



## Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

### MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** July 31, 2020

**Time:** 9:00 A.M.

**Place:** Virtual Meeting via Zoom

#### **Welcome/Call to Order**

Chair, Michelle Choquette was on the meeting only by audio so Vice Chair, Chuck Gray, was asked to chair the meeting. He welcomed the group and announced that if there is an interruption with the audio and/or video of the virtual meeting and connection can't be made within thirty (30) minutes, then the meeting would be continued on August 7, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Vice Chair, Chuck Gray, introduced two new members to the Governor's Council: Senator James Leewright and Senator Adam Pugh. He reviewed the agenda and stated that due to a hard stop at 11:00 a.m. for some of the Council members, the Consent Agenda would be moved up on the agenda after the Oklahoma Office for Workforce Development update. Also, Vice Chair Gray stated that a representative from the Governor's office was not available today so that agenda item would be skipped.

A roll call of the Governor's Council members was taken.

#### **Council members present:**

K. Altshuler, S. Vickers Cameron, M. Choquette, J. Curry, D. DeLozier, M. Fruendt, C. Gray, G. Hager, S. Haworth, G. Hodgen, T. Huggins, J. Leewright, M. Mack, C. Mariska, B. Robinson, R. Seals, S. Shepelwich, J. Simmons, D. Stewart, V. Thompson, M. Williams, and S. Zumwalt.

#### **Council members not present:**

G. Donica, D. Hays, S. Kouplen, P. Lakin, T. O'Donnell, A. Pugh, J. Thomas, and D. Wilcox.

#### **Designees present:**

T. Hutchison and S. Ellis.

**Governor's Office Update** – A representative from the Governor's Office was unable to attend due to a schedule conflict.

#### **Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD)**

Don Morris, Executive Director, gave the following update:

- Don wanted Council members to know what we are doing to help Oklahoma's workforce now and as we bounce back. He said it is prudent that we set reasonable and attainable goals, and it's also important to set those big and audacious goals and outcomes as it is a key part of any strategy. Don said his audacious visionary goal for post-COVID is that we begin to hear multiple testimonials from people who are saying they came out of the pandemic in a better place than before due to upskilling or reskilling or from some of the benefits from workforce programs. He thinks it is very possible that there are some people who actually improved due to some of the programs we've put into place.
- Performance Targets and Data – Don said every two years we negotiate performance targets with the U.S. Dept. of Labor. Our office, OOWD, and the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), recently completed the process and our new performance goals for program years 20 and 21 are on the slide shown below.

Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, 900 N. Portland Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73107

*The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development/Oklahoma Works is an equal opportunity employer/program.  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*

## State Negotiated Targets\*

Indicator	Title I Adults	Title I Dislocated Workers	Title I Youth
Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit	66.7%	75.0%	70.0%
Employment 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	75.5%	66.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,700	\$8,200	\$3,200
Credential Attainment Rate	65.5%	68.0%	50.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	62.5%	65.0%	59.9%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

\*Included in the State Plan at Oklahomaworks.gov

The state, OOWD, then negotiates with Local Workforce Development Boards. Local targets are based on the State negotiated levels of performance. Unlike previous years, performance targets are now factored using the objective statistical adjustment model provided by the DOL for the first time. This is based on how well we serve people with the most difficult barriers. Previously, it was based on the quantity we served.

- **Dislocated Worker Grant Funds and Activities** – OOWD was awarded a Dislocated Worker grant for a little under \$1 million to serve people in multiple industries and demand occupations. There are four categories in which the dollars are being spent:
  - CompTIA Pilot Project – Aims to strategically upskill dislocated workers for employment in the IT industry through online training, including the expansion of the talent pipeline for the military, government contractors, and other IT employers across the state.
  - Virtual Training Activities – Services will be provided to eligible dislocated workers. Priority will be given to workers dislocated from the restaurant, hospitality, and retail industries.
  - Humanitarian Relief Employment – This part of the project will hire people to work in and support food banks, food prep and food delivery to vulnerable populations.
  - Supportive Services – Child care, transportation, rental assistance and PPE required for employment.
- **COVID-19 Response and Strategic Planning** – In response to COVID-19, we're developing a strategic plan for the state workforce system. It will be a cross-agency, multi-effort project to respond to COVID-19. Some of you may have already received a survey – please fill it out and send it back in. It's about the state's strategy for response to COVID-19. We are looking forward to getting input from all stakeholders and developing strategies and recommendations around furthering our response to COVID-19.

