



WIA Youth Council Committee Meeting

MPS Central Office
5225 W. Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI
Superintendent Conference Room

June 2, 2005
12:00 PM

NOTE: PENDING COUNCIL APPROVAL

Members: Chair William Andrekopoulos, Carol Sample, Carolyn Spain, Lauren Baker, Kendra Stevenson and Tracey Neal representing Jeannetta Robinson

Private Industry Council (PIC) Staff: Gerard Randall, Jovo Potkonjak, Chytania Brown, Joseph Stolzman and Sharron Briggs

MINUTES

Chair William Andrekopoulos called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. He thanked everyone for coming, introduced himself and asked council members and guests to do likewise. Mr. Andrekopoulos moved to **Agenda Item I**, the Approval of March 3, 2005 minutes.

I. **Agenda Item I Approval of March 3, 2005 Minutes.**

Adjustment/Clarification: Agenda Item II - Summer/Year-Round Subsidized Jobs - page 2 paragraph 3.

Lauren Baker suggested that PIC integrate the Accuplacer Test System as part of the ACT/SAT Prep/Test sites for youth preparation. **She indicated that it helps participants prepare for and get good scores on their ACT test.** Ms. Baker further stated that if the PIC used the Accuplacer Test System they could possibly get funding to cover some of the cost.

Adjustment: She indicated that it helps participants prepare for and get better placement on the Accuplacer Test.

William Andrekopoulos motioned to approve the March 3, 2005 Council minutes.

Motion to approve by William Andrekopoulos

Seconded By Lauren Baker

None opposed, motion carried

II. **PIC Youth Division Reorganization**

Gerard Randall did a review of the PIC Youth Division Reorganization and the dramatic change for youth in the community. Below are his comments:

Mr. Randall began by speaking of how Milwaukee's graduation rate improved from 61% to 63% compared to the 86% graduation rate in the State. He stated that it tells us that we continue to lag behind and have gaps in graduation rates, teen pregnancy rates, live birth rates and other issues that are needed for a healthy community. During the next five years we will see a tremendous worker shortage particularly in the areas that we have pointed to as jobs of the future. In the construction field we

anticipate that within the next five years half of the workers are going to retire. This will occur at the same time as massive construction projects are on line such as the reconstruction of the freeway, hospital construction, the condominium boom and smaller projects such as the Hope Six Grant from the federal government to revitalize public housing in the community.

We have a responsibility to make sure that our young people are prepared for the jobs that we are rapidly trying to create (high skill, high wage, high tech jobs). These jobs are primarily related to manufacturing, construction and healthcare. The PIC has a responsibility for working with youth, adults and dislocated workers. Those are the three primary sources of funding and it targets those populations. On the adult and dislocated workers side we are retrofitting people for existing jobs. Dislocated workers are people who have been on the job for at least 15 years. The people on the adult side are really challenged to move into the workplace. They will require quite a bit of resources and a number of different techniques in order to get them ready for the workplace. On the youth side the incarceration rate and the number of youth who don't have drivers' licenses in this community verses their suburban counterparts is a huge barrier to employment. These also have a direct impact on the type of jobs we need to improve our community. Jobs of the future are going to require not simply a high school diploma or GED, but some education beyond a two-year, four-year degree as well as substantial training. This is our golden opportunity to prepare this community for the future.

In the WIA reauthorization, there are elements that are politically motivated and there are some elements being crafted simply because it's a different way of thinking about how the Department of Labor and the Department of Education are to assume responsibility for worker training. A brief discussion was had regarding the percent of WIA funds being proposed for in-school youth (ISY) vs. out-of-school youth (OSY). In addition to funding we discussed the age at which you become eligible for services through the youth program, which will have a huge impact on our community. An example is our summer jobs program in which 70% of the subsidized jobs are for youth ages 14 to 16. These are the youth who are not going to get hired by private sector employers. They have maturity issues; experience issues, transportation issues and when you wrap it all up together most 14 year olds are just not ready to work even entry-level jobs in the fast food industry. In the new WIA Reauthorization version the focus will be on youth ages 16 and older. So the 14 and 15-year-old youth will no longer be eligible for WIA funds and/or services.

This summer we will offer about 800 subsidized summer job experiences to over 60 community base agencies. The previous summer (2004) was upwards to around 1100 jobs at 30 hours or more per week. This summer it will only be 20 hours. The allocation from the state for youth programming is \$600,000 less than the previous year. Wisconsin presumptively fared better than other states in terms of the economic recovery. Over all, the allocation for Wisconsin was cut only 7%. Milwaukee received a 2% hit on its funds verses other Workforce Boards who received only a 1% cut. So we are trying to find out why that was and how that could be corrected. The \$600,000 cut is a tremendous amount of money and could pay for an additional 400 jobs.

