



Maryland's Emerging Workforce: Opportunities for Youth Success



Policy Recommendations:
Emerging Workforce Committee
Governor's Workforce Investment Board



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GWIB's Emerging Workforce Committee

The Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board was established in the spring of 2008. The Committee is comprised of representatives from business, state and local government, education, organized labor, and community and nonprofit organizations. It was tasked to provide a set of recommendations to ensure the successful transition of all Maryland youth to careers, college, and productive adulthood. Of particular concern to the Committee were the workplace prospects of young people with significant barriers to employment and youth who are disconnected from school and work. The Committee established three principles to guide its work:

1. As Governor O'Malley has stated, "There is no such thing as a spare Marylander." Every young person is a potential asset to Maryland's future workforce.
2. All young people can succeed given the opportunity and adequate support, along with multiple pathways to academic and career credentialing.
3. A number of promising efforts are already underway in Maryland. There is a need to connect the dots and fill in the gaps.

The Committee met regularly for over a year, during which time they reviewed current literature, reviewed best practices and came to consensus on critical elements necessary to ensure successful transitions for all youth. The Committee placed particular emphasis on research based evidence to identify critical elements for successful transition of all youth. The result was the development of a draft white paper that includes a set of policy recommendations to support a new Maryland State Youth Employment Policy.

In May 2009, the Committee convened a policy summit, attended by more than 150 education, government and private industry leaders. The Summit, held at the Owings Mills Campus of Stevenson University, was designed to:

- validate the critical need to invest in the development of an educated and skilled emerging workforce as an economic competitiveness issue for the state,
- prioritize and spotlight the key issues directly related to promoting a prepared and qualified emerging workforce,
- garner support/advocacy for policy recommendations and recruit champions from across the stakeholder community, and
- initiate a bold "Campaign for Maryland's Future Workforce."

This final report reflects both the initial work of the Committee and the valuable feedback received as a result of the Summit.

A Cautionary Tale

Far too many of our country's young people are leaving high school ill-equipped and unprepared to be successful in today's workplaces. America's students are transitioning into a knowledge-based, global economy, one that requires more education and technical skills than ever before. If we are to remain competitive in the 21st century economy, the United States must better prepare its emerging workforce. Unfortunately, we are witnessing a growing mismatch between the needs of our marketplace and the skills and attributes of our workforce pipeline. While the fastest growing jobs over the next decade will require some level of post secondary education and/or training, we are seeing more young people attempting to enter the work place lacking even basic academic and occupational competencies. This bodes dire consequences for the future, particularly as the baby boom generation begins to retire and critical shortages of experienced workers loom greater.

Adding to this picture is the large number of youth who are falling out of the educational system before acquiring requisite credentials and workforce familiarity. Completely outside of the talent pool, these disconnected youth are not in education nor training, not employed nor seeking employment. These young people are facing severely restricted employment opportunities and limited lifetime income. Their prospects in the labor market are extremely bleak and they are most likely to be represented in statistics on poverty, crime, and incarceration.

There is a short window of opportunity to focus commitment and innovation to change the trajectory of all Maryland's youth.

As Americans, we are facing an economic crisis. But, we are also facing a human crisis, with growing numbers of young people unable to attain a reasonable quality of life, impacting this generation and generations to come.

A Situation of Crisis Proportion

Maryland, like the nation, is in the throes of a great shift. The need for highly educated, highly skilled workers is increasing.

Here are some facts: Nationally, between 2000 and 2015, at least 85 percent of newly created jobs will require education and/or training beyond a high school diploma¹. By 2012, it is estimated that there will be a shortage of more than seven million workers with an associates' degree or higher and a surplus of three million workers with the least education². In Maryland, current middle and high skilled jobs make up the largest portion of current work opportunities (65 percent), with diminishing need for lower skilled workers (35 percent). Maryland's industry sectors with the most robust growth this decade exemplify this shift - aerospace, bioscience, construction, healthcare, education, and hospitality/tourism – all requiring a more specialized, educated workforce³.

The demand for workers adept in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) continues to grow at a rapid pace – crosscutting industries. Globalization, technology, and scientific advances are changing the nature of work and how it is performed, in observable ways now, but in ways that we cannot even begin to predict in the current generation of youths' lifetime.

