



Metro North Regional Employment Board

*"Building Partnerships for a Better Workforce"*

## **METRO NORTH REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD MEETING NOTES**

March 19, 2014

**Present:** Cheryl Scott, Madeline Hoffman, Susan Jepson, Karen Sampson Johnson, Robert Jones, Danny LeBlanc, Kambiz Maali, Lisa Amaya Price, Mina Reddy, Paul Richard, Steven Sullivan, Mark Tardiff, Susan Walsh

**Absent:** Lisa Anderson, Charlene Bauer, Reed Brockman, Kitty Bowman, Andrea Donahue, Philip Bronder-Giroux, Joanna Dowling, John Drinkwater, Camille Ferrullo, William Hart, John Kendzior, Rose Lydon, Larisa Schelkin, Sandra Smith, Michael Spinale, Mary Tighe, Tricia Tyler, Juan Vega, Kerry Wollner

**REB Staff:** Linda Bass, Andrew Diamond, Priscilla Golding, Mike Hatfield, Kimberly Napier, Holly Vogel, Meelynn Wong

**Guests:** Janice Philpot, Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE); Claudia Green and Franklin Peralta, English for New Bostonians; Jay Linnehan, Middlesex Community College; Linda Rohrer, Career Source; and Christopher Brennan, The Career Place

### **Welcome New Staff Member: Paul Richard**

Paul welcomed new REB staff member Andrew Diamond, who is serving as Marketing Manager for the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC).

### **Review of December Minutes: Paul Richard**

Paul requested a motion to approve the notes of the December 2013 REB meeting. The motion was moved and seconded, and the notes of the December 2013 REB meeting were approved as presented.

### **Youth Council Report: Kambiz Maali**

Kambiz highlighted the following announcements made at the March 13 Youth Council meeting: The next Biogen Idec Community Lab Day will be held on May 20; the application for Cambridge Summer Youth Employment Program work sites are now available on the [cityofcambridge.gov](http://cityofcambridge.gov) website; and there will be a career panel for WIA-enrolled youth on May 2 from 10-12noon at Career Source.

## **REB Update: Linda Bass**

Linda provided some highlights of the most recent REB Update:

WIB Certification Package: Jennifer James (the undersecretary for the EOLWD) informed Linda that the Metro North REB submitted the highest rated package of any Workforce Investment Board statewide, and as a result, she shared it with all the other Department of Labor Region One states.

Career Center Day and Legislative Events: Linda Bass, Linda Rohrer (Career Source), and Chris Brennan (The Career Place) met with a combined total of 11 legislators at Career Center Day recently held at the State House, in addition to several other legislators at recent legislative events held at the Metro North career centers.

YouthWorks Roundtable: Governor Patrick recently held a roundtable discussion in Malden to announce this year's YouthWorks funding. REB, career center, and municipal staff and legislators from Malden and other participating cities, and most importantly, youth who have participated in YouthWorks summer jobs, engaged in a lively discussion about the impact of summer jobs.

Resource Development: The REB's primary focus recently has been on resource development. In the last year we added over a million dollars in grants (some of which are multi-year), out of which about 660k was applied to this fiscal year, and the balance is being carried forward into coming years. If we add the CONNECT funds (a \$3M grant, and we are in year two) it would bring it up to \$1.75M in resources beyond the core funding for FY'14. We have also received our YouthWorks allocation, which will level-fund summer programs in Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Malden, and Somerville. We may have less than we need for the year-round program, but will know more as soon as the allocations are made public. We are still waiting to hear about two grants: The Youth Career CONNECT Grant and a National Emergency Grant (NEG).

Benchmarking Chart: Linda briefly reviewed the updated benchmarking chart, as per the REB's decision to revisit the chart every March and September. At this point we should be at about 42 percent (as we are currently in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 4 years). Overall we are staying on track; however, our recent focus on resource development has put us behind on a few items, which we are currently working to complete.

Board Membership: Linda followed up on one of the items from the benchmarking chart by asking if members would like to incorporate brief presentations into future REB meeting about their backgrounds/what they do now as a way to learn about each other's work. Members offered suggestions for various ways this information can be shared both within, and outside of, the format of quarterly REB meetings.

Committee Membership: Linda announced that every REB member – or someone recommended by a REB member who represents his/her company -- should be involved with at least one committee or industry group. Committees and groups include: Policy, Funding, and

Oversight (PFO) Committee; Career Center Committee; Adult Basic Education (ABE) Committee; Metro North Healthcare Partnership; Metro North Regional STEM Network; and the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium. We also have the beginnings of an IT Consortium and a Life Sciences Consortium.

Chris Brennan (The Career Place) then announced that the career centers would like to have program participation by employers, and suggested that if any REB members are interested, or know of others at their firms who might be interested, then to please let him know. Opportunities include giving a presentation or serving on an ad-hoc committee.

