

*Connecticut's workforce for the next 20 years has already been born.  
What happens to them next is largely up to us...*

## **CETC YOUTH COMMITTEE**

### **Meeting Notes September 19, 2006**



**Hold the Date: Next meeting  
November 14, 2006 at CERC  
from 9-11 a.m.**

**Members and Designees Present:** Louis Saloom (Co-Chair), Stephen Pryor (Co-Chair), Julia O'Leary, Susan Deschamplain, Nestor Leon, Maureen Wagner (for George Coleman), Connie Fraser (for Valerie Lewis), Jack Guerrero, Jan Hasenjager, Jim Ieronimo, Lisa Votto (for Brett Rayford), Carol LaBelle (for Fletcher Fischer), Dianne Williams

**Guests:** Alan MacKenzie, Rich Pearson, Marian Eichner, Carl Buzzelli

**Staff:** Barry Goff, Janice Gruendel, Malia Sieve, Maria Dynia, Jennifer Johnson, Jon Swift

#### **1. Review of Minutes of June 7 Meeting**

Mr. Saloom asked if there were any comments on or corrections to the minutes of the June 7, 2006 meeting. Hearing none, the minutes were approved without change.

#### **2. Updates**

##### ***Youth Vision Team: Systems Work Group***

Jon Swift gave the committee an update on the activities of the Youth Vision Team's Systems Work Group, which met on September 13. One encouraging development reported at that meeting was the fact that, at a recent meeting of the After School Advisory Council, DSS staff announced that, in collaboration with SDE, they are going to use the measurable youth outcomes from the Youth Futures Committee legislation in their contracts for after-school services. These outcomes came from the Youth Vision Team and the Jim Casey initiative, and this appears to be an important step towards using the outcomes across a variety of youth services.

Nora Bishop from BRS distributed information on the work of a consultant firm for the NGA Transition Task Force resource mapping initiative. They are looking at several aspects of agency services (including data systems, other data-related issues, and barriers to employment) that are relevant to the work of the Systems Work Group. They are also taking a broader look than just youth with disabilities, so there should be some helpful information as a result. The mapping process is complete, and the consultants are doing the analysis now. It sounds as though they have done a thorough and comprehensive job, and a final draft report will be presented (with findings, analysis, and recommendations) on September 27. BRS staff are open to sharing information and collaborating, so some helpful results should come out of this effort, including recommendations about data systems. Malia Sieve plans to meet with Ms. Bishop to discuss specific ways that the YVT resource mapping can draw upon their information.

Ms. Sieve presented information on the resource mapping initiative that United Way has begun. They plan to construct an inventory of youth services in two communities (New

Haven and Windham) based on UW's 2-1-1 database, and then analyze the services further and get information on funding sources. They are reaching out to the YSBs for help at the local level, and we've also encouraged collaboration between the YSBs and the WIBs to help with local data collection. UW staff will go out to the communities and talk with people who know about youth services.

During the Systems Work Group meeting, some good suggestions came out regarding sources of information. Dianne Williams (who is also a Youth Committee member) offered to help with information about youth programs in Willimantic operated by QVCC.

One item on the SWG agenda that has good potential for inter-agency collaboration on data issues was a presentation by CSSD on their database for youth on probation. They are demonstrating a willingness to move away from a primarily clinical approach and one that focuses narrowly on the risk of recidivism, in favor of a broader approach that recognizes the importance of education for these youth and can include some educational or work-related components, such as the Work & Learn model.

CSSD staff gave the group an overview of their database, which they had described to Youth Committee staff in an earlier meeting. One interesting feature is their ability to differentiate among youth on probation with regard to degree of risk. That enables them to identify youth who might be appropriate for the Work & Learn model, and for participation in the services offered by the WIBs. Staff told the WIB Youth Service Managers about it and got a good result from them, and that linkage is being pursued.