Maryland is realizing unprecedented economic development opportunity as a result of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), the U.S. Department of Defense's plan to reorganize its base structure. The reorganization will bring an increased focus on research and development, as well

as testing and evaluation at Maryland's military installations. BRAC is expected to produce tens of thousands of new technical jobs in fields including engineering, computer science, information technologies, and telecommunications and management. This presents the state with both a challenge to proactively prepare a highly-skilled and highly-educated labor force to fill these current and future openings and an opportunity to refocus and better align our education and training systems in ways which prepare workers to meet the demands of Maryland's thriving technology-driven economy.

The labor force is in generational transition. Nationally, by 2010, the largest part of the labor force will be comprised of our current teens and young adults. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of workers 35 to 44 years of age will decrease by 10 percent and those aged 16 to 24 will increase by 15 percent¹. Maryland's Baby Boomers, to the tune of 1.5 million, begin to reach the retirement age of 65 in 2011. Maryland workers, ages 55 and older, represent 18 percent of all of the state's workers. It is projected that, by 2020, one in four Maryland workers will be 55 years of age or older compared to less than one in five in 2005. Maryland's industry sectors with the highest percent of aging workers include education, public administration, real estate, healthcare, and social services³. This generational transition, which is right at our doorstep, presents an enormous challenge with respect to the existence of a capable workforce to assure critical jobs and knowledge/experience transfer to a new generation of workers.

Young people are not sufficiently prepared to meet the demands of 21st Century careers. "It is clear that high school graduation is no longer an adequate end goal for youth"⁴, yet nationally, almost a third of our 9th graders do not complete high school four years after entering, with black and Hispanic students achieving an on-time graduation rate of about 50 percent⁵. High school students living in low-income families have incidence of dropping out of school that is six times the rate of their high-income family peers⁶. While we are proud of Maryland's number one ranking of public schools in our country, we cannot ignore that, of the 330,779 youth ages 16 to 19 in Maryland, over 21,000 do not have a high school diploma and are not enrolled in school. Nearly two thirds of these out of school youth are also out of work³. If Maryland's high schools and colleges were to raise the graduation rates of Hispanic, African-American students to the levels of white students by 2020, the potential increase in personal income in the state would add more than \$6.0 billion to Maryland's economy. (Alliance for Excellent Education Briefing, *Demography as Destiny: How American Can Build a Better Future*, October 2006)

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As mentioned previously, 85 percent of new jobs require education or training beyond high school. However, slightly over half of Maryland's high school graduates enroll in college the following fall, but only 65 percent of students pursuing a four-year degree earn that degree within six years. Additionally, the percentage is substantially decreased for African American students (44 percent) and Hispanic students, compared to white students (71 percent). At the community college level, slightly more than half of Maryland freshman return for their sophomore year⁷.

Our school systems are challenged to provide solutions. Using research-based indicators of potential school drop out - truancy, multiple suspensions, expulsions, school disengagement/boredom, low achievement, substance abuse, pregnancy, non-English language learners, learning disability and emotional disorders - many local school districts are implementing a variety of intervention efforts, focusing particularly on the transitional periods from elementary to middle school and from middle

to high school. These types of initiatives are critical in helping to keep our most at risk youth in school. And while Maryland is clearly seeing increases in students progressing from high school to postsecondary education, much more must be done on a statewide effort to support the school systems' effort to retain and graduate all students with a high school diploma.

Additionally, catalyzed by the federal School to Careers legislation in the early 1990's, enormous advances have been made in our school districts to deliver rigorous curriculum, to infuse career preparation targeted to demand industries, to promote school based accountability, and to improve student and school performance. Indeed, Maryland's public schools are among the best in the nation. However, our 21st century workforce needs are exponentially greater than the progress we have witnessed.

Across the country, employers express a high degree of dissatisfaction with the competency of high school graduates. A landmark survey of more than 400 employers in the United States has

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yielded some very troubling results. Only 9 percent of employers report that new entrants with 4-year college degrees have excellent knowledge and applied skills. Employers report high school graduates, at every level of employment, as having important deficiencies – particularly with respect to written communications, professionalism, and critical thinking⁸. The Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT) cites lack of skilled employees as having an impact on business

in terms of decreases in productivity, inability to meet deadlines, and a reduction in the quality of products or services⁹.