## COVID-19 Response and Strategic Planning

- Maher and Maher Consulting
- Develop a COVID-19 recovery plan for the state's public workforce system.
- Identify and prioritize strategies the State of Oklahoma can undertake to strengthen the public workforce system in response to the needs of job seekers and employers post-COVID-19.
- Conducting several listening sessions – internal and external to WF
- An electronic Survey has been distributed and is currently underway
- Next step will be to conduct focus groups with various stakeholders
- Final step - Develop strategies and recommendations.
- We hope to have something to present to the Council at the October meeting.
- Other COVID 19 response tactics include:
  - Dislocated Worker Grant activities
  - Multiple television and radio spots
  - Agricultural trucking partnership
  - Talent Exchange
  - \$1.2M spent on cleaning and health screenings at Workforce Centers



Maher & Maher  
Investment Advisors for Talent Development



COVID-19  
RESPONSE

- A task force created standardized satisfaction surveys for jobseekers and employers. The goal of this project is to align survey tools at the state and local level. It allows for comparable data, trend analysis, and informed quality improvement, research and evaluation efforts at the state level. The new survey tools were implemented July 1, 2020.
- OOWD has been working on a pay for performance agreement with Centers for Employment Opportunities (CEO) which will support ex-offenders' transition to the workforce. It will be eligible for CEO participants in the Tulsa Workforce Area. The pilot will have up to 100 participants. They will receive a base payment and incentive payments. Other outcome measures for which payment will be received are:
  - Employment 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (required outcome)
  - Median earnings (required outcome)
  - Measureable skills gain (required outcome)
  - Recidivism within one year (incentive payment)
  - Employment retention 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (incentive payment)
- Business Services Overview:
  - Funding distributed to local areas from OOWD to support staff expenses.
  - Fully leverages our ability to support businesses under WIOA
  - Supports businesses in dealing with reductions in force and rebuilding jobs to meet the “new normal”.
  - Blends with Dislocated Worker and Apprenticeship grants.
- Oklahoma Works Together – Don said that this program is designed to pull together our resources and facilitation coordination between resources in the state. Dave Stewart and Scott Fry have given their time and shared their expertise and everything they've learned at MidAmerica Industrial Park (MAIP), so as we progress down the road, Don wants to make sure he keeps the Council connected to Oklahoma Works Together and see the work that's being done.

**Consent Agenda** – David Stewart made a motion, seconded by Teresa Huggins, to approve the following consent agenda items:

- Approval of Meeting Minutes for January 31, 2020
- Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 24, 2020
- OWDI #11-2017, Change 1 – Governor's Oversight and Monitoring Plan
- OWDI #05-2017, Change 2 – Board Certification Policy
- OWDI #02-2020 – Sanctions and Resolution Process
- OWDI #03-2020 – Fraud and Incident Reporting Policy
- OWDI #04-2020 – Selective Service Policy
- OWDI #05-2020 – Local Performance Goals Negotiation Process for PY20 and PY21

Voting for the motion via roll call was unanimous. Those voting against the motion were none. The motion carried.

### **Governor's Council Bylaws Revision**

The Executive Committee met to discuss possible revisions to the Council's bylaws. Revisions were made and approved and sent out to the Council for review. Vice-Chair Gray asked if there were any questions or items for discussion. Member Jimmy Curry referred to page eight under the heading Removal of a Member, second bullet, why “not supporting initiatives approved by the Council” was changed to “openly opposing initiatives approved by the Council”? He said that if he was asked by a reporter why he voted no for a proposition and he gives his explanation, that could be considered openly opposing the initiative, although he would support the initiative or anything that comes out of the Council. He feels that the language in there would give wide latitude to remove somebody. Mr. Curry made the motion to approve the bylaws revision with the amendment to leave in “not supporting initiatives” and

deleting “openly opposing initiatives”. The motion with the amendment was seconded by Tony Hutchison. A roll call vote was taken and was unanimously approved. Those voting against the motion were none. The motion carried.

### **Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education – Reach Higher and New Website Program/“Show What You Know” Presentation**

Dr. Debbie Blanke, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, OSRHE, said Reach Higher is a program that is geared to upskill adults and to bring them back to the workforce and given skills that they might be missing, especially for those who had started college but never finished. They have their original program, FlexFinish, which they’ve had since 2007. It is three specific degree programs. Last year, they had 9,611 graduates. By this year, they will have surpassed 10,000. Dr. Blanke said that the key to the program is providing support to these students so they will have what they need to wrap around them in order to go back to school and to finish. She said that one of the important things about the program is the feedback from the students. Fifty-five percent of these students said that they got higher pay or a work promotion so they feel that they are upskilling employees for businesses so employees can go into management or whatever needs to be done to keep the business building and growing. Their faculty is very dedicated to helping these students succeed.