With regard to CSSD and their willingness to collaborate, they have (literally) bought into the YVT prototype project, with funding for an additional 20 slots for 16- and 17-year-old New Haven youth involved in the justice system.

Brett Rayford saw the CSSD presentation as further evidence of a positive paradigm shift taking place with regard to youth involved with the justice system, and a greater willingness to emphasize education for them. Steve Grant agreed, and said that the justice system is starting to recognize the significance of educational information in their data on youth.

The SWG discussion also included some encouraging participation from SDE with regard to data, and staff look forward to continued dialogue with them around helping youth with educational needs.

Dr. Gruendel made a good overall observation at the meeting about how the CSSD data ties back to other work being done by the SWG on definitions, identification of indicators used to measure them, confidentiality/privacy, and data-sharing issues. These are difficult, but ways that they can be addressed are beginning to emerge.

### ***Youth Futures Committee***

Mr. Swift recapped the first meeting of the new Youth Futures Committee on July 24, chaired by Mary Ann Hanley (the legislation establishing the committee, PA 06-182, directs OWC to convene and lead the committee).

The group heard a presentation from Rep. Ken Green on the history of the Youth Futures Policy Team (the origin of PA 06-182), as well as on youth listening forums conducted in several communities to give young people a chance to voice their issues and concerns. The YFC also received a staff briefing paper (distributed to Youth Committee members). The

paper can be helpful not only for information on the origins and background of YFC, but also on how various youth-related initiatives in Connecticut relate to each other.

The YFC will meet again on September 20 at 9:00 at the Lyceum in Hartford. The group will hear presentations on Results-Based Accountability (from Rep. Diana Urban and Mike Meotti of UW) and on Positive Youth Development (from Bob Francis of RYASAP, a national expert on the subject).

Other agenda items will include a status update from UW staff on the resource mapping work now under way. Then Ms. Hanley will outline further steps in coordinating actions to move the work forward.

### ***Discussion Forums with WIB Youth Service Managers***

Mr. Swift gave an update on two recent discussion forums with the WIB Youth Service Managers.

At the June 23 meeting, John Matteis from CTDOL presented information on literacy/numeracy screens in the WIA Business System, and the WIB staff appreciated hearing the information. They made some suggestions, and Mr. Matteis was glad to have the feedback. All in all, this seemed like a helpful part of the meeting.

Barry Goff presented information on youth involved in the justice system. The emphasis with this group on justice-involved youth is to lay a foundation for work that will come back to the Youth Committee to help move the agenda forward around justice-related issues. This goes back to an earlier Youth Committee meeting at which Julia O'Leary from CSSD suggested that it would be helpful to clear up some confusion on terminology and process. Staff are working on that, trying to reach a common level of understanding about terminology and procedures relating to youth involved in the justice system, and then the plan is to arrange discussions with representatives from that system with the WIB staff. The overall objective is to identify issues and problems at the interface between the juvenile justice system and the WIA-funded youth service system, in order to improve services to these youth. There was a good discussion about problems encountered in trying to serve court-involved youth, with the WIB managers taking an active role.

The group continued the discussion of sharing information on vendors, in line with the idea of the CETC Youth Committee helping to provide a clearinghouse for such information. Issues regarding the construction of vendor lists, such as the level of detail in the breakouts, the best way to present information, and forms design, will all be resolved through further discussions.

The September 8 meeting was a little unusual in that it departed from the usual format of focusing primarily on issues that the WIB Youth Service Managers suggest. Because of the resource mapping effort for the YVT, and the important role of the Youth Service Bureaus in that effort, staff asked the managers if they would participate in a discussion with representatives of the Connecticut Youth Service Association. They agreed, so staff invited two CYSA representatives and part of the meeting focused on collaboration between the WIBs and YSBs around data collection.

