

MEMORANDUM

TO: Florida Youth Partners

FROM: J. Mac Holladay
Market Street Services

DATE: December 31, 2003

RE: *Strengthening Youth Partnerships: December 16-17, 2003 Meeting*

Overview

Convened in Tallahassee, Florida, the December 16-17, 2003 meeting of two dozen agency representatives from around the state was the second of a series of meetings designed to “strengthen youth partnerships.” Initiated by Workforce Florida, Inc. with a kick-off meeting July 31-August 1, 2003, these meetings are focused on enhancing communication, coordination, and planning among key organizations that play a role in developing Florida’s youth, particularly in the area of workforce skill attainment.

Meeting facilitators from *Market Street Services* provided a summary of the initial meeting for review. In addition to restating the seven expectations of youth partners regarding this effort, the summary also noted five key conclusions from the first meeting, related to:

1. A definition of youth;
2. The overall goal of youth partners;
3. Potential gaps in youth programs;
4. Potential overlaps in youth programs; and
5. Key issues facing youth partners.

During the two days in Tallahassee, youth partners discussed a number of important issues. Some of the points discussed will likely be incorporated into later actions, or a final strategy, and so are recorded here. However, in the meantime, the youth partners determined that, **rather than develop a policy agenda for this legislative session or focus on current funding issues, it would be more advantageous to identify one or two priorities that could be addressed in the short-term.** More information about this decision is provided in the Next Steps section.

The structure of this summary memo follows the discussions during the meeting, rather than directly reflecting the initial agenda, and is organized into five sections – Key Issues; Updates from Youth Partners; Guest Speakers; Potential Strategic and Tactical Options; and Next Steps.¹ A copy of the agenda distributed and a list of meeting attendees are provided at the end of this document.

¹ The agenda was altered slightly based on the conversation and decisions during the first half of the meeting.

Key Issues

During the meeting, youth partners discussed the five key issues developed during the initial meeting and made minor revisions, as noted in bold type below:

1. The training and education systems **must** be demand-driven.
2. **Focus on** leveraging available funding, finding new sources of funding, and adjusting to federal funding changes.
3. Group participants felt strongly that public policies related to youth workforce development **must** be clear and well-directed.
4. Cultural values were considered to be an integral component of the collaborative effort.
5. Finally, youth partners agreed that additional collaboration and networking among youth program providers is needed in order to fully understand all available resources and avoid gaps and overlaps in system delivery.

Updates from Youth Partners

Each of the youth partners in attendance provided a brief update about their agency or organization's recent activities, with a focus on significant changes or upcoming initiatives. Among the information shared were the following highlights:

- Federal WIA reauthorization is still pending; additional money may be available, and there will likely be a proportional shift of money related to in- and out-of-school youth.
- The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is currently looking at how RFPs can be written to solicit better vocational programming. In addition, DJJ has several million dollars in federal funding to work with faith-based groups and is looking for ways to draw down more federal resources for a variety of programs. Finally, DJJ and the Department of Education (DOE), Division of Vocational Education are working together to leverage state funding to draw additional federal funding for programs.
- Several updates were provided from various representatives from DOE: Workforce Education reported increased concerns over a looming crisis with career and technical education and adult education, marked by recent program closings. Finding more funding, including leveraging dollars to supplement state resources, and focusing funding is a DOE priority. In addition to the partnership with DJJ, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is also working with WFI to identify ways it can be a better one-stop partner and eliminate service duplication.
- AWI reported upcoming changes with school readiness programs, including a potential move to DOE. AWI is also working more on interagency efforts and partnerships with faith and community-based initiatives.
- WFI reported on several areas: New branding effort for one-stops, "Employ Florida," is now moving into a second phase. Additionally, outreach efforts to youth are being expanded and increased. New parameters in RFPs are helping local partners achieve better connection to targeted businesses and employer needs. WFI is looking more closely as performance

evaluation to achieve a better return on investment. Finally, as part of an effort to get net new dollars for programs, WFI has hired a grants writer and may be increasing required matches from local partners in some cases.

- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) reported an overall decrease in state and federal funding, but an increased focus on streamlining services and expanding use of technology to increase access to public programs. Child Welfare representatives report that state and federal laws are increasingly calling for more responsibility for helping affected youth become self-sufficient over the long-term. In addition, more federal money has been seen in recent years.
- The Department of Health reported increased departmental efforts to address suicide, STDs, and other youth health issues, some in partnership with faith and community-based organizations. There is also state legislation in development that focuses on adolescent health issues.
- The Governor's Office of Drug Control reported progress in developing coalitions in nearly all Florida counties. Much of the Office's efforts hinge on prevention; there is a clear connection to at-risk youth as defined by youth partners. Finally, the Office expects reduction in federal funding.
- The University of West Florida (UWF) representative (and spokesperson for the Florida Council of the Blind) noted recent efforts to develop a "hometown learning model" that brings different agencies (such as DOH, DOE, the court systems, etc.) together. UWF has also seen success in use of AZTEC courseware for GED preparation efforts.
- *Florida Trend's NEXT* magazine publisher provided an update about increased partnerships with corporations and the Governor's Office to expand mentoring initiatives. The magazine has also been using teen focus groups to gauge progress.

