

**Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Hearing  
June 15, 2016, Harrisburg University**

Chairman Grove, Chairman Harkins, and members of the Select Subcommittee on Technical Education and Career Readiness. My name is Nancy Dischinat and I am the Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc. (LVWDB) one of 22 Workforce Development Board's (WDB's) across Pennsylvania. Thank you for the invitation to submit comments regarding the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** as it relates to career and technical education.

WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Adult, Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998, the Wagner Peyser Act of 1933, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The Goal of WIOA is to improve the quality of the workforce, reduce dependency on welfare, increase self-sufficiency, meet the skills requirement of employers and enhance productivity and competitiveness.

**WIOA** strategically brings together the following four core programs:

1. **Core Program - WIOA Title I - Adult Employment and Training** - directs the WDB's to coordinate the delivery of adult program services, including career services, training services, and job placement assistance. Priority to recipients of public assistance, low-income, veterans and people who are basic skills-deficient. Twenty percent of grant funds may be spent on incumbent worker training. **Youth Employment and Training** – which provides support to targeted youth in attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and individualized delivery of 14 career readiness opportunities. **One major change is a requirement that WDB's spend at least 75% of youth program funds on out-of-school youth ages 16-24.** **Dislocated Worker Employment and Training** - directs WDB's to coordinate the delivery of services to dislocated workers who lost jobs due to plant closures, company downsizing, or significant change in market conditions.
2. **Core Program – WIOA Title II - Basic Education for Adults** - provides services that include adult education literacy, family literacy, and English language acquisition, integrated English literacy and civics education, workplace preparation activities and integrated education and training.
3. **Core Program - WIOA Title III - Wagner Peyser Employment Services** - provides access to employment services to all job seekers including job search preparation and placement assistance services.
4. **Core Program - WIOA Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation Services** - offers vocational rehabilitation and training services to help eligible individuals with disabilities become employed.

WIOA requires implementation of a renewed, more robust and collaborative workforce delivery system for all to pursue the skills, training, and education needed for employment. It begins with Pennsylvania's Combined State Plan for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020 which requires a single, unified State Plan inclusive of all core programs under WIOA.

Pennsylvania's State Plan is designed to improve service delivery and access to the workforce system for job seekers and employers. Local Workforce Development Board Plans are designed to address the needs of the local labor market and to ensure coordination with the State's workforce plan goals.

Workforce Development Board members are appointed by the Chief Elected Official in the local area, and Boards maintain much of their same structure under WIOA, with the exception that the number of required Board members have been reduced.

The local board functions outlined in WIOA are to:

- **Develop** a comprehensive local plan/regional plan
- **Conduct** workforce research and regional labor market analysis
- **Convene**, broker, leverage workforce system stakeholders
- **Lead** efforts to engage with employers in the workforce system, to ensure that workforce activities meet the needs of employers, implement strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers
- **Oversee programs** including developing MOU's with required partners
- **Negotiate** local performance accountability measures
- **Designate** and/or certify one-stop operators
- **Identify** eligible training providers
- **Oversee** local youth workforce investment activities
- **Develop** a budget for the activities in the local area
- **Lead Career Pathways** development efforts with secondary and postsecondary education programs
- **Lead** efforts to identify, promote, and disseminate proven strategies and initiatives to meet the needs of employers and workers with disabilities
- **Develop** strategies for using technology to maximize accessibility/effectiveness of the local workforce system for employers, workers and job seekers
- **Coordinate** education providers including workforce, adult education and literacy, career and technical education, and vocational rehabilitation activities including reviewing applications to provide adult and literacy activities under Title II to determine if applications are consistent with the local plan and implementing agreements
- **Assess** one-stop accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- **Enter** into MOU's with one-stop partners and come to agreement on methods to fund infrastructure costs

Now we come to **WHO** are the required partners in the one-stop workforce system under WIOA?

1. WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth
2. WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy
3. WIOA Title III Wagner Peyser
4. WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation
5. WIOA Title V Older Americans Act
6. Title I Rehabilitation Act of 1973
7. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act
8. Title II Trade Act of 1974
9. Chapter 41 of Title 38 Veterans
10. Community Services Block Grant Act
11. Department of Housing and Urban Development
12. State Unemployment Compensation
13. Second Chance Act of 2007
14. Title IV Social Security Act

Local boards, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners must come to agreement on methods to fund the workforce system's infrastructure costs. If the local partners fail to reach agreement, the State will determine each partner programs' share, and the funds will be pooled in a State Infrastructure Fund.

Career and technical education is an important issue in WIOA. In fact, the term "career and technical education" appears in the Act 59 times. WIOA has a focus on Career Pathways, Work-Based Learning Opportunities (including pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs), engaging Career and Technical Centers (CTCs) as partners in the workforce system, and the workforce system supporting alignment of CTCs to ensure a pipeline of employees in high priority occupations.

