

**BERRIEN, CASS, & VAN BUREN
CAREER & EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2022
Michigan Works! Hybrid Meeting**

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present:

Chris Machiniak (virtual), Mikki Spagnoli (virtual), Karen Reilly (virtual), Ken Flowers (virtual), Allie Knapp (in-person), Jay Bauer (in-person), Jim Berry (in-person), John Fonash (virtual)

Members Absent:

Laurie Hasse, Robert Smith, Debbie Lull, Allie Knapp, Robert Smith, Cody Korfmacher, Bob Kara, Diane Owen-Rogers

Others Present:

Mark O'Reilly, Evan Linskey

Michigan Works! Staff Present:

Erin Venno, Quin Braylock

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m.

II. Introductions

Erin Venno welcomed all CEAC members and guests present with a roundtable of introductions and a brief synopsis of the meeting purpose for new members.

III. Presentations

61c Equipment Grant: Chris Machiniak explained that the 61c equipment grant was developed several years ago for the CEPDs (Career Education Planning District) across the state of Michigan. These funds allowed them to purchase 'bigger ticket' items for Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs. However, now, this money is allocated only to CEPDs that do not have CTE millages in their county. Van Buren County does have a millage, but Berrien and Cass Counties do not. This past October, each CEPD was allocated \$530,000 to spend throughout the year until the end of September. They can use these funds for state-approved programs, and new language allows for new programs as well. There is no action needed for the 61c Equipment grant, but rather an inform to the members.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Chris Machiniak also talked about the requirements for work-based learning (WBL) ramping up while COVID-19 is still rampant. He wants to ensure this conversation continues, while trying to understand the landscape from all sides. Particularly for older students, they want to move them out of the 'exploratory' phase and into the 'experience' phase, but it's been difficult with some occupations to provide. Jay Bauer said that Eagle Technologies is open to these, because they are not open to the public and have a controlled environment, they can facilitate safer visits. Ken Flowers echoed this and said that requirements are very much employer-based (masks, vaccines, etc); as an example, they are still assisting Criminal Justice students with obtaining co-ops with the County Sheriff's Department. Mikki Spagnoli stated that schools are very similar and each has differing levels of what they will allow students to do. Mark O'Reilly questioned the capacity of employers to assist in providing the WBL, and stated that while they are promoting heavily, there is still bottlenecks along the way. Jim Berry mentioned that healthcare has been tough; their Medical Assistant and Phlebotomy students have struggled to get WBL, but their Sports Medicine students have been successful. They've had similar good luck with culinary students with recent field trips. Last year, the woodworking class got creative and did a virtual walkthrough with a local company as well. Mark O'Reilly can provide a

great service in talking to area companies and promoting the connection to the up and coming talent pipeline.

IV. Discussions

Career Pathway Day: Erin Venno provided a brief description and background of Career Pathway Day for new members. She also mentioned that a colleague stated that they will never do another virtual event; the payoff was minimal. Other members agreed that they have heard the same, and that creativity is a must. Chris Machiniak updated that Cass and Van Buren Counties are both interested in participating moving forward and that we do not want another year to lapse. Jim Berry shared that prior to COVID, they held 'Business Bites' during their lunch hour. An employer would come in during the 28-minute period with 30 students. The students got a pizza lunch, but the employer would chat for about 10 minutes, and then provide a hands-on activity. He stated it went well, and students enjoyed it. This idea sparked interest from members.

The continued focus will be on promoting to younger students (9th grade) their options for the future. If we focused on older students, we would have to move from exploratory to experience: focus on specific courses and/or provide training. Jay Bauer asked that educators provide guidelines to employers on how to engage with students, and at what depth they should be providing. Because of the day-to-day life within companies, it's hard to know what parts students will understand, and what needs more explanation.

Chris Machiniak will be continuing to develop a plan for Career Pathway Day.

V. Updates

Workforce Development Board Update: Quin Braylock stated that all four Michigan Works service centers are open; Paw Paw and Benton Harbor are operating Monday-Friday 8AM-5PM, while Cassopolis and Niles are open three days a week. If those hours do not work, virtual options are available. The Clean Slate program is now accepting applicants to help expunge criminal records. Quin also stated that there is funding available to help students or parents remove barriers. Additionally, she said that she would like to create a partnership for the WIOA Youth team and work-based learning experiences. Lastly, Quin thanked Ken and Karen for their partnerships in the MiLEAP grant and the exciting work it offers.

Community College Updates: Karen Reilly shared that the MiLEAP program is up and running and providing helpful services for students. SMC has also hired a Resource Coordinator to assist. She has recently completed the comprehensive local needs assessment. The enrollment numbers have been fairly flat, although they have had an increased number of trades enrollees. Lastly, she shared that SMC's events have experienced transportation difficulties, and its another item to consider in planning.

Ken Flowers echoed that they have also recently completed their comprehensive local needs assessment. LMC has had a lot of success with their free tuition program, and have brought in a lot of students that may not otherwise come to school. They have also hired a new Career Coordinator that can assist with resumes, job placements, and internships.

Employer Updates: Jay Bauer talked about how Eagle Technologies is in manufacturing, but that they are also in service. Their customers are manufacturers. They have been very busy trying to grow in the labor shortage to meet their contracts. In 2021, they had 21 new apprentices, and are looking for around the same amount for 2022. They are conducting a lot of internal training with their incumbent employees, teaching specialized skills.

Debbie Lull was unable to attend the meeting, but stated that Spectrum Health Lakeland has a shortage of pretty much all healthcare roles: nurses, aides, respiratory therapists, medical assistants, environmental services/housekeeping, kitchen staff, etc.

Secondary School Updates: Allie Knapp shared that the Bridge Academy is under construction, with a hopeful completion date in March. Their enrollment continues to climb, but because of the temporary occupancy permit, many students remain virtual. They are starting to enter the CTE realm, with a student enrolled in St. Joseph High School's teacher academy.

Jim Berry stated that St. Joseph High School has ten programs, although they are planning to change their Phlebotomy and Medical Assistant class to just Phlebotomy. They did receive \$200,000 in funding from the 61c Equipment grant for their business/marketing/accounting classes.

John Fonash said that the Adult Education enrollment has been challenging and would love for more linkage for people that need diplomas/GED. They are serving students in-person and getting graduates connected to employment.

Chris Machiniak has also recently completed the comprehensive local needs assessment. He has an open position for an HVAC instructor but have struggled filling it. They are looking at new programs, with a woodworking class in Brandywine being the most developed. He stated that there has been good communication between partners and that taking things to the next step is where we are at.

Mikki Spagnoli shared that Heritage Southwest is developing three new programs, although they are not yet released. She also reiterated that she would love to be a part of the WBL conversations.

Parent Updates: There were no parent updates.

VI. Member/Public Comments

Evan Linskey stated he was happy to help with labor market information, and the state's regional Registered Apprenticeship dashboard sounds like it would be a helpful tool. Their annual analysis report is due to be released on May 1st.

Erin Venno shared that she has accepted a position outside of Kinexus Group. She is working with Quin Braylock to ensure that the CEAC members will have a smooth transition. She thanks all members for being great partners and will miss working with them.

Next Meeting Date

The committee will meet on March 17, 2022, from 9-10AM. Virtual and in-person options will be available.