Dr. Blanke said in 2016 they applied for a grant with the Lumina Foundation to start a new program called DirectComplete. It will build on the Reach Higher FlexFinish program and expand its reach and opportunities. This program is linked to Oklahoma’s 100 Critical Occupations list and is designed to help adults who have earned some college credit to complete a degree. Partnerships with businesses, tribes, workforce development agencies, nonprofit organizations and foundations, federal and state agencies and other groups will provide scholarships, grants and other support to adult students who pursue degree programs within the program. Their target audience are students aged 25-29; income below \$75,000; 75% (45 credit hours) completed towards an associate degree or 50% (60 credit hours) completed towards a baccalaureate degree. Dr. Blanke said that there are some scholarships available to help students get started and then there are some tuition reimbursements available with participating businesses to continue.

Dr. Blanke shared their new website [www.ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org](http://www.ShowWhatYouKnowOK.org). They built this as a “door” to what kind of student you may be:

- An adult with previous college credits and interested in completing a degree program
- Someone who attended a Career Technology Center or holds occupational licensure(s) or certification(s)
- A member or veteran of the Armed Services who has completed military student and training
- High school graduate looking to use Advanced Placement exam scores for college credit

A demonstration of the website was given. Dr. Blanke said that they have cards and holders, brochures, etc. on information about the program and website and if anyone would like to have some, she would be happy to provide them.

### **Southern Workforce Development Board Report**

Kerry Manning, Executive Director, began her report with an interview with John Green. Mr. Green is an alumni who successfully participated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and volunteered to give his experience.

Mr. Green said that he lives in Pittsburg County, McAlester, where job opportunities are limited. He said in the last three years he had jobs through a temp agency and had to file for unemployment twice. Ruby in the Workforce Center told him that she thought he would be a good candidate for some of the programs that they offer. She asked him what he would like to do and he said get a CDL because he knew there were truck driving jobs available, so she connected him with a truck driving school. He went to the school and graduated in December 2019. Since he’s gotten his CDL he has gotten a couple of endorsements and a permanent full-time job as a logistics analysis/relief truck driver.

Kerry said that Ruby is a workforce development case manager and career navigator and she thanked her for all that she does.

**Board Presentation Highlights:**

- The Southern Workforce Board is a not-for-profit entity, volunteer members, business-led. They currently have 26 board members and have 17 counties in their workforce area.
- They are projected to grow their population by 1,470 over the next 5 years.
- Jobs grew by 4,690 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 9,213 over the next 5 years.
- Their average earnings per job is \$49.7K, which is \$18.8K below the national average earnings of \$68.5K per job.
- Commuter patterns indicate that some do work outside their area but the majority work within their area.
- Unemployment rates in February before COVID hit, were running about 2.2% in one of their counties as the lowest and their highest was in Latimer County at 7.2%.
- By April, Bryan County was 11.9% and Marshall County was the highest at 17.1% and Johnston County was 19.1%.
- Educational Attainment

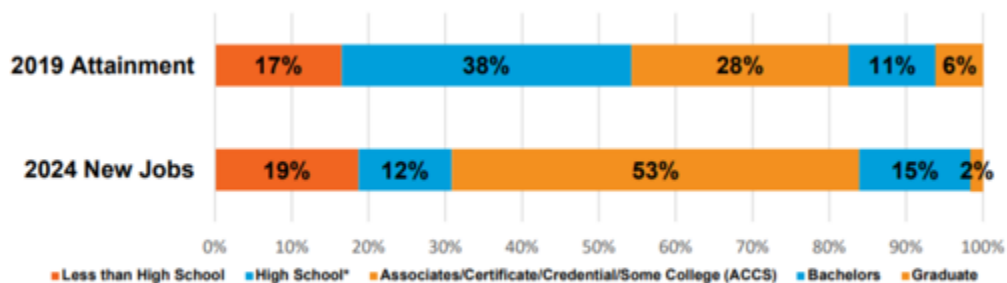
**Educational Attainment**

Concerning educational attainment, 11.4% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (7.4% below the national average), and 7.0% hold an Associate's Degree (1.1% below the national average).



- Local Skills Gap Analysis

**Figure 5: Local Skills Gap Analysis**



\*or Less than High School with Certificate or On the Job

Source: Emsi- economicmodeling.com- 2020.1

- Southern Area's Top Industry Sectors by Total Number of Jobs

NAICS	Description	2019 Jobs	Percentage of Total Employment
90	Government	47,653	31.00%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	17,203	11.19%
31	Manufacturing	15,991	10.40%
44	Retail Trade	15,583	10.14%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	12,360	8.04%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	7,058	4.59%
23	Construction	6,263	4.07%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4,941	3.21%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,517	2.94%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,232	2.75%

Source: Emsi- economicmodeling.com- 2020.1

- Regional Industry Clusters

State Industry Clusters	Estimated Net Job Growth (2019-2024)	Industry Cluster Growth Rate (2019-2024)	Average Annual Earnings
Industrial	2,433	7%	\$61,275
Transportation and Distribution	2,223	6%	\$59,862
Mining and Extraction	1,137	(1%)	\$81,185
Professional Services	1,182	7%	\$57,201
Healthcare	1,736	4%	\$44,454
STEM	1,116	5%	\$83,691

Source: Emsi- economicmodeling.com- 2020.1

- American Job Centers (AJCs)
  - Southern has six comprehensive American Job Centers located in Durant, Ada, Ardmore, Idabel, McAlester and Poteau. WIOA Title I is housed there as well as OESC's Unemployment. At McAlester, they also have a Department of Human Services representative as well as a representative from the Department of Rehabilitation Services.
  - They also have four satellite offices that offer Title I services and they also go to other locations such as Murray State College, Tishomingo, twice a week.
- Job Seeker and Business Services can be accessed on Southern's website. Some of the services provided are:
  - Job Seeker Services
  - Occupational Skills Training
  - On-the-Job Training
  - Work Experience
  - STEM Academies
  - Career Readiness Activities
  - Supportive Services
  - Resume Assistance
  - Business Services-Labor Market Information

- Job Postings
- “Hot Jobs” Posting
- Job Fairs
- Sector Strategies
- Incumbent Worker Training
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Career Fairs

For the complete presentation, click on this link: [Southern Workforce Board Overview](#).

### **Centers of Excellence**

Dr. Marcie Mack, State Director, CareerTech, said that they originally planned to bring forth the applications for Centers of Excellence to the Governor’s Council for a stamp of approval for their first set of Centers, but after some conversations they wanted to make sure that the new members understood the program, so Dave Stewart is going to give an overview for historical reference. They currently have nine applications and they will bring those recommendations to the Council in October. To bring everyone up to date, Dave Stewart will share some information from an historical and a strategic perspective up to what they are doing now with the Centers of Excellence.

Dave said they were looking at this from an economic development perspective to sell Oklahoma to companies and convince them that we have a great workforce and a great system. They started out setting some criteria and guidelines for the committee. Per the guidelines, they weren’t going to do any research or look at any new programs because the programs they already had could be integrated and used. They weren’t going to change the system as they recognized the legal limitations for some of the programs such as for out-of-school youth. So they looked at these things to see how they could put them together to make it more effective and marketable. When he says marketable, he means how does it compare with something like Georgia Quick Start? Dave said that when you look at Georgia Quick Start’s characteristics, Oklahoma has all of the same characteristics but they have marketed it in a way that everyone says it is a great workforce program. He is going to share some of the strategies and recommendations that the committee has come up with. Strategies that are marketable, more effective, more localized, more collaborative, and using all of the training programs that already exist.

In 2019, Dave started working with Sec. Kouplen and Gov. Stitt and started studying best practices on workforce across the nation. They presented their information at the Governor’s Summit and then started working on the Centers for Workforce Excellence. Current members on the committee today are: Dave Stewart, Tony Hutchison, Melinda Freundt, Don Morris, Shelley Zumwalt, and Marcie Mack. This group will carry the initiative forward and present to the Governor’s Council recommendations for the Centers of Excellence, then the committee will carry the program forward.

#### **Strategic Framework:**

- Replicable: the model is designed in a way that can be applied to any community and industry ecosystem.
- Locally Focused: the framework is designed so that it can be driven and applied at the local level by engaged partners.
- Efficient: the model emphasized high-level collaboration that leverages existing work and resources of engaged stakeholders.
- Effective: the model is designed to be effective by addressing specific issues related to a community’s industry ecosystem.

#### **System Strategies:**

- Fully leverage Oklahoma’s strong educational infrastructure utilizing existing assets and resources through the state’s Career Tech and Higher Education systems.
- Further leverage Oklahoma Works and the Governor’s Council for Workforce and Economic Development.
- Create a statewide network of advisory councils in each ecosystem driven by Oklahoma Business and Industry leader.

