

State Plumbing Apprenticeship Advisory Committee Minutes

May 13, 2015

Madison Area Technical College
Commercial Avenue Campus
Madison, WI

Draft Minutes

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Balke, Brian	EGL Mechanical
Breitlow, Steve	UA Plumbers Local 75
Brenner, Joseph	J.F. Ahern Company
Busch, Michael	UA Plumbers Local 75
Callies, Dan	Oak Creek Plumbing
Cartagena, Alaina	UA Plumbers Local 75
Clark, Roger	Plumbers Local 118
De Young, Carol	Countryside Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
Gain, Greg	United Mechanical
House, Mike	UA Plumbers Local 75
Huiting, Mark	Bassett Mechanical, Inc.
Pertzborn, Jesse	H.J. Pertzborn Plumbing & Fire Protection
Rozga, Bill	Rozga Plumbing & Heating Corporation
Schedler, Keith	Don's Plumbing Service, Inc.

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Flory, Tyler	Plumbers & Fitters Local 434
Ignatowski, Chris	Plumbers & Fitters Local 434
Jones, David (Co-Chair)	Dave Jones Inc.
Scherer, Michael	Ideal Plumbing & Heating

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Ahmad, Hafeezah	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Cappetta, Darrel	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Cook, Jim	Milwaukee Area Technical College
Emrick, Leigh	Associated Builders and Contractors

Johnson, Allan	Plumbers Local 118
Korn, Gary	UA Local 434
Nielson, Julie	Plumbers Local 118
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Walsh, Julie	Madison Assoc. of Plumbing Contractors
Phillips, Amy	DWD Youth Apprenticeship
Bernthal, Jamie	DWD Youth Apprenticeship
Hamilton, Scott	ASSE International
Wenger, Scott	UA Local 400
Nakkoul, Nancy	WTCS
Montgomery, Mark	WCTC

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1. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Co-Chair Mike House, in conformity with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
 2. Roll call was conducted, and sign-in sheets were circulated.
 3. The committee reviewed the current roster. One new Employer member is needed. The Bureau will review the representation of contractor associations and geographic areas among the Employer members, and request an appropriate nomination.

4. Old Business

a. Review the follow-up items from the previous meeting:

The minutes were approved as written. The proposed revisions to the Exhibit A were incorporated. The committee expressed its concern that JACs need to receive notices from the technical colleges as to whether apprentices passed or failed the review course. The Water Quality Association was approved to be the third-party proctor of the licensing exam for Restricted Appliances.

b. Guest Presentation: "The Architecture and Construction Youth Apprenticeship"

Amy Phillips and Jamie Bernthal presented a brief overview of the history and structure of Wisconsin's youth apprenticeship program and then discussed the Architecture and Construction youth apprenticeship program and its competency checklist.

i. Overview

Youth Apprenticeship programs provide participants with broad exposure to the fundamental skills with a group of related occupations, or career clusters, such as "Agriculture." YA programs are either one year (450 hours) or two years (900 hours) in length. Students learn on-the-job and are paid, and attend related instruction at their high school, a local technical college, or both. .

The Architecture and Construction youth apprenticeship includes five focus areas: plumbing; electrical; carpentry; masonry; and HVAC. Each focus area contains 16 competencies; the first 12 are identical across all focus areas, and address foundational competencies across construction occupations, such as wearing personal protective equipment and reading blueprints.

ii. Discussion

Karen emphasized that youth apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship are two separate programs that DWD has mandated be linked so that youth apprenticeship graduates can transition smoothly into a registered apprenticeship program. The efforts are being overseen by the Career Pathway Subcommittee of the WI Advisory Council. The youth apprenticeship staff does not receive regular funding to update curriculum, so if the Bureau is awarded an American Apprenticeship Grant, it may allocate some funding to update the curriculum for the construction youth apprenticeship. Several registered apprenticeship sponsors have expressed concern that they were not involved in the development of the construction youth apprenticeship.

The committee quickly emphasized that plumbing is a licensed occupation and expressed concern that the program competencies specific to plumbing should not include work that requires the license. The presenters ensured the committee that the required competencies were reviewed and approved by industry focus groups, DWD Equal Rights, and DWD Child Labor Law experts. In addition, state child labor laws require each youth apprentice to be assigned an on-site mentor who ensures that the youth apprentice performs legal work safely.

A lengthy question and answer session followed.

