

**Workforce Implementation Team Meeting
May 8, 2007**

DRAFT

Major Follow-up for Next Meeting

- 1. A meeting would be set up with each member of the team to discuss what already exists in the way of technical education, what are the barriers to building greater capacity, identifying the employer needs, as well as other ideas that would enhance our workforce capabilities, including identification of indicators. An initial report is planned for our June 7 meeting.**
- 2. Other key stakeholders including the Chamber and the School System Leadership will be approached.**
- 3. Follow-up on the possible charter school RFP will be done.**

Present: Becky Lane, Judy James, Tom Gausvik, Doug Bolin, James Deaton, Lynn Johns, Cassie Bryant, Sonuel Devlin, Carol Rayburn, Flora Tydings, Clay Gilbert, Bart , Mark Tavernier, Bart Freeman, Mark Peevy, Jim Geiser

Clay welcomed everyone to the meeting and had everyone introduce themselves. Clay shared an email from Mark Whitlock from the Central Educational Center as Mark had planned to be at our meeting. The email shared that Mark had to change his plans because he had to meet with the economic development authority because there was a new business prospect that was interested in locating in their community.

Mark Peevy from the Walton Career Academy graciously agreed to come and speak to the group-and did a great job. Some of the information that Mark shared included:

- The partnership in Walton is strong and includes Athens Technical College, the School System, and the non-profit Board overseeing the charter school. The Chamber is very active in keeping employers and their needs in the forefront.
- It's important to understand the workforce needs of your community. It is important to work with your Chamber to find out current workforce needs.
- Are there jobs needing a technical college certificate, are there jobs with a specific skill set?
- The Walton partnership is constantly asking employers how can the partnership help them to achieve their employment/business goals?
- Mark shared that a high school based construction program was developed quickly to meet a specific workforce need as identified by their business community.
- The importance of the School System/Technical College relationship was emphasized for the program to be successful.
- In working with the school system, a major goal is to enhance existing programs.
- The Career Academy seeks to add value to what already exists.
- Capital equipment grants are pursued for new programs.
- The business community provides financial support to help fund things that meet the needs of their business.
- Charter school seed money was available.
- Mark discussed that the biggest advantage for using the charter school model is the flexibility to adapt to changing workforce demands. Charters are able to act more independently and can adjust curriculum quickly. There is much collaboration and interaction with the school system and the school.
- Mark mentioned that it took about 18-20 months for Walton to get up and going.
- They received \$400,000 in start-up monies.

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- The school is funded through the FTE of the students, in the same way as regular public schools. The Career Academy receives the proportion of the FTE that the student attends at their site.
- The students graduate from their home high school, and participate in extra-curricula activities at their home high school.
- The school system pays the expenses of the facility.

Some comments and questions from the group included:

- Ms. Tydings mentioned that the dual enrollment helps the program to work –with high school and adult students together. It may be more difficult in Athens because classes are fuller here than in Walton County.
- We would need to develop strategies to make it cost effective for Athens Tech.
- It was mentioned that there should be \$16 million for charter career academies through recent legislation. An RFP should be coming out soon. It would allow \$3 million for 5 sites. There would be some local contribution required.
- It was mentioned that one of the bigger issues is not the availability of programs for students, but their ability to pass the entrance test into Athens Tech.
- The need to share facilities was mentioned—Athens Tech and the School System could make their facilities available to one another.
- Health care training in high schools was mentioned.
- The need to engage students during their freshman and sophomore years was mentioned.
- The importance of setting up Business Round Tables with each industry was emphasized. This would help to identify gaps and strategies to close those gaps. This could be a big piece of building business support.
- The need for businesses to have a focal point in the community to go to address workforce needs was emphasized. If workforce needs are not met—where do employers go?
- It was mentioned that there is a gap in credibility with what the school system is putting out.
- We need to define the “workforce” we are seeking to address. Is it the emerging workforce?
- The Chamber needs to play a major role.
- We need to know, “What are the problems and issues?” We need a gap analysis.
- Lack of effective communication seems to be a major issue.
- We need to be able to leverage our resources.
- As a group we need to decide upon our indicators to show whether or not we are successful.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 7 from 3:00-4:30 at the Dept. of Labor.