Guest Speakers

Paul Ledford, Florida Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Ledford's presentation provided youth partners with a brief update on the Florida Chamber of Commerce's top legislative issues. Historically, education/workforce has been at the top of members' concerns, but insurance issues and constitutional amendment issues now rank number one and two on the list. The Chamber is in the process of conducting focus groups to educate the public about the importance of education spending. The enduring funding crises will continue to negatively impact higher education and community colleges.

In addition, the Chamber considers education a long-term issue and is interested in working with educators and other partners. They continue to hear from businesses that they need applicants with basic skills, foundation work skills, and integrity. Occasionally there is discussion about the need for engineers and technology and healthcare workers, but mostly, the focus is on finding "trainable" workers.

Senator Steven Wise

Senator Wise expects the upcoming legislative session to be no better than recent sessions, in part because of the upcoming U.S. Senate race. Much of the funding "squeeze" will impact community colleges and workforce development. Some of the issues that are on the horizon include: reevaluating and defining performance contracts; FCAT and pre-K oversight; workers

compensation, medical malpractice, and constitutional amendments. In addition, there is now a bill under development that would help blind residents find jobs.

Two programs that Wise is impressed with are the use of WorkKeys in Jacksonville and the “Take Stock in Children” program. He would like to see WorkKeys expanded throughout the state, and more collaborative funding approaches for the Take Stock program, as is currently being pursued in Jacksonville.

Senator Wise’s had three final points to offer to youth partners – first, he noted that legislators need input from clinicians when drafting education policies. Second, the Senator emphasized the importance of using the term “workforce” and not vocational education. Finally, Senator Wise encouraged youth partners to put together a four-year/long-term plan and start meeting with upcoming leaders in the House and Senate (specifically, Senators Tom Lee and Ken Pruitt and Representatives Allan Bense and Marco Rubio).

Superintendent Don Gaetz

As the first non-educator to serve as the Okaloosa County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Gaetz shared a number of experiences and core beliefs with youth partners. His presentation focused primarily on his efforts to implement a new approach to developing “quality career technical programs tied to diverse economic sectors with growth potential.”

Named CHOICE (Community High – Okaloosa Institutes of Career Education), the program will establish institutes (rather than new career technical schools) that grant regular state diplomas but also award industry certifications and allow students the opportunity to earn university or college credits while in high school at no extra cost. All students will have apprenticeships that will help them develop skills and good work ethics. Over the next several years, six different institutes are planned, each based on a partnership between the public school system, universities, and employers.² Gaetz’s goal is to decentralize career-technical programs, use existing spaces, and leverage resources from industry. Prior to launching the program, Gaetz worked with the University of West Florida to survey employers and families to determine the effectiveness of traditional vocational education. This research, and other steps, were taken with the purpose of preemptively addressing problematic issues and concerns that might be raised by detractors later.

While the program is too new to gauge results, Gaetz reports that some achievements can already be seen. Six high school principals have signed a “covenant” that they will work together and “share” students. In addition, the program will be cash positive with 800 students involved, and currently 1,000 students have signed expression of interest statements.

Finally, Gaetz identified three things that the legislature could do to support this new approach:

1. Give K-12 systems and universities willing to partner in this program maximum flexibility to work together;

² The six institutes will focus on: health sciences, engineering, aerospace, information technology, construction technology, and hospitality and tourism.

2. Make it easier for experienced business and industry workers and executives with subject area expertise to teach with adjunct faculty certification; and
3. Consider tax incentives for companies willing to provide classroom space, technical instruction, apprenticeships, or internships.³

Potential Strategic and Tactical Options

Ultimately, youth partners hope to develop a strategy that can be presented to the Lieutenant Governor, other state leaders and legislators. The following statements drawn from meeting discussion may eventually become part of this strategy:

- Weighted performance measures could help differentiate between groups of youth.
- Need more family involvement in developing and delivering youth programs.
- Need to address various health barriers (substance abuse, nutrition, obesity, provision of health insurance, etc.) as part of this effort.
- Services to at-risk youth groups need to be enhanced.
- Need to reevaluate youth credentialing process.
- May need to develop a priority order, weighting factor, or “multiplier” approach to address youth with a number of different barriers.
- Need to address situations where large DJJ facilities result in less local investment/involvement because of the likelihood that youth being served will “scatter” to other communities.
- “Tracking” of youth being served needs to help identify additional needs, not just follow individual through various systems.
- Every child needs an advocate/mentor.
- Need to use FETPIP not just for tracking but also from a front-end prevention standpoint.
- Need to see system as a series of transitions instead of being based on “hand-offs.”
- Involving critical business leadership is key to implementing successful workforce/education programs.

