

P-20 COUNCIL, LAND OF SKY MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 31, 2022

Time: 1-3 PM

In Attendance

Amy Barry; Brittany Brady; Carol Steen; Chip Gould; Tony Floyd; Dr. Gene Loflin; Jack Cecil; Jaime Laughter; Dr. Jeff McDaris; Dr. John Bryant; Dr. John Gossett; John Mitchell; Dr. Joseph Fox; Dr. Kelli Brown; Kit Cramer; Dr. Laura Leatherwood; Dr. Mark Dickerson; Michael Meguiar; Mike Hawkins; Nathan Ramsey; Dr. Tony Baldwin; Dr. William Sederburg

Guests: Cynthia Liston, NC Workforce Credentials & Tracie Metz, myFutureNC Western Regional Impact Manager

Welcome

P-20 Executive Director, Emily Nicholson, welcomed the Council attendees and expressed gratitude for their attendance. Mrs. Nicholson reminded attendees that a pre-meeting packet of information was provided and to reference that during this meeting as the information aligned to the sequence of the PowerPoint.

Refresher from October Meeting

Mrs. Nicholson reminded the Council that their first convening was in October but that this was her first meeting as their Executive Director as she officially began in November. Information pertaining to the definition of a P-20 Council, the entities the 25 members of the Council represent, and the website link was provided. Mrs. Nicholson also reminded attendees of information that they were provided in October such as how the eight members of the Steering Committee began the Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative, their journey of identifying an attainment ecosystem, forming listening sessions in the four counties of the region, creating an assets map, developing a strategic plan and forming the membership of the P20 Council. P20 attendees then introduced themselves and expressed their interest in closing the educational attainment gap. Mrs. Nicholson moved on to cover the labor market data that underscores the need for this work. Guest Tracie Metz from myFutureNC introduced herself and provided a summary of the relationship of this local work to the statewide framework of myFutureNC. Mrs. Metz pointed out that this collaboration is one of the 15 attainment groups within the state.

Key Indicators & Strategic Goals

Mrs. Nicholson covered the responsibilities of the P-20 Council members, which include advocacy, recruitment, implementation measures and more. The key indicators include academic readiness, career and college access, postsecondary completion and employer alignment of workforce credentials. These indicators are aligned to the strategic goals identified by this collaborative and were the framework of the workgroups' identification of priorities during their work between 2020 and 2021. Mrs. Nicholson explained that the Council had used the list of priorities for each of the four workgroups during their October meeting and that this information was in the pre-meeting packet of information.

Breakout Sessions

Mrs. Nicholson explained the logistics and goals for the breakout sessions of PreK, K12, Higher Education and Employer Alignment. The Council was divided into these four areas with the goal of diversifying subject matter expertise in each group and to have employer representation in each group. The goal of the breakout rooms were to choose three implementation strategies so that we can "ACT" upon these priorities as a P20 Council. The implementation strategies should fit the "ACT" criteria in that they:

- A-Apply to the strategic goal, data & priorities identified by the workgroup.
- C-Can be carried out in a local capacity (in our four county region) as opposed to requiring a state or federal policy change.
- T-Tactile in nature in that it can be observed by the community as a product of the P20 Council.

Breakout group facilitators were representatives of the Steering Committee and were tasked with using a chart* to frame the conversation. The breakout groups were given 15 minutes to discuss the priorities and to choose their implementation suggestions.

*Facilitator chart –

Implementation Idea that fits the "ACT" framework	The priority it's aligned to	Associated/ Estimated Cost	Is this specific to one county or applies to all counties in the Land of Sky region?	What resources are needed?	Is this a completely new concept or built upon an existing idea, initiative, etc.?	Additional subject matter experts to involve in planning and/or execution of this implementation strategy

Report-Out

The four groups re-convened to discuss the implementation suggestions for meeting the following goals:

- Increase enrollment of eligible children in Pre-K and Early Childhood Education to 75%
- Increase high school graduation rate to 95%
- Improve postsecondary enrollment success to 65%
- Ensure that 90% of North Carolina adults ages 25-44 in the labor force obtain the necessary credentials that align with needed employees' competencies.

Pre-K Implementation Suggestions

Dr. Gene Loflin and Amy Barry reported out for this group and suggested the following:

- Collect K screening data to look at readiness to drive curriculum improvement (aggregate data). Comparative data for those who participated in quality to those who did not. This may require state-wide data system.
- Trip to Raleigh to advocate to expand NC Pre-K program. Kit offered to help include this advocacy work as annual trip to Raleigh and focus on need for increased investment in order to pay for true cost of care
- Update data for NC Pre-K data due to Covid Impact
- The key area is focusing on workforce and pay scale. Workforce is the issue but facilities can't expand workforce due to low pay. Must first address pay before can recruit workforce to meet the expanded needs.
- Expand the single portal of information for families to navigate options. Ms. Barry stated that Buncombe is beginning using new software and this can be a model potentially for other counties?
- Look at the impact of children that aren't in high quality care and how this should impact curriculum
- Strengthened data system to track children – track quality in children's progress from PreK to beyond
- Perhaps there is potential to expand the workforce development strategy that's now in 11 counties
- Dr. Loflin concluded that the majority of these strategies is going to require flexibility from state

K-12 Implementation Suggestions

Dr. Bill Sederburg provided the report-out for this group.

