

**TESTIMONY TO:
PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE CHILDREN
AND YOUTH COMMITTEE**

AUGUST 5, 2008

ONE IN SEVEN PENNSYLVANIANS IS A YOUNG PERSON
(AGE 12-21)

ONE IN THREE LIVES IN POVERTY.

ALMOST 11,000 ARE IN FOSTER CARE.

ALMOST 45,000 HAD JUVENILE JUSTICE DISPOSITION.

AND MORE THAN **23,000** TEENS ARE MOTHERS.

ONE IN 40 HAS LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND 15% HAVE A DISABILITY.

EVERY **26** SECONDS A TEEN DROPS OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL. THIS A CRISIS FOR TEENS,
FAMILIES AND OUR COUNTRY.

DROPOUTS HAVE A HIGHER RATE OF TEEN PREGNANCY.

DROPOUTS HAVE A HIGHER RATE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND CRIME.

80% OF THOSE INCARCERATED ARE DROPOUTS.

ALL THIS HAPPENING WHEN:

IN THIS YEAR **2008**, **52%** OF ALL JOBS REQUIRE SOME COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL TRAINING.

BY THE YEAR **2010** OVER **70%** OF ALL JOBS WILL REQUIRE SOME COLLEGE AND TECHNICAL TRAINING.

AN ANALYSIS OF PA'S WORKFORCE SHOWS THAT **21%** OF JOBS IN **2006** REQUIRED A SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH (STEM) EDUCATION.

THE ANALYSIS PROJECTS THAT **35%** OF NEW JOB GROWTH IN PA BY YEAR **2016** WILL BE OCCUPATIONS REQUIRING A BACKGROUND IN STEM.

OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS THE YOUTH POPULATION, AGED **16-24**, WILL GROW **2.9%**. AS THE BABY BOOMERS CONTINUE TO AGE, THE GROUP AGED **55/64** WILL INCREASE BY **36%**.

AND, OH, MY GOLLY OVER THE NEXT **10 YEARS 40%** OF THE ENTIRE WORKFORCE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WILL RETIRE.

AND BY THE YEAR **2010**, THE U.S WILL HAVE A **12 MILLION** QUALIFIED WORKER SHORTAGE.

THESE STATISTICS MAKES IT IMPERATIVE TO **INSPIRE LEARNING** AND TO **HELP WORKING FAMILIES**....FOR WHATEVER YOUR DEFINITION IS OF A FAMILY.

ACCORDING TO PA PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHILDREN, ONE IN 11, 16-21 YEAR OLD PENNSYLVANIANS IS NOT WORKING AND NOT IN SCHOOL (2008).

AND IN MANY CASES, THEY MUST BE RE-EDUCATED. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE MOST POPULAR COURSE IS AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE? REMEDIATION.

I HAVE BEEN IN THE BUSINESS OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR OVER 25 YEARS AND SOME OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED WITH STATE DOLLARS.

ON BEHALF OF ALL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS IN PENNSYLVANIA WE THANK YOU FOR LETTING US BE CREATIVE WHEN IT COMES TO MEETING YOUR AGENDA OF **KEEPING KIDS SAFE, INSPIRING LEARNING** AND **HELPING WORKING FAMILIES**.

IT IS UNBELIEVABLE WHAT WE COLLECTIVELY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED WITH YOUR HELP. AND WE ARE WORKING HARD TO DEVELOP SCHOOL PROGRAMS THAT ALIGN EDUCATION WITH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. OUR PRIORITY IS EDUCATING AND TRAINING KIDS WITH THE

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SKILLS NEEDED BY EMPLOYERS. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A KEY PART OF THIS EFFORT.

