

GWDB Quarterly Business Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 14th, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

In-Person Meeting at Phoenix Hall Event Center, 20732 Holt Ave, Lakeville, MN 55044

Attendees

GWDB Members or Agency Designees	GWDB Members or Agency Designees	GWDB Guests and Staff
- Hannah Alstead - Carol Anderson - Jeremy Andrist - Josh Berg - Misun Bormann - Deb Broberg - David Campana - Barry Davies - Cate Duin - Kevion Ellis - Deborah Gleason - Surya Iyer (GWDB Chair) - Veronica Jaralambides - Steve Kalina - Erica Lester - Nicole Mattson	- Gabe Mooney - Ted Mondale - Mary Niedermeyer - Jovon Perry - Sandra Pulles - Jeffrey Rainey - Marisa Rivera-Luego - Ali Rodway - Nola Slagter-Johnson - Linda Sloan - Roy Smith - Ashley Snider - Rob Stark - DeLinda Washington, (GWDB Vice Chair) - Brian Zirbes	Guests - Assistant Commissioner Natasha Merz, DHS GWDB Staff - Katie McClelland, Director - Sarah Arenston, Workforce Policy Coordinator - Patti Balacek, Workforce Development System Coordinator - Nolan Thomas, Board Engagement Specialist DEED Staff - Adesewa Adesiji, Workforce Strategist - Liz Jennings, Employer Engagement Supervisor - Natasha Jerde, Director State Services for the Blind - Liz McLoone, Employment and Training Program Specialist Sr. - Jessica Miller, Director of Workforce Strategy - Della Ludwig, Workforce Strategist

Welcome and Introductions

- The GWDB Meeting began at 10:07 a.m. The GWDB Chair Surya Iyer and the Co-Chair DeLinda Washington gave the call to order and opening remarks. Chair Surya Iyer welcomed attendees to the Governor's Workforce Development Board Quarterly Meeting, emphasizing the board's renewed energy and commitment to advancing equitable workforce pathways amid statewide challenges.
- The agenda includes updates from the Interagency Workforce Alignment Taskforce, a review of the board's mission and goals, and collaborative committee discussions focused on moving from strategy to action.
- All tablemates were asked to introduce themselves to each other.
- Vice Chair DeLinda Washington reviewed the Goals of the Meeting: aligning around a new vision and mission, launching key committees and a by-laws task force, advancing sector strategies, and strengthen collaboration to drive impact across Minnesota's workforce system.

Staff Introductions and Updates

- Director Katie McClelland introduced GWDB team members: Balacek Thomas, Ellis and Arentson. Announced Ellis starting on May 21. She reviewed their roles and work assignments.
- Reviewed future work and the policies that will be worked on in 2025. A Program Assistant will be hired in the coming months.
- GWDB staff are working more closely with workforce strategy consultants.
- Acknowledged GWDB member Carol Anderson as Business Champion of the Year.
- Future award successes by GWDB members should be sent to Nolan Thomas for acknowledgement.
- Iyer recognizes that good government relies on good GWDB staff and thanks them.

Business Meeting

- Chair Surya Iyer introduced the business meeting items.

Approval of the Board Retreat Meeting minutes from 12/12/24

- Motion made by Deb Broberg and 2nd Jeffrey Rainey – Approved Minutes

Approval of the GWDB Quarterly Report

- Motion to approve by Ted Mondale and seconded by Shannon (Minnesota State). All approved without any opposed.

Additional Comments from Chair

- Announced the formation of a by-laws task force to support governance updates and shared that GWDB staff will follow up with members to gauge interest in joining the task force and newly aligned committees.

Interagency Workforce Alignment (IWA) Update

- Assistant Commissioner Natasha Merz presented an update grounded in the Governor’s One Minnesota vision of collaboration and cross-agency alignment.
- The IWA initiative was created to foster better collaboration among state agencies and to leverage agency expertise and best practices.
- Merz acknowledged the current state budget landscape as a challenge, underscoring the need to work more effectively.
- She discussed the Committee on Educator Workforce and ongoing pipeline initiatives in both healthcare and education, with a goal of aligning metrics across sectors (e.g., adult vs. youth).
- In the education sector, efforts focus on shared metrics, collaboration with GWDB on feedback loops from committees, and educator pipeline development.
- Emphasis was placed on the need for coordinated action, with alignment, metrics, and communication identified as key priorities. A structured approach is needed to meet state mandates and move the work forward.
- In the healthcare sector, a public-private partnership is underway that includes GWDB members.
- The focus includes strengthening alignment, improving retention, reducing turnover, and recruiting new talent in the long-term care workforce.
- The approach emphasizes “elevate and scale” as key strategies to address critical workforce challenges, while also recognizing the essential value of direct care workers in supporting quality of life.
- Final recommendations from these efforts will be forwarded to the IWA task force.
- Merz also introduced an internal working group and the Inventory of Workforce Supports, a tool designed to map workforce efforts across state government and improve coordination.
- The team is evaluating short- and long-term funding as well as coaching and mentoring strategies to determine which approaches deliver the greatest impact.
- Vice Chair Washington recognized Merz for her 16 years of service at DHS and commended her leadership and strategic contributions. Merz expressed appreciation to all who have supported the ongoing efforts.

