SWIB | State Workforce Investment Board

5/23/2024

Dear Partners,

Your organization is a critical piece to the workforce development system in Mississippi and the progress made in the last few years. However, much work remains to address deficiencies and to improve workforce outcomes for Mississippians and the state as a whole. As a state and in communities, we should not just work to be better, but we should aim to be the best at training more citizens into good jobs and improving the overall quality of our workforce.

At a recent meeting, the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) discussed the following recommendations. Consisting of a majority business representatives, the Board's task is to monitor the state system and make recommendations towards ensuring the programs and activities are focused on achieving prioritized workforce outcomes. To this end, I am asking your organization and others to provide information towards the goal of ensuring overall state workforce outcome goals are aligned. For the information requested, I ask you please provide it to AccelerateMS by July 26, 2024 and be prepared to present recommendations to the SWIB at the August 22, 2024 meeting.

- *WIOA Core Partners must examine ways to reduce public workforce system infrastructure costs, improve access to services and training in areas of the greatest prime-age employment gap, and areas with existing and anticipated high labor market demands.*
  - WIOA Core Partners are requested to examine current operating structure and procedures of WIN Job Centers along with other WIOA funded programs and make recommendations for any improvement that may reduce administrative costs and increase program access and efficacy as well as detailing how participants will be directed to priority occupations established by AccelerateMS and associated training programs. For example, how many WIN Job Centers should there be? How should centers staffed? What are the most efficient means for centers to communicate and correspond with the population? What are barriers to a higher percentage of this population accessing meaningful occupational training?
- *The secondary system should improve passer rates for all certifications on the SWIB approved list to no less than 65% (if currently below 50%) and no lower than 70% (if currently above 50%) by the end of FY25.*
  - The chart below denotes AccelerateMS Priority credentials. MDE and the secondary system are requested to make recommendations on methods to reach goals and increase pass rates on priority industry-recognized certifications.

K-12 Priority Credential Goals

Assessment	Course	Tested	Passed	% Pass	% Pass Recommended	Proposed Pass Goal 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2028 & Beyond
Autodesk Certified User	Architecture and Drafting/Engineering	123	73	59%	70%	86	150	250
Certified Logistic Associate	Fundamentals of Material Handling	11	4	36%	65%	7	100	300
Certified Logistic Technician	Advanced Logistics and Supply Chain	4	3	75%	N/A	3	100	300
NCCER - MCEF Custom Core Test	Advanced Manufacturing I/Metal Fabrication I	291	162	56%	70%	204	204	750
NCCER - MCEF Pre-Post Exam Level 2 Welding	Welding Third Year Dual Credit	12	12	100%	N/A	12	50	150
NCCER - Mississippi Pre-Post Construction Carpentry Year 2	Carpentry	631	186	29%	65%	410	450	800
NCCER - Mississippi Pre-Post Construction Electrical Year 2	Electrical	47	19	40%	65%	31	250	400
NCCER - Mississippi Pre-Post HVAC Year 2	HVAC II	10	2	20%	65%	7	100	250
NCCER - Mississippi Pre-Post Industrial Maintenance Electrical and Mechanical Year 1	Industrial Maintenance I	124	67	54%	65%	81		750
NCCER - Mississippi Pre-Post Industrial Maintenance Electrical and Mechanical Year 2	Industrial Maintenance (Y2)	69	38	55%	65%	45	200	500
NCCER - Mississippi Pre-Post Welding Year 2	Advanced Welding II	568	296	52%	65%	369	400	600
NIMS Measurement, Materials, & Safety	Precision Machining II/Metal Fabrication II	161	58	36%	65%	105	300	450
Solid Works Edu - CSWA Academic	Engineering II	355	69	19%	65%	231	250	400
TestOut IT Fundamentals Pro Certification	Information Technology (Y1)	325	196	60%	70%	228	350	500
TestOut Network Pro Certification	Information Technology (Y2)	150	78	52%	70%	105	200	350
PCEP™ – Certified Entry-Level Python Programmer	Computer Science				70%		100	350
CIW JavaScript Specialist	Computer Science				70%		100	350

