



## ***Joint Newark & Essex County Business and Economic Development Committee***

Essex County College- Training Inc.  
Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 9:00 am  
Meeting Minutes

### **Attendees:**

Jasmyne Beckford, Joyce Bryant, Mitch Cahn, Ida Chimbay, Evanthia Corrado, Jerrah Crowder, Barbara George-Johnson, Jonathan Kobza, Davetta Lane, Michael A. Marchetti, Fred Murphy, Amanze Okere, Janine Schaeffer, Bhavna Tailor, Chike Uzoka, Raymond Vaccari and Shanequa Wilson.

### **Meeting Called to Order: Chairperson Mitch Cahn**

Mitch called the meeting to order. A roundtable roll call was conducted to introduce all meeting attendees. August 24, 2017 minutes was approved by Bhavna Tailor and seconded by Jonathan Kobza.

### **Update: Donald M. Payne Sr. Vocational Technical School- Chairperson, Mitch Cahn**

Mitch advised the institution is a merger of multiple smaller vocational technical schools. The institution will be ready for the next school year; the curriculum is posted online which lacks manufacturing courses, however, the institution is open to suggestions to widen their curriculum. Mitch advised that for the February meeting he will try to get a representative from the Donald M. Payne Sr. Vocational Technical School to our meeting so he or she may hear the committee's suggestions and difficulties when trying to fill positions that applicants are not trained in.

### **Work Readiness & Committee's Mission- Chairperson, Mitch Cahn**

Mitch advised the committee's mission is focused on three areas. 1<sup>st</sup> area focuses on taking the bundle of grants, incentives, programs and services available to employers that hire Newark and Essex County residents and making it easily accessible online. 2<sup>nd</sup> area focuses on *Work Readiness Credential*, which will allow employers to have a better way to determine which job applicants are deemed *Work Ready* by a *Credentialing Authority* which does not currently exist. This is separate from the idea of training our residents to become *Work Ready*. 3<sup>rd</sup> and final area is to work with Career Connections to help improve the usage of Career Connections as there is a disconnect between job applicants and job postings.

Mitch advised in regards to Work Readiness he has spoken to representatives from New Jersey Business and Industry Association and their main focus is *Work Readiness Training* as opposed to having some sort of *credential*. Mitch advised the New Jersey Business and Industry Association is one stakeholder representing business and industry. New Jersey Business and Industry Association have numerous stakeholders such as: education (public schools), employers (NJBIA), government (state representatives), higher education (colleges), local workforce (SETC & Department of Labor) and organized labor (Labor Union) which all worked together to craft an extensive plan about how to prepare students as early as middle school through high school to have work readiness included in their curriculum for all public schools. Mitch provide the committee with the CCSSO Task Force Recommendation to Improve Career Readiness handout of the above mentioned plan that shows three recommendations along with the eleven steps within the three recommendations the association is focusing on bringing work readiness to public schools.

**CCSSO Task Force Recommendations to Improve Career Readiness can be found at <https://www.ccsso.org/resource-library/opportunities-and-options-making-career-preparation-work-students>**

**Recommendations and steps can be found on page 4 of the link provided above.**

Mitch advised he invited representatives from New Jersey Business and Industry Association to the 1/4/18 meeting.

The New Jersey Business and Industry Association have accomplished four major tasks:

1. They got the Department of Education to require local schools to build a curriculum around career readiness. Their guidelines involve achievement and foundation skills. They did not come up with a curriculum, but they did bring it to the attention of the public schools. There has not been any enforcement, however, it is a start and some schools have already started incorporating it in their curriculum.
2. They enforced soft skills training in every Department of Labor training grant.
3. They got Labor Unions and their apprenticeship programs to include soft skills training grants.
4. 65/25 program was developed. (65% of NJ residents will have some type of credential by 2025; high school degree or any form of work credential)

The New Jersey Business Association and Industry Association initially discussed having a Work Readiness Credential but, they didn't believe it was worth the money or effort because in order for it to work employers would have to accept it. Mitch proposed Work Readiness Credential can be piloted locally and then expand out to other cities. This Credentialing Program will target anyone high school and above, enable people who would pass the credentialing program or just get a credential without going to training to enable them to go to an employer and provide proof of soft skills knowledge which is one the biggest concern from employers. This Credentialing Program would aid people as it would proof they are soft skilled even though

they did not graduate college and Newark 2020 would be an initiative that can incorporate this because employers would know who to hire.

Evanthia proposed Newark Beth Israel be used as a model to pilot this Credential. Newark Beth Israel used the National Work Readiness Credential which was a huge success. Mitch and Shanequa emphasized that it would be hard to model or duplicate Newark Beth Israel because of the number of applicants and cost.

Jerrah advised he can inform the Newark 2020 committee about the Credentialing Program as it would be beneficial and increase success. Mitch suggested he can draft a plan and present it to Newark 2020 by February meeting.

Mitch advised he will have an NJBIA representative in January's meeting so they can give us an overview on what they are working on.

### **Career Connections**

Career Connections launched a website and asked for the committee to participate in a survey and provide any feedback. Jasmyne advised she participated in the survey. She thought the presentation was great, however, the language, directions and overview was not clear enough for an applicant. Categories were vague and not specific for employers or applicant. Mitch suggested for the next meeting, the committee can provide more suggestions to improve the website and their literature advertising career connections. Jonathan commented that Career Connections doesn't work through Google and that the Department of Labor employees do not advertise Career Connections properly but, suggests other platforms like Career Builder and Monster.

Mitch advised the next action plan in regards to Career Connections is to reach back and make additional suggestion and concerns such as the Google/Chrome issue, how was the feedback used and request statistics.

### **Website**

Has not been advertised needs to be cleaned and few revisions and specifications which can then be advertised. Once ready to go live, Evanthia Bhanva and Jonathan can provide a list of stakeholders and/or contact person to provide the link to while Joseph Epps will provide a list of employers and Talent Networks.

Jasmyne advised My Brother's Keeper which Mitch suggested the Credentialing Program be incorporated and the Employer Opportunity Grant can be used. Mitch will find out the cost for training for the next meeting.

Calendar matter was discussed and dates were chosen, however, Mitch will advise by email if dates need to be changed.

There was no further business with the committee. Mitch thanked everyone for their participation and called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Barbara made a motion to move, and Bhavna seconded the motion.