- Get Every 5th or 6th grader in region to visit community college w/ emphasis on how college helps with career goals and learning opportunities – Renew excitement among younger students
- Dr. Jeff McDaris stated that mental health issues are increasingly severe and getting in the way of educational completion. Dr. Leatherwood had commented in the breakout room that they are separating career advising from personal coaching in Henderson County. This could be a good example for others to follow.
- Dr. Tony Baldwin recommended looking at the dual enrollment strategies and tie them into certification process couple with workforce learning opportunities. Use internships more effectively so you get a smoother path from HS education to other pathways.
- Maybe a good use of funds would be to hire somebody what exactly is being done now in those categories and what funding opportunities may be available to advance these objectives.
- Dr. Baldwin stated that social emotional learning is a real need right now

Higher Education Implementation Suggestions

Dr. John Gossett and Dr. Joseph Fox provided the report-out.

- Increase Higher Educational Pathways Initiatives (Community College and Four-Year)
- Educational and Workforce Competencies Alignment Initiatives
- Expand focus to incorporate universities
- Focus on continuum of going to work and going where that work leads – entry and exit ramps as your training needs require
- Expand Pell Grant; the maximums are being worked on at state level
- Truly partner with employers beyond advisory meetings, dig in deep and work in curriculum programs to fit those recommendations.
- Plenty of agreements between educators and employers already exist but how can we help students to understand these agreements are in place?
- Mr. Tony Floyd stated that the two year retention rate of Mars Hill students has jumped 11% as a result of stimulus money removing challenges for students through financial assistance (case study is small but believes this is impactful)

Employer Alignment Implementation Suggestions

Nathan Ramsey provided the report-out.

- Parents, students and the community may not understand the many career pathways of the region. Perhaps an infographic would help individuals better understand these options and to consider how this can be a live resource for us all to use.
- Inquire about the investment of employers, and how they are competing for graduates. Are there strategies to use like military recruiters use? Mr. Chip Gould stated in the breakout room that employers need to be leaders and should be competitive in recruitment practices.
- Consider how small business needs are different than larger employers as they have limited or no human resources staff.
- Outreach tools may not be targeted to the right demographics; how can these be more modern?– how do students, etc. find out about these opportunities?
- Dr. John Bryant stated that a chart similar to what was used in the breakout room would be helpful for inward and outward facing purposes so that students and stakeholders understand regional work-based learning opportunities, employer commitments, etc. that are aligned to high growth areas. This should be a live living resources to help align communications.
- Jack Cecil stated that a comprehensive data tool is needed and inquired with Tracie Metz whether there are plans at the statewide level to accomplish this. Ms. Metz stated that this is something she will look into.

What's Next

Mrs. Nicholson explained what the P20 Council will be moving forward with:

- Infrastructure: Consider the long-term governing structure of P20, to include an executive committee
- Implementation Strategies: Begin work for carrying out suggestions from this meeting
- Exposure: Begin P20 social media presence
- Data: Explore software to more accurately capture credential attainment in region
- Sustainability: Research funding sources for implementation strategies

Mrs. Nicholson reminded the Council that they can recruit additional members to the Council and should connect if/when those suggestions arise.

Mrs. Nicholson reminded the Council that they will meet quarterly.

Mrs. Nicholson provided updates to the Council regarding:

- The “Pathfinder” project identified at their October Meeting. They had targeted the need of “Increasing Engagement between Employers & Educators” at this meeting as they sought to see some type of local work aimed at this project. Mrs. Nicholson explained that she is working on a video campaign targeted to employers to inform them of how they can become involved in Career & Technical Education across the region Good Jobs Challenge Grant
- Mrs. Nicholson Explained that two grants were in the final stages: the Accelerat[ED] Grant and the Good Jobs Challenge Grant. Both were federal opportunities in which P20 was the system lead with the Accelerat[ED] focusing on expanding early intervention strategies for the youth of the region and diversifying early and middle college enrollment and this was a joint application of \$175,000 in partnership with the Work in Burke/Industrial Commons team. The Good Jobs Challenge Grant is a \$10M application with the focus of expanding the healthcare trainee enrollment of Blue Ridge Community College and the manufacturing trainee enrollment of AB Tech Community College (with the Asheville Chamber’s Inclusive Hiring Partners as a recruitment measure).
- Mrs. Nicholson then explained that she is part of the team planning the 2022 State of the Workforce Survey and that her involvement has expanded the focus of this survey (compared to the first one of 2018) towards workforce credential needs of the region. Mrs. Nicholson stated that a stakeholder meeting of entities from the 10 counties involved will take place on Feb 22 and P20 will be invited.

NCWorkforce Credentials (Guest: Cynthia Liston)

Cynthia Liston, a consultant working with the NC Community College system and a core team of representatives from across the state provided a presentation regarding NC’s focus on creating workforce credentials aligned to industry sectors. Presentation attached.

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 PM.

Next Meeting

April 2022 | TBD