- *The Legislature should consider establishing a post-secondary SWIB credential list and increasing the SWIB credential reimbursement dollars available from $600,000 to $5M combined.*
  - o AccelerateMS and SWIB will identify post-secondary credentials of value in alignment with certifications offered in high schools. Once list is created and shared, MCCB and IHL are requested to collect data on current attainment rates of those credentials issued for past 3 years.
  - o The Legislature should consider prioritizing funding for training and education programs leading to identified credentials.
- *The secondary and post-secondary systems should examine models to increase retention in programs beyond the first semester and year, to increase the output of qualified workers in critical occupations.*
  - o MDE and MCCB are requested to report on CTE program completion rates for all enrollees over last 3 years and make recommendations on how each will increase retention and completion.
  - o AccelerateMS shall produce a current state report to highlight existing programs, enrollment, and completion to be presented at the August SWIB Board meeting.
- *To support existing and expanding priority sector and occupation employment in Mississippi, the secondary and postsecondary systems should add or expand the following:*
  - i. *Industrial maintenance programs and pathways in AccelerateMS Ecosystems 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 & 8 must be added and expanded to <u>double the number of completers and graduates</u> to close the gap in the number of new workers needed in these regions.*
  - ii. *Advanced manufacturing K-12 programs in Ecosystems 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 must produce triple the state's current enrollment of 164 total students by FY26.*
  - iii. *To support existing and expanding construction workforce needs, Construction Electrical programs must be established and/or expanded in Ecosystems 3, 5, and 7 for both K-12 and adult learners.*
    - o AccelerateMS shall report bi-annually on the progress towards these goals and identify challenges and opportunities clearly for the SWIB Board to review.

- *The K-12 College and Carees Readiness Course (CCR) should be implemented earlier to allow for exploration and ensure students can utilize their senior year for internship opportunities.*
  - Can the K-12 College and Career Readiness Course align with sector and occupational priorities identified by AccelerateMS and SWIB?
- *Business/Industry should examine policies that are age prohibitive to allow students of all ages to work in appropriate occupations.*
  - For SWIB members representing businesses, please report on any barriers to student-aged internships and potential options for exposing more students to work opportunities.
- *Local Workforce Development Areas must review the Priority Occupation List provided by AccelerateMS, to ensure local needs are reflected on the list, and establish highest priority labor market demands for their area by July 2024.*
  - LWDA must detail how these occupations will be addressed in their respective WIOA plan to ensure funds are prioritized for the highest needs. For priority occupations, please submit data on recent publicly-funded training program actual output and growth goals.
- *The secondary and postsecondary system, career coaches, and partners must ensure ALL students have access to internship opportunities for priority sector job opportunities.*
  - Can LWDAs develop list of internship providers and begin recruiting new providers?
- *The State should consider adding a requirement within funding models ensuring priority sector class size maintains a minimum enrollment of 10 students per class.*
  - MDE and the Secondary System must examine enrollment and identify programs/classes with 10 or less participants each semester and provide an explanation to SWIB on how program participation will be increased.
- *ROI: MCCB and partners must develop initiatives to increase the enrollment and retention of underrepresented groups.*
  - After examining enrollment/completion, MCCB is requested to identify priority programs lacking retention of underrepresented groups and make recommendations to SWIB on how program participation and completion will be increased.
- *ROI: Mississippi Core WIOA partners should join a Multi-State Data Collaborative to improve accountability and student tracking, specifically for those who leave Mississippi.*
  - MDES and AccelerateMS have joined the Coleridge Initiative. Other partners should consider joining as well to ensure access across the board to vital data from other states. MDES and AccelerateMS are requested to work with partners to develop a plan to present to SWIB for how participation will increase data based decision making.
- *Career Coaches and counselors at all levels must provide targeted career guidance to students and potential students that emphasize priority sectors and occupation opportunities as these provide higher earnings potential in Mississippi.*
  - AccelerateMS should make partners aware of the needs in each region, and partners are requested to set measurable goals of how each plans to close identified gaps, including desired post-secondary outcomes for students receiving career guidance.
- *MDE should establish more strenuous early graduation requirements to ensure high school students graduating early have appropriate plans in place to ensure access to work or training/education upon graduation.*

- *AccelerateMS and partners must establish a means by which to track coached students beyond high school to analyze outcomes of individuals receiving services.*
  - Career Coach funding subrecipients must identify how each will track students and associated outcomes, specifically addressing how career coaches will be utilized to close identified gaps.

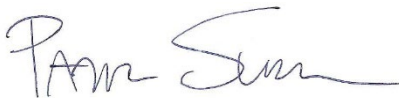Further, as a reminder, MS Code Section 37-153-7 requires the following:

Each state agency, department and institution shall report any monies received for workforce training activities or career and technical education and a detailed itemization of how those monies were spent to the state board. The board shall compile the data and provide a report of the monies and expenditures to the Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee, the Chair of the House Workforce Development Committee and the Chair of the Senate Economic and Workforce Development Committee by October 1 of each year. Each such state agency director shall remain responsible for the actions of his agency; however, each state agency and director shall work cooperatively to fulfill the state's goals.

To avoid collecting this information in inconsistent formats, please remit the following basic information:

- Name of Program (segregated by occupational category), Total program cost by category (Personnel, Contract Services, Instructional Materials, Equipment, Office Supplies, Computer/Software, Other), and Program funding source (state funding, tuition/fee revenue, Perkins, grant, etc)

There are many challenges to address today and ahead. The AccelerateMS team and/or I are always available to discuss with you what specific actions may be to begin making progress in these areas. We value your partnership and your contribution to progress in this complex endeavor so far.

Sincerely,

Patrick Sullivan

Chairman