

MINUTES  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD  
August 14, 2001

Chairman Bill Fisher called to order a meeting of the Executive Committee, Arkansas Workforce Investment Board at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 14 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Little Rock. Members who were able to attend included Robert Drechsler, Bill Fisher, Steve Franks, Alan Hughes, Gloria Lynn, Kathy Matlock, Karen McFarren, Helen Moore, Bill Sutton, Joe Warren, Campbell Wilkerson, and approximately 25 public representatives. Members unable to attend included Joe Dillard, Larry Featherstone, and Mary Beth Green.

Chairman Fisher welcomed Ms. Rebekah Lee, Governor's Deputy Chief of Staff; Dr. Mark Kutner of the American Institute of Research in Washington, D.C.; and Ms. Susan Harden and Mr. Derrick Edwards of *G Stars*. Chairman Fisher announced that Mr. John Parke, Chair of the Little Rock Workforce Investment Board, had an article printed in the *Arkansas Business* paper as well as the *Employment Register* describing the Workforce Investment Board system. Chairman Fisher said a copy of the article will be distributed to the Board.

**Minutes: The minutes of the July 10 Regular Quarterly meeting was approved on motion made by Bill Sutton, seconded by Dr. Kathy Matlock, and carried unanimously.**

Report of Executive Director: Dr. Beene began her report by reviewing some follow-up items from past meetings. She stated that a letter to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) concerning the 2001 performance measures was finalized. She added that other states have also requested adjustments in measures and a USDOL workgroup will meet on September 5 and 6 to establish a process for adjusting performance measures. Dr. Beene said actions have been taken to get Ron Stone of the state staff as a member of this workgroup. Dr. Beene stated that requests for Corrective Action Plans were sent to seven local areas based on the Employment Security Department's year-end financial report and the information is in the agenda book. She also said that a report on the Western local board's business council would be distributed to all local board administrators as a model for getting greater business participation.

Dr. Beene continued her report by focusing the Board on a press release at their table, which announced the establishment of a *Nestle* plant in Jonesboro. She said this was a great accomplishment for Governor Huckabee and Arkansas, including the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and the state agencies. She said the Department of Economic Development found themselves searching for one million dollars to support training for this plant and asked Dr. Beene for help. She turned to Sammy McGuire and the staff of the Northeast local board and a transfer of 20% of Dislocated Worker funds to Adult funds was approved by the State Board to acquire the one million needed to train the workers of this plant. Chairman Fisher added that this success was an example of the cooperation that can exist between Chief Elected Officials and local boards.

Dr. Beene explained that a meeting was held with the local board chairs and Chairman Fisher last month after the State Board meeting. She said this meeting was very productive and plans call for a regular quarterly event at the same time. Chairman Fisher added that he appreciated the time he could spend with the local board chairs. He felt it was very beneficial and represented an opportunity to communicate openly. Dr. Beene also announced that a meeting was held the day before that included representatives of the local boards as well as State Board members Helen Moore, Arnessa Staten and

representatives of John Wyvil and Jim Pickens to discuss plans for changes to the Arkansas Workforce Association, through which local board youth chairs, administrators, and program providers could communicate and share ideas. Mike Norton, Administrator for the Northwest local board, explained that this association's board, composed of former JTPA administrators, would need to meet and give approval to using an existing 501(c)3 organization in a different manner. Dr. Beene said that after some discussion John Parke, Chair of the Little Rock local board, asked if the state staff could organize the local communication they desired. Dr. Beene said she suggested a quarterly meeting on the Monday afternoon before each regular quarterly meeting of the State Board in which a report of major issues would be given to the entire group by her or others and then small groups would convene for further discussion, sharing of ideas or concerns, some of which could be routinely be presented to the state board on the following day. She said this seemed to be unanimously accepted as no one stated otherwise upon request for comment. John Parke added that the intent of the Board Chairs was to get together to further enhance communication, and he thanked Dr. Beene for taking the initiative to help that purpose by arranging the quarterly meetings of these groups.