More than ever before, we need to focus our attention and action on youths' acquisition of 21st century applied skills. Where this happens, employers express positive results. For example, Maryland conducts an annual survey of employers who provide work-based learning opportunities for students enrolled in Career and Technology Education programs. In the 2008 survey, employers report: 98 percent of these students met or exceeded job requirements at the time of placement; 98 percent exceeded workplace readiness requirements; and 82 percent learned new skills faster than the average worker¹⁰.

Entering the labor market is growing more difficult for youth. Research has shown that early work experiences are crucial to youth acquisition of 21st Century skills. In an analysis of Maryland data, Sum et al. found that the employment success is strongly linked to individual's prior work experience. The more teens worked in earlier periods, the more likely that they are working today. This holds true for years worked, number of weeks worked, and hours worked. Nationally, since 2001, the teen employment rate is on a downward trajectory and is at historic lows. In Maryland, the decline in teen employment was 9.2 percent between 2001 and 2007, exceeding all of our neighboring states¹¹. Access to employment for Maryland high school students varies enormously across race, class, disability, and gender groups portending the enormous need to expand work experience opportunities for students, particularly those from low income, single parent, and minority families, especially males.

Disconnected youth are at an enormous disadvantage. An estimated two out of three high school graduates (ages 16 to 19) were employed in Maryland versus one in three school dropouts. This results in labor market disadvantages that will continue throughout their lives¹¹. Of 20-year old high school dropouts, 92 percent had not enrolled in some type of programming to get back on track – whether continued schooling, youth development or job training. Only 55 percent of these young

people had some type of employment¹². In 2006 in Maryland, there were nearly 74,000 youth, ages 16 to 24, who were both out of school and out of work and that number surely has escalated given the current economy. Of young adults not enrolled in college, employment rates vary quite widely across educational subgroups – with 56 percent of high school dropouts holding some type of job versus 90 percent of youth with an Associate’s degree¹¹. Wages and employment are clearly and directly related to educational attainment. Each dropout, over his or her lifetime, costs the public approximately \$260,000, with about \$60,000 in lost taxes alone¹³. In Maryland, nearly nine out of every 100 high school dropouts between the ages of 20 to 24 were institutionalized in jails, prisons, and mental hospitals, with one in four black males in this age range incarcerated in 2006. These financial costs and human capital costs have huge implications for a civil society and future generations¹¹.

A Window of Opportunity

In Maryland, we have a vision of a future workforce that is qualified to meet the expectations and demands of the 21st Century labor market. We recognize that a highly educated, highly-skilled, and capable workforce is vital to the innovation and productivity that will strengthen our state’s economic status, competitiveness, and the well being of its citizenry.

Maryland prides itself on being on the cutting edge of many workforce issues. Meeting emerging workforce challenges is no exception. Governor Martin O’Malley has made workforce development a priority. In response to his charge, the Governor’s Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) created the **Emerging Workforce Committee**, comprised of representatives from a broad spectrum of educational and human services agencies, non-profit organizations and the corporate community. The committee was tasked with initiating a critical dialog leading to an agreed upon set of recommendations for ensuring Maryland’s emerging workforce is and will continue to be exceptionally equipped to maintain our competitive status nationally and globally. This white paper is a beginning step in that process – recognizing that Maryland needs to close the gap between vision and current reality with clear and guiding state policy and strategic policy actions to improve the career readiness and transitions of all of Maryland’s youth.

