Oklahoma WORKS Together
A Strategic Framework for Oklahoma’s Workforce

INITIAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 10.10.2019
Submitted by Oklahoma’s Workforce Advisory Committee
David Stewart, Chair
INTRODUCTION

Oklahoma’s economy will prosper when every worker representing every industry has the skills to compete.

As of April 2019, Oklahoma has the 15th lowest unemployment rate in the Nation at 3.3 percent. Most economists would consider our State to be at “full-employment,” which means companies must be competitive in order to hire the skilled labor necessary to grow its output. There is no question finding ready-to-work employees is one of the most significant barriers to corporate growth and expansion.

For several years now, MidAmerica Industrial Park has had a great deal of success in developing and executing a workforce development plan in Northeast Oklahoma. MidAmerica Delivers is a plan that brings the needs of industry together with our education and training resources.

With this proven example, a Workforce Advisory Committee was established to develop recommendations and create a strategic framework to provide a replicable model with the goal of moving Oklahoma’s workforce to a top 10 status. The Committee is comprised of decision-makers, subject-matter experts and stakeholders from throughout the state. These members included representatives from Oklahoma’s CareerTech, higher education, school districts, key industry sectors and civic organizations.

These strategies and recommendations leverage the state’s existing workforce and employment-related agencies. The results are recommendations aligned with the needs of business and industry.

To make this happen on a state-wide level, local and regional ownership is essential. The recommendations found in this book had a consensus of all Committee members for continuous improvement of the state’s workforce system.

On behalf of the Committee, we look forward to the advancements in these efforts to benefit Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

David Stewart
Oklahoma’s Workforce Advisory Committee Chair
Trustee and Chief Administrative Officer,
Oklahoma Ordnance Works Authority
(dba MidAmerica Industrial Park, Pryor, Oklahoma)
Workforce development, recruitment and retention plays an essential role in three of Governor Kevin Stitt’s “Oklahoma Turnaround” initiatives. These include:

1. ECONOMIC GROWTH
2. EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS
3. GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

In support of these goals, Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell and Secretary of Commerce Sean Kouplen sought recommendations on a comprehensive framework that includes strategies to position Oklahoma to be recognized as a Top 10 state in workforce development. Governor Stitt recognized this plan as “Oklahoma Works Together” in his Economic Development and Workforce Summit in August, 2019.
As a committee, we worked together to identify and propose modifications which provides Oklahoma with a highly-visible and highly-effective workforce development system.

It is imperative Oklahoma leverage existing state resources and develop a plan of action aligned with the needs of business and industry. Ultimately, the plan integrates resources within the Workforce system and beyond into a “branded” program that businesses can trust to support workforce demands.

Local and regional ownership is essential to the success and sustainment of any workforce initiative. Currently, many communities around the state are working to improve and establish an effective workforce program for their area. The work and recommendations from this committee complements and supports those efforts.

The Committee’s recommendations leverage the state’s existing workforce and employment-related agencies to develop an effective model. This committee focused its efforts on invoking change through consensus building, policy making and establishing effective channels of communication.

The foundation for many of the recommendations are consistent with the Oklahoma Works initiative launched in 2014. Additionally, the recommendations integrate elements of successful workforce development initiatives already in existence within the state and across the nation. There are many successful programs incorporated into the plan; for example, Junior Achievement, Jobs for American Graduates and many others that complement these efforts.
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Committee was formed on January 9, 2019 and includes the following members:

DAVID STEWART (Chair)
Chief Administrative Officer and Trustee,
Oklahoma Ordnance Works Authority
MidAmerica Industrial Park, Pryor, Okla.

THE HONORABLE JOY HOFMEISTER
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

TONY HUTCHISON
Senior Vice Chancellor for Strategic Planning and Analysis, Workforce and Economic Development at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

DR. DON RALEIGH
Superintendent, Pryor Public Schools

DR. LARRY RICE
President, Rogers State University

DR. MARCIE MACK
State Director, Oklahoma CareerTech

JOHN HAWKINS
Business owner and former chair of local NEWIB and former member of Governor's Workforce Council

DR. KAYSE SHRUM
President, OSU Center for Health Sciences
Secretary of Science and Innovation

RICHARD MCPHERSON
Executive Director
Oklahoma Employment Security Commission

MELINDA FRUENDT
Director, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

DON MORRIS
Executive Director, Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development
Local Workforce Board Director

EDDIE FOREMAN
Chief Executive Officer
Central OK Workforce Innovation Board

BRENT KISLING
Executive Director Oklahoma Department of Commerce

Advisory Members:

