekly hearing schedule posted each Friday, the site will include information on workforce-related bills and legislative work sessions. New this year is a listing of the Workforce Board's position on a variety of issues ranging from career and technical education funding to the high school dropout rate, skill panels, the health care shortage, and the state's strategic plan for workforce development. Check it out at www.wtb.wa.gov/leg05.html.

For more specific legislative action, contact Wes Pruitt at 360-586-1672, wpruitt@wtb.wa.gov, or Madeleine Thompson at 360-753-5653, mthompson@wtb.wa.gov.

WAVE Applications: Details about the Washington Award for Vocational Excellence (WAVE) scholarship program and application forms are now available online at www.wtb.wa.gov/wave.html. Paper copies were mailed to high schools and colleges across the state in December. Completed applications are due to school vocational administrators or WAVE coordinators by February 15 and to the Workforce Board no later than March 3. Notifications go out to recipients on April 15.

For more information, contact Lee Williams at 360-586-3321, lwilliams@wtb.wa.gov, or Diane Donahoo at 360-753-0892, ddonahoo@wtb.wa.gov.

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

Mark the dates: **February 7-9** for the Building Skills 2005 conference at The Westin Hotel in Seattle. Sponsored by the *Center for Learning Connections* at Highline Community College, the conference targets frontline staff in workforce development that work with customers in transition. Register online at <http://www.learningconnections.org>.

On **March 15**, the *Homeland Defense Journal* is holding a one-day basic grant writing workshop in Chicago at the Radisson Hotel & Suites. The workshop will provide information about the federal agency's plans for over \$3 billion in grants to first responders for training, communications, and outfitting. Cost for government entities is \$295 per person. More details at www.homelanddefensejournal.com/conf_grantsIL.htm.

The *Washington Technology Center* is hosting its first statewide Washington Technology Summit on **April 8** in Seattle at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center. The one-day conference will discuss the state's economic potential in technology during the morning, and, in the afternoon, focus on four key industries: Energy, Life Sciences, Defense and Security, and Nanotechnology. More information and registration at www.watechcenter.org/re/techsummit.

Various dates – the *National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation* has planned a series of Summer Institutes around the country where secondary and postsecondary restaurant/foodservice instructors can work toward obtaining a Certified Secondary Foodservice Educator certificate. Deadline for registration for the Summer Institutes is May 16, and more information is available at www.nraef.org/prostart/teachers/development/institutes.asp. There is a basic level course at Washington State University in Pullman from June 20-24.

Funding Opportunity

The American Express Foundation plans to grant \$1 million this year to fund financial literacy and education projects. The program is designed to support the delivery of financial literacy education to underserved adult segments of society, including the newly employed, young workers, individuals moving from welfare to work, and immigrants.

Any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose clients are representative of these underserved adult audiences is eligible to apply. The focus is on organizations operating at the community level that may or may not have affiliations with state, regional, and national groups. Multi-organizational partnerships or statewide programs are acceptable.

Grant amounts range between \$15,000 and \$30,000, and proposals will be considered for projects ranging from 12-24 months in duration.

See www.nefe.org/amexeconfundrfp/aeef2005rfp.html for more details about this opportunity which deadlines March 4.

Resources

Are you looking for fresh ideas on how to change the way workforce development is done in your community? A Boston group, Jobs for the Future, has recently published *Reinventing Workforce Development*, which describes their initiative (SkillWorks) and its start-up lessons for workforce development reforms throughout the nation. To download *Reinventing Workforce Development*, go to www.jff.org/jff/kc/library/0238. For more information on SkillWorks, go to www.skill-works.org.

The Arbor Workforce Institute has a free e-newsletter (Perspective) available for workforce development professionals. Available by signing up at www.arboret.com/newsletter.asp. Perspective promises brief and succinct interpretation and analysis of workforce policy, legislation, and regulation.

The Institute also has revamped its website and will focus on national policy in three sections:

- Workforce Development Policy — need a copy of the President's budget or the Senate-passed WIA reauthorization, go to www.arboret.com/policy_wfi.asp.
- Trends that Influence Workforce Policy — check out www.arboret.com/trends_wfi.asp if you need information on globalization, population shifts, etc.
- Ideas from the World of Workforce Programs and Services for a look at what we must do to make certain that the emerging world of work is aligned with the programs and services we provide; i.e. business services, One-Stops, etc.

Blane, Canada Ltd., an economic consulting company, has issued a report *Workforce Health: Emerging Challenge Faces Workforce* that reinforces the Workforce Board's own research on workplace skills. In its report, the consulting firm notes that companies will have increasing difficulty in the near future finding the workforce it needs. Soft skills such as innovation, flexibility, and the ability to deal with change will be at a premium, the report states. Of particular interest is the number of companies that have training programs (78 percent), and the number (two-thirds) which are devoted to remedial training.

More details about the report, which analyzed interviews from over 5,500 executives in more than 300 communities across the country between January 2000 and December 2003, is available at www.blanecanada.com/workforce_health_rpt.pdf.