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Positive Work Is Already Underway

Maryland has a strong foundation on which to build renewed commitment and action and much good work is already taking place. However, what is needed is **an overarching youth workforce policy framework** that would enhance our ability to connect the dots, and move systems and stakeholders forward to achieve a shared vision. Renewed commitment and action begins with recognizing the importance of youth workforce readiness and mobilizing our collective will to invest in sustainable strategies to prepare and assist youth in making positive transitions. We do not begin this effort with an empty plate. Maryland has important building blocks in place, including:

Policy initiatives, such as the **P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland**, established by Executive Order, brings together leaders in the business community, P-20 education, and local and state government, with the mission to better prepare Maryland students for the jobs of the 21st Century. **Ready by 21**, led by the Governor's Office for Children, is a five year action agenda focusing on youth successfully transitioning into adulthood. The goal is that all Maryland youth will be ready for school, work and life by the time they are 21, with a focus on youth transitioning out of public systems - foster care, juvenile services and youth with disabilities. The Ready by 21 report includes recommendations with comprehensive strategies and resources designed to address the needs in education, employment, housing and health.

Statewide service systems, such as **Career and Technology Education (CTE)**, operating in every school system in Maryland and articulated with higher education, provide career preparation in crucial high skill, high demand, high wage career pathways. CTE was developed based on industry standards and leads to industry recognized certifications, incorporating skills for success and high quality workplace-based

Time Tested/Research Supported: We Know What Works

Fortunately, the solutions to many of these challenging issues exist. We know that specific elements are consistently identified as crucial to promoting youth workforce readiness and the successful transition of youth to careers and are consistently found in programs and strategies that demonstrated effective youth employment outcomes:

- Personalized, supportive learning environments where strong relationships are established with caring adults that guide, mentor, teach, and support youth
- Early identification and provision of support to students who are likely to need extra help and coaching along the way to meet Maryland's challenging curriculum standards
- Rigorous, relevant, and engaging classes that meet young people where they are and propel students to higher levels of competency, with authentic projects so students apply and connect learning to the real world
- Early and sustained career development provided throughout the years of schooling, with access to high quality career information and resources
- Exposure to workplaces and workers, offering multiple opportunities to explore careers and interests, apply academics, and build transferable skills through workplace-based approaches – from job shadowing and internships to summer work experience and on-the-job training
- Multiple pathways for high quality career preparation, credentialing learning, and transition support to provide different avenues for youth to achieve academic and career related credentials and
- Employer leadership and involvement in delivering an array of programs, extra-curricular experiences, and workplace-based learning opportunities to promote acquisition of 21st Century skills and knowledge of careers.

experiences. **Locally delivered workforce development opportunities** provide a range of emerging workforce services in the different regions of the state, including One Stop Center services, summer youth work experience and a cadre of academic and job training programs which connect out-of-school youth to the workforce.

Local programs, initiatives, and services, include **career academies**, schools that combine academic and career preparation in specific pathways. **Small learning communities** are schools divided into smaller entities, with each providing immersion in a theme or special interest area, such as law, government, health, technology and the arts. Small learning communities often operating in partnership with community organizations, government agencies, higher education, and/or employers; and a variety of special programs focused on preparing young people for careers. These local efforts offer some of the greatest potential for expansion, bringing effective initiatives and programs to scale where evidence-based practices exist.

Business engagement opportunities include the **Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT)**, a coalition of employers dedicated to preparing young people to meet the skills demands of 21st Century workplaces. MBRT activates their commitment by supporting education initiatives that demand high standards, partnering with local school systems and schools and conducting the comprehensive Achievement Counts Campaign. The Achievement Counts Campaign entices youth to make good choices for academic achievement and engages the business sector in helping students understand the importance of their choices. The state's **Tax Credit for Approved Work-based Learning Programs** provides employers 15 percent tax credit on wages paid for up to a \$1,500 credit per student, ages 16 to 23, employed a minimum of 200 hours. Students must be participating in approved work-based learning programs that meet specific criteria and requirements, are school or post-secondary sponsored and supervised, are connected to classroom learning and bear academic credit.

Other Promising Practices and Innovation

Throughout the nation, several interesting initiatives demonstrate ways to strengthen youth workforce preparation and transitions to meet 21st Century labor market demands. These can serve as beacons and inform our efforts, as we work to improve opportunities for young people and strengthen our capacity to meet this 21st Century challenge. Illustrative examples include:

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.21stcenturyskills.org) brings together the business community, education leaders, and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education and to ensure that students emerge from our schools with the skills needed to be effective citizens, workers, and leaders in the 21st century. Having defined 21st Century skills outcomes, the Partnership has developed a framework of the skills, knowledge, and expertise students need to succeed in work and in life.

Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School in Washington, D.C. is a new partnership innovation and a unique public school, where all three fields of architecture, construction and engineering technologies are combined. Housed in a “green” school, students attending Phelps engage in a project-based curriculum.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) (www.pltw.org) is an approach to teaching and learning that adds rigor to traditional technical programs and relevance to academics. By engaging in hands-on, real-world projects, students understand how the skills they are learning in the classroom can be applied in everyday life. PLTW integrates science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) so that

students pursue challenging learning within the context of engineering or biosciences.

Northrop Grumman Corporation, a Maryland-based employer, makes substantive investments in public education, using a multi-prong partnership approach to increase students' interest, knowledge, capacity for careers that require science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Among Northrop Grumman's key initiatives are an internship program preparing middle school teachers with information about STEM career opportunities; an engineering scholarship program providing \$240,000 of scholarships; senior level and retired engineers, and company employees prepared and serving as mentors to teachers and students; and a network of hundreds of employees that go into Maryland's classrooms to familiarize students with careers that require competencies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Philadelphia's Project U-Turn (www.projectturn.net), a citywide campaign to focus public attention on the dropout crisis, designs strategies and leverages resources for dropout prevention in Philadelphia's public schools. Project U-Turn's extensive data analysis efforts have pinpointed specific challenges and needs, beginning to shape policy and programs within school districts in the region.

Florida's Memorandum of Agreement among its Department of Children and Families, Department of Education and Agency for Workforce Innovation is designed to facilitate data sharing among agencies to reduce redundancy in data collection. The Memorandum specifies the use of a work order process that defines what data will be shared and how it will be shared—with a focus on verification, accountability, and reporting.

New York's new, innovative grant program recognized the importance of internships by providing high quality internships to 1,850 youth statewide in its first year of operation. A collaborative between education, economic development, the business community, and the workforce system, the endeavor will serve students who are 16 years of age and older and attending high school, post-secondary, or technical schools.

Project C3 (www.c3online.org) is Minnesota's Youth Portal. This project connects communities to services through facilitated collaboration, resource mapping, training, and advocacy for solutions to transition, employment, and accessing post-secondary education. It helps teens, young adults, and their families locate resources, particularly internships to help youth learn, earn, and engage in the community.

A Maryland Youth Workforce Policy for the 21st Century

This paper identifies a great need to ensure all Maryland's youth are workforce ready, and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that meet the demands of the 21st century workplace. Leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners need a clear policy framework to unite the vision, work with common purpose, and respond with a sense of urgency to ensure that our current and future generations of youth transition successfully to work and contribute to their communities, economy, and Maryland's competitiveness. The following policy recommendations are offered in an effort to better prepare and strengthen our future workforce.

Emerging Workforce Policy Issues

Issue 1. Maryland needs to establish a policy framework and actions that connect agencies and organizations under a common vision of youth workforce preparation.

Improving the future of our emerging workforce requires the involvement of many stakeholders from a broad range of institutions, organizations, and providers. Only by working together driven by a common vision, can we have real impact on the issues. Maryland also needs to increase public awareness so that the urgency of the problem and its potential impact are more broadly understood. The public needs to see that comprehensive solutions are necessary and require a full range of involvement - employers, community groups, community colleges, universities, public schools, employment training agencies, human service agencies, political leaders - all have a stake in and something important to offer to make this vision a reality.

All schools need to infuse career and employability development in the learning process across the board, consistently in all schools, ingrained in the way we do business – with responsibility and with accountability.

Additionally, many youth and their families are unaware of broad range of programs, services available to teens and young adults in their community. This can be challenging when transitioning from high school to the adult world of postsecondary education or training, employment, and independent living. By providing information and making the connection to a broad range programs and services available throughout the state can help address the many of the challenges faced by the transition age youth and improve the outcomes for all youth.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends the following policy actions:

Key Action Step: A web-based portal should be created that links information on all state and local youth resources, programs, and services, and providing contact information so that youth, parents, state and local child serving agencies, and community and faith-based organizations have easy access to career development and related resources.