Dr. Beene continued her report by mentioning that the Strategic Planning Committee met on July 10 and a report was the next agenda item. She said the *Opportunity Arkansas* events held across the state went well, and she recently noticed in her mail some information for the next step. Meetings were held among the local board representatives and *The Communications Group* to hear ideas and concerns about the marketing campaign with a state-level briefing following those meetings. These discussions resulted in changing the word "career" to "workforce" and a redesign of the stop sign logo. Dr. Beene said she attended a conference of the Higher Education Presidents and Chancellors in West Memphis and Dr. Matlock introduced her at the conference. A major topic at the conference was the term "work first", for which the staff tried to find a definition in the state or federal acts without success. She said Anna Hall of DOL asked if Arkansas as a state was promoting a "work first" philosophy and Dr. Beene said the staff could not find such terminology in documents from the state or local areas. She said this was a major issue that could hinder training if the philosophy of "work first" was followed.

Dr. Beene concluded her report by stating that the staff had attended meetings of the Southwest, Northeast, Little Rock, and Central local boards in the past month. She also said that meetings were held with the partner agencies of the Employment Security Department, Department of Workforce Education, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. She said a budget committee was formed and met on August 1, a report of which was distributed to the Board. Meetings were held with Jeff Hankins of *Arkansas Business* for discussion of advertising in *Arkansas Next* magazine. Job Spectacular was held on August 11, and Christina Miller of the staff attended, stating that the Little Rock Career Development Center was a major player. Other businesses were also involved, including *Staffmark*. Dr. Beene introduced and welcomed Joyce Walker to the staff of the board. She said Joyce would be filling the Administrative Assistant position and would be responsible for the fiscal duties of the office.

Report of Strategic Planning Committee: Chairman Fisher stated that the Strategic Planning Committee met after the State Board meeting on July 10 to further discuss the research of workforce development and training programs in Arkansas. He said a written report was included on pages 8 and 9 in the agenda book; and Jim Smith, Chair of the Committee, would give the report of that meeting. Mr. Smith reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met with Mr. Terry West of the Job Corps Centers and Mr. Steve Sparks of the Department of Economic Development at the July 10 meeting. He said Terry West discussed uses of performance standards and Steve Sparks reviewed the programs designed to upgrade skills. Mr. Smith said the meeting ended with Robin Pelton distributing grids, which reflected the accomplishments of the Committee and also helped reveal areas where possible duplication could occur. Mr. Smith added that some members for the Committee traveled to

Monticello to see the Y.O.U. program, and he was very impressed. He said he hoped the Committee could visit other programs in the future. He concluded his report by stating that the Committee would meet on August 23 at 9:00 a.m. and they should be on target to start analysis in October. Chairman Fisher thanked Mr. Smith for his report, and Dr. Beene thanked Robin Pelton and Rebecca Trammell of the staff for the work done with this Committee. (A copy of the Strategic Planning Committee report of July 10 is carried as Attachment A to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

National Assessment of Adult Literacy: Chairman Fisher announced that because the Assessment of Adult Literacy is included in the 15% set-aside statewide activities budget, the literacy agenda item would be addressed first. Chairman Fisher said Dr. Mark Kutner, Project Director of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy through the American Institute of Research in Washington, D.C., was in attendance to present information about the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. He said the information is being presented to the Board for possible interest in participating and contributing to the cost of such assessment. He said partial funding for the assessment could come from the 15% set-aside for statewide activities on Title I of the Workforce Investment Act and from other partners. Chairman Fisher welcomed Dr. Kutner.

Dr. Kutner thanked the Board for the opportunity to present this Assessment and for the possibility of Arkansas participating. He said that 13,000 individuals across the country would be surveyed, and the first national survey was conducted in 1992. Dr. Kutner explained that the next national survey would be conducted in 2002 and would reveal a snapshot of the skills of the people. He said this survey would analyze trend data as a whole and the national assessment would allow the participating states to compare literacy skill levels with each other as well as the nation as a whole. Dr. Kutner explained that the states that participated in 1992 were able to use the sample data collected in a number of ways, especially to show support for increases in funding. He also added that in 1992 Adult Education was more isolated in the communities so there will be a lot more opportunities for the assessment in 2002. Dr. Kutner distributed some reading materials and explained that the assessment was not the traditional type of assessment used before. He said a ninety-minute household survey would be conducted after a detailed questionnaire is completed by a sample of households in each state. He said this assessment would also cover the issue of family literacy by asking how many children under the age of 18 are living with that person and the frequency to which those children are read. He said the questionnaire would be in Spanish as well as English and the survey would include 1,000 adults in the state of Arkansas. He also added that the American Institute of Research would help the state identify funding sources, customize analysis plans, appropriate strategies, customize briefing materials and press kits as well as customize reports.