The Department of Education is now being looked to as the new center for delivering career education and guidance services. We need to develop a stronger relationship with the Department of Education. School to Work Programs which are not perceived to be in the department of labors primary focus. At least not K12 school to work initiatives. If that focus is going to shift to where services for youth are going to be delivered primarily through the Department of Education, then we need to move to figure out how best those services can be delivered with Department of Education resources verses the Department of Labors resources.

We have reorganized the PIC Youth Division so that we can be more successful in meeting the needs of the youth. What we have discovered is that REACH was a valuable asset in the community in working with out-of-school youth. Now that the Youth Opportunity Grant is terminating we no longer have the boundaries as a restriction. Our obligation as a Workforce Board is to serve all of the youth in Milwaukee County. All of our out-of-school youth will be served through the REACH program to the degree that we can. We will take a rational reasonable approach to how many out-of-school youth we can serve. This will be done by creating solid partnerships working with those youth that have dropped

out of school to get them back in and move them beyond a high school diploma to the workforce. The STEP-UP Program is our flagship program for in school youth. Both programs have been serving in-school and out-of-school youth. Chytania Brown will oversee both in-school and out-of-school youth components.

The final part of the reorganizing process is the Milwaukee Career Center. This is truly a unique One-Stop Center for youth. Young people will be able to go to the Career Center and access everything from job information, job placement assistance, career guidance, getting the appropriate preparation that they need in order to get into college. What we've done is tightened up our offering in the career center and numbers will now drive them. Last year we offered about 125 placements in our ACT prep class. The ACT and SAT now have writing components to them. Those writing components will not assist our youth in getting into school or doing well on these test unless they are doing better with their writing skills. In addition we hope to assist 300 families in completing Financial Aide applications and 500 families in completing college applications.

PIC's three components REACH, STEP-UP and MCC will be serving more youth. REACH is not ending but will serve a broader number of youth and will have to do an even better job helping out-of-school youth with training or acquisition of a degree. For the STEP-UP partnerships our colleges and principals are receptive.

Questions:

Lauren Baker asked if the PIC was interested in procuring the Accuplacer Test. Mr. Randall replied that because of the partnership with the GEAR-UP programs PIC would be offering the Accuplacer Test. The amount of space needed to do large scale testing is being determined.

Mr. Randall stated that the Kilmer partnership for out-of-school youth is one of the best models that could be employed for moving out-of-school youth on to a successful track. Approximately 50 youth will be graduating from the north side Kilmer site this June.

Comments:

Ms. Sample stated that she would be interested in the committees view as to whether or not there should be a sub-committee to look at how we can deal with some of that changes being proposed. The school to work grant at MPS was basically directed to get teachers on board and get them trained. It did not have any direct impact within their school. The Department of Education really knows absolutely nothing about labor and the approach to academics. The Department of Labor has moved to out-of-school youth 19 to 24. They are thinking students 19 and under are the responsibility of the Department of Education. Once again in partnership with the PIC, the committee should get together and somehow devise some kind of method starting at K4 integrating work ethic at a very young age. By the time we get them at 16 or 17 the dye is cast. I think we have to go beyond an engagement and start looking at a marriage between actual work related curriculum and academic curriculum.

Mr. Andrekopoulos stated that it would be good to look into a way to try and get work competencies built in to our learning targets. MPS has taken the state standards and created learning targets and now the state has learning expectations to test every grade level. The kids today have difficulty in high school and making it in an academic environment. But if you provide a quality work experience for them with positive work ethics and organization skills, there is good evidence and research that show that those children have a higher probably of being employed when they are in the age group of 21 to 24 years old. Mr. Andrekopoulos wants to try and get more youngsters 16 to 18 years old with no credits engaged into something that's positive. He thinks that it's critical to get these youth involved in some sort of night school program but during the day work with the PIC to possibility get these kids employed. This re-engages them back into a system and gets them involved in good employment during the day. This will in turn give them a more productive atmosphere, help build their self-esteem, give them hope and a positive expectation in life. It could also lead them to be more engaged and lead them into technical colleges, apprenticeships and other technical programs. The work and work competency can be an excellent vehicle to getting more youth competent and molded into successful 18

to 24 year olds. This has to be done early on in the school year rather than disregarding these youngsters and hoping that at some point and time they recover. Working together will give youth more opportunities for jobs during the day and credit for school in the evenings.

Carol Sample pointed out that the academic levels in which our students can perform those high levels and high industry jobs are minimum. She understands the need for summer youth employment, but with the low academic achievement that the students in Milwaukee face there is a need for jobs that have an academic component attached. She gave two examples of the summer youth employment model at Spotted Eagle. One was of their landscaping project where the participants had to actually go through four hours of remedial education and then four hours of learning an actual job skill in landscaping. In addition 15 students were selected to create a Resource Library. Their job duties entailed cataloging books and learning bar coding. There will be field trips to the university, local small neighborhood and public libraries to learn the system. A teacher was hired to coordinate the program whose job description is to develop lesson plans in reading, writing, and math in order for them to do their job to develop this resource library. Participants will be using geometry to measure spaces and dimensions. The academic deficiencies so many of our students are facing cannot be ignored. When building these youth employ programs you have to find some way to incorporate academics.

Mr. Randall agreed with Ms. Sample and pointed out some of the education/employment components of the PIC's such as the collaboration with Bayview High school and UW Madison, the Discover World Project. Approximately 30 youth are taking science and math classes at Bayview on Saturdays. The math and science skills that they developed during class are what they use while working at Discovery World during the summer. There has been over 200,000 dollars invested in this program during the past two years.

Ms. Baker added that it is a question of integration on how we integrate academics with the future planning that our youth have to do. It has to be the kind of preparation we do for youth from K4 on up in helping them to learn that math and science has something to do with their career choice in the future. That's the key part of it. Our kids will loose their jobs or get fired from them if they are not prepared. Integration is the key.

III. Directors Report

Jovo Potkonjak did a short review of the Directors Report. The MilwaukeeJobs4Teens Website, which is collaboration with the County Executive's Office, has had approximately 20,000 hits, to date and school was not out of session yet. In addition to the website a phone line for Milwaukeejobs4teens is located at the PIC and available daily for people to call in and get information. At this time over 450 calls have been received and handled.

PIC is collaborating with the Mayors' Office and the Wisconsin Dells. Employers such as Chula Vista Resort, Noah's Ark and the Tommy Bartlett Show were looking for employees. Historically they have hired many of their workers from foreign countries. Based on the weak dollar and the escalating cost of the euro, it wasn't economically advantageous for potential employees to make the trip to the states in order to work. Through the PIC and the Mayors offices over 70 youth interviewed. There were 71 youth who were screened for the job. The employers came on site and interviewed 61 youth who were referred on for the final interview following the screening. 36 youth were offered jobs in the Dells.

Mr. Randall stated that the Rotary Club sent a check for 2,500 dollars to support this initiative. The money could be used for bonuses or housing as needed for the youth. A formal letter has been drafted thanking the Rotary Club for their donation.

Jobs for Wisconsin's Graduates (JWG) JWG hosted their 6th Annual Career Development Conference (CDC) on May 24, 2005. Over 80 youth attended and participated in various events throughout the day. The youth did Public Speaking on the topic of "The best is yet to come". Mr. Potkonjak indicated that he would forward those speeches to the committee with the minutes. The activities allowed students to use their skills and knowledge gained through the JWG curriculum, which included public speaking,

interviewing skills, decision-making and job readiness. Competitions were held in these areas and awards were given. The ultimate objective of the JWG program is to keep students in school through graduation and to attain a positive outcome, which includes: attainment of employment, enlisting in the military or enrollment in post-secondary education.

The Private Industry Council has applied for a \$285,000 grant for 2005/2006 school years to fund JWG, which is offered through the Wisconsin Technical College System known as School-to-Work for at-risk youth. The JWG team visited WTCS in Madison trying to keep the doors of communication open. One of the JWG goals is that 90% of the seniors graduate. At this time JWG has a 96% graduation rate. There are four youth that will be attending summer school and anticipate they will also graduate which will result in JWG having a 100% graduation rate. Most of the referrals to JWG come from guidance counselors, principals and teachers.

IV. Set meetings for 2005/2006 Program Year

Mr. Potkonjak will contact Terry Summers, Assistant to Superintendent Andrekopoulos to schedule the next WIA Youth Council Committee meeting dates. The next meeting will take place sometime in September. It was decided by the committee to keep the meetings on Thursdays as a luncheon.

Kendra Stevenson, one of our youth board members, had concerns about the lack of funding for youth ages 14 and 15. She stated that with out any help it's very hard for kids in that age group to find jobs unless they do so by going through programs like those offered through the PIC. Mr. Andrekopoulos stated that there are enrichment programs going on during the summer, which are under enrolled at this time. These programs are geared to youth who are in the 3rd to 8th grades. Young people can get involved in these recreation and community programs during the summer. These types of activities will help better their lives. Mr. Andrekopoulos suggested that Kenya contact MPS to get the guide on summer programs and help get the word out about the programs that are available.

Gerard – Suggested that we invite a member of the Common Council's Youth Council to serve on the WIA Youth Council. This would give the council another youth to participate in quarterly meetings. A formal letter from Andrekopoulos and the County Executive will be drafted inviting a representative to be part of the WIA Council.

William Andrekopoulos called for a motioned to invite a member of the Common Council Youth Council to serve as a WIA Youth Council member.

Motioned by Lauren Baker

Seconded By Carol Spain

None opposed, motion carried

Ms. Baker suggested that with the upcoming changes, representatives from the PIC and MPS should sit down together and talk about the different ways the programs could work together. This way even with some reduction in funding there would be more efficient work being done.

VI. Agenda Item VI Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.