Mission, Vision, and Goals Review

- Patti Balacek reviewed the Strategic Pyramid and vision themes developed during the board retreat.

Vision Statement Discussion

- Chair Surya Iyer reflected positively on the retreat process and introduced the current and draft vision statements, expressing support for the phrasing “Minnesota leads,” as well as the inclusion of individuals and employers in the statement. He suggested the draft could be more concise.

Board members shared feedback on the vision statement

- Deborah proposed the phrase “We lead the nation in...” to specify what Minnesota is leading in.

- Carol Anderson emphasized including language like “throughout the state” to represent Greater Minnesota.
- Rob Stark noted the executive committee’s intention to keep the vision inclusive and concise.
- Mi Sou contributed to wordsmithing efforts.
- Katie McClelland led a brief revision discussion and urged caution in overediting.
- Jess expressed concern that “leading the nation” could distract from in-state priorities.
- Adesewa Adesiji asked about opportunities for external feedback.
- Deborah proposed revised language for consideration by a task force.
- Patti Balacek and Katie McClelland cautioned against including too many specifics in the vision and emphasized the importance of broad applicability and representation across regions.
- Approval of the GWDB Vision Statement was postponed pending further discussion and refinement.

Mission Statement Discussion and Approval

- Patti Balacek presented mission themes from the retreat; Vice Chair DeLinda Washington facilitated the mission discussion.
- The proposed new GWDB Mission: “Champion strategies for attracting talent and developing a resilient workforce that strengthens Minnesota’s economy for all communities.”
- Rob Stark emphasized maintaining broad geographic relevance and the importance of internal workforce development.
- Veronica asked for clarification on the term “resilient”; Washington explained it refers to the workforce’s ability to adapt to changing skill demands.
- Julie Dincau noted that while statutory language can feel overly governmental, the mission should stay true to the board’s core purpose.
- Katie McClelland reminded members that alignment with the statute is important in function, not necessarily in language.
- Deb Broberg suggested placing “communities” in the mission rather than the vision, receiving general support.
- The mission statement was put to a vote. Motion to approve (with edits): Bernie Burnham. Second: Linda Sloane. Motion carried; mission approved unanimously.
- Patti Balacek moved on to review WIOA State Goals to prepare for afternoon table work.
 - **Goal 1 to enhance state and local coordination and alignment.**
 - **Goal 2: Advance State and local sector partnerships.**
 - **Goal 3: Innovative Service Delivery**

Committee Discussion

- Director Katie McClelland previewed the afternoon session focused on committee structures for the GWDB and IWA Taskforce, using an organizational chart to guide the conversation.
- She encouraged members to revisit the statutory charge of the GWDB, noting areas where the board is not currently meeting its full mandate and opportunities to better align work with statute.
- Emphasis was placed on aligning the board’s mission, vision, and goals with its statutory requirements.

- Nolan Thomas discussed member feedback on improving board operations, noting that input will shape the focus of the committee work ahead.
- A proposed committee structure was introduced, developed from member feedback, WIOA requirements, and strategic priorities identified during the winter retreat:
 - **State & Local System Coordination: Led by Sarah Arentson**
 - **Sector Partnerships: Led by Kevion Ellis and Jessica Miller**
 - **Innovative Service Delivery: Led by Nolan Thomas**
- McClelland reminded members that federal guidance exists for partnership development and stressed the importance of incorporating business and economic development perspectives.
- She also noted that committee work will consider AI's impact on the workforce and emphasized the need for proactive planning to ensure workforce resilience.
- In response to questions, McClelland affirmed that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) will be integrated across all committee efforts and that MAWB and CareerForce staff will be key partners in aligning and amplifying best practices, particularly in areas like healthcare.
- McClelland encouraged committees to be intentional about embedding DEI and incorporating user perspectives, stating the GWDB must use its voice to elevate those experiences and establish feedback mechanisms.

Committee Planning and Breakout Session Report-Outs

- Director McClelland introduced the next phase of the meeting, encouraging members to engage in shaping the board's upcoming work and provide input.
- Patti Balacek, GWDB Workforce Development System Coordinator, reviewed the directions for the breakout activity. Members were asked to use flip charts with GWDB goals and large post-its displaying WIOA board functions to guide their discussions.
- Members self-selected into breakout tables based on interest areas, with each table led by a facilitator.