HERE IS ONLY A SAMPLE OF SOME OF THE INITIATIVES DEVELOPED WITH THE REGIONAL CAREER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP RESOURCES:

1. ***CAREER GATES*** CD SERIES, WHICH SHOWCASES EMPLOYERS AND THEIR WORK, SKILLS, AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.
2. ***PA CAREERLINKING ACADEMY CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAM*** ALIGNED TO THE PA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR CAREER EDUCATION AND WORK.
3. ***INDUSTRY CLUBS*** AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.
4. ***SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH*** AN AFTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.
5. ***CAREER CRUISING***, A WEB-BASED CAREER AWARENESS SITE USED BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.
6. ***CAREER LADDERS AND LATTICES***.
7. ***INTENSIVE CAREER, ACADEMIC AND WORK READINESS PROGRAMS***.
8. ***ACADEMIC AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT YOUTH PROGRAMS***.
9. ***CAREER EXPLORATION INITIATIVES TO ASSIST YOUTH IN MAKING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION DECISIONS BASED ON DIRECT OBSERVATIONS***.
10. ***PROGRAMS CENTERED ON BASIC EDUCATION, OCCUPATIONAL OR WORK READINESS GOALS***.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOU CAN HELP US WITH IS PROVIDING RESOURCES FOR US TO ALIGN EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AS AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY. THE NORTHEAST RECENTLY COMPLETED A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GAP ANALYSIS AND THREE ISSUES SURFACED:

1. SCHOOL SYSTEMS NEED TO CONTINUE WORKING TO IMPROVE THE BASIC MATH AND READING SKILLS OF STUDENTS. WE KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE BECAUSE WE WORK ON THESE SKILLS WITH KIDS IN OUR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS.
2. SOFT SKILLS AND CAREER AWARENESS MUST BE INCORPORATED INTO THE EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS NEED TO BE

STRENGTHENED. WE KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE BECAUSE MANY OF OUR INITIATIVES ARE CENTERED ON INTEGRATING WORKFORCE READINESS AND CAREER EXPLORATION INTO OUR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

3. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MUST BECOME MORE INVOLVED WITH CAREER AWARENESS FOR ALL STUDENTS. WE KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE BECAUSE EMPLOYERS ARE TELLING US THEY ARE WILLING TO BE INVOLVED IN CAREER AWARENESS AND CAREER PREPARATION FOR KIDS WHETHER IN SCHOOL OR AFTER SCHOOL.

EVERY SINGLE STUDENT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR ECONOMY AND AS FEDERAL FUNDING CONTINUES TO DECREASE, A LARGER PORTION OF FUNDS ARE USED TO SUPPORT THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO KEEP PA CAREERLINK CENTERS OPEN TO PROVIDE BASIC SERVICES TO BUSINESSES AND JOB SEEKERS UNDER THE LAW.

AS A RESULT OF NEARLY A DECADE OF DECLINING FEDERAL FUNDS, PLUS FUNDING RECISSIONS, HALF OF PENNSYLVANIA'S 23 LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS REPORTED THEY EXPECT TO RUN OUT OF TRAINING FUNDS BEFORE THE END OF THE PROGRAM YEAR WHICH WILL IMPACT AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS LIKE LITERACY PROGRAMS, COMPUTER SKILLS TRAINING, JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE AND OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.

EVEN WITH THESE CUTS, PENNSYLVANIA SERVED ALMOST 8,000 YOUTH DURING PROGRAM YEAR 2007. IF WE HAD ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WE COULD HAVE SERVED 16,000.

THE WIB'S SERVE AS THE INTERMEDIARY FOR OUR COMMUNITIES. MOST OF OUR WORK IS UNDERSTANDING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF OUR EMPLOYERS, WHERE ARE THE JOBS, WHAT ARE THE SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS NEEDED FOR WORK, AND HOW DO PEOPLE, INCLUDING YOUTH, ACCESS THESE JOBS. CAREER AWARENESS IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE WE ADDRESS DURING OUR AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

THIS IS WHAT I UNDERSTAND AND KNOW. WE NOT ONLY NEED MORE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING, BUT IN SCHOOL PROGRAMMING AND PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING, BECAUSE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN BASED ON EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS FOR A SKILLED WORKFORCE ***THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA IS AN ASSOCIATES DEGREE.***

WE NEED TO INSPIRE EVERY SINGLE CHILD IN PA.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

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