Outcome: Implementation of a web portal by June 30, 2010, that provides comprehensive information on resources and services needed by transition- age youth.

Other Policy Actions:

- The state should increase efforts to provide direct linkages between the public education system and state-funded training providers, including the Department of Juvenile Services, other youth-serving organizations, pre-apprenticeship, registered joint apprenticeship and employer-sponsored apprenticeship programs, to provide Maryland youth with expanded opportunities to enter living-wage careers in high-growth sectors.
- The state should continue to develop the Longitudinal Data System, similar to the State of Florida's, that allows organizations and agencies serving young people to exchange valuable information and track individuals through programs and services, using a unique student identifier. This will help in the alignment, integration and coordination of all youth services and address the need to build/increase capacity for providers through a variety of avenues (webinars, regional meetings, etc.)
- The state should undertake a public awareness campaign to increase stakeholders' understanding of the pending workforce crisis.
- The governor should task the P-20 Council with establishing accountability measures that would permit the collection and tracking of outcome data to measure post-secondary success.

Issue 2. Maryland must ensure that public schools, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, higher education, and community providers prepare youth to be workforce ready and support their transition to 21st Century careers.

Maryland schools need to view workforce readiness as a critical goal of schooling. All students must engage in career awareness and exploration and have exposure to a broad array of career opportunities in order to build a solid foundation for informed career planning and decision-making. This needs to be accompanied by a career planning process beginning in the early years and continuing through the transition years. This will ensure that young people have techniques and tools to determine their assets and needs, set goals and action steps for achievement, enact their plans, and modify their course when faced with opportunity or circumstance. All youth must have easy access to high quality, age-appropriate career information and resources to help them select, prepare for, and achieve success in their chosen career pathway.

Most importantly, it is imperative that all Maryland youth have multiple, direct avenues of workplace experience, from job shadowing and mentoring to internships and summer work experience. At every education level, students must engage in assignments, projects, and assessments that focus on authentic, real world applications to foster the development of 21st century skills: problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork and leadership, communication, computer literacy, professionalism, work ethic, ethics, and social responsibility. Maryland needs to expand opportunities for career preparation and in-depth interest-based learning to foster skills development for entry into fields of high growth in targeted regional labor markets through career and technology education programs, career academies, and interest-based programs.

The bridge from high school to postsecondary learning, including apprenticeship opportunities, must be strengthened. This is particularly important in the community college system which serves a large share of Maryland's high school graduates. Dual enrollment in the final year of high school in community college coursework that provides students with transcribed or articulated credits as well as early exposure to pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities are examples of ways help provide a bridge into higher education. Assessing college readiness, providing academic and personal support will ensure successful transition and by providing incentives for community college program completion and credentialing will support student completions.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends the following policy actions:

Key Action Step: Every local school district should provide and expand workplace-based learning opportunities to ensure that all students have workplace based learning experiences before they complete high school.

Outcome: Establishment of a statewide data collection and reporting system that enables local school districts to measure implementation and progress.

Other Policy Actions:

- The state should establish measures to ensure that all Maryland school systems develop and implement a comprehensive and meaningful “classroom to careers” plan that illustrates how the Maryland Career Development Framework (COMAR 13A.04.10.01 and .02) is put in place to promote career awareness and exploration, informed career decision-making, and acquisition of 21st century skills.
- The state should take an aggressive leadership role in providing high quality workplace-based learning for all youth, regardless of educational program or level of instructional support. These learning opportunities need to reinforce classroom-based academic skills with real world work experiences. These experiences can be gained through summer youth employment, after-school experiences or as part of the regular school schedule. Opportunities could and should be expanded by:
 - taking legislative actions to increase the availability of authentic internships for students,
 - promoting tax credits for employers who hire students in high quality work-based learning programs, including internships, and
 - encouraging businesses to provide externships/work experiences for teachers to help them better understand how to integrate the teaching of workplace skills into the curriculum.
- Maryland teacher preparation programs and professional development should include training in career development, exploration and acquisition of 21st century skills, mentoring youth and infusing problem/project-based learning so that teachers can effectively integrate concepts, content, and skills within teaching and learning.
- That state should support recommendations of the Career and Technology Education Taskforce of the P-20 Council to expand offerings, increase the rigor, and increase access to Career and Technology Education programs.
- Every local jurisdiction should have multiple pathways for youth to achieve academic and career success.
- Jurisdictions should take advantage of state law that permits funding for students to pursue high school credentials until age 21 as one avenue for funding multiple pathways strategies.

