



# **YOUTH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 10, 2010**

**11:30 a.m.**

**Greater Lawrence Technical High School**

**57 River Road**

**Andover, MA 01810**

### **Youth Council MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Irene Chalek, Howard Allen, Kristine Blum, Lisa Coy, Beverly DeSalvo Brad Howell, April Lyskowsky, Heidi Riccio, Barbara Richards, Megan Shea, Cal Williams

### **MVWIB Youth Council MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Janet Allison, Tom Casey, Melanie Mericle, Ed Fitzgerald, Howard Flagler, Linda Piergeorge, Michael Strem, Steve Noroian, Vinnie Ouellette, Ed Warnshuis

### **MVWIB STAFF PRESENT:**

Mary Kivell, Deborah Andrews, Susan Almono

### **GUESTS PRESENT:**

Dan Bush, Charlie Ramos

### **I. Call to Order and Introductions**

A quorum being present, Youth Council Chairman Cal Williams called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. Introductions were made around the table.

Cal then called on Heidi Riccio who said that Greater Lawrence Technical School is a vocational school much like Whittier that serves the communities of Andover, Lawrence, North Andover, and Methuen. They offer 19 career programs. She spoke about Chapter 74 certification and the difficulty of recruiting certified instructors. Ms. Riccio said that they are bringing back the evening extension program. She invited Youth Council members for a tour of the school after the meeting with student representatives to see the new programs such as the bio-tech program.

### **II. Approval of October 13, 2010 Minutes**

Cal then called for a motion on the minutes of the October 13, 2010 meeting.

**Motion by Howard Allen seconded by Irene Chalek to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2010 Youth Council meeting as submitted. Motion passed.**

**III. Overview of Youth RFP and Timeline**

Deborah Andrews said that staff has been talking for a while about the youth RFP and we got some input from the Youth Council last meeting. She stated that WIA regulations require a minimum of 30% for OSY and we have been closer to 80% for the last few years. The Youth Council recommended in the past that the split be 70% OSY and 30% ISY.

We are not serving the numbers we would like to serve in either the OSY or ISY categories. Therefore, we would like to revisit the funding split.

Lisa Coy said that OSY are more difficult to serve and that is why WIA requires a minimum of 30%. Lisa said that ISY are engaged in the system and OSY are disengaged and have no support. The Youth Council's decision was based on the dropout rate and the decision was to serve 70% OSY to target the most difficult to serve.

Cal Williams stated that with the additional barriers we added last month there is an increased opportunity to bring ISY into programs. We need to determine whether to keep the funding split at 70/30 or change to 60/40 or 50/50.

Deborah said that we still want to re-engage OSY but helping to prevent youth from dropping out is also important. Council members received copies of the High Performing WIB Youth portion of the submission with strategic objectives and a focus on manufacturing and health care. We will focus on gender neutral industries and mentoring and tutoring in emerging and critical industries. Deborah said that most youth don't know what manufacturing is and equate it with jobs their grandparents held. There are entry level jobs in the region in manufacturing. 80% of our ITAs have been in health care related industries and some that we haven't touched, such as imaging, could broaden the field. Deborah said that we have approximately \$104,000 - \$160,000 for two or three programs.

April asked how funding is provided. Lisa Coy said that OSY services are provided mostly from ITA or group training such as medical assisting, food service training. The EMT program was tabled because candidates lacked driver's licenses and clean CORIs. Lisa said that we work with ISY through Connecting Activities in Haverhill High School, Lawrence High School, Lawrence Diploma Plus, and Job Shadow Day. Another ISY program is Pathways in which the current graduating class students who haven't passed the MCAS receive instruction.

April Lyskowsky said that services should be provided through the school for the ISY. Megan Shea said that youth are dropping out in 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> and the four year dropout rate is much higher. She said that a lot of young people are stuck and so many are on the street and need help. The schools are doing ok with the resources. There are low income youth who are at a point of no return getting their first job.

Deborah Andrews mentioned a discussion with Rafael Abislaiman who stated that at the same time that the federal government wants to help the hardest to serve, they also want to focus on STEM jobs. Ralph suggested to Deborah that youth who have passed math and not language MCAS could be youth who benefit from an ISY program in STEM industries.

Discussion followed on required outcomes for youth. Deborah went over the outcomes which she noted are different for older youth and younger youth. Cal said that we need to figure out what to do as a Youth Council. Although the numbers appear to dictate serving OSY, some programs haven't been filled.

Lisa Coy said that there are not enough vendors coming to the table. Young males are coming in our doors and we have a duty to get vendors. Irene Chalek said that it is important to understand the needs of our customer base but encourage vendors and find out if businesses are looking for middle skill or entry level and encourage creating partnerships around a number of specific areas.

Susan Almono said that there are a couple of issues and areas where there are jobs. Other than manufacturing and health care, there are more green jobs and science based jobs and couldn't we do both ISY and OSY.

Kristine Blum said that Lisa has been great in explaining the issues but she feels that we are going in circles. It seems that there aren't enough trainers and we are trying to force people into a cookie cutter with the requirement to get a credential. This is a great idea but we can't get kids qualified. How do we get OSY a GED and bring them up to level.

