

**Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
Board Meeting Minutes
415 S. First Street, Suite 110B, Lufkin, TX 75901
January 23, 2024**

I. CHAIR KELLI MARSHALL CALLED THE BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AT 2:34 P.M.

MS. MARSHALL ANNOUNCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (WD LETTER 28-19) DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2019, REGARDING THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551 ALLOWING THE USE OF VIDEO-CONFERENCING AS A METHOD FOR CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS, THE BOARD IS PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ITS BOARD MEETING AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE AND VIA VIRTUAL MEETING WEB LINK. SHE ALSO SAID THE MEETING IS BEING RECORDED AND THE OPEN SESSION PORTION OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST. THE BOARD SERVES TWELVE (12) COUNTIES AND LISTED THE HOST LOCATION; AND PRESIDING OFFICER, KELLI MARSHALL, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.

AFTER THE ROLL CALL, MS. MARSHALL CONFIRMED THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT:

Members Present: Joe Clyde Adams, Lisa Balty, Rebekah Burkhalter, TJ Colwell, Ashley Courtney, Tyane Dietz, Tim Ditoro, Robert Fitzpatrick, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Anita Humphreys, Kotosha Jeffery, Gene Lee, Matthew Lowery, Kelli Marshall, Ellen Mills, Marisa Phillips, Randy Roberts, Rich Scott, John Allen Slocomb

Members Absent: Wayne Haglund, Eddie Hopkins, Staci Hodges, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Garvey Jackson, Quincy Martindale, Benjamin Mott, Jessica Rogers, John White

Board Staff Present: Mark Durand, Cheyenne Faircloth, Dara Harmon, Debb Homman, Sarah Milligan, Lauren Phipps, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, Karen Stubblefield

Visitors: Scott Amey, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Michelle Kennedy, Keith McLeod

KELLI MARSHALL REMINDED THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.

Ms. Marshall asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration regardless of whether they have a conflict and return the form to Board staff.

WELCOME OF GUESTS:

Mark Durand welcomed new Board Member, Ashley Courtney. He also welcomed Joe Caesar, Michael Martinez and Lawrence Spikes with Legacy.

II. Public Comments

None

III. Discussion/Action: Nomination Committee Recommendation of Officers

Tyane Dietz reported that the Nomination Committee recommended that each of the present officers – Chair, Kelli Marshall; Vice Chair, Ellen Mills; and Secretary, Kotosha Jeffery be reappointed for another term.

Motion: Tyane Dietz made the motion to approve the Nomination Committee’s request.

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: Kelli Marshall, Ellen Mills, Kotosha Jeffery

Motion: Passes

Board Members Kelli Marshall, Ellen Mills and Kotosha Jeffery abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

IV. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – November 14, 2023

Motion: Tyane Dietz made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Second: Ellen Mills

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

V. Information Items

A. WIOA One-Stop Certification

For TWC to recommend one-stop certification, a comprehensive center or affiliate site must meet certain minimum standards. Staff compiled and completed WIOA One-Stop certification questionnaires for each of the six workforce centers and all have met the standards.

B. 2024 Board Meeting Schedule

Will normally be the second Tuesday of each month at 2:30pm, unless canceled or rescheduled.

C. Recognize Apprenticeship Partner – Legacy Institute

The Board introduced registered apprenticeship programs to the region with the IT Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Grant that began in September of 2021. We partnered with Legacy Institute for Financial Education (LIFE) to serve as the training provider and apprenticeship navigator. During the Texas Workforce Conference in December of 2023, The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) recognized and awarded Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas the Third Place Board Service Award for increasing the availability of registered apprenticeships in the region. This would not have been possible without the partnership with Joe Caesar and his team at LIFE, including Michael Martinez with the IT Program and Lawrence Spikes with the Carpentry Program. Since 2022, they have 20 Carpentry Certifications with an additional 5 to start in the near future.

VI. Board Members Comments on Activity in their Respective Areas

Ms. Ellen Mills reported that the Sabine River Authority is building a world-class fishing tournament venue in Sabine county to be completed in 2026.

VII. Executive Director’s Report

A. Contracts/Agreements

We have renewed our contract with HR Alignment for CY’24 for Human Resources Consultant. JobEQ is a data platform that provides access to up-to-date labor market and job information and tracks real-time job openings.

B. Performance

Child Care:

The Board Calendar Year (BCY) and End of Year (EOY) average for children served per day was 2,379 which equals 102.85%. There were 2,692 enrolled as of January 18, 2024, and our current target

is 2,683. There are currently 417 children on the waitlist. We have 87 Child Care Provider Agreements and 48 Texas Rising Star Providers serving 1,321 CCS children.