- Establish branded regional Workforce Centers of Excellence focused on local demand.
- Leverage and maximize existing resources and assets to support the workforce effort.
- Establish a “single point of contact” concept which will serve as a single point of entry for workforce related services.
- Establish a linked data system that collects and links information from education, employment and workforce agencies so that policy makers and state leaders can make more informed decisions.
- Develop an effective brand and marketing strategy for the new workforce model
- Support effective intervention strategies which serve the most at-risk and vulnerable populations aimed at increasing education completion, certification attainment and workforce participation rates.

Committee Recommendations:

- Further leverage the new Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP) and OK EDGE programs by supporting new and innovative career awareness, character education and college preparation initiatives.
- Provide centralized support to assist economic development groups to establish local workforce advisory teams across the state through a consortium of state and regional staff from the Department of Commerce, Office of Workforce Development, OK Department of Career and Technology Education and Oklahoma Manufacturing Alliance.
- Provide ongoing and unified professional development training to local and state workforce boards, economic developers and local workforce advisory groups.
- Establish a single point of contact in each identified workforce area that serves existing and prospective employers’ workforce needs by coordinating resources and services.
- Broaden the definition and expand eligibility of concurrent enrollment to include college-readiness courses, industry certifications and micro-credentials.
- Increase education/training participation rates of underserved and disengaged populations by supporting and leveraging programming targeting minorities, at-risk populations and the formerly incarcerated.

Centers of Excellence:

- Five workshops were held across the state to roll out the plan and provide assistance to interested communities and to get input from the public.
- Application guide and rubric was released to the public on May 1, 2020, by CareerTech and the first round of nine have been received by the due date of June 30 for evaluation and consideration.
- The applications are put forward to the Workforce Committee of the Council. Of those applications that meet the criteria and the metrics of the rubric, they will be put forward to the Governor’s Council for approval.

Next Steps:

Moving forward the committee will focus on the following:

- Approve Center of Excellence applications
- Develop brand and marketing strategy
- Establish support strategies to ensure success
- Create a structure for continuous improvement
- Develop benchmarks to evaluate performance

**Participating Wage Research/Study and Discussion on Improving Outcomes**

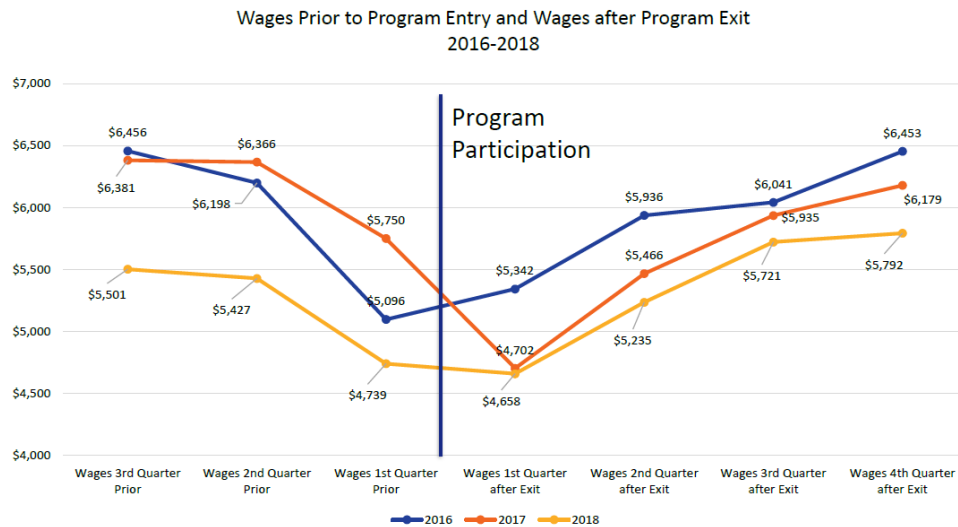
Dr. Natalie Daugherty, OOWD, said that she will be sharing two different data-related reports today. The first one is a wage progression evaluation that was done. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) they are required to do this for their programs, so today she is talking about the Title I Adult program. She said that this report can be found on [www.oklahomaworks.gov](http://www.oklahomaworks.gov) under the tab Data, Reports and Research, and link to WIOA Wage Progression Evaluation, June 2020.

Dr. Daugherty said that the purpose of this evaluation is to look at participants’ wages before and after they participate in our programs. Performance indicators that Don talked about earlier are all primarily exit-based after a participant leaves the program, so it really doesn’t answer the question of where they were before.



She said that they captured the wages that participants were making before they entered the program. They see that participants experience a decline in their wages before they get our help. Once they get our help and enroll in the program and participate in training, you can see from the graph that they recover their wages, and a lot of the times increase their wages.

