

Metro South/West Workforce Board Youth Committee Draft Minutes November 16, 2023

Members present: Chair, Brandy DeBarge, Jennifer Jackson, Kevin Lopez

Members absent: Yemi Ajao, Nancy Houle, Nick Pavone Sasha Stadhard, Lexi Winter

Other: MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board Staff: Meghan Burke, Greg Bunn, Tricia Lucier, Sheniqua Rogers. Admin Consultant: Cindy Cedrone

Review of Agenda, Welcome

Brandy DeBarge called the meeting to order.

Approval of September 14, 2023 Minutes

Approval of September 14, 2023 minutes was tabled until the next meeting due to lack of quorum.

Youth Connections Brand Rollout

Greg Bunn reported that the Youth Connections Brand Rollout is in the soft launch phase. He said the brand was introduced at a meeting with the Framingham School Committee last week and will continue to be used within the community. A formal launch will be planned for the end of January/beginning of November, to be held at the Board office in Marlborough, with the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, marketing and facilitating the meeting, which will include a ribbon-cutting ceremony. He also reported that three vendor quotes have been received to update/separate out the website into three areas: MassHire Metro South/West Career Center, Metro South/West Workforce Board and Metro South/West Youth Connections. Greg said the target audience will be youth, educators, and businesses. Meghan Burke asked the members for “best practices” regarding how to stand-out when there is a culture shift. She noted the goal of the Youth Connections website is to be transactional vs stagnant and also asked the members to make a list of what they would like to see on the youth website. Brandy asked about also using social media to connect with youth. Meghan said that there are plans to start fresh with Youth Connections and update different avenues of social media.

Program Updates

Meghan reported that the three-year successful program, HSSIIEP (High School Senior Internship in Education Program), placing over 900 high school seniors in elementary school internships, has been “in review” from DESE so the program has not been able to be started this fiscal year. She noted that the schools are upset because they have done a lot of pre-planning, and because the program is on hold, it is hurting the relationship between the schools and the board. Brandy proposed the idea for a letter to be sent from the youth committee to the secretary of education and the commissioner. Meghan said that there was a possibility of funding the program through YouthWorks but noted that instead of being paid through stipends, the interns would all have to be put on payroll which is an admirative burden.

Tricia Lucier reported that the Framingham Young Adult Career Center office was up and running. She said there have been a lot of HiSET referrals from DTA so an “Information Session” is planned on November 29, with tutors on staff to help academically prepare the students. She said a possible “Bootcamp” may be set up for January; that a new HiSET instructor had just been hired; and there is still an opening for a Case Manager in Waltham. She said the successful SkillsBuild trades program was just completed. Tricia also said the policies for WIOA eligibility needed to be updated and she would draft an outline for the members to review at the next meeting. Meghan said she would do the same for the in-school eligibility.

Trade and Construction Month

Meghan Burke reported that a meeting is scheduled for next week to start planning for the events in month of April 2024.

Youth Success Stories

Meghan said the meetings would end with success stories. Brandy said her current YouthWorks intern has applied for early acceptance to the pre-med program at UConn. Kevin noted that he hired two YW interns who are planning to become teachers. Sheniqua said a YW intern had been planning to work at Dunkin Donuts but was hired by the Framingham School Department. Tricia said a person referred from DTA, with domestic and homeless issues had completed the CDL training, got his license and secured a position as a truck driver allowing him to find housing with his children. Jennifer Jackson said it was important to highlight the tenacity of students, and all agreed that mentorship is so important for students especially those who face obstacles.

Next Meetings

The next meetings will be a “Zoom-Only” meeting on Thursday, December 14, 2023, 10:00-11:00 a.m. and an in-person meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2024, 201 Boston Post Road West, Suite 301, Marlborough

Adjourn

Brandy asked for a motion to adjourn. Jennifer made a motion. Kevin seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.