### **Lehigh Valley's Examples of Integration with Career and Technical Education**

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is strategically embedded in Lehigh Valley's workforce system as stated in the Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc. (LVWDB) One-Year Transitional Regional/Local Plan which can be accessed at [www.lvwib.org](http://www.lvwib.org):

Workforce development activities for training and education are aided by Lehigh Valley's training and education providers including 17 school districts providing K-12 education; **three career and technical centers providing youth and adult technical education, credentials and certificates**; two intermediate units providing professional development for educators; two community colleges offering training courses, credentials, degrees and literacy education for youth and adults; 13 colleges and universities offering higher-level education and training, degrees and certificates; and, 21 regional training providers on the State Approved Eligible Training Provider List offering education, training, certificates, credentials and degrees.

The LVWDB is integrated with Lehigh Valley's career and technical education centers including Lehigh Career and Technical Institute, Bethlehem Area Vocational Technical School and Career Institute of Technology through the following initiatives that are aligned with the Governor's overarching goal of ***Schools That Teach***.

**Rotational Internship Network Program.** This industry-driven work experience model envisioned by B. Braun Medical Inc. provides career and technical students hands-on work experiences through paid internships. The goal of the program is to enhance the image of manufacturing by giving career and technical students the opportunity to experience a variety of manufacturing jobs. Interns rotate among multiple employers in 8-week rotations during the school year, learning technical and employability skills, experiencing numerous career pathways, company cultures, and how academics relate to industry needs.

**Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Initiative (LVCPI).** The overarching goal of this business/education collaborative is to institutionalize a Common Career Pathways Model throughout Lehigh Valley's career and technical centers and school districts. This initiative strategically impacts our educational system through partnerships with education to ensure a highly-skilled workforce to support business retention, growth and attraction.

We have an established Career Pathways Advisory Committee of business, educators, workforce and economic development to: develop and operationalize a Lehigh Valley Common Career Pathways Model for schools; create a career pathways support services for schools including district assessments, planning tools and technical assistance; develop work-based learning toolkits for students, teachers, mentors and employers; develop work-based learning opportunities, job shadowing, internships and pre-apprenticeships, summer educator externships with businesses, and career awareness labor market intelligence in concert with the PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis.

To fully align career and technical education into the workforce system's pipeline, LVWDB hired a nationally-recognized former executive director of a career and technical center to lead and manage workforce development initiatives, such as the Lehigh Valley Career Pathways Initiative and the Micro-Credentials Grant in conjunction with Northampton Community College to create mini credentials or badges to upskill workers for the manufacturing industry.

Lehigh Valley's career and technical centers partner in LVWDB's award-winning **CareerLinking Academy**. More than 4,000 high school students, including those attending career and technical centers, have participated in CareerLinking Academy, a week long career awareness and preparation program that links students with high priority occupations within targeted industry clusters.

The comprehensive CareerLinking Academy curriculum is aligned to the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Academic Standards in Career Education and Work and includes: career awareness, leadership skills, job and labor market information, resume preparation, job applications, interviewing skills, employer expectations, job shadowing, and tours of

employers, career and technical centers, community colleges, and PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley.

Representatives from career and technical centers serve on LVWDB's **Youth CareerFORCE Committee** that is charged to develop a plan targeting at-risk youth for training and work-based learning, and recommends policy to ensure a full range of youth services through leveraging resources and community services, and assists in developing innovative pipeline development ideas.

The **Business and Economic Development Committee** engages the private sector to provide input on strategic issues focused on workforce intelligence, labor market data, targeted industry sectors, high priority training, skills shortages, recruitment strategies, career pathways, talent supply, industry demand, resource efficiency and issues that impact the workforce.

One of LVWDB's career and technical education centers is co-located at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley providing an immediate, on-site, close-to-customer career and technical education presence within the workforce system offering industry-recognized training options and credentials aligned to industry-driven, high priority occupations within targeted industry sectors for adults, dislocated workers and youth. Lehigh Valley's career and technical centers training programs are on the approved State Eligible Training Provider/Program List.

Last year LVWDB approved almost \$300,000 of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for training in high demand occupations such as Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and logistics and transportation to this on-site partner. Last year LVWDB's approved training expenditures at all three career and technical centers totaled 43% of all ITAs!

LVWDB is an integral partner with career and technical schools and serves on all three Carl D. Perkins Participatory Planning Committees and Councils. LVWDB provides strategic guidance on Local Perkins Plans including industry-driven input on resource allocations, equipment and training aligned to industry needs, and also reviews programs of study.

LVWDB serves on career and technical centers' Local Advisory and Chapter 339 Committees and helps with career guidance, exploration, and counseling.

To align business and industry needs with education, and continue to develop a pipeline of workers in high priority occupations within targeted industry sectors, LVWDB refers private sector companies to serve on career and technical centers' Occupational Advisory Committees to provide industry guidance on curriculum and equipment purchases for training in high demand careers such as Electromechanical/Mechatronics, Precision Machining, Supply Chain and Logistics, and Healthcare Occupations, to name a few.

Lehigh Valley's career and technical centers are members of LVWDB's Diversified Manufacturing and Healthcare Industry Partnerships. Industry Partnerships are consortia of employers, workforce development, education, economic development and the community partners that align industry workforce needs with education's talent supply and training programs.