## Adult Wage Progression 2016-2018



Building Oklahoma's Future Workforce | [www.oklahomaworks.gov](http://www.oklahomaworks.gov) | @OklaWorks



Dr. Daugherty said in reference to the performance indicators that Don Morris talked about in his report that there are six primary performance indicators under WIOA:

### WIOA Performance Indicators

There are six primary indicators of WIOA Performance for Title I programs:

- Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit
- Employment Rate 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit
- Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment
- Measurable Skills Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

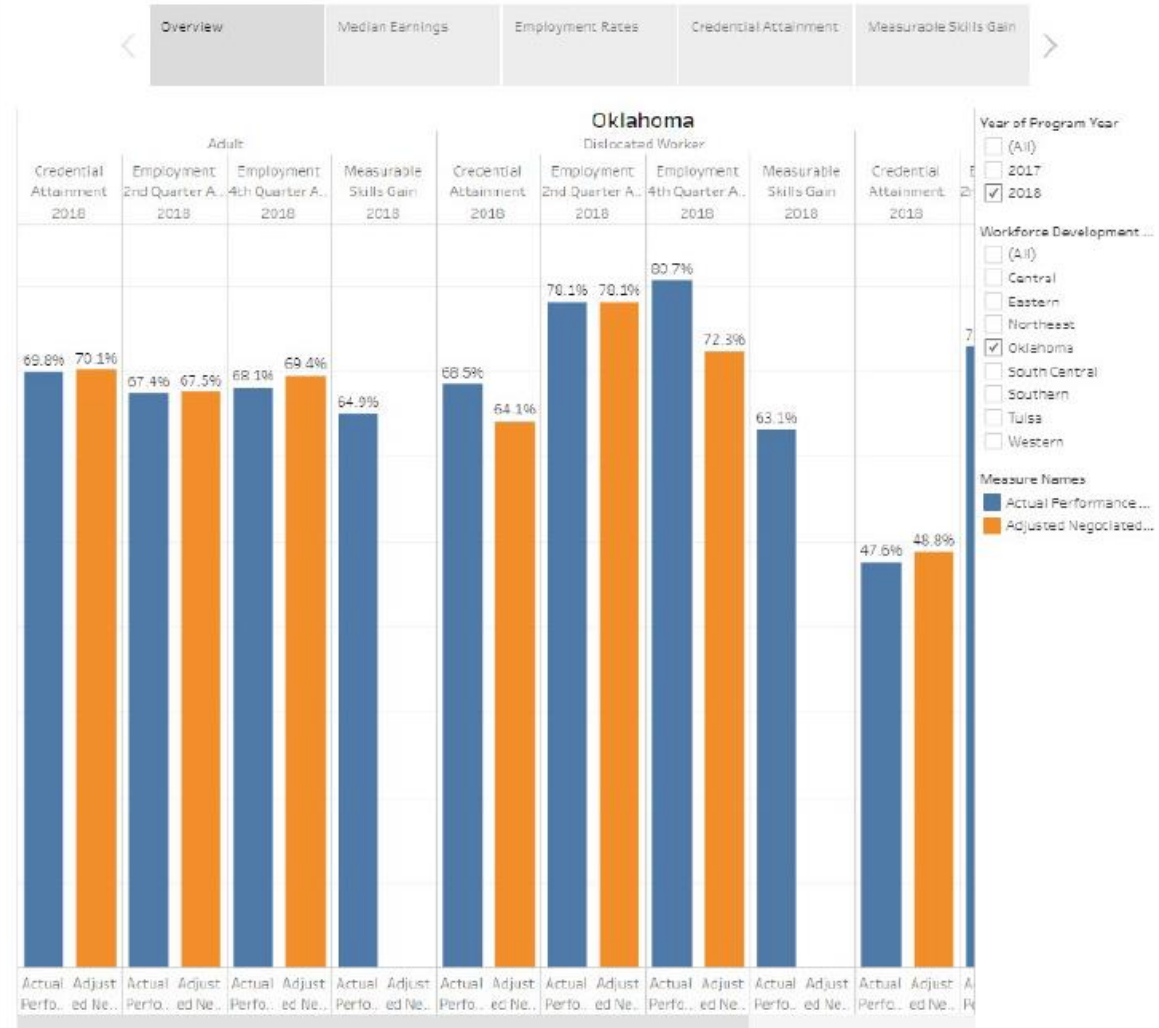
Building Oklahoma's Future Workforce | [www.oklahomaworks.gov](http://www.oklahomaworks.gov) | @OklaWorks



Dr. Daugherty encouraged everyone to go to [www.oklahomaworks.gov](http://www.oklahomaworks.gov) under Data, Reports, and Research to view the Tableau dashboard. You can view all of the workforce areas in the state. See example below.