**Presentation: Kimberly Napier**

Kimberly provided an overview of Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE) initiatives, which include:

- Career Pathway Programs: Industry-focused programs funded through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE);
- General ABE Programs: Non-industry focused programs, also funded through DESE;
- ABE classes within CONNECT, which include ESOL, pre-GED (formerly named), and transition to college/bridge programs;
- Assisting in organizing the out-stationing of ABE provider staff at Metro North Career Centers
- Connecting ABE providers to employers to better align their curricula to the needs of businesses;
- REB participation in the Metro North College to Career Partnership Steering Committee, which oversaw a project overseeing ABE students transition to post-secondary education;
- Forming an Adult Basic Education Transition to College and Careers Committee;
- Collaborating with community-based organizations regarding ABE training in the workplace, and how to effectively reach out to employers; and
- Funding high school equivalency preparation programs.

Future plans include: collaborating with the English Works Campaign to educate employers about ABE training and resources such as the Workforce Training Fund; and developing a list or database with information on employers who are interested in participating in ABE initiatives.

**Presentation: Mina Reddy**

Mina Reddy, Director of the Cambridge Community Learning Center (CLC), presented on ABE and Adult Pathways.

- The mission of ABE is “To provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, and better employment, and to reach his/her full potential as a family member, productive worker, and citizen.”
- ABE programs include instruction in: ESOL, ABE/ASE, Citizenship, Transition to College, Workplace Education, Family Literacy, and Computer Literacy.
- CLC’s Bridge-to-College program is designed for people who have earned a high school diploma, but are in need of skills to succeed in higher education. This program includes instruction in reading, writing, and math, as well as advising, financial aid, applying for college, and time management.
- Adult Careers Pathways Program is a new, industry-focused initiative established by DESE and the REB. As this year’s focus is on healthcare, CLC is providing instruction for individuals who have an intermediate level of English, and who would like to work as CNAs or home health aides (jobs for which there is a need, and for which a high school diploma is not required). This program also includes English and math components, as well as career awareness and a resume development class.

Outcomes: CLC graduates 12 people per semester. Out of fifteen students who have entered training, six are currently working in the field. The Friends of CLC (a non-profit established to create a scholarship fund) has supported 12 students to date.

To learn more, please visit the [Cambridge Community Learning Center’s web page](#).

#### Adult Basic Education Transition to College and Careers (ABETCC) Committee

The REB has established the ABETCC Committee to facilitate the transition of adult learners from ABE programs to college and careers. So far, the committee consists of several Metro North organizations that offer ABE programs, Metro North career centers, and Middlesex Community College. Committee members will share information about the various systems, identify barriers and support, and explore new models. If you are interested in joining, please contact Kimberly Napier, at [knapier@mnreb.org](mailto:knapier@mnreb.org).

#### **Presentation: Claudia Green and Franklin Peralta**

Claudia Green, Executive Director for English for New Bostonians (ENB) and Franklin Peralta (ENB’s English Works Campaign Organizer), provided an overview of their organization. ENB is a partnership among the City of Boston, foundations, corporations, non-profits, and community organizations, established to address the need for English language classes in Boston. Their work includes:

- Awarding funding for ESL providers in Boston (funds about 1,100 ESL students annually);
- Providing training and technical assistance to organizations that provide ESL classes;

- Running the English Works Campaign – a coalition of business, labor, community and civic leaders and organizations which conducts business outreach, as well as serves to increase state, federal and private funding with the goal of more effectively addressing the need for ESL in the state;
- Doing policy work, including helping to bring the Learn at Work program to fruition;
- Conducting outreach to encourage businesses to use the statewide Workforce Training Fund to address the need for English language among their workforce; and
- Capacity building.

For more information, please visit the websites for: [The English for New Bostonians](#) or [English Works Campaign](#).

Janice Philpot, Executive Director of the Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE), presented on the new High School Equivalency Test. A few highlights:

- The exam formerly termed the “GED” is now the “High School Equivalency Test (HiSET).”
- As of December 2013, the GED was no longer being offered; test centers were shut down, and students who did not pass the GED were discouraged. Much of SCALE’s recent efforts have been focused on getting students to start working towards taking the new exam.
- As of today, March 19, students have not yet been able to take the HiSET, although test centers will open shortly (SCALE is registered as an official HiSET test site, and is working on setting up the portal so they can administer the test).
- The new test differs from the GED in several ways. For example, the HiSET incorporates algebra, and requires that students have the ability to extrapolate information, rather than just know facts.
- It is critical that students are proficient with working on computers before taking the exams (which will soon only be offered electronically). Hands-on computer training courses should be mandatory as part of ABE programs.

To learn more about SCALE, please visit the website for the [Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences](#).

**Other Business: Paul Richard**

Paul announced that the Massachusetts Workforce Board Association meeting will be held tomorrow (Thursday, March 20), at UMass Lowell.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

**The next REB meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2014.**