

State Construction Craft Laborers Apprenticeship Advisory Committee Meeting

March 27, 2015

Laborers Training Center (Madison)
DeForest WI

Approved Minutes

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Bohne, Hunter	Stevens Construction--ABC
Burke, Daniel	Laborers' Local 464
Grohmann, Gert	AGC of Greater Milwaukee
Hoerke, Damien	McCabe Construction
Miller, Kent	WI Laborers
Neira, Anthony	Laborers' Local 113
Pratt, Dawn (Co-Chair)	Payne and Dolan
Schmitt, John (Co-Chair)	WI Laborers' District Council
Topp, John	ACEA
Zignego, Dan	Zignego Company--ABC

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Dehnhoff, Jeff	Laborers' Local 268
Grundman, Eric	Michels Corporation
Jensen, Clark	Laborers' Local 140
Marcelle, Tony	Laborers' Local 330
Ziegler, Craig	WI Laborers Apprenticeship & Training

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Berenthal, Jamie	WI Dept. of Workforce Development
Emrick, Leigh	ABC of Wisconsin
Johnson, Joshua	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Kraus, Diane	Youth Apprenticeship
Phillips, Amy	WI Dept. of Workforce Development
Schanke, Deb	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Wiatt, Ray	Laborers Apprenticeship
Zignego, Nathaniel	Zignego Company

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by John Schmidt, Committee Co-Chair, in conformance with the Wisconsin open meeting laws.
2. A sign-in sheet was circulated, and attendees introduced themselves.
3. The minutes of the October 9, 2014 meeting was approved as written.
4. **Guest Presentation**

Mr. Jamie Bernthal and Ms. Amy Phillips from the WI Dept. of Workforce Development Youth Apprenticeship Program, and Diane Kraus, School to Career Coordinator for Dane County School Consortium, presented an overview of youth apprenticeship and the Architecture & Construction Youth Apprenticeship program.

i. Overview

Youth apprenticeship is a statewide work-based learning initiative that offers high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to receive on-the-job learning in skilled occupations in 10 of 16 national career clusters. The goal of the program is to provide the students with the opportunity to explore skilled occupational areas while learning fundamental skills. The curriculum is available to all high schools across the state; to implement the program, a school must have a sufficient number of employer participants and an instructor certified through the NCCER.

The program contains two tracks, or "levels," Level 1 and Level 2. Students who take Level One must complete the following minimum requirements: all required skills; one pathway unit; two semesters of related instruction; and at least 450 work hours. Students who take Level Two must complete the following minimum requirements: all required skills for each pathway; two pathway units; four semesters of related instruction; and 900 work hours.

To officially participate in the program, the student must be employed by a sponsor, register with the Department of Workforce Development, and adhere to all work and job site rules of the employer. Each apprentice must have an on-site mentor available to guide the apprentice through workplace requirements and ensure safety is followed. Youth apprentices are evaluated by the employer three times a year.

The current completion rate for Level 1 students is 76%; the rate for Level 2 students is 81%. All graduates receive a Certificate of Occupational Proficiency, signed by the Workforce Development Secretary Newson. Many graduates receive an offer for continued employment from the sponsor; others enter registered apprenticeship with a different employer; and others move on to school or other employment.

The Dane County School Consortium works with 15 school districts outside of the Madison Metropolitan area. Each school has a Career Technical Education coordinator that works with each youth apprentice and actively recruits new students into the program.

ii. Architecture and Construction

The presenters distributed a guide to the Child Labor Laws for youth apprenticeship sponsors. The guide outlines which tools and equipment are allowed to be operated by youth under 16, youth over 16, and student learners.

Architecture and Construction youth apprentices must choose one of five paths: carpentry; masonry; mechanical/HVAC; sprinklerfitting; and plumbing. The first 12 of the 16 competencies in each path are identical, which were requested by industry sponsors to ensure that all youth apprentices learn foundational skills in construction, such as adhering to safety procedures, using hand and power tools, and reading blueprints. An apprentice in Level 2 can repeat a unit, but must learn a new competency in the second year.

The work hours must be paid and performed on a job site, and can be performed over the summer.

iii. Discussion

The committee suggested that the youth apprenticeship program might not be applicable to the construction craft laborer trade because the large majority of contractors that sponsor laborers work prevailing wage jobs, which require the worker to be at least 18 years of age.

Youth apprentices can be 18 years old, but likely not in time to complete the program requirements before graduating. Child Labor Laws contain a provision for student learners that permit students less than 18 years of age to use tools and equipment for no more than 5% of work content and under direct supervision.

The youth apprenticeship agreed that hiring youth apprentices might not be possible for all trades and employers. However, the staff finds it valuable to make aware and inform as many industry stakeholders as possible of the program and what it entails. It is very likely that skilled apprentices might receive applications from youth apprenticeship graduates in the future.

The committee asked how it could contact youth apprenticeship graduates, and suggested mailing informational packets on laborer apprenticeship programs to all high school consortiums included on the Youth Apprenticeship handout.