Workforce:

WIOA BCY and EOY missed 2/15 measures. Original goal for median earning for Adults was \$6,500, which was met, but EOY goal was updated to \$7,600 which we missed but we continue to monitor and project to meet by June 2024. The WIOA Youth Credential Rate was also missed for EOY. This measure is expected to be met in June 2024.

C. Contacts and Coordination Efforts

Mr. Durand was a panelist at the Super Session at the Texas Workforce Commission Annual Conference. The Southeast Texas Regional Economic Summit was also a highlight. A committee has been formed in Nacogdoches to research the possibility of a Training Center to help employers train existing and future employees.

D. Rules and Legislation Update

Mr. Durand mentioned The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Reauthorization which would affect WIOA funding and training. SB2315 Task Force on Consolidation of TWC/HHSC has been appointed by the Governor to explore the consolidation.

E. Funding

The Board amended the Carpentry Apprenticeship Grant to extend 90 days through March.

F. Other Activity and Administrative Matters not requiring action by the Board

Mr. Durand reported the December 2023 unemployment rate of 4.3%. The Texas Conference for Employers hosted by the TWC will be May 17, 2024, in Nacogdoches.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Executive/Finance Committee

1. Information and Briefing Items

a. Teacher Externship Grant Update

Mr. Durand reported that the Board successfully submitted the application for this grant to provide fifteen teachers with an Externship that gives the opportunity to engage in industry-related activities in the amount of \$55,683. Teachers create specific lesson plans for students, linking students to real-world industries and jobs. The grant start date will be February 2024. Some changes to this year's RFA include:

- The individuals eligible for the externship expanded to include middle and high school teachers, school counselors, school administrators, teachers from IHEs, and teachers in Adult Education and Literacy Programs.
- The minimum number of days the Teacher Extern spends at the worksite has increased from three to five days.
- An additional responsibility was added for the employer: to collaborate with the ISD to provide a tour of the worksite or offer classroom presentations during the school year to extend the school to work pipeline.

The maximum stipend amount remained at \$1,000. There may be two or three more teachers added if needed. The concern is the employers' time and training required. There are no foreseeable issues finding teachers. They hope to identify and recruit employers by mid-February.

b. Tri-Agency Regional Convener Report

Mr. Durand discussed the progress of the Board staff, Jeff Eichman and Josh Fleming of the Asset Map and Gap Analysis report, which is due at the end of January. The pathways leadership team SPEAR (Student Pathways for Economic Advancement in the Region), has been formed and consists of 20 members that represent secondary and post-secondary education, Education Service Centers (ESC), economic development corporations, and regional employers. The team selected the winning SPEAR team logo that was developed by Center ISD's Graphics Communication program and will be awarded with a \$1,000 stipend

for their student's career-related workforce skills. Some early responses noted on their survey that schools may not have a connection with local employers for their CTE courses.

Tyane Dietz asked if all our ISDs have filled out the survey fully.

Overall, it may be they underestimate the value and relationship of partnerships with employers. When complete,

Ms. Dietz asked to share the results and noted the importance of business partnerships.



2. Discussion/Possible Action

a. Action Item 24-01 Child Care Advisory Committee

Mr. Durand noted that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) issued WD Letter 19-23, Change 1, aligning with the 87th Texas Legislature, House Bill 619 requiring the implementation for Boards to establish local child care committees. At a minimum, individuals appointed must represent the following entities: Licensed child care centers participating in TWC's Child Care Services (CCS) program; Licensed or registered child care homes participating in CCS; Families currently or formerly served by CCS; Board CCS contractors; Board members and/or Board staff. Other child care stakeholders that represent the interests of the children and/or the families served. Currently, Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas has an Advisory Committee that includes Texas Rising Star Providers, Board and Contractor staff. To meet the new requirement set forth the Board is adding additional members to the committee to align with HB 619. The Child Care Advisory Committee will be comprised of the following: Ashley Courtney, Licensed Child Care Center, Deep East Texas Local Workforce Development Board Member; Katrina Smith, Licensed Child Care Center, CCS Participating Center; Melissa Hughes, Licensed Child Care Center, CCS Participating Center; Debbie Quan, Licensed Child Care Center, CCS Participating Center; Sueanne Morehouse, Licensed Child Care Home, CCS Participating Home; Joelle Harkins, Representing Families currently or formerly served by CCS; Michelle Kennedy, Goodwill Industries, Representing Board CCS Contractor; Mark Durand, WSDet Executive Director, Representing Board Staff; Debb Homman, WSDet Child Care Coordinator, Representing Board Staff; Charles Zemanek, Nacogdoches ISD - Fredonia Early Childhood Center, Representing Other Child Care Stakeholders. As required in WD Letter 19-23, Change 1, The Child Care Advisory Committee will meet at least quarterly and report to the Deep East Texas Local Workforce Development Board's Operation Committee and Board to provide an update, at least twice per year, on the issues discussed by the committee; and any input on CCS policy change recommendations.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for acceptance the committee as presented.