- *How are youth apprenticeship employers selected?*
Participating employers are recruited by the regional coordinator and screened for their ability to provide all necessary training. Employers that participate exhibit a strong interest in giving back to the community or developing a pipeline program. It is not a requirement for youth apprenticeship employers to also sponsor a registered apprentice. The employers are under no obligation to sponsor the apprentice or hire him or her after graduation.
- *How are youth apprenticeship applicants recruited?*
Students are recruited into the youth apprenticeship program by the regional coordinator based on their interest, aptitude, and academic performance. The applicants are then interviewed by employers.
- *Is the employer required to have a master plumber, as required in the registered apprenticeship program?*
Youth apprentice employers are not required to employ a master plumber at this time. However, the presenters agreed that this is a good example of a potential improvement to their standards.
- *What is a typical day for a youth apprentice?*
Youth apprentices typically take regular classes until 2:00 p.m., and then go to work at the employer, or work in the morning before class. A youth apprentice typically works for 10-15 hours per week during the school year or summer.

- *Do any schools in Milwaukee offer youth apprenticeship programs?*
Currently, no schools in Milwaukee offer the Architecture & Construction program, but many schools offer other youth apprenticeship. However, employer interest is increasing, and some companies are in discussing whether to partner and rotate youth apprentices between the companies.

A member summarized that the ultimate concern of the state committee is that the youth apprenticeship would prepare the students poorly; the graduates would not get into a registered apprenticeship; and as a result, the registered apprenticeship program would receive a bad image.

Karen acknowledged the committee's concern over the reputation of its program, and strongly encouraged members to view youth apprenticeship as valuable exposure to the work of the skilled trades, especially given the lack of career and technical education in high schools, rather than view the purpose of youth apprenticeship as producing fully-fledged skilled workers.

Leigh Emrick commented that at a recent conference a representative of an automotive industry youth apprenticeship program commented that the construction industry was losing out by not participating in youth apprenticeship, because most of the automotive youth apprentices were originally interested in construction, but no program was available.

The committee stated that it is not opposed to expose high school students to the trade, but it is concerned about working high school students in hazardous environments, such as a construction job site. In contrast, construction employers may be far more comfortable working the students in the shop, which has many less hazards. Karen replied that the students need to be exposed to the job site, or else they will suffer quite a culture shock once they become a registered apprentice.

The committee concluded by suggesting to the DWD Youth Apprenticeship staff that they ensure that employers who train youth apprentices in plumbing have a licensed master plumber on staff.

The presenters thanked the state committee and concluded by stating they are excited to be one of the pipeline programs into registered apprenticeship.

c. Veterans in Piping

Darrell Capetta reported that the second class has graduated the first phase of the program, classroom training, and is currently in the second phase, on-the-job training. All participants except one were placed with an employer. He is currently recruiting for the third class. The first round of interviews will occur next week. Interest in the program among veterans is high.

d. Apprenticeship Completion Award Program

The Bureau distributed statistics on reimbursement requests submitted, accepted, and denied through April 2015. Karen reported that the statistics demonstrate that the cost of paid related instruction is much greater than the Bureau anticipated: the total dollar amount of denied requests is much greater than the total dollar amount of accepted requests. The primary reason is that many apprentices submitted all of their costs for reimbursement, including ineligible costs and costs that exceeded the maximum reimbursement. This, however, showed the total cost that apprentices pay for related instruction. ACAP was not intended to reimburse all costs of instruction, but nonetheless, if the program is considered for renewal, the high financial costs may influence the Bureau to advocate for a greater maximum reimbursement.

e. WI Apprenticeship Summit

Karen summarized that the primary purpose of January's WI Apprenticeship Summit was to position registered apprenticeship stakeholders in the driver's seat of any potential changes to registered apprenticeship policies and regulations that may occur as a result of the unprecedented exposure and support registered apprenticeship is receiving. She briefly reviewed the structure, participants, and resulting action plan. She concluded by stating that much in the works at the policy level, so the Bureau will continue to update the state committees, and might call upon members for assistance with implementing action items.

f. American Apprenticeship Grant (WAGE\$)

Karen explained that many action items from the Summit may be funded by an American Apprenticeship Grant, for which the Bureau has applied. The objectives of the grants are to expand registered apprenticeship into new sectors of the economy and increase the pool of qualified applicants to registered apprenticeship programs. The maximum award is \$5 million.

The Bureau's application is titled, "WAGE\$," which stands for the Wisconsin Apprenticeship Growth and Enhancement Strategies. Its primary focus is increasing the pool of qualified applicants by bridging youth apprenticeship and related registered apprenticeship programs through credit and expanding readiness training for the underemployed and unemployed. Its second focus is expanding registered apprenticeship into new economic sectors, such as information technology and health care.

The Bureau submitted its application on April 30 and does not know when the grants will be awarded. The maximum grant award is \$5 million. The grant would last five years. The Bureau would commit to training 1,000 additional apprentices. Karen emphasized that WAGE\$'s objectives mean that the funding will not be used to upgrade existing apprenticeship programs.

