

State Electrical Construction Apprenticeship Advisory Committee

April 27, 2015

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Green Bay, WI

Approved Minutes

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Allen, Don (Co-Chair)	IBEW Local 158
Bzdawka, John	IBEW Local 494
Grundahl, Carol	IBEW Local 159
Habermehl, Sylvia	Habermehl Electric
O'Leary, Loyal (Co-Chair)	NECA-- WI Chapter
Pohlman, Mike	R.J. Nickles Electric Co.
Sokolik, Leo	IBEW Local 890
Steiner, Rick	Steiner Electric (ABC)
Walsh, John M.	IBEW Local 14
Young, Greg	IBEW Local 577

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Balthazor, Michael	Michaels Power
Kryzaniak, Rick	Faith Technologies (Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC))
Mielke, John	Associated Builders and Contractors
Miller, Dean	IBEW Local 388
Washebek, Dave	Lemberg Electric (NECA)

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Anhalt, Tim	NECA-IBEW Apprenticeship & Training
Cattelino, Mike	Fox Valley Technical College
Ecker, Rob	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Kiel, Todd	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Perkofski, Lisa	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Schumaker, Paul	Fox Valley Technical College
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Tourdot, Kelly	Associated Builders and Contractors
Tschillard, Clay	NECA-IBEW Apprenticeship & Training
Wagner, Mike	NECA-IBEW Apprenticeship & Training

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Don Allen, Committee Co-chair, in conformity with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
2. A roll call was conducted and a member sign-in sheet was circulated.
3. The committee reviewed the current roster for accuracy of contact information, soon-to-expire terms, vacancies, geographic representation, and industry representation. No updates were necessary.

4. **Old Business**

a. **Action:** *the draft minutes from the previous meeting were approved as written.*

b. **Review the follow-up items from the previous meeting:**

The Bureau posted links to DWD Youth Apprenticeship website and related documents on the state committee website.

Owen asked the state committee whether local committees or employers had expressed interest in youth apprenticeship as a result of the presentation by DWD Youth Apprenticeship staff at the last meeting. A member reported that the Dane County school district had expressed interest to local committee representatives, but noted that many contractors are concerned about liability insurance.

The Bureau's position on apprentices do not pass the licensing exam one year after their proposed completion date, but meet all other program requirements, is as follows: the local committee must make a recommendation to the Apprenticeship Training Representative; to the Bureau, a period of one year beyond the proposed completion date is sufficient to complete all requirements, and should be strongly enforced; the local committee can consider extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis, but should not do so liberally. The final decision is made by the ATR and the Bureau.

Owen reported that the Department of Safety and Professional Services was unable to attend the 2014 fall and 2015 spring meetings due to scheduling conflicts. The state committee again recommended that the Bureau write an official letter to DSPS that contains the committee's questions. A general discussion followed on the appropriate questions for the department. Recommended topics included increasing the availability of the licensing exam, and receiving notifications when an apprentice takes the exam and when an apprentice's license is cancelled.

Action: *Owen and Clay Tschillard will draft the letter, email it to the committee for input, and mail it to DSPS.*

c. **How is the administration of the electrical licensing requirements proceeding?**

Much of the previous discussion on questions to the Department of Safety and Public Services addressed this agenda item. However, members reiterated that several administrative processes, particularly the license exam application processes, are not aligned. For example, the local committees are not informed consistently of when apprentices take the journey worker license exam. In addition, members stated that many inspectors have not been checking for licenses regularly.

The item will be included on the fall agenda, too.

d. Apprenticeship Completion Award Program (ACAP)

Owen introduced ACAP, the WI Apprenticeship Summit and the American Apprenticeship Grants as three examples of unprecedented support for registered apprenticeship. ACAP is an excellent example of the strong support from the state legislature: ACAP was not created by the Bureau; it was created by the state legislature in 2013 and signed into law by Gov. Walker in 2014.

Owen reviewed the background of the ACAP program and distributed a summary of its performance statistics as of February 1, 2015. ACAP reimburses apprentices, sponsors and employers to be partially reimbursed for tuition, books and supplies required for paid related instruction. If the apprentice completes the one-year anniversary of his or her contract, the party or parties that incurred the costs can be reimbursed up to \$250. If the apprentice completes his or her entire apprenticeship program, the party or parties that incurred the costs can be reimbursed 25% of the total costs up to and including \$1,000. In both cases, if multiple parties request reimbursement, the reimbursements are deducted from a single total.

As of February 1, 2015, the Bureau had reimbursed a total of \$110,000 and has denied almost \$538,000 in reimbursement requests. Denied requests were either from an ineligible party, an ineligible expense, or an amount that exceeded the maximum reimbursement. The Bureau did not expect the denial amount to be so high, but the data demonstrates, in part, that costs for paid related instruction exceed the reimbursement allotments.

A general discussion followed on the costs of paid related instruction and the future of ACAP. The committee agreed that costs of paid related instruction are high and noted that ACAP is helpful to apprentices, particularly first-year apprentices. The committee asked whether ACAP will be discontinued or extended. The program is included in Governor Walker's proposed budget, but the budget has yet to be approved.

e. Wisconsin Apprenticeship Summit

Owen distributed a summary of the Summit purpose, participants and action plan. He noted that the list of participants proves that the Summit was another excellent example of state support, as well as national support, for registered apprenticeship.

He briefly reviewed the purpose and background of the Summit. Registered apprenticeship has been in the national and state spotlight in the past few years, from President Obama's State of the Union address to Governor Walker's support. Subsequently, many new industries and employers became interested in registered apprenticeship. The surge of interest had the potential to influence proposed changes to the program procedures or laws, many of which may have come from parties unfamiliar with registered apprenticeship. Therefore, to position itself as the driver of all potential changes, the Department of Workforce Development convened a three-day summit of thought leaders, researchers and apprenticeship sponsors to intentionally discuss potential changes to registered apprenticeship in Wisconsin. Participants included representatives of the Canadian registered apprenticeship program; John Ladd, the national administrator of registered apprenticeship at the U.S. Department of Labor; Tony Evers, State Superintendent; Secretary of Workforce Development Reggie Newsome; and labor and employer representatives from Wisconsin.

During the first day, national and international researchers presented research on or related to registered apprenticeship. During the second day, attendees discussed how the research might lead to potential improvements in the Wisconsin apprenticeship program. During the last day, the attendees finalized an action plan across five major categories:

- 1) Marketing, advocacy and outreach
- 2) Workforce and economic development systems and resource alignments
- 3) Employer and sponsor engagement
- 4) Clear and productive career pathway from K-12 to apprenticeship
- 5) Participant recruitment and retention

Owen acknowledged that the action plan is comprehensive and thorough, and therefore a lot to digest. He summarized that the Bureau is sharing the Summit summary with all stakeholders to emphasize two central points: a lot is happening in the policy arena to improve Wisconsin apprenticeship; and the participants represent a comprehensive cross-section of stakeholders.

A general discussion followed. Clay Tschillard attended the Summit, and shared that his experience was inspiring because the participants represented so many sectors and aspects of apprenticeship that he had not encountered before. He was particularly inspired by the emphasis on taking action. Clay noted that a quote that he shares often with colleagues: registered apprenticeship "is going to change with or without your input." He complemented the Bureau's efforts to gather the input and perspectives of all stakeholders.

The committee briefly discussed the need for reinstating career and technical education curriculum in high schools and methods of raising the awareness of skilled trades careers among parents and K-12 staff. The committee expressed support for the related items on the Summit action plan. In addition, the committee noted the important role the Department of Public Instruction played in distributing apprenticeship outreach information to staff. The Apprenticeship Awareness Toolkit, promoted by DPI employee and Advisory Council member Brett Kindred, was email blasted to all K-12 staff.

f. American Apprenticeship Grants

The Bureau strategized that many items on the Summit action plan may be funded by an American Apprenticeship Grant, Owen continued. The grants are the primary example of unprecedented national support for registered apprenticeship. Back in 2014, President Obama started the national discussion on registered apprenticeship when his administration announced it would invest \$100 million into registered apprenticeship in the form of competitive grants to be issued by the Department of Labor.

The grant announcement was released in late fall of 2014. The Bureau's application is titled, "Wisconsin Apprenticeship Growth and Enhancement Strategies," or "WAGE\$" for short. Prior to the grant announcement, the Bureau convened multiple focus groups of stakeholders to learn which gaps they perceive in Wisconsin apprenticeship and how the grant could help. Individual focus groups were held for construction, manufacturing, workforce development boards, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the Bureau apprenticeship training representatives.

The focus groups arrived at three key strategies:

- 1) Increase the pipeline of qualified applicants into registered apprenticeship from both the K-12 system and under and unemployed individuals, and position apprenticeship as an equally valid and profitable career option as a four-year degree program and the military. The strategy also includes efforts to prepare unemployed and underemployed individuals with skills necessary to successfully apply for a registered apprenticeship. Many similar programs operate in the southern part of the state, especially Milwaukee.

- 2) Efforts within the K-12 system would focus on bridging the youth apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs. The programs have similar components and are both administered by DWD, which creates ease of working.
- 3) The third strategy is to expand registered apprenticeship into new occupational areas, such as health care and information technology. These trades are involved in H1B grants, which train American workers in high-demand skills using fees paid by employers that imported workers with those skills.