Deborah said that we need to get our ducks in a row and she has been researching RFPs. She said that she could send out an RFP for both ISY and OSY with separate outcomes. Cal suggested talking to NECC, the Technical schools and employers to find out how to encourage more vendors to the table. Irene Chalek wondered whether our local WIB could provide contacts in our region and also suggested adding a list of employers to the RFP with the numbers of additional jobs and educational expectations.

Discussion following on the RFP with Megan Shea stating that we should have a needs assessment. Not make the RFP too complex but take bite size chunks. She mentioned a two tiered program and talking with schools about continuum of programs. We can be planning to be a better part of the system. Lisa Coy said that a letter from Jane Oates suggested the two tiered program as a priority for those hardest to serve and homeless whose problems cannot be solved in one year and suggested a two year plan. Heidi talked about counseling and support services for the programs.

Cal then asked if the consensus is to leave the split as it currently is. Brad Howell said that he has no idea how to decide on the RFP but that \$100,000 is not much money to address all the issues we have raised. We need to reach into the community and leverage other resources. A little bit of money cannot fix homelessness, get credentialing, and help youth get a job. We

should consider making one award to one program with WIA and see what else we can bring in.

April Lyskowsky said that what youth need is a bridge for the period of time when a program or credentialing is completed until they obtain a job or begin secondary education so that at the end of the day they can obtain sustainable, wage earning jobs.

Kristine said that the ideal situation is if OSY get a GED or credential and training that leads to a pathway to a job. She suggested that breaking it into chunks might be a way to look at things. Lisa mentioned the wait list for GED classes and Megan said that we should buy extra GED seats.

Cal then said that we maybe we need to make a decision to hold the split at 70/30 until we come up with a better solution since we keep coming back to the problems for OSY. Deborah said that even if we release an RFP for both older and younger (ISY and OSY) youth, and fund ISY with it, we have still already fulfilled our commitment to serve 70% OSY this year.

Howard Allen asked what we do best and Lisa said that she feels like what we do best is that OSY know to come to us when there is nothing else. There are so many things in the community that we are lacking. Many youth need pre-GED training. Megan said that we need to come up with a system and Howard said a timeline. Cal said that he definitely wants more vendors at the table. Howard talked about tying into the externship program as a means to move to more objective training and parameters.

**Motion by Megan Shea seconded by April Lyskowsky to retain the current funding split of 70/30 for OSY/ISY. Motion passed.**

Deborah said that they are looking at RFPs that are simpler and more user-friendly. The RFP itself will not be designed by the YC, as several members may ultimately apply as vendors. The overarching strategic plan is approved by them.

#### **IV. High Performing WIB Overview - Youth**

Deborah said that we were recently granted High Performing WIB status by the state which came with a \$100,000 award. She referenced the scorecard that was submitted to the state during the submission process which was in the meeting packets. The scorecard included MVWIB priorities for youth. She said that we would like to use some of the award for the sample program we talked about for ISY adept at math and science that need language instruction.

Howard Allen then spoke about barriers to entry into trucking mechanic jobs that require a GED and certification. He said that we need to fine tune the process and get vendors to the table.

Deborah said that page 4 includes our goals and said that the YC is responsible for overseeing our scorecard performance on a quarterly basis. This item will be placed on the agenda on a quarterly basis.

Howard Allen said that we were competing with other WIBs and board members and others participated in developing the plan. The scorecard is a help for us to stay on target.

Deborah then went over the First Quarter Performance for WIA Title I Youth Programs which should be at least at 25% of plan. Most first quarter outcomes exceed 25%.

Cal Williams then asked Charlie Ramos from the City of Lawrence to say a few words. Mr. Ramos said that he was a crime scene investigator who grew up in Lawrence and attended Lawrence High School. He said that there was a riot in 1984 and the same social problems exist today. The majority of the population is Latino and there are no jobs in Lawrence. The dropout rate today is the same as 26 years ago. He said the city leadership has let the youth down. There are kids today who are parents and who grew up without parents. He thanked the Youth Council for bringing forth the issues and suggested reaching out to the community through the Spanish media. He spoke about the differences between the Puerto Rican and Dominican cultures and said that we should work with Lawrence High School and target potential dropouts. He also spoke about the CORI on a young person's record.

Irene said that information on the impact of a bad CORI on a young person's life should be included in the curriculum at an early age and more positive resources implemented for getting students involved to minimize gang violence. Barbara Richards said that kids depend on a lot of misinformation, such as pleading out to avoid jail or are advised to do so by legal counsel without the awareness that now they will have a negative CORI.

Heidi Riccio said that Lawrence Technical School is partnering with the community to give kids a second chance. There are programs that kids can enter and have a bad CORI and be successful. That is why they work with police and build relationships and partnerships to serve the kids in this area.

Cal said that due to the time the rest of the agenda would be tabled.

## **V. Adjournment**

**Having no further business Irene Chalek made a motion to adjourn seconded by Brad Howell. Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary Kivell*

Mary Kivell

Recorder