Dr. Kutner explained that if Arkansas decides to participate, the pilot would have to begin this fall. He said the national surveys would begin this winter, with data collection beginning in January of 2002, reports prepared in 2003, and the release of information in January, 2004. He said this meant that the states would need to decide by November, 2001 if they want to participate, and the cost would be \$725,000. He said that \$625,000 of this was for data collection and sampling and the remaining \$100,000 would be for analysis and reporting. He said the first payment of \$100,000 would need to be made in November, 2001.

Dr. Franks stated that he is very interested in participating in this assessment and feels it is critically important to capture the base-line data for Arkansas. He said he would also be very interested in facilitating a partnership to bring this to Arkansas because it would be valuable for the local boards. It was asked if the states that participated in 1992 used WIA funds; and Dr. Kutner responded that the notion to use WIA funds is just now being realized, but it was the ideal solution.

Dr. Matlock stated that this assessment was a great idea. She asked how the random selection would be determined and Dr. Kutner explained that the selection would be based on the census data, it may not include every county, but it will be a representation of the entire state. He said it would take a year to collect the data. He answered several more questions by stating that Arkansas is guaranteed questionnaires from 1,000 households but some may not participate in the assessment. He also said that the data collectors will be from Arkansas but the coordinators for the collection process would not. He didn't know if the collectors would be from the particular area they are interviewing, but he would be happy to arrange a meeting or phone call with the statistics company responsible for the data collection process to further answer any questions.

Campbell Wilkerson asked what the other states found valuable from this assessment. Garland Hankins, Department of Workforce Education, responded that in Kentucky they used the information gathered to restructure their programs. He said this assessment would give the focus for what is needed, and Arkansas needs a focus.

After more discussion, Chairman Fisher reminded the Committee that this would be an action item for the September meeting and asked Dr. Beene and the staff to follow up on the funding issues, specifically how much it would cost the Board to participate. He also asked the Board members to give any other questions or comments to Dr. Beene within the next week. He thanked Dr. Kutner for his presentation.

Statewide Activities Budget: Chairman Fisher stated that the Workforce Investment Act provides for the use of up to 15% of each state allocation for statewide workforce investment activities including required activities and allowable activities. He said he appointed a budget committee Chaired by Robert Drechsler and including Board Vice-Chair Joe Warren, Representative Mary Beth Green, Mayor Joe Dillard, and Campbell Wilkerson. He said the Committee met on August 1, and he thanked them for their work. Chairman Fisher said a written report of the meeting was at each member's table and Mr. Drechsler would give a report as well.

Mr. Drechsler focused the Board on the green handout that included the Budget Committee report. He said the budget was a \$4.3 million dollar budget with \$2.1 million in reserve. He said the format of the budget presented the PY 2000 allocated and actually spent and well as the variance between those two. He added that pages 13-15 of the agenda book included an explanation of some of the items. He stated that the Committee believed the budget was in compliance and recommended that the Board accept the activities budget and the Budget Committee stay engaged as a liaison tool for the Board. Mr. Drechsler added that Dr. Beene needed to mention an additional item in the budget that came up after the Committee meeting. Dr. Beene explained that on line 26, an additional \$25,000 would need to be added to cover the cost of collecting JTPA exiter information for the U.S. Department of Labor. She said this issue just came up and it must be addressed. She stated that at yesterday's meeting, local area representatives believed the best way to complete this task would be for the local areas to make the phone calls to collect the data since they had the files and their staff would be familiar with the exiters. She said the data collected must be included in the annual report, which needs to be submitted on December 1. She said Ron Stone of the staff looked into the cost per call based on customer satisfaction data to call 2,000 exiters in the state and the allocation to local areas was based on this estimate. This amount will be distributed to the local areas based on the number of calls they will have to make. It was noted that this addition would cause a decrease in the amounts on lines 55 and 57. Chairman Fisher reminded the Board that Congress took \$110 million out of the 2001 budget, and the cut for each state has not been determined. Mr. Drechsler added that was the reason for the reserve