***Action:** The Youth Apprenticeship staff will research appropriate methods of informing youth apprentices of available registered apprenticeship program and informing registered apprenticeship stakeholders of youth apprenticeship graduates.*

The committee thanked the presenters for their informative and helpful discussion.

4. Old Business

a. Review follow-up items from previous meeting.

Owen Smith reported that all of the items from the previous meeting are listed as discussion or action items on the agenda.

b. Review roster.

The committee has two new members: Damien Hoernke of McCabe Construction is a new employer member; and Ken Miller of the District Council is a new employee member. The committee has one vacancy on the employer side, which will be filled by Associated Builders and Contractors before the fall meeting. Several members' current terms will expire this calendar year; Owen will ask whether they will renew via email after the meeting.

c. For action: proposed revisions to apprentice to journey worker ratio.

Owen Smith summarized that the committee revised its ratio in the summer of 2014, declined a motion in fall 2014 to revise the ratio further, but agreed to revisit the matter again at this meeting. The central issue is whether to lower the initial ratio from 1:3 to 1:2.

Proponents argued that the lower ratio would make the program accessible to small contractors that have no business capacity or business need to employ more than two journey workers. The current ratio has prevented these contractors from hiring additional apprentices, which the contractors fear may discourage applicants from the trade altogether. In addition, two journey workers can supervise one apprentice sufficiently; a third journey worker is not necessary. Opponents express concern that a lower ratio would have an adverse effect on the hiring of journey workers. In addition, seasonal hiring began only recently, so the committee has not had the opportunity to see whether the 1:3 ratio works.

A motion was made and seconded to revise the apprentice to journey worker ratio to 1:2 across the board.

Co-Chair Schmidt expressed concern that the vote should be postponed because two employee members whose feedback is critical to JAC members were absent. He requested additional time to consult with the absent members and suggested voting via conference call during the summer.

On behalf of the Bureau, Owen expressed concern that the absence of the two members was preventing a vote. This marks the second time the committee has postponed a vote until a specially called meeting. The voting items were identified on the agenda and the agenda was distributed in advance for the specific purpose of informing and preparing all stakeholders to vote at this meeting.

The Co-Chairs duly noted the Bureau's concern.

Action: *A motion was made to revise the ratio of apprentices to journey workers to 1:2 across the board. The motion was seconded, but did not pass due to lack of consensus.*

A general discussion followed on the next steps. State committees operate on consensus, not majority rule, which means all members must be able to live with the decision. In case such as this, in which a motion does not pass due to disagreement, the committee returns to discussion to determine whether an alternative could be reached that all members could live with.

A general discussion followed on an appropriate time to vote on the matter again. Suggestions included two weeks, 30 days, and summer. Members agreed that two weeks was too soon but summer was too late.

Action: *A motion was made, seconded and approved to hold a special conference call in the next 30 days to vote on the proposed revisions to the ratio again. The Bureau will email an availability survey to all members.*

c. For action: proposed revisions to Exhibit A

Owen summarized that the committee agreed by consensus to revise the list of required courses and electives for paid related instruction that is included in the Special Provisions section of the state Exhibit A. The committee had agreed that ABC and JAC representatives would submit individual proposals for a joint review. He asked members of each affiliation to present their proposals.

Members affiliated with ABC proposed striking the list from the Exhibit A because such content is more appropriate for the state standards.

A general discussion followed on the administrative purpose of the course list and the functions of the state standards and the Special Provisions section of the Exhibit A.

Action: a motion was approved to remove the course list from Special Provisions.

e. Apprenticeship Completion Award Program

Owen introduced ACAP, the WI Apprenticeship Summit and the American Apprenticeship Grants as three examples of the unprecedented regional and national support registered apprenticeship is receiving. He noted that ACAP is an excellent example of state support for apprenticeship, because the program was conceived by the state legislature and passed into law by Governor Walker.

Owen briefly reviewed the purpose and requirements of ACAP. The program reimburses apprentices, sponsors, and employers for tuition, books, and required materials for paid related instruction. An apprentice is eligible when he or she completes either the one-year calendar year of the contract start date or the entire apprenticeship program. The reimbursement(s) are awarded to the party or parties that incurred the costs. The sponsor can nominate their payment be designated to the training trust.

The report shows that the cost of related instruction is more expensive than previously thought. ACAP reimburses either \$250 or 25% of total costs up to \$1,000, so many apprentices submitted all of their paid related instruction costs for reimbursement. Consequently, the Bureau denied all requests for funds beyond the maximum reimbursement. As a result, the total for funds denied is much higher than the total for funds approved.

Owen noted that the program is included in the Governor's proposed budget, but it is not known whether it will pass, be modified, or be denied.

A general discussion followed on how ACAP benefitted the program. Co-Chair Pratt stated that she does not believe ACAP accomplished its goal; the maximum reimbursements were too small to significantly offset the cost of tuition.

f. WI Apprenticeship Summit

Continuing on the theme of unprecedented support for registered apprenticeship at the state level, Owen discussed the 2015 WI Apprenticeship Summit. He distributed a one-page summary of the participants and the resulting action plan.