GLEN HAMMONDS
General Counsel, CareerTech

BOB KLABENES
Former President, Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology
The committee adopted the following goals and guiding principles:

1. All members are committed to work toward the common goal of improving the overall workforce system to achieve Top 10 status nationally.
2. The plan utilizes existing platforms, resources, programs and best practices studied from other successful models within the state and across the U.S.
3. The plan is scalable and recognizes the rural nature of the state.
4. The plan engages stakeholders including businesses, industries, economic development organizations, workforce development groups, tribal governments and education service providers from across the state.
5. Business and industry is fully engaged and committed to participate in leading and driving the effort.
6. Local and regional ownership is key to the success of the effort.
7. Continuous improvement is incorporated to insure ongoing evaluation and improvement of the model.
The following Key Requirements were developed based on research of best practices throughout the state and the country:

1. A framework that integrates state agencies, tribal governments, workforce development Boards, and civic organizations resulting in a more efficient system that centralizes services, data and points of contact.

2. An engaged group of state and local stakeholders that are dedicated to collaboration and cooperation.

3. Strong support from the Governor, execution from the legislature and public engagement.

4. Adopted and aligned career pathways in state and regional ecosystems that include on and off ramp capability, articulation opportunities, and focus on locally relevant, industry-based, certifications and degrees.

5. Accountability in the measurement of skill, talent and aptitude in the workforce development pipeline. (PK-12 and postsecondary)

6. Integrate new, innovative, and engaging learning PK-12 models focused on character/leadership education, aptitude/talent discovery, STEM education and education/career pathway awareness.

7. Accessible, ecosystem based, training developed by business and industry that leverages existing educational resources and systems to move Oklahoma to Top 10.

8. State-wide training facilities with applicable resources that provide relevant and affordable programs to meet the current and future needs of key industries.

9. A well-trained and experienced support team to assist regional areas in implementation, coordination, and ongoing performance measurement of the new workforce model.

10. An effective strategy for developing the program’s “brand promise” and the execution of a communications plan to launch it as one of the nation’s premier workforce programs.
This workforce plan requires establishment of local, ecosystem-based, workforce models supported by state agencies and focused on deploying resources, leveraging existing programs, and aligning curriculum with local and regional employment demand.

Oklahoma has identified five primary ecosystem drivers and five secondary drivers; however, the committee recognizes that each community across the state has its own unique ecosystem. The following strategies are designed to support local area businesses, economic developers, workforce professionals, educators and other stakeholders to assume responsibility for the success of the plan.

STRATEGY #1: Fully leverage Oklahoma’s strong educational infrastructure utilizing existing assets and resources through the states Career Tech and Higher Education systems. Oklahoma has a robust educational system that provides opportunity for all levels of workforce and career development options. A statewide network of campuses and resources are well positioned to serve as the primary delivery mechanism for workforce and career development through the following:

- Statewide presence with almost 100 combined campus locations
- Strong fiscal positioning and administrative structures
- Accredited programs with relevant curriculum
- Existing industry and corporate partnerships

STRATEGY #2: Further leverage OK Works and the Governor’s Council for Workforce and Economic Development. A significant amount of work has been accomplished through the OK Works initiative under the direction of the Governor’s Council. This work focuses on the betterment of the Workforce system at the local
level and is a key element applied to the strategic framework. The Governor’s Council should adopt these strategies as they develop policy and provide ongoing guidance to local area workforce boards.

**STRATEGY #3: Create a statewide network of advisory councils in each ecosystem driven by Oklahoma Business and Industry leaders.** The purpose of the new workforce development system is to adequately prepare workers for employment opportunities at businesses within their region. Many advisory councils already exist and will be leveraged in the development of additional teams. These committees will:

- Provide expert leadership
- Lead and drive advisory committees
- Develop and align curriculum
- Provide work-based learning experiences
- Oversee performance and evaluation
- Engage business and trade organizations
- Establish career pathways in each ecosystem

*see Appendix 6*

**STRATEGY #4: Establish branded regional Workforce Centers of Excellence focused on local demand.** The new workforce system will engage Career Tech to certify local Workforce Centers of Excellence. These centers will serve as a primary outlet for best in class training and workforce development initiatives at the local level. Existing resources and infrastructure will be leveraged including career tech districts, institutions of higher education, common education and other related organizations to serve as a partner in the Workforce Centers of Excellence. Local advisory councils, comprised of a consortium of stakeholders, will work together to establish the model for each center. Benefits of being a Center of Excellence will include marketing through statewide economic development initiatives, state level support and potential incentive funding. *see Appendix 4*

**STRATEGY #5: Leverage and maximize existing resources and assets to support the workforce development effort.** Each community across the state of Oklahoma has access to a variety of assets and resources which will be leveraged to build and support the new system. Each community will take a unified approach to establish an asset map which will ensure maximum utilization of the resources available in their community. Communication will be essential in the process and models such as OSU’s Project ECHO will be utilized for effective collaboration across workforce areas and the state.