money and reminded the Board that the information presented below line 23 was responsibility of the Budget Committee because everything else was pre-determined by a formula provided in the federal law. **Motion was made by Robert Drechsler, seconded by Campbell Wilkerson, and approved unanimously to accept the 15% Set-aside Statewide Activities Budget with the \$25,000 increase in line 26.** Chairman Fisher again thanked the Budget Committee for their work. (A copy of the Budget Committee report of August 1 is carried as Attachment B to the permanent copy of these minutes. A copy of the 15% Set-aside Statewide Activities Budget and change to line 26 are carried as attachment C to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Local Board Maintenance Policy - Revised: Chairman Fisher stated that an initial local board maintenance policy was approved by the Board in March 2000 and since then the staff has developed a more detailed and efficient policy which will provide an improved mechanism for the local areas to communicate local board membership changes to the state board. He focused the Board on pages 16-20 of the agenda book, which contained the revised policy. He said the major changes (in bold type) from the previous policy are specific deadlines for submission of membership changes and also deadlines for state staff acting on changes. He said the operation procedures have been tightened for both the local and state staffs. Chairman Fisher added that it was important that a focus be made on this activity to assure compliance with both federal and state laws requiring recertification of local boards in early 2002. **Motion was made by Dr. Steve Franks, seconded by Karen McFarren, and carried unanimously to approve the revised local board maintenance policy.** (A copy of the revised local board maintenance policy is carried as Attachment D to the permanent copy of these minutes.)

Campbell Wilkerson asked if the State Board knew the turnover rate for the local boards since establishment. Dr. Beene said that information was not known at this time, and Chairman Fisher requested that the turnover percentage for each local area according to category be presented to the Board.

Program of Work: Chairman Fisher stated that the State Board has many responsibilities, constituencies, and areas of work to monitor. As part of organizational oversight, he said the Program of Work document was created to present ongoing activities of the staff. He said the item is found on pages 22-27 of the agenda book for the Board's information. Chairman Fisher said the Program of Work would be revised as duties and assignments are added or accomplished. Dr. Beene added that this document was believed to be consistent with the responsibilities chart adopted by the Board in which clarification on agencies and responsibilities for certain items was established.

Report on June 30, 2001 Expended and Obligated Funds, Corrective Action Plans: Chairman Fisher reminded the Executive Committee that at the July 10 meeting the Board approved a policy and timeline for increasing services and related expenditures of WIA Title I funds. He said the policy required a corrective action plan from local workforce investment boards for which PY 2000 WIA funds were underspent or underobligated. He said Bryan Hicks of ESD provided the year-end report on July 25. Chairman Fisher explained that a copy of the letter and information sent to the seven local areas was included in the agenda book.

Chairman Fisher also explained that as a first step in developing the plan, the staff has been notified that some local areas do not agree with the dollar amounts in the ESD report. He stated that if any local area does not agree with these numbers, they should contact the state board and immediately contact Bryan Hicks to clarify the amounts. He stated that ESD carries the official documents and numbers for the state of Arkansas and the local areas; therefore, ESD needed to know the exact

amounts and needed to clarify any discrepancies. He also reminded the Board that at the July 10 meeting a request was made for more specific dates to monitor the approved Corrective Action Plans. Chairman Fisher explained that monitoring would begin on October 1 and continue monthly for a ninety-day period. He also said that by June 30, 2002 all the PY 2000 funds not expended by local boards will be returned to the state and must be spent in one year.

Eligible Training Provider List: Chairman Fisher stated that the newly-formed Board was advised by its consultant to delegate the formation and maintenance of the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) list to the Arkansas Employment Security Department, and such action was taken on August 10, 1999. He said some concerns have been expressed concerning the maintenance of this list from local providers, administrators as well as public and private occupational training institutions. He said Mr. Herman Sanders of the Employment Security Department would give some information about the ETP list. Dr. Beene said she would mention the concerns heard first so Mr. Sanders would have some information to which he could respond in his report. She said the major concerns heard about the ETP list included the new quarterly "initial/subsequent eligibility certification" policy and process, the extensive reporting process, and the burden placed on the local areas.

