Youth & Education Committee
April 13, 2016
Attendees: Susan Ronga, Interim Chair, Chris Irving, WIB Director, Cynthia Miller, Davidene Alpart, John DePalma, Alan Concha, Ashiri Lopez, Cristhian Barcelos, Will Graulich, Andrea Newton, Pedro Tavarez, Kathleen Mauer, Dr. Lorenzo Puertas, Mike Powell, Andre' Caban', Mien Mombo, Erica Crenshaw, Minnie Hiller, Josephine Sardina

Introductions
Susan Ronga, of PACE/Paterson Adult Continuing Education, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m.

Minutes
Minutes were reviewed and accepted.

WDB Executive Director’s Report
Christopher Irving apprised the committee that Matt Stevens will be giving a presentation later in the meeting who works with at risk youth related to employment to talk about pathways for youth who are entering the systems such as Catapult, Youth Corp., Youth Build as well as the youth that come in off the street. As per SETC the push is to establish pathways for young adults and no longer is it ok to say that the youth is engaged in an activity.

Chris Irving noted that the conversation is about pathways and putting together a sub-committee to start to develop some ideas and concepts to establish the pathways related to the trades because we have a good partnership with Passaic County Building Trades Association and Mark Roche who is the President of that organization served on our Board. Chris Irving stated that there is an opportunity to be creative when youth come into the programs and make sure there are other options and would like to hear from the members that are in the room who are providers, partners and educators and help create buckets.

Committee Suggestions

- Mike Powell Passaic County Community College noted that it is a great idea because we have career pathways and guided pathways to how we move people through and now that WIOA has taken effect there are certain metrics that we will be using and being able to strategically map that out with the partners to do a pilot which PCCC will be committed to help guide it back to the laws and on a policy perspective.

Chris Irving asked Mike Powell that when it comes to the basic skills component because that is always the sticky point when trying to move not just youth but the TANF, GA and WIOA participants into activities the
basic skills or competency piece how do we prepare them best to be successful in a role that they may have or may not have the aptitude for the level of service of the position? What is your experience and how do we make that bridge?

- Mike Powell PCCC noted that Passaic County Community College redesigned the Adult Basic Education department because each have a different level of challenge because 85% of the students that come into the school are not at college level and the challenge is not every youth or young adult will go into a four year institution or two year associate degree many will go into a career or something other than a traditional pathway. So this is about mastering and how do we improve mastering at a competency based level and we all need to understand that it has to be valued truly by that sector and there must be a bridge component to help strategically place people into the sectors within our area because there is always going to have food, trades and health. We must think about how the sectors connects for example retail is the third highest in our county and now we have to hold the employers accountable when hiring our clients to make sure they are paying better salaries. Mike Powell noted that PCCC evaluations from the HPOG is getting good data and shows that many go on into a 2-4 year institutions.

- Sue Ronga PACE/Youth Corps noted that in reference to the financial field and banking to start partnering with PNC Bank and others that are willing to train and hire. Possibly partner with some of the agencies and/or businesses.

- Erica Crenshaw Youth Corps mentioned that there is a retail customer service 6 week program to get certification where they have a chance to teach life skills. The great thing about the customer service skills that is being used can be used across the board because most agencies utilize customer service such as effective communication, team work etc. Which is an awesome program

- Kathy Mauer DVRS noted that Goodwill also have a program that is for middle supervisor positions.

- Mike Powell PCCC explained that in the retail programs it is like a catch twenty two to get other retailers to buy into it there are 4 critical skills that are needed in any industry. Because they were not able to get other retailers to come on board they decided to go with Goodwill who has 80 stores and was trying to figure out who to move up to middle management. Goodwill was able to move people which
the first cohort was 13 and the second cohort was 20 but now all are being promoted and getting a raise.

- Andrea Newton One-Stop Career Center noted that many of the youth in the programs are classified as at risk but many are at potential when taking the Advanced Level TABE Test scoring at 12.9 and we have to give the youth a chance and would like to see the youth given a chance in IT, STEM and engineering jobs.

Chris Irving stated that is a good point when talking about pathways because when you talk about pathways for example for a CNA the TABE score is set for 8 but for someone who may score above that level we need to create different streams and buckets to determine what category each may go into which having those options is really crucial.

- Davidene Alpart One-Stop Career Center noted that the WIOA really speaks to both Chris Irving and Andrea Newton’s point.
  1. The mandate is that we do not take clients in and move them along the narrow path but we individualize and the comprehensive assessment that becomes a living document traditionally we would write a plan for their long and/or short term goals and put in a file but that will no longer happen now it will be a living document that will follow the student so that the next person that will work with the student will update the file where the client is constantly revisiting and renewing one-self in terms of the career goals and expectations so that they are on the pathway which is implicit in the law and help to get to the next level.

  2. The employer is missing in the room. We need the employer to tell us what is it exactly that is missing? What do they need and what are we sending that makes them not want to expand their wages or expand opportunities for the youth and it is not just low level literacy it is many things which is hard to do because they are busy running their business it is difficult to get the employer to sit down and discuss.

- Cristhian Barcelos Literacy Volunteer of America noted that when it comes to adult education students we have the same standards and we have to make sure that the adults get the same access and opportunities that the youth have because they are also employable as well.

Chris Irving explained to Davidene Alpart’s point is that the responsibility of youth is not just a One-Stop Career Center responsibility it is the responsibility of every agency that they will come in contact with if we are all
on the same page it is a much more concurrent conversation in reference to the youth and the student is hearing the same language from our agencies.

- Julio Sabater Workforce Advantage explained that the population that is being discussed when we talk about literacy clients especially the adults who serve are not on the high tier it is the 3rd, 4th, or 6th grade levels and the challenge is what career pathway can we create with those low levels because each client is only engaged 100 hours of literacy which will take years to reach the level and reengage them so the questions is what kind of occupations can we engage the individuals in the workforce while the levels the client continue in the training.

Chris Irving stated that there is a way because we cannot expect someone to stay in an activity and never get the work experience and it is not a good idea after getting the high school equivalency to then just drop the client into a job. There may be a way for the clients that have not obtained the equivalency to infuse and parallel the experience where they are put in a work experience where they can start to make an income and the provider articulate to the client that they have to get the equivalency whether it be attending class at night or weekends or special course at the college in order to move up in the career levels.

- Dr. Lorenzo Puertas noted that this difficult adult population that we deal with the inching up is very slow and it has occurred to him that when we deal with ow functioning children or special education programs we provided them with different ways of learning without language but other ways of communicating to engage them such as pictures to help the client learn so what if we bring in technology to this hard to develop group and use other ways to reaching higher levels of performance.

Chris Irving ask if he could get volunteers to have a working sub-committee together so that over the next 3-4 month to discuss and workout specifically for the youth to work out pathways and ask that any volunteers see Cynthia Miller and sign up.

**Summer Work Experience**
Davidene Alpart reported the following:

- The One-Stop Career Center will be reducing the number of youth hired to half of the 500 that was hired last year and will be concentrating of the out-of-school youth and 12th graders to concentrate on attaining their credentials in their education and training.
- Davidene Alpart noted that as per WIOA specifically says that they can have a Summer Youth Program as a component of a year round
program so there must be year round services for the youth to engage them and provide information and work experience so that it is not just a six week program.

- The One-Stop Career Center is currently interviewing and going to the schools to recruit. The program is for six week pay rate $8.38 per hour and can be used on their resume.
- The One-Stop Career Center will be hiring 250 from the returning youth from last year so applications will not be sent out.

**Out-of-School Youth**
Davidene Alpart & Sue Ronga reported the following:

- The Request for Proposals (RFP) for youth just closed and the proposals for July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 will be reviewed and awards will be created.
- Inventory of services for out-of-school youth in the process.
- The New Jersey Youth Corps had one of their students come to the conference because the student won first place in a poetry competition. Was a great experience.
- NJ Youth Corps. Will be hosting a youth job fair 151 Ellison Street on May 26, 2016 in half hour intervals all youth organizations are welcome. Graduation will be held on June 15, 2016.
- Sue Ronga noted that there was a Guidance Counselors meeting with the academies to make them aware of the many programs and alternatives that are available to the youth that may not graduate in June.

**Presentation Matt Stevens YMEN Welcome to Work Forum**
Matt Stevens apprised the committee that he represents and agency known as School to Success working with 9th & 10th grade boys from ages 14-18 specializing in behavior development, modification and student achievement.

Matt Steven presented the following highlights:

- School to Success will be hosting a workshop at Passaic County Technical Institute on May 26, 2016 and the focus will be on what employers are looking for and how to start your own business.
- Matt Steven noted that his son helped to model the video Game Tournament and to date have secured contracts in Newark, Camden, Rutgers in New Brunswick and Trenton.
- Young Men Employment Network started in Newark to help find jobs before, while in college or after college where over 500 young men are serviced within a year working with the Newark public schools. The video can be found on the website www.school2success.com the weekly program is called *Think Like a Young Man* where they are
helped throughout the school year by introducing them to mentors based on their interest including doctor's offices, fast food services etc.

- The young men are given a pocket interview kit which is a brochure that can fit into their pocket and includes an interview checklist and the boys must answer at least 5 out of the 10 questions in order to play in the tournament.
- Each of the young men get a card for Dress for Success and how to tie a straight tie or bow tie.
- The brochure also tells the young men the importance of follow-up, sending a thank letter and to learn to ask question, how to engage the employer and how to complete an application which also list a free app to put in their cell phone to remember information that is necessary to complete the application.
- The winner of the tournament will receive a coupon
- Matt Steven talked about a book that was published called *Single Mothers Raising Boys* explained the importance of the *10 Rules of Survival if stopped by the Police* and ask that all parents with young men to engage them with the conversation that could help save their life by teaching them how to communicate with police officers. Matt Stevens noted that they will be hosting workshops on May 14 & May 21, 2016 and all young men are welcome.

Chris Irving stated that for the Passaic County young men he would be willing to put a workshop together for in-school and out-of-school youth for job readiness that are in our programs and he will commit to work with the Youth & Education Committee Chair and extended a thank you to Matt Steven for the work that he does and for the presentation.

The meeting concluded at 11:26 a.m.

The schedule for the next meeting: **TBD**