**STRATEGY #6: Establish a Single Point of Contact concept which will assist in navigating local and state workforce services and resources.** Existing, and prospective employers should be able to easily identify and access the resources needed to recruit, train and develop a qualified workforce. Resources should be combined to further develop this single point of contact concept.

**STRATEGY #7: Establish a statewide data system that collects and links information from education, employment and workforce agencies so that policy makers and state leaders can make more informed decisions.** Currently Oklahoma state agencies do not have the ability to share data relevant to education, employment and workforce programming and results. Having this data would put these groups in an advantageous position in decision making and driving policy.

**STRATEGY #8: Effectively brand and market the new workforce model.** The new workforce system will be tangible and identifiable. The system will strive to be widely known and easily navigable by all stakeholders and participants. It should have a positive image that invokes confidence by both groups. Elements that will ensure a well branded system include the following.

- Strong system name and brand
- Strategically crafted message
- National and state campaign
- Easy access and navigation

**STRATEGY #9: Support effective intervention strategies which serve the most At-Risk and vulnerable populations aimed at increasing education completion, certification attainment and workforce participation rates.** The state must put more emphasis on serving individuals with various personal challenges by establishing intervention programs to assist them in developing relevant, in-demand workplace skill sets.
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Further leverage the new Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP) and OK EDGE programs by supporting new and innovative career awareness, character education and career preparation initiatives. see Appendix 5

2. Provide centralized support to assist economic development groups to establish local workforce advisory teams across the state through a consortium of Career Tech, Higher Education, Local Workforce Boards, State Agencies and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. see Appendix 3

3. Provide ongoing and unified professional development training to local and state workforce boards, economic developer’s and local workforce advisory groups.

4. Establish a Single Point of Contact in each identified workforce area that serves existing and prospective employers workforce needs by coordinating resources and services.

5. Broaden the definition and expand eligibility of concurrent enrollment to include college readiness courses, industry certifications and micro-credentials.

6. Increase education/training participation rates of underserved and disengaged populations by supporting and leveraging programming targeting minorities, at-risk populations and the formerly incarcerated.
This report represents the first set of recommendations. The committee will continue its mission in the following areas:

1. Continue to seek consensus and get feedback from stakeholders across the state
2. Amend and improve existing recommendations if needed
3. Develop new recommendations
4. Support implementation
5. Monitor performance and provide guidance

The recommendations are intended to bring Oklahoma in-line with current workforce strategies that are more effective and align with business needs. Our recommendations focused on those that would be most impactful in meeting the needs of Oklahoma’s Workforce.

This report concludes the first phase of the committee’s work and is intended to be the initial step of an effort to continuously improve Oklahoma’s workforce system.
## PRELIMINARY TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

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<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>Q1, 2019</th>
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PHASE I:

The committee’s work for Phase I evaluates the use of the current local Workforce Development Boards to ensure efficiencies and integration of regional business and available resources. The boards will regionalize the workforce plan and make it relevant to local business and community cultures. The boards will also act as a distribution/communication channel for information valuable to the local community from the Department of Commerce.

In addition, the boards will provide relevant economic data to the Department of Commerce and other agencies. This information will enable Department of Commerce to better market the State’s resources and serve the regions. The constituency of the Boards may change to accurately reflect the mission of the workforce plan. This committee will establish mission, goals, objectives, and guidelines to assist the Boards in meeting these goals and meeting the specific requirements of WIOA.

This phase is scheduled for completion in Q1, 2020

PHASE II:

The committee’s work for Phase II will focus on program integration from Workforce System Partners such as Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Oklahoma Department of Human Resources, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title 1 service provider focused on the alignment of resources and enhancing service delivery at the local level. The concept of establishing a support group within CareerTech will be explored at this time.

This phase is scheduled for completion in Q1, 2020
PHASE III:
The committee’s work in Phase III will focus on program integration from civic/non-profit and trade organizations. This work is scheduled for completion in Q1, 2020.

