

MEETING SUMMARY

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON
WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

9:00 A.M.

Association of Arkansas Counties Building
Little Rock, Arkansas

Senator Jane English, the Senate Co-Chair of the Legislative Task Force on Workforce Education Excellence, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE: *Senators:* Jane English, Senate Co-Chair; and Lance Eads. *Representatives:* Rick Beck; Dan M. Douglas; and Dan Sullivan.

NON-LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON WORKFORCE EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. Kenneth Calhoun; Mr. Stephen Horton; and Mr. Mike Rogers.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ATTENDANCE: *Representatives:* Ken Bragg; Charlotte V. Douglas; Kim Hammer; and Johnny Rye.

Minutes:

Without objection, the minutes of August 22, 2018, were approved as written.

Exhibit:

Exhibit C – 08/22/2018 Minutes

Remarks by the Chairs

At the request of Senator English, members of the Task Force and those invited to make presentations introduced themselves. Senator English commented that the Task Force has spent months reviewing programs, hearing presentations from industry representatives, and making site visits. She stated the next step toward making recommendations is to look at the bigger picture and ask, What should a workforce system look like in the State of Arkansas? Who are we trying to reach? Where do we want to go? How do we want to use our resources to create a functioning system in which everybody benefits? She commended the work already being done by Mr. Mike Rogers of Tyson, and others, to bring together K-12, higher education, industry representatives, and communities to organize and establish maintenance programs in rural areas of Arkansas.

Discussion of *Building a Skilled Workforce for a Stronger Southern Economy*, a joint report of the National Skills Coalition and the Federal Reserve Banks of Atlanta and St. Louis

Presenters:

Ms. Melissa Johnson, Senior State Policy Analyst, National Skills Coalition, and **Ms. Samantha Evans**, Community Development Advisor – Workforce Development, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, were recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Johnson and Ms. Evans reviewed the National Skills Coalition’s report, discussed policy recommendations, and answered related questions. Ms. Johnson and Ms. Evans included a discussion of middle-skill jobs; tackling barriers to work; addressing inequities and outcomes to arrive at an inclusive economy; the roadmap to southern skill-building and vehicles for implementing the roadmap. Ms. Johnson detailed five recommendations, and provided state examples for each of the recommendations.

Contributor to the Discussion:

Mr. Quentin Suffren, Managing Director - Innovation Policy, ExcelinEd

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- clarification of “middle skills,”
- pushing training and skills development back to high school,
- workforce development and economic growth,
- whether barriers to work, such as poverty, transportation, childcare, or having a criminal record, are a cause or an effect,
- making a living wage as part of the education and training solution,
- providing a breakdown of mid-level skills gap by state,
- the disconnect between education and business needs,
- trends indicating that employers are picking up more responsibility for training workers,
- systemic alignment of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and job placement,
- outcomes-based funding model at Texas State Technical College, and
- Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative as a successful example of providing career advice and navigation.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Building a Skilled Workforce for a Stronger Southern Economy: Opportunities for Arkansas

Exhibit:

Exhibit D – Building a Skilled Workforce for a Stronger Southern Economy

Handouts:

Handout #1 – Building a Skilled Workforce for a Stronger Southern Economy: Opportunities for Arkansas

Handout #2 – *Southern states must build a skilled workforce for a stronger economy*, article by Ms. Melissa Johnson

Discussion of *Putting Career and Technical Education to Work for Students: A Playbook for State Policymakers*

Presenters:

Mr. Nathan Hoffman, Regional Advocacy Director - Gulf Region, ExcelinEd, was recognized. Mr. Hoffman stated that the Foundation for Excellence in Education (ExcelinEd) is a non-profit organization, the main goal of which is to help states customize policies built around student-centered models for education.

Mr. Quentin Suffren, Managing Director - Innovation Policy, ExcelinEd, was recognized. Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Suffren focused his discussion on career and technical education (CTE). He provided reasons for the focus on CTE. He said Arkansas spends a funding mix of about \$120 million a year on secondary-only career and technical education, a sizable investment for roughly 150,000 students in high school. He asked where that investment should be placed. Mr. Suffren discussed America's Skills Gap; 16 Career Clusters with Numerous Programs of Study; State CTE Programs Must Evolve; Non-Negotiables for State Policymakers; No Dead Ends; Rethinking State CTE Programs; Sample Program Quality Indicators & Questions; State Spotlight (Tennessee); Industry-recognized Credentials; Arkansas Career & Technical Education Pathways; Incentivize Access to Real-World Job Skills; and State Spotlight (Florida).

Contributors to the Discussion:

Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education

Mr. Ed Franklin, President, Franklin Educational Consulting

Mr. Cody Waits, Deputy Director, Office of Skills Development, Arkansas Department of Career Education

Issues Included in the Discussion:

- presenters offering a solid roadmap to creating a strategic plan,
- related activities taking place at the Arkansas Department of Career Education,
- being agile to change when change is unknown,
- annual review of curriculum,
- advantage of having a longitudinal database,
- importance of partnerships with industry, and
- completed studies for reference which contain relevant data.

PowerPoint Presentation:

Handout #3 – Career & Technical Education

Exhibit:

Exhibit E – Putting Career and Technical Education to Work for Students

Handout:

Handout #3 – Career & Technical Education

Senator English recognized **Ms. Rachel Pitre**, Publisher, Arkansas Business Publishing Group, to discuss and distribute Arkansas Next PROS, an insert to the publication, Arkansas Next. The insert contains information on careers in CTE for guidance counselors to use in the classroom.

Handout:

Handout #4 – Arkansas Next PROS

Next Scheduled Meeting:

Wednesday, October 10, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 138 of the State Capitol, Little Rock

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Approved: 10/10/2018