Next Steps

As noted in the Overview section, youth partners determined that, rather than develop a policy agenda for this legislative session or focus on current funding issues, as was initially considered as a goal for this meeting, it would be more advantageous to identify one or two priorities that could be addressed in the short-term. Youth partners agreed that the next meeting would focus on further developing the key issues into specific action steps and tactics. As noted by one partner, it could be much easier for the group to “sell” its final strategy to state leaders and legislative partners if there are demonstration projects/sites to showcase. Having talked extensively about successes and innovative approaches in the Jacksonville area as well as the new approaches being used in Okaloosa County, these two communities were noted as potential focal points for the group.⁴

³ At the completion of the presentation, Senator Wise requested that Superintendent Gaetz develop a paragraph on the tax credit idea so he could bring it to fellow legislators.

⁴ *Market Street* will provide the group with an update on recent workforce activities by WorkSource and its partners at the January meeting.

The group also committed to further analyze their individual agencies and organizations. Prior to the next meeting, each youth partner will provide information about funding sources, groups served, parameters of different programs, performance measures (including unintended consequences of these measures), and any research that identifies best practices. This information will then be compiled and distributed back to the group for review before the January 30, 2004 meeting.

Finally, while youth partners agreed that the group size worked well and should not be expanded extensively, there is interest in having a K-12 representative from DOE. In addition, the group may eventually “field test” some of its ideas with youth representatives at a later date, using the focus groups that *Florida Trend NEXT* has worked with in the past.

**Strengthening Youth Partnerships
December 16-17, 2003
Attendees**

- Curtis Austin, Workforce Florida, Inc.
- Tom Bentley, Department of Children and Families, Child Welfare/Community-Based Care
- Jill Canono, Volunteer Florida, Inc.
- Lonna Cichon, Department of Children and Families
- J.B. Clark, Florida Electrical Workers Association/WFI Board
- Nancy Cordill, Department of Education, Workforce Education
- Loretta Costin, Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation
- Gay Frizzell, Department of Children and Families, Child Welfare/Community-Based Care
- Don Gaetz, Superintendent, Okaloosa County School District
- Ray Gilley, Metro Orlando Economic Development Commission/WFI Board
- Lynda Hartnig, Department of Education
- Lynda Keever, Publisher, *Florida Trend*
- Phyllis Law, Governor's Office of Drug Control
- Paul Ledford, Florida Chamber of Commerce
- Eliza McFadden, Volunteer Florida Foundation
- Bill Maloy, University of West Florida
- Judy Meyer, Agency for Workforce Innovation
- Mary Mills, Department of Juvenile Justice
- Michael Nilsson, Pasco County Health Department/WFI Board
- Susan Pareigis, Agency for Workforce Innovation/WFI Board
- David Pierson, Pierson A/C & Electrical Contractors/WFI Board
- Jo Anne Richmond, Department of Health
- Susan Simpler, Agency for Workforce Innovation
- Vickie Smith, Agency for Workforce Innovation
- Sharon Watley, General Scientific Manufacturing/WFI Board
- Senator Stephen Wise, Florida Senate/WFI Board

Workforce Florida Staff:

- Jane Burgess
- Andra Cornelius
- Rosanne Heard
- Lucia Fishburne
- JenniLee Robins

Market Street Services Staff:

- Mac Holladay
- Kathy Young



STRENGTHENING YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

DOE TURLINGTON BUILDING
TALLAHASSEE, FL
DECEMBER 16 AND 17, 2003
8:30 AM – 4:00 PM EST

AGENDA

December 16, 2003

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome and Introductions *Mr. Dave Pierson, Chair*
First Jobs/First Wages Council
- 9:00 a.m. Review Report on Initial Statewide Meeting *Mr. Mac Holladay, Facilitator*
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:15 a.m. Update from Youth Partners *Group discussion*
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch Courtesy of J. B. Clark, Florida Electrical Workers Association
- 1:30 p.m. Consensus on Goals *Mr. Mac Holladay*
- 2:00 p.m. Guest Speaker *Mr. Paul Ledford*
Sr. Vice President of Public Policy
Florida Chamber of Commerce
- 3:00 p.m. Break
- 3:15 p.m. Policy Directions for Youth Partners *Mr. Mac Holladay*
- 4:00 p.m. Adjourn

December 17, 2003

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome and Acknowledgements.....*Mr. Dave Pierson*
Message from Florida Legislators *Representative Bev Kilmer*
Senator Stephen Wise
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:15 a.m. Guest Speaker *Mr. Don Gaetz, Superintendent*
Okaloosa County School District
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch On your own – DOE Cafeteria
- 12:30 p.m. Local, Federal, and Private Funding Sources *Mr. Mac Holladay*
- 1:30 p.m. Identification of Youth Policy Direction *Mr. Mac Holladay*
- 2:30 p.m. Break
- 4:00 p.m. Adjourn