## Yearly Performance

### Oklahoma WIOA Annual Performance Results, PY2017 & PY2018



For the full report given at the Governor's Council meeting, go to the following link: [Wage Progression and Performance Outcomes Report](#).

### Career Ready School Initiative

Steve Shepelwich, co-chair of the Youth Programs Committee of the Governor's Council, said that this is an initiative that's championed by the committee. The committee would like to recommend this to the State Department of Education (SDE) to align with their Champion of Excellence initiative and today he will be giving an overview of the initiative. He said this was initially proposed by co-chair Cecilia Robinson-Wood, superintendent of Millwood School District and it has a strong grounding from the perspective of educators. It has been led by a sub-committee of the Youth Programs Committee and is steered by Lester Claravall and Rhonda Mize, and they have done tremendous work, and also staff Darcee Simon, who has been invaluable.

Steve said that the idea is to help school districts promote having a focus on career opportunities as well as soft skills for their youth to help them transition from a school setting into labor market employment options. They are proposing that this be a part of SDE's Champion of Excellence initiative. A school can focus on a subject or an issue such as math or foreign language, etc. and build their capacity and infrastructure around that. They can present that to the community and receive a bronze, silver or gold certification based on a

rubric for each of the different areas. The idea is that school systems will be able to show the value they provide to the community and what is special about differentiating themselves.

Steve said what the committee wanted to do is have a Champion of Excellence to help with Workforce Development and its career ready school idea. Career Ready Schools ties in with all of the issues that we've been talking about, the need to provide soft skills in a very coherent way, to be able to expand access to students as well as to support other initiatives such as Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP), etc. They saw this as a critical way of building in support to these initiatives that counselors have already been supportive of. There will be three areas of criteria that a school will look at:

- Employability and Professional Skills
- Ethics and Character
- Community and Employer Engagement

Steve explained that the committee laid out the rubric in consultation with educators around the state as well as with other stakeholders such as employers. They've also had consultations with SDE to make sure they are interested in moving this forward. Their next step is to take this forward to SDE to formally propose that it become part of their Champions of Excellence program.

To access the full presentation, go to this link: [Career Ready Schools](#).

### **Core Partners Updates**

- Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) – Shelley Zumwalt, Executive Director
  - They released the state's extended benefits program that all traditional unemployment people are eligible for. It's basically an extension program that can pay up to 13 weeks more after a person has exhausted traditional benefits and PEUC (Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation).
  - They just finished up their claims events in Ardmore. They've held a total of 15 events - eight in Oklahoma City, five in Tulsa and two in Ardmore. The events were very successful and they were very cognizant of being safety conscious due to COVID-19. They did temperature and health screenings, socially distanced people, and required masks. They served just under 10,000 people. That also meant that they had 10,000 less people competing on the phone lines.
  - The phone situation has been a moving target and is not where it needs to be so they are working with their vendor to develop a 30, 60, and 90 day plan with metrics that they have to hit. They are seeing the call volume going down. In addition to their vendor contract, they also have an Oklahoma City and a Tulsa call center. They have hired staff that will double the number of staff in both of those call centers. They are going through an 8-week training currently. This will help with lowering the volume of claims and people will get paid more quickly.
  - Regarding call volume, Shelley said they saw call resolution on the first call improve by 40% which is wonderful. They had a tier 1 and a tier 2 system and they have collapsed it into one so a caller will be able to talk to a knowledgeable claims representative when they first call in. They've seen their resolution rate go from 1% up to over 40%.
  - They are moving their East Side location to a better location in order to accommodate the people who are going there. The move will happen later in August.
  - When she arrived at the agency, they had about 130,000 claims in backlog, that number moves every day and hovers around 5,000-10,000, which they are proud of. This is a pretty good number to have in that pending category. Claims carried over from week to week has also dropped. The average was about 152,000 and they've seen it go down to 136,000 for the four week moving average.
  - As far as fraud goes, they are working with their credit card vendor, Conduent, and they have put into place two different fraud measures which have helped tremendously.
  - They will be releasing digital ID within the next month, they have a beta test that they are going to kick off. It will require a couple of things to verify your identity using a smart phone and they have a back-up for people who do not have smart phones. This will be a great help in reducing fraud.

- Shelley said that they have the 539 plan that OESC has been working towards, and they have hired a new CTO and she has been working on that plan and making recommendations so they can speed up the delivery of the plan. They have a very old mainframe and all of their information, claims and payments have to go through a system that is almost 40 years old. It was a priority to update it but with the pandemic, it has become essential because it has crippled their ability to process the volume of claims that they have.
- Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) – Melinda Freundt, Executive Director
  - On July 26th, the Americans with Disabilities Act celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This law was a civil rights legislation written to prevent further discrimination among citizens with disabilities and was put into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush. On that day, he actually stated, “This shameful world with exclusions will finally come tumbling down.” Obviously, the purpose of the law is to ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else as well as civil rights protections.
  - Vocational Rehabilitation Division – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they’ve been doing primarily telework throughout their services up until July 6<sup>th</sup> and they did a return to work process at the local field offices (with the doors open). During the process, some of the staff had to become really innovative with their solutions in service delivery. Many services had to be done virtually and usually they are provided one-on-one, so it presented a lot of challenges, but they are finding out that it can be done virtually and can be accomplished and individuals are not falling behind.
  - They have an Accessible Instructional Materials Center for the blind and visually handicapped. It supports the education of Oklahoma youth by continuing to provide equipment to teachers for the visually impaired and to many parents for home schooling during COVID.
  - Vocational Rehabilitation staff have staggered their schedules and try to remain as flexible as possible as some clients do come into the office.
  - In Oklahoma City, they are working with the Central Workforce Board to potentially co-locate with them in their new Oklahoma City facility.
  - DRS has two schools – School for the Blind and School for the Deaf. At this time, the School for the Blind does not know when they will return to the school. They did have a date set but the parents and students were still feeling pretty nervous about returning. The School for the Deaf, who has a residential campus in Sulphur, will be returning back to school on August 17-28 doing distance learning, then on August 31, they will be returning to campus in person, assuming all continues to go well with the safety of the students, teachers and staff.
  - Their first virtual DRS Business Summit: Breaking Barriers for an Inclusive Workforce, is on October 15, 2020, and is free to all.
- Career and Technology Education (CT) – Dr. Marcie Mack, State Director
  - Specific to the Governor’s Council and as a Core Partner, the piece that they do is Title II, which is the Adult and Family Literacy Act. For individuals who may not be familiar with this, the legislature in 2014 transitioned Adult Basic Education to the Department of Career and Technology Education so they have been working very closely with them at that time with WIA and now with WIOA. In looking at providing these services across the state during this time period, they wanted to be sure that they had services available and that they were able to provide individuals with opportunities so they would be able to have hope in being able to complete their work. Across the state, they have their Adult Basic Education and many of them are in person and following safety protocols and social distancing. They are offering some classes online for those who are not able or confident to participate in person.
  - They have 32 providers across the state. The provider in the Western Area has chosen not to continue in this fiscal year, so they have that out for selection. They already have a site that is going to pick that up which will allow them to have a larger area to serve and have more locations.
  - Their test sites are open. Their first area test site began opening up May 15, with the majority of them opening by the middle of June so individuals could have the opportunity to

test for the high school equivalency. Their test sites have remained open where individuals who have to travel or have other barriers can work with our partners and have the ability to test.

- Their high school equivalency numbers for a couple of months were starting to decline, however, now they are continuing to rise and individuals are signing up for courses whether in person or online.
- In reference to performance measures that Dr. Daugherty mentioned, there was the concern during this particular time period and cancelled classes and a restructured piece that we would not be able to meet those metrics. In the first run of our metrics as of right now, we are only 2% less in our benchmark that was set. So as we finish out the year, we are very hopeful that we will be able to meet that benchmark and potentially with the innovative ways that we are able to connect with students, and looking at a lot of various options, we will be able to meet those benchmarks.

#### **Announcements**

- DRS Virtual Business Summit 2020: Breaking Barriers for an Inclusive Workforce – The Summit is free to all business professionals in Oklahoma – October 15, 2020
- Workforce Vision 2020 Conference – Don Morris said that this is initially planned for October 29-30, 2020 and to include the next Governor's Council meeting. They would like to bring in people from other states to see what they are doing. The Governor is invited to come for a reception to meet with our board chairs and CLEOs. Right now, it is unpredictable if we will have it or not due to COVID. Don asked if everyone would go to the chat box and put: 1-for going ahead with the conference; 2-doing the conference virtually or; 3-postponing it until next year sometime. We'll consider everyone's input and let you know what's been decided very soon.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next Governor's Council meeting is October 30, 2020.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:28 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Emrich*