

Workforce Development Board

Youth Council Minutes

Friday, November 18, 2022

Attendance: via ZOOM

Attendees:

Caren Freyer – PSE&G, Chair
Curtis Myers – Aspire Youth
Jodie Glenn – Bordentown
Jared Toscano – Palmyra High School
Karin Meyer – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Paula Johnson – Rancocas Valley
Randy Hamilton - Smith & Solomon
Barbara Weir - WDB
Krystine Torreto – WDB

Call to Order: 10:05AM – Caren Freyer, Chair

3 objectives for the Council:

1. Set an agenda for the next calendar year. An outreach to ensure that we are capturing each of our youth who may have recently and unfortunately dropped out of school.
2. Identify a group of youth that have not returned to school since Pandemic, that might need services, particularly mental health support services, job development services, or any of the other psychosocial needs to meet the community.
3. Make sure that we're supporting the great service providers and that we are interconnected in a way so that together we can certainly touch and help each other to stand on the shoulders for a successful future.

Round Robin Discussion:

- **Jared Toscano**

It would be beneficial to have a career fair. We tried to do it here at Palmyra High School but unable to get it off the ground this year. It could be something like countywide, State, RCBC or even Palmyra where we have different people come in. Not all students at a high school level are that college track and we can make them aware of some opportunities that are currently available and or will be available in the very near future to them. Not just for our high school, but just for youth in general.

- **Jodie Glenn:** We are Community District Alliance, so we oversee the Adult Education program. Our college prep students feel like they are in good place despite COVID and other bumps. However, there are some students that are struggling. May be looking to find alternative paths like Adult Education. We have alternative programming for some, but I feel like we're not doing enough for them. Providing some more career related opportunities would be inspiring and help them maintain to finish that path of graduation, to be able to see what the next step could be; especially if they're not interested in even the two-year or four-year path.
- **Randy Hamilton:** More schools have been reaching out to us for the last few years wanting me to come in and talk to the students about the careers in truck driving as an alternative path. Some students that have spoken with their counselors expressed interest in this path that could have been influenced by either/both parents who were in the industry. Smith and Solomon would like to try to cultivate that, because there may be funding available to the students, so they're not paying out of pocket if they qualify. We can help these students to get that first job even though they are limited since that they cannot drive out of state until they are 21 years old. However, there are still job opportunities where they can drive within the state, still make a decent living, and then be able to migrate into the bigger world of truck driving thereafter. Tracker Trailer Driver is one of those jobs that most parents don't want to hear as an option, because everybody is focusing on the college track, yet haven't gotten a grip on not every student is a college student waiting to happen. We can try to reach out to more students and do small presentations. It could be beneficial to open people's eyes to the type of opportunities that exist out there.
- **Paula Johnson:** Stated via chat, having a career fair is a great idea and possibly using RCBC as an opportunity to see the campus as well.
- **Curtis Myers:** Our real task is how do we create as many opportunities as possible for our young people and help them think of the opportunities differently. Whatever we can do to introduce these opportunities to our young people that they may not have considered in the future and helping it be more accessible to them as well as preparing them for those opportunities. We can leverage our collective intelligence and collective resources and relationships to help us move the needle for more of the young people in Burlington County to really seize the opportunities that are available to them.
- **Caren Freyer:** Having chaired the large Youth Investment Council in Essex County and the City of Newark, it's understood it's not *Harvard or Homeless*. There certainly is a very strong need, beginning even at the middle school level, to identify those talented scholars that would follow paths to either apprenticeship, vocational programming, or artistic programming, and entrepreneurial skills.

Having spent the last six months in Burlington County, I've observed the growth and development of warehouses, there's also a very strong partnership that we could help to

create for mechatronics and logistics, transportation paths. There are certainly federal grants that could be available in Burlington County, and students with that sort of aptitude certainly could be identified even at younger ages. Having a CDL license when you graduate high school today is an advantage because of so many job opportunities.

We implemented many speakers (role models) to enter the classrooms and talk about nontraditional paths to get them thinking.

Having a job fair will benefit and help our youths. We'll form a subcommittee at our January meeting, to help develop what that job fair should look like. We should entertain have more than one location so that all could partake whether it be in person or even zoom in classroom if that would be a possibility. Palmyra volunteered their site as a potential location.

Council Homework: Please put your good thoughts to paper and send Caren an email caren.freyer@pseg.com on what the efforts the Council should focus on.

Possible Outreach Committee: Have a newsletter that could be offered to the High/Middle school students offering insight on resources, career paths, upcoming career fairs, etc.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:50 AM

Next Meeting: TBD (January 2023)