Then, once again, part of the discussion was about juvenile justice issues. Staff described their meeting with CSSD and how their database can identify youth on probation who could benefit from WIA services, and the reaction was very gratifying. Nestor Leon offered to host CSSD staff and present information to them about the services available from The

WorkPlace (Southwest WIB), so staff have introduced him to Steve Grant from CSSD and they are working on setting up a meeting/visit.

Another way that staff asked for help from the WIB managers was by engaging them in a discussion of possible proxy measures of capacity among youth service providers. Staff had been struggling with that issue, so the group spent some time on it in the meeting. This is still a difficult issue, but the discussion with the WIB managers was helpful.

### ***Update on Young Adult Learners Program (Maureen Wagner, SDE)***

Maureen Wagner from SDE presented information on the Young Adult Learner (YAL) program. She traced the background of the initiative, saying that SDE had wanted to learn about the impact of additional program components, including elements of the Work & Learn model, so an RFP was designed to incorporate those components. She noted that input had been received from a variety of sources, including the Youth Committee and OWC staff, and that the RFP design process had been very collaborative. A total of \$500,000 was awarded in grants, with a total of 222 students to be served.

Ms. Wagner presented statistics illustrating the scope of the problem of educational deficits among many of the state's young adults: 42 percent of those age 16-21 do not have a high school diploma, only 52 percent of those 16 and older achieve acceptable scores on the CASAS, and 87 percent could not meet the reading benchmark. Overall, many young people need developmental classes when they enter community college.

The Young Adult Learners program ties into the YVT Prototype project in that Adult Education services from SDE will be available to participants in that program, with coordination by case managers. Ms. Wagner also described SDE's Workforce Skills Certification Credential, and announced a training session to be held in October for all grantees focusing on that credential.

The YAL program will include a focus on outcomes: SDE expects that all programs will exceed the state average for student retention, credits earned, graduation, and entry into post-secondary education and training programs. All programs will establish exit criteria based on CASAS assessment instruments indicating that students have achieved adult secondary education completion levels.

The YAL grants will extend through June 30, 2007. Ms. Wagner noted that this is state funding, and expressed hope that it will be renewed. After WIA has been reauthorized, SDE hopes to obtain federal funding through Title II to continue the program.

Mr. Saloom expressed appreciation for SDE's collaboration with the Youth Committee on this initiative.

### ***Early Childhood Education Update***

Dr. Gruendel gave a brief update on early childhood education, based on a written handout. She noted the quick pace of activity, saying that the ECE Cabinet has issued a framework and policy briefs. In addition, the Research and Policy Council met in July to receive the framework, and again in September, when it looked at the 10 priorities with a view to costing out recommendations. The Governor's summit on ECE has been rescheduled from December to January. The Council, with assistance from OWC, has contracted with United Way for staff support.

Overall, Dr. Gruendel noted that this new and different policy effort is moving forward well, including meetings with the Secretary of OPM as well as the Governor. She described local listening forums that are being conducted around the state and drawing excellent attendance.

Malia Sieve of United Way provided brief information on a new website for the ECE initiative, and Dr. Gruendel added that work is under way on a website for broader youth-related issues.

### ***Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee***

Dr. Gruendel then provided information on the new Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee, which will hold its first meeting on September 26. Its purpose will be to consider changing the age of adult criminal jurisdiction from 16 to 18. A working group will be formed to examine the implications of such a change, including various aspects of services and service needs. Connecticut is one of very few states in which 16- and 17-year-olds are subject to the jurisdiction of the adult criminal court. Dr. Gruendel said that, as a member of the new committee, she intends to push for providing components of the Work and Learn Model in the array of services available to these youth.

### ***Youth Vision Team Prototype Work Group***

For the final portion of her updates, Dr. Gruendel gave the group information on the YVT's Prototype Work Group, saying that the RFP process has been completed and a provider has been selected to operate the New Haven program. She emphasized the excellent collaboration between DCF and the Workforce Alliance (South Central WIB) in developing the RFP and designing the program, and also described two meetings that had been held in New Haven with community leaders. One problem being encountered at that level has been difficulty in getting representatives of the school system to come to the table, but efforts will continue.