Mr. Sanders addressed the Board and asked them to turn to the information included in their agenda book that was supplied by his office. He stated that on July 1 the Arkansas Consumer Reporting System was established as a website listing training providers in the state. He said the plan is to expand the site to include all training providers in the state (WIA approved or not). He also stated that ESD is working with the National Employment Training Administration to pilot a state automated electronic application process for the Eligible Training Provider list. He explained that a user identification and password would be given to all training providers in Arkansas. If a training provider wishes to be WIA approved, they will simply make an application to one, or all ten, local areas, through the electronic system. He said this would leave only the cost of training to be handled by the local board. This automated process will do away with paper processes and Sanders hopes the new automated system will be running by September 15. The data that the local areas will receive will be pre-screened and therefore greatly decrease the workload. Campbell Wilkerson asked about the quarterly process and when it changed. Mr. Sanders explained that at the beginning of the process, applications were accepted as they came in; but the workload was too great and the policy changed to a quarterly acceptance of applications. When the new system is operating on September 15, it will once again be operated on an as-needed process. Mr. Wilkerson asked about the immediate need for training programs to be accepted. Dr. Beene mentioned a specific example of a technical institute that has two classes for which it can't accept students for because the school will not be WIA approved until October because of the quarterly system.

Chairman Fisher asked Mr. Sanders to get together with Dr. Beene to work out the complications and concerns for the provider list. Mr. Sanders agreed that was a good idea. Dr. Franks stated that he felt the classes needed now should be added now. Chairman Fisher asked the Board what their desire was for the ETP list. **Campbell Wilkerson made a motion to go to an "as needed" policy for the Eligible Training Provider list until the new system is running. The motion was seconded by Gloria Lynn and carried unanimously.** Sharon Williams, Director of Eastern Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, stated that the training providers of other states were not included on the Arkansas training providers list even though she had tried to include them. Chairman Fisher asked Mr. Sanders to look into this concern. Dr. Beene also asked Mr. Sanders to forward a response to the technical college that could now be added to the WIA approved list to start enrollments. Sanders agreed.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Website Demonstration: Chairman Fisher said he was pleased to share information on accomplishments of WIA. He said information from the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services website devoted to training its 500 employees was included in the agenda book. He reminded the Board that programs offered by Arkansas Rehabilitation Services are covered under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act and Mr. John Wyvil, Commissioner, is a member of the Board. Chairman Fisher introduced Mr. Wyvil and invited him to give a demonstration of the new website.

Mr. Wyvil thanked Chairman Fisher and explained that the new website was a better use of technology to better serve clients. He said the Internet would be used as a training tool to communicate the agency policies and procedures with employee only access for such items as video screening of training tapes. He said the site was designed to be very user friendly and so far there have been 119,000 hits on the site. The site is broken into five major categories for easy navigation. Dr. Beene mentioned that Simon Lee of Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods designed the website. She also said that a link could be created from the new Workforce Investment Board website to this website in the future. Mr. Wyvil demonstrated many aspects of the website for the Board. He thanked the Board for allowing him to present the site and said he was very excited about the possibilities. Chairman Fisher recognized Eddie Miller, new member of the Board and representative of the Client Assistance Program. Mr. Miller said he felt the website was helpful to clients also, and that he was happy to have the opportunity to work with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

Announcements: Dr. Beene announced that Chairman Fisher was reappointed as Chair of the Board by Governor Mike Huckabee for the third year and the Board joined her in thanking him for his service. Chairman Fisher announced that the Little Rock Local Workforce Investment Board had their closing ceremony for the summer youth program at the Capitol on August 9. He said over 200 youth were there as well as the Mayor and other distinguished guests. He said the state is proud of the youth and the work done by the local boards to help the youth of Arkansas. He stated that one of the required partners under the Workforce Investment Act is the American Indian Centers and a television advertisement for the Center mentions WIA as a source of funding. Chairman Fisher announced that a list of local board meetings was included in their mailings and the list is also on the Board's website, which is updated regularly. He said the next Executive Committee meeting would be held September 18, the **third** Tuesday of the month and would be a teleconference. He announced that the next regular quarterly meeting would be on October 9 at the Embassy Suites hotel. He also said that the next out of Little Rock meeting was scheduled for November 13 in Jonesboro. He stated that Senator Jodie Mahony resigned from the Board due to other timely demands and Senator Mike Beebe would be appointing another Senator to the Executive Committee. He said a letter of thanks was already mailed to Senator Mahony.

Adjourn: **With no other announcements, motion was made by Helen Moore, seconded by Karen McFarren, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m.**

Bill Fisher, Chair

Dr. Linda Beene, Executive Director

**Minutes Recorded by Christina Miller  
Workforce Investment Board Staff**