Issue 3. Maryland needs to expand and create programs and services that provide real options that engage students in learning and effectively re-engage disconnected youth; helping them achieve academic and industry-recognized credentials; and enter work within a career pathway with good prospects for the future.

Every young person is an asset to Maryland's future workforce. All of Maryland's youth need to be on a positive trajectory from school to work. Unfortunately all too many remain disconnected. By expanding options for academic credentialing, attainment of applied skills, career preparation, achievement of industry-recognized credentials, and transition support, we will increase the likelihood that they will complete their high school education and enter adulthood more work ready.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends the following policy actions:

Key Action Step: The state should ensure that every jurisdiction provide multiple pathways for youth to gain workplace skills and academic credentials.

Outcome: Each local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) will collect and report annually information about multiple pathway options available in their jurisdiction.

Other Policy Actions:

- The state should support the recommendation of the STEM Taskforce's report, *Investing in STEM to Secure Maryland's Future*.
- The state should develop policies that encourage and support expanding the menu of job training programs and educational options with flexible schedules to encourage youth to reconnect and prepare for 21st century labor market participation, providing options that effectively engage youth who are currently detached. Strategies should include:
 - expand occupational (hands-on) employment training options for all youth (serving not just youth with academic, college prep curriculum),
 - expand pre-apprenticeship training programs and ensure youth meet entry requirements for registered apprenticeship programs,
 - expand dual enrollment opportunities for occupational programs, particularly those that are currently non-credit courses,
 - introduce both youth and their parents to apprenticeships as a valuable and acceptable option for a broad range of career opportunities that can lead to college credit, and
 - encourage the State Board of Education to adopt the GED Options program that enables students to earn a Maryland high school diploma by examination without requiring withdrawal from a high school program.
- The state should promote the Career Development Framework to state agencies and community-based organizations so that all youth benefit from career and employability skills development, as well as informed career planning and decision-making.
- The state should establish community-based hubs for out of school youth and their parents' to provide easy access to information and resources designed to help reconnect out-of-school youth to a full range of learning environments where they can achieve the Maryland high school credential.

Issue 4. Maryland needs to engage the employer community as key partners in solution-building.

Youth are the talent pipeline for tomorrow's workforce and it is important that Maryland's employer community understands it has a vested interest and a stake in youths' workplace readiness. Employers need to be more actively involved in helping youth become work ready. The business community can be instrumental in providing advocacy, technical know-how, and financial support. More than ever before, the employer community needs to understand that helping youth learn to work is an investment in their own economic vitality.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends the following policy actions:

Key Action Step: The state should support the creation of a paid internship program that includes businesses and other sponsors.

Outcome: The creation of an internship program that provides 1,000 paid internships by FY 2010.

Other Policy Actions:

- The state should solicit input from employers and business groups to design effective incentives resulting in an increase in employer engagement by providing workplace-based learning for students and teacher externships (work experience within the business community), as well as consider the following types of strategies:
 - promote the use of targeted tax incentives for hiring youth like the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the state's Tax Credit for Workplace-based Learning Programs,
 - create set-asides for youth work experience in state contracts, as a condition of award,
 - encourage state and local agencies to actively offer workplace-based experiences, and
 - develop a governor's awards program, acknowledging employer community innovation and performance in support of workplace-based learning.
- The governor should champion business engagement and use every opportunity to communicate the importance of the employer community's involvement.

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Addendum: Youth Focus Group Summary

The GWIB's Emerging Workforce Committee conducted a focus group on August 19, 2009, at the Mayor's Office of Employment Development's Career Academy. The purpose of the focus group was to review and validate the recommendations and key action steps in the report. Seventeen youth, ages 15 to 21, from Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Carroll, Prince George's, and Montgomery Counties participated in the discussion facilitated by staff from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED). The discussions resulted in following responses to each of the recommendations in the Emerging Workforce Report:

Issue 1. Maryland needs to establish a policy framework and actions that connect agencies and organizations under a common vision of youth workforce preparation.

Youth Response: The youth in attendance were strongly supportive of the development of web-based portal; and suggested the following list of topics they would like to see included on the portal:

- How to earn money, including detailed information of jobs and training information for those jobs;
- Directions to resource locations, work and the availability of public transportation to them;
- Job search skills, e.g., resume writing, interviewing skills, dressing for an interview or job;
- Information and resources for supportive services, e.g., like clothes for the job, haircuts, etc.; and
- The ability to post a resume and make connections with employers for job/internships.

Features should include a comprehensive array of information – thorough and detailed, well organized, constantly updated, and provide feedback to keep youth engaged. There should also be a strong marketing plan to incorporate the use of social networking site such as YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, etc.

ISSUE 2. Maryland must ensure that public schools, Pre-K through grade 12, higher education, and community providers prepare youth to be workforce ready and support their transition to 21st Century careers.

Youth Response: There was strong agreement that work experience would be very helpful in building confidence in the workplace and prepare youth for future success. They also agreed that such opportunities were very difficult to obtain, limited options exist, and many schools lack the necessary resources to expand opportunities. There was strong feeling that work-based learning should involve “hands-on” work experience, aligned with the student's interest and provide follow-up after the experiences was completed. Follow-up might include resource information and continued connections to the employer, who could serve as a mentor or assist in providing information about a job lead. There was also agreement that more work experiences in multiple industries would expand their career choices. In order to expand opportunities for workplace-based learning, participants recommended that schools review their current scheduling, change the guidelines for eligibility for work release, and increase the quantity and quality of opportunities and promote them with students. Many youth felt that there should be a mandatory work readiness class in the school curriculum that focuses on professional behaviors to ensure a positive work experience.

ISSUE 3. Maryland needs to expand and create programs and services that provide real options that engage students in learning and effectively re-engage disconnected youth; helping them achieve academic and industry-recognized credentials; and enter work within a career pathway with good prospects for the future.

Youth Response: Local libraries and recreation centers offering tutor assistance and the use of interactive computer training programs could all be helpful to support academic achievement and night and on-line classes would expand opportunities for learning. Other recommendations included: that local school systems offered a voluntary summer school to increase the opportunity to take a broader array of classes; a summer project or work project for high school seniors would help tie academic learning to their future careers. Work readiness should be strengthened in the school curriculum and be offered in the appropriate sequence. One student said she had a workplace readiness course, but it was offered to freshman, not when she really needed to write a resume or practice her interviewing skills. Such course offerings should correspond with when most students begin to consider getting a job and are more likely to have transportation (driver's license) – about age 16. They also agreed that more 'real-life' application should be built into the school curriculum where students could gain a better understanding of how what they is being learning applied to the real world.

Some youth felt that it was important that career exploration should start earlier - in middle school - so that youth had the background and knowledge to make good choices upon entering high school. They also thought teachers should participate in multiple career experiences so they too would be more informed about career options.

ISSUE 4. Maryland needs to engage the employer community as key partners in solution-building.

Youth Response: The State should support the creation of a paid internship program that includes businesses and other sponsors.

Two-thirds said the students felt an internship experience should be a mandatory graduation requirement. They cautioned, however, that internships must be interactive, engaging and reinforce the connection between school academic and the workplace. Transportation challenges must be considered when making those assignments, and recommended that some consideration should be given to address the issue, like bus passes or stipends to cover costs.

Students hoped that internships will result in an ongoing relationship with the employer, who could serve as a mentor by providing advice, feedback and a continuing lasting relationship. They thought that a provision for incentives might be necessary to keep employers engaged over the long term.

To help students connect, it was suggested that internship opportunities be advertised via posters, TV announcements, assemblies and other marketing efforts within the schools, and be placed on the annual school calendar at the beginning of the year. Internship/career fairs, similar to job fairs should be held where students can talk with potential employers about opportunities within their organization. Additionally there should be a list of internships maintained on the teen web portal.



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