Owen explained the background of the Summit. Amidst the unprecedented shortage of skilled workers and growing interest in registered apprenticeship among new economic sectors, new occupations, and from German companies within America, the Bureau wanted to ensure that potential changes to registered apprenticeship were steered by the Bureau, the Advisory Council, and sponsors rather than parties largely unfamiliar with apprenticeship.

Therefore, the Summit overarching design of the Summit was to have "thought leaders," sponsors and supporters of registered apprenticeship in Wisconsin listen to the latest research on apprenticeship and workforce development issues, and then discuss what improvements could be made to registered apprenticeship in Wisconsin.

The handout, Owen noted, conveys two significant outcomes of the Summit. First, the front page includes the impressive, comprehensive list of participants of participants at the meeting: all economic sectors, all labor affiliations, all educational partners, as well as the U.S. Dept. of Labor were represented. In addition, DWD Secretary Newson, DPI Superintendent Tony Evers attended most of the three days, which was a substantial commitment.

Second, the back page lists the comprehensive, proposed action plan of five categories with five items each. Owen noted the scope of action items, which ranges from new, innovative improvements, such as developing employer consortiums to conduct outreach, to enhanced delivery of existing products, such as more promoting Transition to Trainer to journey workers for heavily.

A general discussion followed on the action plan. Co-Chair Pratt, who attended the Summit, expressed how impressed she was with the participants and the commitment of all parties, especially DWD, to implement the suggestions. She believes that many of the action items will be addressed. Several other members commented on the benefits of exposing high school students to careers in the skilled trades, and expressed support for the action items that concern linking youth apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship.

g. American Apprenticeship Grants

A significant tool that the Bureau could use to implement the Summit Action Plan is the American Apprenticeship Grant, Owen continued. The grants are the prime example of national support for registered apprenticeship.

Owen noted that President Obama's administration released \$150 million to the U.S. Department of Labor to release in the form of competitive grants with a maximum award of \$5 million. The focus areas of the grant are launching apprenticeship models in new high-growth fields; aligning apprenticeship to pathways for further learning and career advancement; and scaling apprenticeship models that work.

The Bureau's application is title WAGE\$, which stands for the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Growth and Enhancement Strategies. WAGE\$ focuses on bridging youth apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, as well as expand readiness training for the underemployed and unemployed. The second focus is to expand apprenticeship into information technology and health care.

A general discussion followed on the grant objectives. The committee asked whether the grant would help existing programs. Owen noted that the grant funding would likely not go directly to existing apprenticeship programs, but be directed to workforce development boards to develop pipeline programs that would improve the level of foundational skills in applicants.

h. Other

No additional topics were raised.

6. New Business

a. BAS personnel update

Owen Smith reported that the Bureau hired three new Apprenticeship Training Representatives: Rob Ecker in Eau Claire; Tracy Jallah in Madison; and Joshua Johnson in Waukesha.

b. Applicant testing

Owen reported that the Department of Public Instruction mandated that all high school students must take the ACT in order to graduate, beginning in 2016. The ACT assesses students in many of the subject areas that local committees assess them in using Accuplacer or other tests, such as basic math and reading comprehension. Thus, in the future, local committees may receive many applicants that have been recently assessed in those areas, and could accept the ACT scores rather than re-test the applicant, thus saving a duplicative administrative procedure.

Therefore, the Bureau is asking each state construction committee whether it would like to amend

its standards to include ACT scores and determine a maximum timeframe in which the scores would be accepted, such as three years. Owen emphasized that including ACT scores would not replace current testing procedures; in fact, the current testing procedures would stay in place. Applicants with valid ACT scores would not have to be assessed again in those subjects; applicants without valid ACT scores would continue through the standards assessment procedures already in place.

A general discussion followed. The committee asked for a comparison of ACT and Accuplacer scores. The Bureau did not bring one intentionally to convey that not all decisions had to be made at one meeting. But the crosswalk is readily available through technical colleges, and the Bureau will bring one to the fall meeting. Representatives from ABC commented that they do not place a time limit on the date of the ACT scores; applicants could use them indefinitely. Representatives from the JAC commented that they would prefer a window of two years.

Action: a motion was approved to include ACT scores as an alternate form of testing in the state standards. The Bureau will follow up accordingly.

c. Other

Co-Chair Pratt asked the committee how long an apprentice can stay on the candidate list before being removed. She expressed concern that qualified apprentices remain on the list too long and unskilled workers are hired directly as journey workers. A general discussion followed on possible solutions, but the committee quickly agreed that the issue and potential solutions were appropriate for local hiring authorities, not the state committee.

7. Review of Program Participants

Program participants included 250 apprentices and 114 employers with a contract start date as of March 25, 2015. Associated Builders & Contractors noted that their total for female apprentices should be two, not one.

8. The next meeting will be a webinar to discuss and vote on the ratio. BAS will survey committee members for the best date.
9. The meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Owen Smith, BAS.