Another encouraging development, added by Lisa Votto, is that the Workforce Alliance has been very cooperative about allowing the use of their database for the prototype participants. She said that excellent progress has been made, and that DCF and the WIB staff are now "speaking the same language" with regard to data collection and management for the program. The prototype program will provide good information on database needs and requirements, and that understanding can help in replicating the prototype program elsewhere and bringing it to scale. She said that work is progressing on MOUs, and that an RFP for research and evaluation of the program is being developed.

Dr. Gruendel also described a very productive meeting that she and Mr. Swift had with CSSD earlier in September, discussing youth data and CSSD's recent work in developing an improved database. The fact that CSSD has also become a partner in the prototype project is important; they have contributed funds for 20 additional slots in the program for 16- and 17-year-olds who are involved with the court system. Their database has powerful capabilities for identifying the educational status and needs of those young people.

Ms. Wagner noted that SDE is also contributing to the prototype program, using a portion of the WIA incentive funds received by the agency. These resources will be targeted specifically to minority males in the program, providing them with the supports that they need. In response to a question from Susan Deschamplain about whether Young Adult Learners will participate, she said that one of the YAL grants had gone to New Haven Adult Education, so those linkages are sure to be made.

### 3. Youth Data Report

Mr. Goff reported encountering problems in obtaining data from CTDOL. He had received one set of data and analyzed it, but then was informed by DOL staff that the data were incomplete due to WIBs being late in sending their data to DOL. He suggested that this situation relates to issues discussed previously by the committee: either limited vendor capacity, or failure of contracts to include sufficiently strong requirements for timely reporting of data by vendors.

CTDOL staff reported that they have now received all data from the WIBs, and the year-end data report will be presented at the November 14 meeting.

### 4. Proposed Youth Committee Work Plan for 2006-07

Mr. Saloom referred to the draft work plan distributed to committee members, and also to a list of issues in the agenda. He said that the plan was intended as a blueprint for the committee to follow in pursuing its work.

Dr. Gruendel noted that the proposed work plan had been developed by staff, based on last year's work plan and also drawing upon process issues identified in the course of working with both the Youth Vision Team and the Youth Futures Committee.

Addressing the issues listed in the agenda for the committee's consideration, Mr. Swift explained that they were intended to offer committee members an opportunity to choose among the issues and make some decisions about which ones should be high-priority. Rich Pearson, an experienced facilitator, offered to help the group in a decision-making process, and a lively discussion ensued regarding the relative importance of the issues.

The outcome of the prioritization process was a consensus that three of the issues were most important for the committee to pursue:

1. The impending shift in federal emphasis toward "older" (16-21) and out-of-school youth and the implications for youth programming in Connecticut

**NOTE:** The companion piece to this is the state policy issue of the need to compensate for the shift in WIA funding (as well as the continued overall cuts) through state investments to ensure that the younger (14-15) in-school vulnerable/at-risk youth are not left behind.

2. Serving justice-involved youth and youth with disabilities
3. Inter-agency collaboration, including finding a way to bring local school system representatives to the table

The issue of local school participation received particular attention in the discussion, with Mr. Saloom emphasizing the difficulty encountered in achieving representation from school systems in the Youth Committee's discussions. Dr. Gruendel reported on a meeting she recently had with Allan Taylor, Chair of the State Board of Education, regarding early childhood education. At that meeting Mr. Taylor had described a new report on high school reform, due to be released on October 1. Dr. Gruendel suggested that the report might be relevant to the issue of school system participation in other initiatives, and suggested that a presentation to the Youth Committee on high school reform might be helpful and informative.

The Co-Chairs directed staff to incorporate these issues into the work plan and present the revised plan to the committee members.

**5. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Youth Committee will be on November 14 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. at CERC.