

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE INVESTMENT

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2022 Interim

July 21, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 2nd meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment was held on Thursday, July 21, 2022, at 9:00 AM, in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Russell Webber, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Wil Schroder, Co-Chair; Representative Russell Webber, Co-Chair; Senators Robby Mills, Adrienne Southworth, Brandon J. Storm, Reginald Thomas, and Phillip Wheeler; Representatives Kim Banta, Lynn Bechler, Josh Bray, George Brown Jr., Josh Calloway, McKenzie Cantrell, Daniel Elliott, Chris Freeland, Al Gentry, Thomas Huff, DJ Johnson, Kim King, Nima Kulkarni, William Lawrence, Matt Lockett, Scott Sharp, and Timmy Truett.

Guests: Kish Cumi Price, Commissioner, Department of Workforce Development and Special Advisor to the Governor; Michelle DeJohn, Executive Director, Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services; Beth Hargis, Associate Commissioner, Office of Career and Technical Education; Leslie Slaughter, Executive Advisor, Office of Career and Technical Education.

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Kirk Smith, Crystal Thompson, and Sasche Allen.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2022 meeting was made by Representative Elliott, seconded by Senator Schroder, and approved by voice vote.

Update on Workforce Development and Apprenticeship Programs

A registered apprenticeship program is a systematic approach to training that utilizes classroom instruction and on-the-job training to ensure employees are trained and certified to produce at the highest skill level required for a particular occupation. The Commonwealth's apprenticeship program is housed within the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services and encompasses a diverse range of industries such as healthcare, education, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and hospitality. The program is primarily funded by two federal grants with some state general funds. There are 623

registered apprenticeship programs, 359 registered apprenticeship sponsors, and 216 registered apprenticeship occupations. If an occupation does not have an existing apprenticeship program, then the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services can collaborate with industry and employer partners to design one. Approximately 25 new registered apprenticeship programs have been implemented in 2022. Recommendations for support from local and state leaders consists of investing in youth through career exploration, career counselors, and more paid co-op opportunities; creating more job training scholarship funds; continued support from the General Assembly through general funds to match federal dollars; and investing in workforce development technology.

Responding to questions from Representative Webber, Michelle DeJohn, the Executive Director of the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services, explained that the decline in the number of registered apprenticeship occupations is due to the removal of inactive programs. Answering a follow up question, she stated a new website is being designed that will feature information for employers and those interested in apprenticeship programs. Kish Cumi Price, Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development, added that virtual tours have been utilized to engage young learners.

Addressing a question from Representative King, Ms. DeJohn suggested referring individuals and employers to the Education and Labor Cabinet to gain access to information on the registered apprenticeship program.

Replying to Representative Calloway, Commissioner Cumi Price discussed the Work Ready Scholarship, the Everybody Counts initiative, and the Evolve 502 Scholarship as financial educational assistance opportunities. There is also a reimbursement option for registered apprenticeship programs available through the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority.

Answering a question from Representative Johnson, Ms. DeJohn elaborated on the newly established Early Childhood Administrator/Director registered apprenticeship program. The program is a pathway that can lead to expanding childcare options across the state.

In response to Representative Huff, Ms. DeJohn said that the Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services has several initiatives in place for veterans outreach.

Addressing a question from Representative Bray, Ms. DeJohn confirmed that apprenticeship sponsors and workforce partners are being educated in an effort to combat workforce shortages.

Representative Lawrence made comments about the state's workforce and SB 163 from the 2022 Regular Session which would have allowed some individuals with felony convictions to receive Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) funds.

Replying to questions from Representative Gentry, Commissioner Cumi Price stated she would consult the Kentucky Center for Statistics regarding the recent decline in the median wages of those who have completed a registered apprenticeship program.

Answering a question from Representative Freeland, Commissioner Cumi Price confirmed that the Department of Workforce Development is a part of the National Governors Association's Skills-Driven State Community of Practice and is working to improve application development for further investment in workforce development technology.

Responding to Representative Kulkarni, Ms. DeJohn explained that there are no size limitations for employers to participate as a registered apprenticeship sponsor. Addressing a follow up question, Commissioner Cumi Price discussed the value of a tactical approach with employers for outreach to individuals with disabilities.

Update on Career and Technical Education Programs

The Commonwealth's secondary career and technical education delivery system includes 51 state operated area technology centers, 249 district operated career and technical education locations, and 16 other career and technical education program locations. Career pathways are encouraged at the high school level through technical core classes, aligned general education classes, and embedded acceleration opportunities. During the 2021-2022 school year, 70 percent of the state's high school students were enrolled in career and technical education career pathways. The Office of Career and Technical Education works closely with employers to align workforce efforts through Business and Education Alignment Teams (BEATs) and the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB) industry certification approval process. The Kentucky Center for Statistics provides labor market data and other data resources regarding emerging and evolving career pathway. Continued legislative priorities include an increase in adequacy of funding and reform for funding distribution. The Office of Career and Technical Education is developing several strategic projects such as work based learning, a statewide comprehensive college and career advising platform, and a career and technical education branding initiative.

Representative Webber commented on the career and technical education branding initiative and dual credits. He requested lists of the 150 career pathways and the district operated career and technical education locations.

Responding to Representative Bray, Leslie Slaughter, the Executive Advisor for the Office of Career and Technical Education, explained that there is a large percentage of high school students that graduate with a career and technical education certification, and there are federal requirements for technical skill attainment.

Addressing comments made by Representative Truett, Beth Hargis, the Associate Commissioner of the Office of Career and Technical Education, discussed the need to begin exposure to career pathways at the elementary school level and starting participation at the middle school level.

Replying to Representative King, Associate Commissioner Hargis detailed the seamless career pathways and earning credentials for those who have graduated high school but did not immediately enter into a postsecondary program. Ms. Slaughter added that there are supports and resources available for specific audiences and different types of learners.

Answering questions from Representative Johnson, it was stated that the 16 other career and technical education program locations mentioned includes programs housed within some Department of Juvenile Justice facilities and Kentucky Community and Technical College System locations. Ms. Slaughter explained the Work Ready Scholarship and the Work Ready Dual Credit Scholarship which focus on high demand career pathways. In addition, she said that having business and industry liaisons assists with getting information out to the public and workforce partners about career and technical education opportunities.

In response to Representative Banta, Ms. Slaughter discussed the nationally emerging academies model approach where teachers are required to complete summer externships with industry partners in an effort to make curriculum more relevant to career pathways.

Representative Bechler made remarks about exposing career pathways to students too early. Ms. Slaughter explained that at the elementary and middle school level the goal is career pathway exploration.

Senator Thomas stated he was not in favor of exposing elementary and middle students to career pathways.

Representative Webber announced that the next meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment would be August 25, 2022 at the Kentucky State Fair. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:34 a.m.