

# Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council

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**MINUTES**

**Thursday, March 11, 2021**

**1:00-3:30pm**

**Virtual Meeting via Webex**

Council Members present:

|   |                      |   |               |   |                      |    |                     |
|---|----------------------|---|---------------|---|----------------------|----|---------------------|
|   | Kevin Berhardt       | X | Tom Gillis    |   | Sen. Howard Marklein | X  | Sec. Randy Romanski |
| X | Gary Besaw           | X | Bob Hagenow   | X | Dr. Susan May        | X  | John Rosenow        |
| X | Gwendolyn Boettcher  | X | Erik Huschitt |   | Shelly Mayer         | X  | Jill Runde          |
| X | Greg Cisewski        | X | Pete Kondrup  | X | Rep. Loren Oldenburg | X  | Sara Schoenborn     |
|   | Sen. Alberta Darling | X | Corey Kuchta  | X | Kristin Olson        | X  | Nick Stadnyk        |
| X | Jeff Edgar           | X | Larry Lee     | X | Paul Palmby          | ** | Rep. Gary Tauchen   |
| X | Jeff Eide            | X | Miranda Leis  | X | Sec. Amy Pechacek    | X  | Sharon Wendt        |
| X | Monica Gahan         | X | Betsy Leonard |   | Pam Porter           |    |                     |
| X | Dale Gallenberg      |   | Lynn Maki     | * | Sam Ridders          |    |                     |

Staff present: Jenifer Cole, DWD; Ashley Andre, DATCP, Grace Atherton, DATCP; \*Kietra Olson, WEDC (surrogate for Sam Ridders); \*\*Craig Arrowood (surrogate for Rep. Tauchen)

Public present: Jeff Hicken, DPI – Presenter; Britta Rottering;

**1. Call to Order and Welcome** Amy Pechacek, DWD Secretary-designee

Sec. Pechacek called the meeting to order at 1:03pm and welcomed the Council members. Provide a brief introduction of her work and experience.

**2. Introductory Remarks and Governor's Budget Items** Amy Pechacek, DWD Secretary-designee  
Randy Romanski, DATCP Secretary-designee

Sec. Pechacek provided a brief presentation highlighting provisions in Governor Evers' 2021-2023 Executive Budget proposal that impact the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and other key provisions that intersect with agricultural education and workforce development. Presentation slides provided with meeting materials.

Sec. Romanski highlighted proposed provisions of the Governor's budget that impact the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and related to agriculture, particularly the programs that may connect with education or workforce development.

**3. Roll Call and Self-Introductions** All

All Council members introduced themselves, sharing their names, organization or agency they represent, and their connection to the work of the Council.

**4. Review and Approval of Minutes from September 9, 2020 Meeting** All

Motion to approved minutes – Schoenborn; second – Palmby; minutes approved unanimously.

**5. Recap of Statutory Charge of Council**

Jenifer Cole, DWD Legislative Liaison

The Council is required to identify an Executive committee, which must consist of the Secretaries (or their designees) of DATCP and DWD and the Superintendent (or their designee) of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The executive committee must also include a majority of Council members that are not state employees; therefore, the committee must consist of the three agency leaders and at least four private sector members.

While not statutorily required, it was proposed at the September 2020 meeting that the Council elect a chair to lead the executive committee and overall Council proceedings.

**6. Council Discussion of Administrative Matters**

All

**a. Election of Chair** - To elect a chair, Cole facilitated the Council vote. The results were as follows:

- i. Schoenborn self-nominated.
- ii. Cole opened the floor for additional nominations.
- iii. Seeing none, Hagenow moved to close nominations for chair and moved to approve Schoenborn as Chair; second – Huschitt.
- iv. Schoenborn elected as chair unanimously.

**b. Executive Committee** – To elect private sector executive committee members, Cole facilitated the Council vote. The results were as follows:

- i. Schoenborn nominated Palmby, Huschitt, and Boettcher.
- ii. All accepted the nominations.
- iii. Edgar self-nominated.
- iv. Palmby nominated a representative from the Tech College system; Leonard accepted the nominations.
- v. Schoenborn moved to approve Palmby; second – Leonard; approved unanimously.
- vi. Schoenborn moved to approve Huschitt; second – Kuchta; approved unanimously.
- vii. Schoenborn moved to approve Boettcher; second – Gillis; approved unanimously.
- viii. Sec. Pechacek moved to approve Edgar; second – Palmby; approved unanimously.
- ix. Palmby moved to approve Leonard; second Kuchta; approved unanimously.

**7. Presentation on Agricultural Education at the K-12 Level**

Jeff Hicken, DPI Education Consultant for Agriculture Education and FFA

Hicken provided a presentation about the status of Wisconsin agriculture, food and natural resource education and the Wisconsin Association of FFA. Shared mission of agricultural education in Wisconsin – to prepare students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems. DPI wants to assist the Council with building regional agricultural career pathways. Presentation slides provided with meeting materials.

**8. Report Outs from K-12 Affiliated Council Members**

Council members that represent K-12 education provided report out on on what their schools or organizations are doing to connect youth to agricultural education or any programs related to ag ed/ag workforce development.

**Gwendolyn Boettcher, DeForest School District** – With quick growth in the school district, DeForest

has three full-time Ag teachers and has seen growth in the program. However, can't serve all interested students because demand is greater than spots available. One of the biggest goals of the program is to expand agricultural literacy to build knowledge in students not necessarily engaged with farming outside of school. (Of 345 students in the program, six live on farms.) Other program highlights include:

- Incorporation of science base in courses.
- Work on this begins with students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and builds ag education pipeline through secondary education and encourages continuation in post-secondary ed.
- Engages FFA alumni to help recruit and retain students.
- Built a new 2400 square foot greenhouse.
- Moving towards farm to table, with urban focus, to connect ag with school meal program through hydroponics and aquaponics.
- Raise fish for students' meals.
- Works to bridging the urban and rural experience.

**Monica Gahan, Vincent HS of Agricultural Sciences** – Vincent provides agricultural education programming in a very urban environment on the north side of Milwaukee. Students come from all over the city to attend, and program and facilities include:

- Farm to field to fork emphasis.
- Barn with horses, cattle, goats, ducks, sheep, etc. on site.
- Large garden and greenhouses
- Over the past year, 2,000 trees were planted to start a forest.
- Six pathways: Animal Science, Ag Business, Environmental Science, Horticulture Science, Food Science, and Culinary Arts with six ag teachers and a culinary teacher.
- Café on site.
- Field trips, showing at State Fair, national FFA convention.

All students take an ag class and go through all six of the pathways during first. Students determine pathway for next three years, culminating with a senior capstone project. Milwaukee Public Schools is working to develop feeder schools to create ag focused elementary and middle schools. Students are encouraged to take on internships, apprenticeships, and camps.

**Jeff Eide, Blair-Taylor School District** – Education systems need to foster the development of future teachers. There is a need for recruitment and retention of quality educators. The goal needs to be to develop not only the industry career pipeline, but also the educator pipeline.

**Britta Rottering** – Within career and technical education programs, works to get students engaged and how to double major in industry specific areas and education. Blair-Taylor and other western Wisconsin districts are focused on:

- Early immersion, even down to 4-K.
- Older students share activities down into elementary programs.
- Career pathways leading to capstone, including connection to other opportunities in other districts.
- FFA imbedded in students' lives and helps with success in getting involved. (It's about providing opportunities to students that did not grow up with a connection to ag.
- Career exploration through guest speaker panels.

**Jill Runde, McFarland School District** – Opportunity for improvement in McFarland. Suburban school without a lot of acres. Ag education focuses on:

- Field trips and environmental science for elementary.
- Outdoor education (camps) for 6<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Career pathway exploration, tech ed, and food and family science classes for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Biotech courses, environmental sciences, small and large animal and landscaping apprenticeships, and culinary arts for high school.

The main focus in McFarland has been tech ed (welding, automotive), but would like to build more relationships with natural resource management (state parks).

**Bob Hagenow, Rio Community School Board** – Rio schools have a donated school forest with amenities that connects students with the outdoors. Award winning teacher and school has brought in curriculum that is connected to agricultural education. Largest extra-curricular program is FFA, and board understands the value of the supplemental education that helps bridge the gap to the community and ag industry.

## 9. Wrap-up

Jenifer Cole, DWD Legislative Liaison

Cole reviewed ideas that the Council discussed in 2020 to inform next meeting, specifically, now that the Council has heard some points about K-12 education, the Council could include presentations and discussion about post-secondary education and then the bridge and connection to entering the workforce.

Schoenborn discussed possible agenda topics for next meeting including setting a renewed vision for the council, setting goals, and beginning to develop Council bylaws.

Besaw would like the Council to know that tribal knowledge of food sovereignty, forestry, and building green economies to grow foods can be a resource, as well as the tapping into the capacity of the tribal colleges. Consider looking at ways to create FFA and ag education pathways for tribal colleges.

Sec. Pechacek and Sec. Romanski provided closing remarks.

## 10. Adjournment – 3:29pm