Breakout Report-Outs

- **Goal One – Mary Niedermeyer:** Connected two WIOA functions and aligned them with Goal Four. Focused on updating the state plan and evaluating progress. Discussed diversifying funding strategies to close gaps for universal customers and proposed a federated model for IWA to streamline alignment.
- **Goal Four – Mary Niedermeyer:** Emphasized developing a policy review process through the one-stop system to assess effectiveness and support collaboration and information sharing.
- **Goal Two – Nicole Mattson:** Discussed strategies to strengthen sector partnerships and career pathways. The team began drafting action plans, explored braided funding strategies, and acknowledged a need to better align metrics, especially for emerging initiatives.
- **Goal Four – Jeremy Andrist:** Representing the building trades, proposed employer incentives, reframing “pathways” as “ladders,” and ensuring equitable access and outcomes.
- **Ashley Snyder (DCYF):** Discussed strategies to support career pathways and intermediary partnerships. Emphasized metrics such as apprenticeship participation by sector and defining quality standards for programs.

- **Goal X – Deborah Gleason:** Noted that while DEI was listed as a strategy, the group viewed it as a foundational goal. Explored ways to better connect the workforce system to all populations and recommended identifying new measurements and reexamining job requirements.

Next Steps and Wrap-Up

- Balacek provided instructions on organizing the post-it notes and next steps for compiling the input.
- McClelland noted that committee work plans will be shared at the August meeting.
- A discussion followed on expectations for committee participation, including meeting frequency, distribution across committees, and timing. Emphasis was placed on aligning participation with member interests and encouraging cross-sector collaboration to leverage diverse strengths.

Sector Partnerships Discussion and Framework Overview

- Director McClelland reviewed slides to align the board on a common definition of sector partnerships, including their purpose, types, and key stakeholders involved.
- She outlined a vision for building a stronger sector partnership system in Minnesota, emphasizing that states with well-developed models tend to access more resources for industry advancement.
- The presentation included key elements such as:
 - Components of effective sector partnerships
 - The America Achieves “Good Jobs Economy” framework
 - A proposed step-by-step approach to defining, mapping, and scaling partnerships
- Discussion emphasized the importance of clearly defining sector partnership activities, scope, and quality indicators.
- Deb Broberg highlighted the importance of governance and sequencing participation; Carol Anderson recommended showcasing local models like RMCEP in Region 2 at a future GWDB meeting.
- Veronica suggested including city governments in partnership development.
- McClelland supported learning from strong existing models across the state and proposed presenting local examples at the next board meeting.
- Deborah inquired about a workforce development database to better map and connect efforts. McClelland noted that states typically choose to organize sector work using either an economic development or workforce development framework and stressed the need for Minnesota to align on a mapping method to identify gaps and streamline registration.

Additional Sector Partnership Framework Elements

- McClelland reviewed steps for building sector partnerships:
- **Step 1:** Defining partnerships and their scope
- **Step 2:** Convenings with partners and a larger stakeholder gathering
- **Step 3:** Mapping partnerships to identify alignment and gaps
- **Step 4:** Sharing best practices to aggregate employer demand and improve performance
- Iyer raised the need for sustainability and sequencing stakeholder engagement.

- Broberg mentioned she will be teaching Colorado's TPM Leadership class in October, offering additional insight into scalable models.
- Nola Slagter-Johnson emphasized clarifying the tangible outcomes expected from sector partnerships.

Presentation: Workforce Strategy Consultants (WSC) – Director of Workforce Strategy

- Miller described the role of Workforce Strategy Consultants in supporting employers, regions, and the GWDB, with a focus on actionable consultation reports and continuous improvement.
- WSCs bridge economic and workforce development, identifying growth projects and emerging opportunities.

Highlighted Initiatives

- SW Manufacturing Accelerator (employer-led model)
- BioBusiness/Life Sciences partnership
- CHIPS Coalition workforce development
- Advancement of MedTech Workforce funding opportunity

Discussion and Next Steps

- McClelland stated that the GWDB Sector Partnership Committee can develop recommendations to align with and expand upon WSC efforts.
- Deborah asked about integrating employer best practices in hiring; McClelland noted the board's role in offering such guidance.
- Carol Anderson raised the issue of layoffs in today's economic climate, urging the board to support companies navigating workforce challenges.
- A board member and former disability equity committee chair emphasized the need to intentionally leverage untapped talent pools, such as individuals with disabilities, even if adjustments are needed in the future due to changing political leadership.

Meeting Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- Chair Surya Iyer thanked members for their engagement and recapped the day's efforts, noting the high level of care, expertise, and commitment shown throughout the discussions. He acknowledged Jessica Miller for her work on the CHIPS Coalition and emphasized the board's shared interest in driving progress.
- Vice Chair DeLinda Washington reviewed the day's goals, highlighting the approval of the new mission statement, ongoing work on the vision, and the importance of embedding DEI as a foundational element across all efforts. She expressed optimism about making continued progress before the next meeting.
- Iyer shared brief next steps from his prepared remarks and formally adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m. with no objections.