LVWDB serves as an intermediary in engaging the private sector with career and technical centers to develop high-demand career pathway programming like an Emerging Health Professionals Program targeted to high school seniors who are on a higher level healthcare professional career path. Students are dual enrolled either at a community college or four-year school, while gaining hands-on healthcare work experience at a healthcare facility. Students can achieve up to eight college credits upon completion of the program, jump-starting their continuing academic and/or technical education pathway.

Career and technical schools are integrated into LVWDB's youth programming by responding to Request for Proposals such as a Summer Jobs Initiative by providing youth with 35 hours of employability skills curriculum followed by six weeks of paid employment.

When career and technical schools apply for Equipment Grants from the state, LVWDB signs off on requests to ensure the equipment is aligned to industry standards.

LVWDB staff presents at local, regional, state, and national career and technical conferences like PA Association of Career and Technical Administrators. LVWDB participates in national dialogues on career development with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on the importance of career awareness in education and workforce systems.

LVWDB partners with career and technical centers to assist students in applying and being accepted into a Bachelor of Applied Science in Technical Leadership at Bloomsburg University (BAS-TL) Program. Career and technical students take dual enrollment courses offered at community colleges, and credentials are articulated into community college credits. One student graduated high school with 42 college credits towards the 60 credits needed for community college graduation! Up to 60 Associates Degree credits can be seamlessly transferred to the BAS-TL Degree. The student continues coursework at the community college and can graduate with a four-year Bloomsburg University BAS-TL degree without ever leaving the community college. The cost is \$18,000 to \$20,000. High value Bachelor's Degree at a minimal cost.

SkillsUSA Council, a coalition of over 70 business and industry partners committed to fostering a world-class workforce through career and technical training, is co-located in the one-stop. LVWDB continues to support SkillsUSA honoring students with technical skills and further links these graduates to the workforce system to decrease the skills gaps, and increase their employment opportunities.

.....and the beat goes on all across Pennsylvania.

Career and technical education also plays a critically important role meeting the five workforce development goals in Pennsylvania's WIOA Combined State Plan.

### **Goal 1: Establish Career Pathways**

- In partnership with the workforce system, employers and secondary and postsecondary education (including career and technical education) develop Career Pathways that lead to employment in high-priority occupations in targeted industry sectors – many of these pathways include career and technical education.
- Promote and support the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs as part of relevant career pathways. Apprenticeship programs are most often in career and technical based occupations. A state Office of Apprenticeship has been created to provide technical assistance on creating and promoting apprenticeship programs.
- Refine the High Priority Occupation (HPO) process to ensure career pathways are aligned to occupations that are in-demand, have high higher skill needs and are likely to pay family-sustaining wages. Many of the HPOs are occupations that can be accessed through career and technical education, such as healthcare and advanced manufacturing.
- Establish statewide and regional lists of industry-recognized credentials along established career pathways. Industry credentials are often obtained through career and technical education programs.
- Enhance career guidance for individuals to get them into programs and services that provide them with an effective pathway to their career goals – again, often through career and technical education programs.

### **Goal 2: Invest in Talent and Skills for Targeted Industries in Strategic Partnership with Employers and Educational Institutions**

- Identify the skills and competencies necessary to attain family-sustaining employment. Today, just 48 percent of Pennsylvanians have a college credential or industry-recognized certification. By 2025, it is projected that 60 percent of good-paying, reliable jobs in the commonwealth will require these credentials. Career and technical education is an important component to addressing the gap between the skills of our workers and the needs of employers.
- Expand access to online education, including career and technical and training programs that result in industry-recognized credentials.
- Foster relationships between workforce development, career and technical, secondary and postsecondary education and public libraries to ensure system alignment, programs of study that support job seekers and employer needs.
- Work with the local workforce development boards, employers, secondary education (including career and technical education), and community colleges to establish micro-

credentials that demonstrate job readiness and the attainment of soft skills and measureable skill gains aligned to career pathways.

### **Goal 3: Increase Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Youth**

- Expand opportunities for youth to acquire post-high school skills and credentials needed for high –wage jobs through increased access to career and technical programs and work-based learning experiences.
- PA Department of Education (PDE) to make additional funds available to support the transformation and modernization of career and technical education and align career and technical education (CTE) with recognized career pathways.

### **Goal 4: Engage Employers to Strengthen the Connection of Education and Training and the Economy, Increase Investment in Critical Skills and Increase Jobs that Pay**

- Encourage employers to participate in Business-Education Partnerships to connect schools, employers and community organizations to provide career-related experiences and opportunities through “soft skills” development, internships, job shadows, and career mentoring.
- Validate credentials developed as part of state and regional lists of recognized credentials and career pathways.

### **Goal 5: Strengthen Data Sharing and More Effectively Use Data**

- Expand upon Workforce Data Quality Initiative efforts to add additional state agencies and data sets to the database, with particular focus on PDE longitudinal educational data. This data could be helpful in showing positive outcomes for students who take a career and technical path.

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