



## CAREER CONNECTIONS GROUP

October 2, 2008

Orrin E. Bailey, Secretary

Members:	Present:	Excused:
Mr. Paul Bonsall	X	
Mr. Tony Ebli	X	
Mr. Larry Godwin		X
Mr. Chuck Guay		X
Mr. Andy Hongisto	X	
Ms. Laurie Kaufman	X	
Dr. Paul Lang	X	
Ms. Gina Lindquist		X
Mr. Don Mourand	X	
Ms. Johanna Ostwald	X	
Dr. Steve Piereson	X	
Mr. Steve Pontbriand		X
Mr. Michael Powers	X	
Mr. Tony Retaskie	X	
Ms. Jenny Short		X
Mr. Darlene Smith	X	
Mr. Tom Sparacino		X
Ms. Sheila Veraghen	X	
Mr. Alan Yeck		X

**I. Call to Order**

Co-Chair D. Mourand called meeting to order.

**II. Roll Call**

A quorum was present. Robyn Loviska, Job Force Board Youth Committee Chair was also in attendance.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

A. Hongisto moves to accept the agenda with no additions or corrections; seconded by M. Powers, the motion is approved.

**IV. Reading, Correction and Action on Minutes**

S. Veraghen moves to support the June 18, 2008 minutes; seconded by P. Lang, the motion is approved.

**V. Old Business**

Great Lakes Economic and Workforce Summit

Members that attended the summit were asked to provide feedback about the day's speakers. D. Mourand commented that presenter Dan Pink's book designed in comic book

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form targeted for youth 16-20 may be a good tool for teachers, students and parents to review when discussing careers with youth. J. Ostwald added that she attended with four teachers from her school local districts. One of the teachers indicated that in his nine years of education, this day was the best professional development day he experienced. Further discussion at the Superintendent's Roundtable prompted some discussion about bringing Mr. Pink back. S. Piereson said that Ed Gordon presented excellent data information, noting the different styles of presentation. M. Powers stated that it is often difficult to get teachers to events such as the summit because of schedules and required attendance at curriculum meetings that unfortunately do not include career readiness topics.

M. Powers inquired as to whether the WorkKeys® *Locating for Information* assessment would be included in this year's Michigan Merit Exam. It will be included as part of the assessment. M. Powers added that in the past, Manistique area schools has purchased that assessment for its students, but in order for them to get a certificate [National Career Readiness Certificate] there is an additional cost of \$15 per student. A state-wide committee is working on addressing this issue as well as the implementation statewide of this Certificate to include the marketing component to businesses and schools. The Department of Labor and Economic Growth will be issuing policy on this. Michigan now has an ACT office. J. Ostwald added that it may be beneficial to contact the office as part of this group to share our concerns about the cost. Additional information on the Certificate was included in the Board packet.

## **VI. New Business**

### **a. Strategic Planning**

D. Mourand began the discussion to re-define our goals to ensure they are aligned with the Job Force Board. T. Retaskie added that the goals can be subject to change, but we need to start with basics.

Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollments in an arena which has led us more in the direction of college preparatory has been the main discussion of this group for the past year. Although one of the goals of is to CTE is to move students on to post-secondary through articulation agreements, not all students are post secondary bound. As we discuss this goal, T. Ebli asked that the focus not be limited to purely secondary education, but to be inclusive of post-secondary as well. Currently CTE courses are up against the Merit Curriculum requiring more academic requirements for high school students to achieve graduation. The current sophomore class is the first class that must meet the new requirements to graduate. P. Bonsall added that the goal of this group may be to educate the legislators. As students are forced to take more in-depth math and science classes, it limits their ability to take CTE classes. The Michigan Association of Secondary Principals is looking at alternative approaches to address the curriculum and drop-out concerns. Many members voiced their concern that for at-risk students either mainstreamed or in alternative school settings that may not have the ability to pass more rigorous subjects. T. Retaskie commented that he had an opportunity to talk with Mike Flanagan, Michigan's Superintendent of Public Instruction about aligning CTE Classes to the required curriculum. Further discussion with local school officials indicated that CTE classes do not give students the rigorous academic criteria that are included in the ACT test. In the Dickinson County ISD region, the schools have granted the 4<sup>th</sup> math requirement to be in CTE classes. CTE Classes do have math, but not enough math to count towards the benchmarks. S. Piereson added that we need to focus our concerns with the legislature and governor. P. Bonsall added that the CTE classes teach the math that is required of the occupation. For example, if a student is in welding, the math lessons are about the math

required as a welder. These types of occupational requirements aren't included in the benchmarks. M. Powers indicated that as a teacher, the incentive is not there for the CTE classes and as instructors, teachers are judged by the Michigan Merit Exam. Students have a hard time going from CTE classes to the assessment because of the materials presented in class.

D. Mourand asked if there was a group who is willing to teach about relevance rather than each to the test. J. Ostwald commented that when the Cherry Commission came out on the basics of rigor, relevance and relationships to the Michigan Merit Curriculum that rigor is definitely addressed, but relationship and relevance are current topics of conversation. J. Ostwald gave an example by Dan Pink, speaker at the Great Lakes Economic and Workforce Development Summit who talked about changing from the linear aspect of thinking to a Gestalt type of thinking, referencing that problems don't come at you as a social studies problem. Problems come at you with a myriad of skill sets that one needs in their tool belt to deal with them. Relevance is one of the three legs of a stool the MME was launched. It seems that the relevance and the relationships that we talk about in terms of employability skills, soft skills sets, the ability to apply in problem solving, work in teams, all part of relationships is lacking.