A general discussion followed on the grant objectives, the qualifications of the average applicant, and the high cancellation rates of women and minorities. The committee agreed strongly with the grant objectives, and concurs that many applicants lack foundational skills, such as proficiency with basic hand and power tools. However, the committee cautioned that the skilled trades are misperceived as a career option for individuals who "aren't good enough" to go to college. The committee added that the grant efforts may eventually increase the percentage of women and minority apprentices, who typically have higher cancellation rates.

g. Other

Karen suggested that the state committee revisit its credit allowances at the fall meeting. For example, the committee had agreed to up to 500 hours of credit for on-the-job learning.

Action: the Bureau will add a "review of credit allowances" to the agenda for the fall meeting.

5. New Business

a. BAS personnel update

The Bureau reported that it hired three new Apprenticeship Training Representatives: Joshua Johnson will serve the Waukesha area; Tracy Jallah will serve the Madison area; and Rob Eckert will serve the Eau Claire area.

b. For action: should apprentices that pass the review course receive credit?

Karen reported that some apprentices are pretending to take the online version of the Plumbing Review Course. The course is suggested for all apprentices, but some local committees go beyond and require the apprentice to take it and complete it. Karen asked whether the state committee preferred to require the course and, if so, give credit for successful completion. The committee preferred to see completion data before deciding.

***Action:** the Bureau will research completion data on the 54-hour course. The state committee will vote on all proposed revisions, including the Exhibit A, at the fall meeting.*

c. For Action: should ACT scores be included in applicant testing procedures?

Karen 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 the same subjects as the Accuplacer: reading, arithmetic, and basic algebra. Therefore, more and more graduates will apply to the trades having been recently assessed by the ACT. Local committees could avoid a duplicate administrative procedure by accepting the ACT scores rather than re-assessing the applicant via the Accuplacer.

Therefore, the Bureau is recommending to each state construction committee that it amend its applicant testing procedures to include scores from the ACT. Current assessment procedures would remain in place, unaffected. The Bureau also recommends that the state construction committees establish the maximum timeframe for acceptable scores, such as three or five years. Using this approach, applicants with recent ACT scores would bypass the current assessment and applicants without recent ACT scores would take current assessment.

A general discussion followed. The committee expressed support for including ACT scores in order to prepare itself for future applicants and for keeping the current assessments in place. The committee stated that it preferred to review a comparison of ACT and Accuplacer scores before discussing the recommendation further.

***Action:** the Bureau will bring a crosswalk of ACT and Accuplacer scores to the fall meeting.*

d. Other

Al Johnson reported an incident in which an apprentice allowed his or her license to expire and then wanted to receive credit for work performed in the meantime. The incident demonstrates that the state standards neither require local committees to meet in-person with the apprentices annually nor verify that they hold current licenses. Rather, the state standards require local committees to review and evaluate the apprentice's progress at a minimum of two times during the term of the contract and prior to recommending completion to the Bureau.

Al suggested that the state committee discuss whether to make two revisions to the state standards: require local committees to review and evaluate apprentices' progress in-person a minimum of once a year; and require as part of the review that local committees verify whether the apprentices hold valid licenses.

***Action:** a discussion on whether to require local committees to review apprentices in-person annually and verify their licenses will be added to the fall agenda.*

6. WTCS Update

Nancy Nakkoul reported that 100 apprentices received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Great Lakes Higher Education scholarship fund, a significant increase over the 20 recipients in the pilot program. Ten of the 100 recipients were either maintenance mechanics or millwrights.

Financial aid rules have been reexamined and expanded to apply to registered apprenticeship. Although many apprentices do not earn enough credits to qualify, some apprentices in longer programs may earn sufficient credit to qualify for financial aid. The issue is pertinent to local districts, so they will conduct educational and outreach efforts to potential apprentices rather than have the Bureau provide technical assistance.

The WTCS is a postsecondary education partner with a grant for women in apprenticeship in non-traditional occupations, led by the Chicago Women in the Trades.

7. Review the program participants.

As of May 13, 2015, active participants included 570 apprentices and 323 employers with a contract in active or unassigned.

The a representative from the Milwaukee JAC noted that the report inaccurately lists the committee as having 20 minority apprentices.

Action: *the Bureau will review the data and fix any discrepancies.*

- 8. The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 21, at Madison Area Technical College in Madison.
- 9. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Follow-up Items

- i. The Bureau will review the minority data for the Milwaukee JAC.*
- ii. The Bureau will review the available data on the 54-hour review course.*
- iii. The Bureau will add a review of credit allowances to the fall agenda.*
- iv. The Bureau will add a review of local committee duties to the fall agenda.*
- v. The Bureau will bring a crosswalk of ACT and Accuplacer scores to the fall meeting.*

*Submitted by Hafeezah Ahmad and Owen Smith,
Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards*