



High Skills, High Wages

Annual Progress Report to the Legislature

(July 2008)

A Note from the Executive Director:

In your pursuit of making Washington state a great place to learn, work and live, tracking the many programs and activities that fall under the umbrella of “workforce development” can seem daunting. Our job at the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is to help you better understand the interplay of these programs and activities. We plan, monitor and evaluate these activities, while advocating for those exceptional policies that will benefit our workforce and meet the needs of Washington’s business and industry.

Later this year, we will present to you the next workforce development strategic plan, *High Skills, High Wages 2008 – 2018*. This plan outlines how to bring together our public and private resources to ensure a world class workforce development system. But before you look ahead, we wanted to share with you some recent highlights from 2007 and 2008. Each highlight takes aim at one or more of the workforce development goals identified in our current strategic plan. We have organized these achievements along our three key audiences: youth, adults and industry. A fourth category: “Improving Service and Efficiency” addresses systems innovations in delivery of workforce development services.

You will see that many of the initiatives include an evaluation component. These evaluations go beyond the normal performance measures the Workforce Board maintains for major workforce development programs. To remain competitive, we must continue to improve the quality of our workforce development system. These evaluations help us do that.

At the same time, we need to hold ourselves to high standards. To this end, we are working with our five workforce development system partners to integrate and improve the services we deliver. You can read more about our efforts in “Improving Service and Efficiency.”

Your time is valuable, so we have kept this progress report brief. I encourage you to contact me with any questions.

Eleni Papadakis
Executive Director

Youth Highlights

Getting the High School Diploma

In 2007, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) established the Building Bridges Dropout Prevention and Retrieval Program supported by a \$5 million appropriation. Also, the Governor directed, at the recommendation of the Workforce Board, an additional \$550,000 of Washington's discretionary dollars received from the federal Workforce Investment Act (10 Percent Funds) to support dropout prevention and retrieval.

These dollars provided grants designed to build school/community partnerships that reduce the dropout rate and improve the "on-time" graduation rate. The grants went to the following organizations:

- Snohomish Workforce Development Council
- West Valley School District
- Community in Schools – Seattle
- Ferndale School District
- Olympic Workforce Development Council
- Educational Service District #112 (Vancouver)
- Community in Schools – Tacoma
- Pasco School District
- Northwest Community Action Center (Toppenish)
- Federal Way School District
- Reinvesting in Youth
- Educational Service District 113 (Olympia)
- Granite Falls School District
- Suquamish Tribe

These grants run from February 2008 through June 2009. After that, the grant program will receive an independent evaluation.

Looking Beyond High School

Based on the performance of earlier pilot programs in improving indicators that lead to increased graduation numbers, OSPI is using a \$6.4 million appropriation to increase the use of *Navigation 101* in school districts across the state. *Navigation 101* is an intensive career preparation and planning program aimed at students, teachers and parents. While the program typically starts in middle school and goes through the high school years, some elementary schools have also launched the program. Across the state, 103 school districts and 221 schools are implementing *Navigation 101*, including:

- 100 high schools
- 15 programs for seventh through 12th grade
- 18 Alternative Learning Experience programs (where learning occurs primarily away from school)
- 77 middle schools
- 11 elementary schools

OSPI has commissioned a third party to evaluate *Navigation 101* best practices, and to offer recommendations on effective rollout strategies to bring *Navigation 101* to more school districts.

Improving Access to Skill Development

A 2007 Legislative appropriation (\$7.4 million) allows OSPI to provide more support to Skills Centers. Each of the 10 centers operate as an extension of a set of high schools, providing students with a mix of academic and work skills that lead to the job market or advanced education and training. Another appropriation (\$9.4 million) is paying for significant equipment replacement in career and technical education programs and at Skill Centers. During 2007, Skills Centers issued 1,092 industry certifications to students and taught summer programs to 4,642 students.

Expansion of Apprenticeship Preparation

OSPI is fostering development of pre-apprenticeship programs by issuing grants of up to \$10,000 to support program design, school/business/labor agreement negotiations, and student recruitment for pre-apprenticeship programs in the building trades and crafts. Bellingham Technical College, Edmonds School District, Kennewick School District, and New Market Skills Center in Tumwater received pilot grants. Kelso School District, Lynden School District, Marysville School District, Omak School District, Seattle School District, Selkirk School District, Trout Lake School District, Evergreen School District, Mount Adams School District, and Sea-Tac Occupational Skills Center received incentive grants.

Federal Dollars for Career and Technical Education Innovation

The Workforce Board ensured continued federal funding for career and technical education innovation by developing and approving a state plan that meets the newly reauthorized federal Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. The state recently received more than \$23 million, which will flow directly to career and technical education programs at high schools and community and technical colleges and will be dedicated to fostering continued innovation in these programs.

Adult Highlights

Improving Effectiveness of Basic Education and Training Programs

Workforce Board evaluations of Adult Basic Skills programs found employment rates and earnings were much stronger for students who enrolled in specific job skills training while also learning basic reading, writing and math skills. These programs are called Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) and they succeed by uniting Adult Basic Education with job skills training.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has used an allocation increase (\$11.4 million) to boost basic skills education enrollment by a projected 1,250 student full-time equivalents (FTEs). In turn, the community and technical college system more than doubled the number of approved I-BEST programs between 2005-06 and 2006-07. The participation rate grew from 20 programs at 17 colleges to 50 programs at 27 colleges.

Another appropriation (\$7.35 million) will increase I-BEST enrollment by 250 student FTEs per year, allowing the program to expand to all 34 of the state's community and technical colleges. As the number of programs increase, I-BEST students continue to demonstrate greater proficiency in basic reading, writing and math, and better professional-technical skills, than their counterparts who aren't enrolled in the integrated model.

Fostering Success for Low-Income and Working Adult Students

Based on the track record of 10 pilot programs that provided low-income students with support services, tuition, fees, books and supplies, the Legislature created and funded (\$23 million) the Opportunity Grant Program. This program targets low-income students who pursue high-wage, high-demand career pathways, such as construction, business, manufacturing and health care. Each of the state's 34 community and technical colleges has received Opportunity Grant funding.

Meanwhile, the Workforce Board is administering two pilot programs, funded by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, that provide industry mentors to Opportunity Grant students studying health care. The Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council operates one of the pilots, working with area hospitals and the following colleges: Lake Washington Technical College, Bellevue Community College, Renton Technical College, North Seattle Community College, South Seattle Community College, Seattle Central Community College and Renton Vocational Institute. The South Central Workforce Development Council operates the other pilot, working with Yakima Valley Community College students to pair them with professional role models that will help them complete their education and training with one-on-one support.

A \$1 million appropriation now provides working students access to the State Need Grants. To be eligible, students can enroll in just three to five credit-bearing quarter credits, or the equivalent semester credits. It is too early to tell if this strategy is working but we know from a 2006 Workforce Board assessment that reducing financial barriers is critical to boosting student retention in postsecondary programs.

Creating the Right Incentive for Success

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges *Student Achievement Initiative Task Force* developed a way of measuring and rewarding colleges for improving student achievement. These new measures emphasize building college readiness and earning college credit that help students gain momentum for college success. The new performance-based criteria will be in place for the 2008-09 school year.

Clearing a Path to a Bachelor's Degree

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is piloting different types of Applied Baccalaureate degrees that recognize a student's skills and knowledge acquired through his or her first degree, allowing a baccalaureate degree to be earned within an additional two years.

- Bellevue Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Radiation and Imaging Sciences
- Peninsula College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management
- Olympic College – Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- South Seattle Community College – Bachelor of Applied Science in Hospitality Management

An additional \$452,000 has been allocated for startup and planning for three more applied baccalaureate degree programs, including one at a technical college.

Expanding Apprenticeship Training

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges allocated \$2,835,000 to increase enrollment in apprenticeship training programs by 300 student FTEs. When compared to fall quarter data for all apprenticeship programs for the previous year, enrollments increased by 535 FTE in fall quarter 2007-08.

Industry Highlights

Supplying Workers to Meet Employer Needs

To address skill gaps identified by the Workforce Board through its regular surveys, the Legislature provided \$16 million to expand general enrollments at community and technical colleges by 1,950 student FTEs. Another \$4.6 million went to expand High Employer Demand programs of study. These funds expanded enrollment by 518 students.

Community and Technical College Programs Receiving High Demand Funds for 2007-2009	
College	Project
Bates	Increase Machinist Training Capacity
Bellevue	Electroneurodiagnostic*
Bellingham	Process & Control Technology Industries Expansion
Big Bend	Commercial Driver
Centralia	Capacity Expansion in Energy Technology
Clark	Expansion of Associate Degree Nursing
Clover Park	Architectural Engineering Capacity Expansion
Columbia Basin	Surgical Technology
Edmonds	Increasing Capacity in Allied Health
Everett	Computer Aided Design
Grays Harbor	Commercial Driver
Green River	Expanding Occupational Therapy
Highline	Gateway International Healthcare Worker Re-Entry Assistance
North Seattle	Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning
Olympic	Welding Technology Expansion
Pierce FS	Occupational Safety and Health Expansion
Pierce Puyallup	Increasing Construction Management
Renton	Civil Computer Aided Design Drafting Program
Shoreline	Expansion of Associate Degree Nursing
Skagit	Nursing Expansion
South Puget Sound	Nursing Education
South Seattle	LPN to RN Ladder
Tacoma	Health Information Management Program Expansion
Walla Walla	Associate Degree Nursing Expansion
Whatcom	Online Physical Therapist Assistant
Yakima	LPN to RN Bridge

*Programs in bold are new.

Building on the Strength of our Existing Industry Sectors

Industry skill panels focus the resources of business, labor and education for purposes of identifying and closing worker skill gaps in a specific industry sector and/or cluster. These partnerships enable industries and public partners to anticipate and respond effectively to industry's changing workforce needs. Currently, there are 15 skill panels receiving Workforce Board funding. An evaluation of skill panels is currently underway, to be completed by mid-year 2008.

Other activities in support of industry sectors and clusters:

- The Workforce Board and the Economic Development Commission began developing the process and criteria for identifying key industry clusters for Washington.
- Washington is a leading participant in the National Governors Association’s Policy Academy on sectors. Our state team includes representatives from workforce and economic development, business, and labor.
- The Workforce Board has conducted an analysis of the supply and demand for skilled workers in over a dozen occupational clusters.

Meeting Special Needs of Rural Communities

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges allocated over \$1 million of Workforce Development/Rural and Economically Impacted Community Development funds to support the extraordinary costs associated with the startup or expansion of local high demand programs linked to economic development.

Community and Technical Colleges Receiving Workforce Development Funds for 2007-2009	
College	Project
Bellingham	Dental Hygiene Program Development
Big Bend	Healthcare Assistant
Grays Harbor	Commercial Truck Driving
Lake Washington	RN Expansion for ABE/ESL
Olympic	Electronics Program Update and Expansion
Renton	Statewide Centralized Clinical Placement Partnership
Seattle District	Statewide Centralized Clinical Placement Partnership
Shoreline	Improvement & Expansion of Biotechnology Lab. Specialist Program
Skagit Valley	Aluminum Welding/Fabrication
Tacoma	Secure Logistics, Transportation, & Supply Chain Management
Whatcom	Pathways to a Medical Career: New Opportunities in Medical Assisting
Yakima	Statewide Centralized Clinical Placement Partnership

Improving Service and Efficiency

Identifying and Removing Barriers to Services

Workforce development agencies and partners formed the *Partnering for Performance: Washington's Workforce Compact*, which clarified roles and responsibilities and committed partners to improving performance system-wide through service integration. This compact has driven participating agencies to identify barriers. Current priorities include streamlining co-enrollment processes, encouraging staff cross training, co-locating staff among workforce partners and raising awareness about the state's core performance measures. Work will continue in 2008 and through the next strategic plan to address these issues.

Improving Accessibility of Frontline Services

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation overhauled its frontline service design, eliminating a waiting list that peaked at 12,250 individuals. There is now no waiting for DVR services.

Increasing Coordination with Education Systems

The Governor established the P-20 Council, with the Workforce Board Chair as a member, to bring together leaders of early learning, K-12, higher education and workforce preparation with the goal of increasing coordination and accountability in our education system.

Aligning State and Local Goals for WorkSource

The Employment Security Department and Workforce Development Councils are conducting WorkSource pilots on management and budget integration. WorkSource is Washington's system of one-stop career centers, affiliates and online services providing a wide range of workforce development programs. A number of Workforce Development Councils have redesigned their systems to enhance service integration. For example:

- Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County spearheaded the development of the Self-Sufficiency Calculator, an online tool that lets customers view the cost of living in each region of the state and the wages needed to pay for it.
- Workforce Development Council of Southwest Washington integrated its services to more efficiently link customers with disabilities with employers.
- Spokane Area Workforce Development Council integrated programs and staff at its WorkSource office, and made it easier for job seekers and employers to navigate the system.

Working Outside the Agency Box

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation led an interagency workgroup on how the workforce development system can better serve people with disabilities. Meanwhile, the Department of Labor and Industries created a vocational rehabilitation pilot program (2007 Legislation - SSB 5920) that includes placing full-time vocational professionals at WorkSource locations.