PHASE IV:
Concurrent with Phase III, the committee’s work in Phase IV will focus on “branding” for all phases into a comprehensive, statewide marketing campaign for one program, such as “Oklahoma Works Together.” This phase is scheduled for completion in Q1, 2020.

PHASE V:
The committee’s work for Phase V will run concurrently with Phase IV and will establish new Expert Advisory Teams for designated Oklahoma ecosystems, as needed. Each team will consist of industry experts and educators to identify top-rated educational resources, establish standards of performance, and identify gaps in performance for improvement. It is imperative that business and industry drive these standards and play an active role in the process. This phase is scheduled for completion in early Q1, 2020.

PHASE VI:
The committee’s work for Phase VI will be the establishment of “Workforce Excellence” standards. The “Workforce Excellence” metrics will be informed by the Expert Advisory Teams. Applications to be recognized as a Center of “Workforce Excellence” will be submitted to Oklahoma Department of CareerTech. All existing educational institutions and other organizations may qualify. The “Workforce Excellence” entities will receive incentives (to be determined) for their level of achievement in these metrics, which includes but is not limited to, partner collaboration, educational outcomes, and new performance standards. It should be noted that existing educational institutions (PK-12, CareerTech, and Higher Ed) may already qualify as a Center of “Workforce Excellence.” This phase is scheduled for completion in Q1, 2020.

PHASE VII:
This phase identifies steps for formal roll out of the plan. This is the final phase and includes detailed recommendations for various stakeholders to use for implementation. Ongoing work for the committee will be evaluated after completion of this phase. This phase is scheduled for completion in Q1, 2020.
REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE
A consortium of stakeholders/partner resources and assets which caters to industry specific training and education. The Centers will be certified and accredited through State Career Tech based on newly established standards and guidelines.
PK-12 CAREER AWARENESS MODEL

**PK-12 EDUCATION**

- Teacher Externships
- Career Awareness
  - PK-3rd
- Career Exploration
  - 4th–8th
- Career Preparedness
  - 9th–12th

**Developmentally Appropriate Activities**

- Career Awareness
- Goal Setting
- Academic Planning
- Guest Speakers
- Business/Industry Tours

**PK-12 EDUCATION**

**Career Awareness**

- 4th & 5th
  - Guided Career Exploration
    - What are you good at?
    - What are you interested in?
  - Student Aptitude & Interests
  - Career Interests
  - Inventories/Assessments

- 6th–8th
  - 6 – ICAP Initiation
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - Career Tech Options
  - 7 – Career Interests
    - Inventories/Assessments
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - Career Tech Options
  - 8 – Career Clusters Identified
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - Introduce Career Tech Options
    - Career Cluster Research
    - Develop HS course plan
    - College/Career Fairs
    - Career Tech Options

**Career Exploration**

- 4th–8th
  - 6 – ICAP Initiation
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - Career Tech Options
  - 7 – Career Interests
    - Inventories/Assessments
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - Career Tech Options
  - 8 – Career Clusters Identified
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - Introduce Career Tech Options
    - Career Cluster Research
    - Develop HS course plan
    - College/Career Fairs
    - Career Tech Options

**Career Preparedness**

- 9th–10th
  - 9 – Career Pathway Identified
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - ACT/SAT Prep
    - ICAP Review - student led conference
  - 10 – Investigate Career Tech Options
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - ACT/SAT Prep
    - ICAP Review - student led conference

- 11th–12th
  - 11 – Establish HS & PreACT/PSAT (test & prep) Post-Secondary Plans
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - PSAT/ACT/SAT (test & prep)
    - Concurrent Enrollment
    - Career Tech Enrollment
    - Internships/Apprenticeships
    - Update resume
    - ICAP Review - student led conference
  - 12 – Solidify Post-Secondary Plans
    - ICAP Platform Activities
    - ACT/SAT (test & prep)
    - Concurrent Enrollment
    - Career Tech Enrollment
    - Internships/Apprenticeships
    - College/Career Fairs
    - Update resume
    - ICAP Review - student led conference
    - Graduate
MANUFACTURING CAREER PATHWAY EXAMPLE

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<tr>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>ADMIN &amp; SUPPORT</th>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
<th>WAREHOUSE &amp; LOGISTICS</th>
<th>MAINTENANCE</th>
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### Key
- HSD – High School Diploma
- HSE – High School Equivalency
- 2-Year – AAS Degree
- 4-Year – BA or BS Degree
- Certificate – Short-Term
- Training Certificate Experience
- Work Experience and/or Demonstrated Skill

### Data Sources
- Oklahoma Employment Security Commission
- Local employer survey