A general discussion followed on the grant timeline and objectives. The Bureau does not know when the grant awards will be announced. The grant funding will not be used to directly enhance existing programs, like the SAGE grant did by providing equipment. Rather, the grant will benefit existing programs indirectly by funding curriculum development for pipeline programs, such as youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship readiness programs.

g. Other

No additional topics were discussed.

5. New Business

a. BAS Personnel Update

Owen reported that the Bureau hired three new Apprenticeship Training Representatives. Rob Ecker will serve the Eau Claire area. Tracy Jallah will serve the Madison area. Joshua Johnson will serve the Waukesha area.

b. For action: proposed inclusion of ACT scores in applicant testing requirements

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 in which local committees assess them using the Accuplacer or other tests, such as basic math and reading comprehension. In the future, local committees may receive many applicants that have been assessed recently. Rather than re-test the applicants in the same subject matters, local committees could accept the ACT scores and save 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. On the contrary, 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 assessment procedures already in place.

Owen added that the Bureau intentionally did not bring comparison reports between the ACT and other assessment tools, because the Bureau is gauging industry support. If the state committee supports including ACT scores, then the Bureau will bring detailed comparisons to the fall meeting.

A general discussion followed. Opponents argued that many applicant tests for the occupation are proprietary and assess skills beyond basic math and reading. Other opponents argued that including ACT scores would create a systemic bias against underserved high school students or applicants that earned a high school equivalency without taking the ACT. Owen reiterated that the ACT will be

mandatory for all high school students in 2016 and applicants without an ACT score would follow the trade's current assessment procedures; thus, they would not miss an opportunity.

***Action:** a motion to support including the ACT in the applicant testing procedures was made but was not approved due to lack of consensus.*

c. For action: minimum qualifications for employers in the state standards

Owen informed the committee that the Bureau is seeking its advice on whether to allow two non-contractors (a manufacturer and a hospital) to register construction electrician apprentices, if all other conditions are met. The Bureau has received several requests from the entities over the past months. In both cases, the employer has a master electrician on staff and would be performing construction at the facilities. However, the committee's state standards currently prohibit non-contractors from sponsoring apprentices.

A general discussion followed immediately. Most members opposed allowing the employers to register. They argued primarily that non-contractors do not perform enough construction work to train the apprentices to a sufficient extent that they would be useful to contractors. In addition, members expressed concern that they did not receive this information in advance and were being asked to make a decision on the spot. Owen acknowledged that the information was compiled by the Bureaus only days before the meeting, and offered that the decision could be postponed for a webinar or for the fall meeting.

The committee did not support extended the discussion.

***Action:** a motion to maintain the current minimum qualifications for sponsors was approved. The current standards state all sponsors must be "contractors;" therefore, the requests from non-contractors were denied.*

d. Other

Clay Tschillard recommended that several committee members and consultants convene to revise the Construction Electrician brochure produced by the Bureau.

***Action:** a motion was approved to revise the booklet. The Bureau will schedule a meeting with Clay, Kelly Tourdot, Loyal O'Leary, and Tim Allen.*

6. WTCS Update

Nancy Nakkoul introduced herself and informed the committee that she had been hired into the Education Director position previously held by Marge Wood.

Nancy reported that the WTCS is a post-secondary education partner with a grant for women in apprenticeship in non-traditional occupations, led by the Chicago Women in the Trades. In addition, the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation awarded 170 scholarships to apprentices at the end of January. The WTCS will also conduct technical skills attainment projects (TSAs) for 15-20 trades next year. TSAs identify measurable performance outcomes for paid related instruction, and include a review of the occupation's curriculum standards model.

7. Review the program participants.

Program participants included 1061 apprentices and 268 employers with a contract in active or unassigned status on April 20, 2015. The current totals are only slightly less than the annual totals from 2014, which means the 2015 annual totals could be the largest since 2011.

A member commented that women and minorities are represented poorly in the trade. Other members replied that women and minority representation has historically been high in metropolitan areas and unrepresentative outside of metropolitan areas. In addition, retention is an ongoing issue in registered apprenticeship and one that crosses over into many areas, such as the cost of tuition for paid related instruction.

8. The next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2015, at Moraine Park Technical College in West Bend, at 09:30 a.m.
9. The committee adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Follow-Up Items

- i. BAS and Clay will mail a letter with the committee's questions to DSPS.
- ii. BAS, Clay, Kelly, Loyal and Tim will revise the outreach booklet.

Submitted by Owen Smith, Program and Policy Analyst