M. Powers stated that Junior Achievement is a good model to utilize as the program has clear expectations and standards. Members indicated that as a group a curriculum needs to be identified that can be presented to superintendents that will bring more real life experiences into the classroom. M. Powers uses JA for his economics class, making the material presented in the classroom relevant to life. If additional programs with already existing program and standards and expectations were available, this might help to connect the rigor to relevance and application. Conversations are taking place at school district levels about how the rigor of the curriculum can be integrated into an already tight schedule that still would allow for some flexibility for students to take electives such as CTE classes. At risk students are going to have difficulties in meeting the requirements. S. Veraghen added that alternative school students are more artistic and have shown not to do well in math classes.

Compounding the tight schedule issue is the scheduling of CTE classes that are usually in block sessions which take up to class periods. P. Lang asked how the average student is acclimating to the new curriculum. Is the new curriculum working for the students? Are they doing better? Some school districts are going to trimester schedule to give students and extra session to do make-up work if they don't pass classes. Since the first Merit Class students are sophomores, the answer is not yet known. Do we know for sure that the bottom third are failing? Statistics have showed that at least 20% of students who take Algebra I fail. D. Smith added that the sense of failure trickles into the workplace. There exists concern that the drop out rate is going to increase over the next few years. It is a real challenge to work with at-risk students to get them to understand that education is not evil, even if you are required to take Algebra II.

J. Ostwald reported that the Superintendent of the Year from Inkster schools who turned around the second highest drop out rate in Michigan recently presented at a conference she attended. In the last three years that school system has turned the outcomes around 180 degrees. Their enrollment is growing and dropout rate declining. The school system took on a complete overall. When students graduate from the school district, they are all graduating with one year of college credit or some type of certification. It is a career academy. Members commented that he may be a good resource to bring to the Upper

Peninsula. He rid his system of individuals who wouldn't be on board and recruited folks who would jump on board. He made a complete overall recognizing that his schools still need to meet the Michigan Merit curriculum.

T. Retaskie added that it is proposed that the reorganization of the CCG committee structure work within the following three goals: CTE Advocacy, Marketing to Parents and Career Pathways focusing on presenting to students information and resources in order to accurately document their Education Development Plans (EDP). EDPs are mandated to be complete in order for student classes to count toward graduation requirements. Members will identify their areas of interest and support will be provided to the three subgroups to focus more clearly on activities that would achieve outcomes and align to the Job Force Board Strategic Plan. Each committee would define some sort of measurement that we hope to get us now to a better place in terms of the three goals. With the focus on the Regional Skills Alliances and the pipeline of workers bringing relevancy of what is at the secondary and post secondary level and aligning that information the Strategic Plan. Regional Skill We want to bring in the industry clusters to be our resources to help. As we look to make legislative impact, we need business on board to be our voice. The Manufacturing RSA is looking to align strategic plan to our plan so that we can maximize our resources. Members suggested that we invite legislative representatives or their staff to be part of our sub-committee membership as this will help to draw focus to our issues. It was recommended that we have representatives of the legislators on subcommittees.

Our next steps would be to reorganize our committee structure with each committee focusing on strategies to meet our goals. Sub-committees would meet during the off-months, utilizing video conferencing. S. Veraghen said that the quickest way to meet our goals is to make sure legislators are aware of what issues we are facing with the curriculum. If we could speak as one voice and get them to consider the population, it would help to clear the path to help us accomplish our goals.

Members suggested encapsulating the discussion today addressing how we feel it is going to impact the workforce and drop out rate in our schools and take the message to our representatives. Members want to go on record to begin some conversation and continue to inform them of the opinions of this group on a regular basis. J. Ostwald moved that the CCG develop an advocacy plan for an examination of the Michigan Merit Curriculum and what effects it may have, as we perceive them, on our workforce and our students. Seconded by A. Hongisto, the motion carried unanimously.

S. Veraghen motioned to embrace the three goals: Advocacy for CTE Programs; Parent and Community Awareness; and Supporting Career Pathways through Educational Development Planning; seconded by Mike Powers, the motion carried unanimously.

T. Retaskie reported to the Board that he would like to bring in Jason Dorsey, a speaker he recently heard at the Michigan Works! Conference that talks about "GEN Y" and their expectations of the workplace, values and education. Members were asked to review his website before the next meeting for discussion. T. Retaskie indicated that there may be grant dollars available to bring him to our area.

**b. Next meeting:** Meeting Wizard Scheduler will be sent out to determine next meeting date prior to the Joint Job Force Board/Career Connections Group Meeting on December 17, 2008. At the next meeting, the quarterly meeting schedule for the Career Connections Group will be planned.

**Job Force Board Strategic Plan**

**1. Workforce Improvement for Economic Development**

**GOAL #1. To build regional competitiveness through collaborative partnerships**

<b>Strategy:</b>	<b>Tactic:</b>	<b>Measurable Outcomes tbd: (Suggestions)</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>
Support partnerships that align career pathways with economic development goals.	Market current and projected labor market demand to students, education and <b>parents</b> through the Career Connections Group and education stakeholders [i.e. Regional Skills Alliances]	Develop marketing plan to parents Use school websites School newspapers Flyers Parent Teacher Conferences  Connecting businesses to middle school to make presentation on career paths to assist in development of EDP	<b>CCG Parent /Community Awareness</b>  <b>Career Pathways/EDP</b>
	Assist K-12 and beyond with career pathways and preparation.	Non-Traditional Career Fairs  Mobile Career Exploration Unit Pathways to	<b>CCG Parent/Community Awareness Career Pathways/EDP</b>

**Skills Development for business & industry**

**Goal #3: Build/prepare skilled and competitive workforce for business and industry**

Train for skill gap's).	Promote relevant learning applications to teachers and students.	Fairs such as the UP	Career Pathways/EDP
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