Second: Tyane Dietz

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: Ashley Courtney

Motion: Passes

Board Member Ashley Courtney abstained from voting due to a conflict of interest.

b. Action Item 24-02 WIOA Supportive Services Policy

Sarah Milligan reported that staff recently reviewed the Supportive Services Policy to update the allowable assistance and maximum limits that may be provided to participants for each specific type of supportive service. Types of Supportive Services were updated or added as follows:

- **Classroom Related Assistance** – available to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Choices, and SNAP participants. Funding includes the cost of books, supplies, uniforms, tools, equipment, training related applications, tests, and certifications as

required for participation in coursework. Limit increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per semester;

- **Personal Vehicle Expenses** – available to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Choices, and SNAP participants. Funding includes minor repairs, maintenance, driver’s license fees, inspection, registration tags, insurance, batteries, tires, and one-time car payment. Limit increase from \$500 to \$800 each 12-month period, except car payments which are limited to one-time only;
- **Food Assistance** – available to WIOA Youth participants. Funding includes grocery food cards or Visa cards, depending on the individual situation, circumstances, and food resources available in local areas. Limited to \$25 per day; and
- **Work-Related Assistance** - available to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Choices, and SNAP participants. Funding includes tools, uniforms, etc. when these are not provided by the employer but are needed to perform the job. Limit increase from \$300 to \$800 one-time.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for approval to accept policy as presented.

Second: Ellen Mills

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

c. Action Item 24-03 Apprenticeship Board Service Award Implementation Plan

During the Texas Workforce Conference in December 2023, the Texas Workforce Commission recognized and awarded Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas the Third Place Board Service Award and \$50,000 for increasing the availability of registered apprenticeships in the region. The Board introduced registered apprenticeship programs to the region with the IT Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Grant of \$200,000 that began in September of 2021. The Board partnered with Legacy Institute for Financial Education (LIFE) to serve as the training provider and apprenticeship navigator. The Board/LIFE partnership continued with a second Apprenticeship Texas Expansion grant of \$50,000, which is supporting the LIFE Build division to train and employ workers in the construction industry, specifically carpentry. Board staff have developed a plan to spend the \$50,000 on activities that involve awareness and pathways to apprenticeships during the grant period, January 1 – December 31, 2024: Pre-apprenticeships, \$35,000; Apprenticeship Success Story Video, \$4,000; Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Training, \$1,000; Texas Workforce Commission Apprenticeship Conference, \$5,000; Board Admin Cost, \$5,000.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for approval to accept the plan as presented.

Second: Tim Ditoro

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

d. Action Item 24-04 Staff Plan Proposal

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) issued WD Letter 25-23, on requirements to the Boards for participation in the Infant-Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN). The WD Letter requires Boards to designate one staff member to serve as the Infant-Toddler Specialist. The person will serve as the subject matter expert and attain certification as an Infant-Toddler Specialist. Infant Toddler Specialist must meet the following requirements: Complete the required Infant-Toddler Specialist training through the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI); Be actively involved in ongoing CLI-facilitated Infant-Toddler Specialist professional learning communities; Attain and maintain Texas Infant-Toddler Specialist Certification. The

Infant Toddler Specialist will be responsible for the following: Mentoring and training child care program staff serving infants and toddlers, particularly classroom teachers; Provides technical assistance and cross-training on infant and toddler focused topics to local Texas Rising Star mentors who are not certified Infant-Toddler Specialists.

The Child Care Business Specialist position has not been filled and the grant ends April 2024. The Board does not plan to fill this position due to the grant period ending in April 2024. The Infant-Toddler Specialist will not increase the overall FTE's.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for approval to accept the proposal as presented.

Second: Joe Clyde Adams

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

e. Open Session Action, if any, as a result of Closed Session

None

3. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports

a. Financial Reports for October & November 2023

- **Statement of Financial Position**
- **Budget vs. Actual**
- **Grant Report**

Finance Director, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, provided financial updates for October and November of 2023, stating no concerns.

IX. Adjourn

Mr. Durand recognized and thanked the Board members that did not request reappointment: Mr. Fitzgerald, Wayne Haglund, Malcolm Ifoezeh, T.J. Colwell, Staci Hodges, Ethan Herr, and James Gentry. He thanked them for their service – some for many years – and announced new members: Melane Jenkins, Keith McLeod, Dan Kerns, Ashley Courtney, and Kerry Ballast. The new Board members, upon approval, will be approved by TWC February 6.

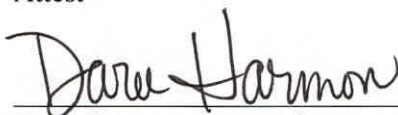
Kelli Marshall adjourned the Board Meeting at 4:15 p.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 13 day of Feb. 2024



Kelli Marshall, Chair

Attest



Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant