

**Date:** December 5, 2017

**To:** Governor’s Workforce Development Board Members

**From:** Employer Engagement Subgroup, Career Pathways Partnership Committee

**Subject: Executive Summary and Recommendations for Employer Engagement**

The charge of the Career Pathways Partnership Committee’s Employer Engagement Subgroup is to develop a framework with a common message to reach business and industry. This framework supports \*regional sector-based Career Pathways. These regional partnerships are key to achieving results for two of the goals of the Minnesota state combined plan (attachment A): (1) reducing educational and employment disparities based on race or disability to provide greater opportunity for all Minnesotans, and (2) building employer-led industry-sector partnerships focused on aligning skills with careers in demand. The subgroup conducted an extensive literature review and interviewed national experts to identify employer engagement promising practices throughout the United States. The questions explored through this research were:

* Why employers engage and do not engage in workforce development?
* How employers like to engage in workforce development?
* What are funding models and resources for employer engagement?

This executive summary reflects the work of the Employer Engagement Subgroup of the Career Pathways Partnership Committee by outlining the employer engagement research process, outcomes and three recommendations for next steps in advancing the Career Pathways work of the Minnesota state combined plan.

**Research Process:**

This subgroup created and followed their Work Plan to complete this project. See Table 1.

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| **Table 1: Employer Engagement Subgroup Work Plan** | | | |
| January – May 2017 | June - September 2017 | October 2017 | November – December 2017 |
| * Conducted literature review and research by subgroup members. * Began identifying themes from research and interviews. | * Worked with DEED’s Performance Management Team to validate and expand Employer Engagement Subgroup research and findings | * Validated research themes and identified recommendations on employer engagement for GWDB | * Presented Employer Engagement Subgroup findings and recommendation to CPP Committee for discussion and feedback. * Final Employer Engagement Subgroup Executive Summary submitted to CPP Committee Chair to present to GWDB. |

**Outcomes:**

Summarized outcomes from the Employer Engagement Research were listed in the Table 2. The completed Employer Engagement Literature Review see Attachment B.

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| **Table 2: Outcomes from Employer Engagement Research** | | | |
| Why employers engage? | Why employers do not engage? | How do employers like to engage? | How to fund employer engagement? |
| * Engaged for talent recruitment, development and retention of employees * Assisted employers in meeting their business needs and goals * Created flexibility in employer engagement opportunities * Led the workforce conversation by employers | * Confusion – what is the benefit for them? * Lack of awareness that programs exist or how to engage in them * Cumbersome to access and employers get frustrated if it is too difficult * Sometimes it just did not fit into the employer priorities | * Provided paid and unpaid work experiences and exposure * Informed/consulted/advised on training pathways * Connected to workforce development with concrete asks of them (Size of company matters, amount of time people can be engaged with priority or their time and resources) * Led workforce conversation, advocacy and governance. | * Identified from several single or multiple sources; i.e., philanthropy, employers, braided funding, in-kind resources, and government (local, state, and federal). * Paying employers is not always necessary * Braided funding to make EE projects work |

**Recommendations:**

The Employer Engagement Subgroup is recommending three strategies to enhance employer engagement through the state.

1. **Employer Engagement in Career Pathways Call to Action**

Vision:

* Engage more employers in Career Pathways work throughout Minnesota by outlining the business case for their involvement and giving specific opportunities for employer involvement.

Tactics:

* Send a taskforce to visit other states to research innovative ways to successfully engaged employers in Career Pathways, as Career Pathways implementation has been embedded into the fabric of employer engagement work in several states.
* Create Communications Plan to frame conversation with employers and state agencies on Career Pathways Tools and Resources, and partnerships.

1. **Document Successful Employer Engagement in Minnesota**

Vision:

* Highlight successful employer engagement in Minnesota to promote promising practices in the state and to contribute to the national conversation/work on employer engagement.

Tactics:

* Identify and document examples of outstanding employer engagement practices in place in career pathways across Minnesota by creating white papers/case studies/videos on what successful employer engagement already exists throughout the state.
* Share success stories broadly with all workforce development stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce, legislatures, and professional associations.

1. **Establish a common vision and operational approach to workforce development in Minnesota.**

Vision:

* Establish and Implement Outcome Based Career Pathways Demonstration Projects in each Work Force Development Region.

Tactics:

* Provide the framework of successful \*\*demonstration project.
* Provide guidelines for successful regional partnerships.
* Convene a community of practice in each region to guide and manage the implementation of their \*\*demonstration projects.
* Align \*\*demonstration project outcomes measures with the state dashboard metrics.
* Create fact sheets on \*\*demonstration projects in which GWDB members are currently taking part and prominently post on the GWDB web site.
* Intentionally evaluate \*\*demonstration projects for continuous improvement opportunities.
* Assess ongoing alignment with the State Plan strategies.

**\*** **Sector-Based Career Pathways** A career pathways system must be employer driven. A sector strategy is a strategic approach to engage employers by bringing industries together critical to the economic success of a region. This industry specific regional partnership is led by business in collaboration with public partners in economic development, workforce development, labor, human services, education, and community-based organizations. *This definition is adapted from the U.S. Department of Labor Career Pathways Toolkit and the Colorado Workforce Development Council’s “Building Industry-Driven Career Pathways Systems in Colorado” Guide.*

**\*\*Demonstration projects** give opportunity to test innovation and measure the effects of program changes in real-world situations.