



AN INITIATIVE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S 2011 JOBS BILL (PUBLIC ACT 11-1)

***STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS &
RESOURCES FOR ASSURING CONNECTICUT'S SKILLED WORKFORCE
MEETS THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS & INDUSTRY TODAY & IN THE FUTURE***

**STUDY BRIEFING
JANUARY 17, 2013**

Study Committee

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Robert Clifford, Policy Analyst, New England Public Policy Center, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

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Study Research Team

➤ *Study Research Group*

Connecticut Economic Resource Center

- ✓ **Alissa DeJonge**, Director of Research
- ✓ **Michelle Riordan-Nold**, Research Consultant

➤ *CASE Staff*

- ✓ **Richard Strauss**, Executive Director
- ✓ **Bruce Carlson**, Associate Project Manager
- ✓ **Terri Clark**, Associate Director
- ✓ **Ann Bertini**, Assistant Director for Programs

Academy Member Reviewers

- **Peter G. Cable**, Applied Physical Sciences Corporation
- **Herbert S. Levinson**, Professor of Civil Engineering (ret.), University of Connecticut

Study Background

- **Goal: Identify strategies and mechanisms to assess and evaluate the value and effectiveness of state programs and resources with a goal of providing businesses and industries in Connecticut with a skilled workforce (*with a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics related fields*) that meets the needs and expectations of employers, and at the same time, seeks to insure that students receive the education they need and expect to successfully work in today's jobs/careers and in the jobs/careers of the future.**

Study Approach

- **CASE Study Committee Meetings**
- **Presentations and interviews with national experts on workforce alignment and strategies**
- **Presentations by state agency representatives, state-based businesses, and educators**
- **Interviews with key stakeholders**
- **Statewide focus groups**
- **Study conducted in consultation with DECD, DOL, and BOR in accordance with legislation authorizing the study (P.A. 11-1), as well as SDE**

Study Report – Table of Contents

The Study Report includes the following major sections:

- ✓ **Executive Summary**
- ✓ **Study Background**
- ✓ **Introduction**
- ✓ **2009 Legislative Program Review and Investigations (PRI) Committee Report: Alignment of Postsecondary Education and Employment**
- ✓ **Current System**
- ✓ **Recent Legislative Changes**
- ✓ **Alignment Progress in STEM Occupations**

Study Report – Table of Contents (cont.)

- ✓ **Findings and Recommendations:**
 - **Organizational Structure and Leadership**
 - **Data and Information**
 - **Education and Business/Industry Link**
 - **Where can Connecticut Achieve the Greatest Return on Taxpayer Investment?**
- ✓ **Concluding Remarks**

Study Report – Table of Contents (cont.)

✓ Appendices

- **Appendix A: Focus Group Summary**
- **Appendix B: Summary of Research Interviews**
- **Appendix C: Detailed Findings from Program Review and Investigations Committee 2009 Study “Alignment of Postsecondary Education and Employment”**
- **Appendix D: Strategic Document Review**
- **Appendix E: Study Committee Meetings and Guest Speakers**

Sample Guest Speaker Presentations

- [College Completion in Connecticut: And the Impact on the Workforce and Economy](#)
Bruce Vandal, Director, Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development, Education Commission of the States
- [Connecticut's Economic Strategy & Education's Role](#)
William J. Holstein, Author, *The Next American Economy*
- [Projects of education demand for the future workforce](#)
Nicole Smith, Senior Economist, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
- [Early Childhood Initiatives](#)
Art Rolnick, Senior Fellow, Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- [Why Good People Can't Get Jobs](#)
Peter Cappelli, George W. Taylor Professor of Management and Director, Center for Human Resources, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

Recordings and archiving of study committee meetings and guest speaker presentations provided courtesy of ConnDOT



Workforce Alignment Vision

The study committee developed a workforce alignment vision that guided the study's research, findings and recommendations, as follows:

Workforce alignment is the efficient and flexible collaboration of state and local public and private entities that educates and trains a dynamic and globally competent workforce that

- (1) obtains sustainable jobs*
- (2) provides value to the current and future needs of businesses and industries*
- (3) is an asset for the region to attract and retain workers*

Brief Statement of Primary Conclusion

- **Economic well being of the state of Connecticut and its citizens and businesses is dependent on a vibrant and globally competitive state economy**
- **Preparing the state's workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow must be a state priority of the highest level**
- **Workforce system is complex — spans an individual's lifetime from pre-natal development through retirement— that requires coordination, collaboration, and continuous review and improvement of programs and initiatives provided by many state agencies and others**

Brief Statement of Primary Conclusion

- **A statewide workforce system should be coordinated to assure that:**
 - **clear objectives are established and progress is monitored**
 - **education, economic development and workforce program entities are held accountable regarding each entity's responsibilities related to workforce issues**
 - **implementation of strategies related to the workforce system are assessed and outcomes monitored**
 - **a system is created that can address and adapt to transformations and globally emerging trends.**

Brief Statement of Primary Conclusion

- **Workforce system needs to be informed by data:**
 - **Data and information that provides historical and projected future workforce trends are necessary for informed decision making regarding state and federal investments in workforce related programs**
 - **To hold agencies and others with workforce related responsibilities accountable for results and outcomes**

Brief Statement of Primary Conclusion

- **Paramount for workforce system to meet the needs of business and industry and prepare students and adults for workforce opportunities:**
 - **The workforce leadership responsibilities of the Connecticut Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) should include facilitating the development of relationships between and across the education and business and industry communities.**
 - **Education and training initiatives should be integrated with key economic growth strategic initiatives to assure workers have the skills needed to support the business sectors identified by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD)**

Brief Statement of Primary Conclusion

- **One goal of this study is to provide guidance regarding methods for evaluating workforce system-related programs for the purpose of determining return on the investment of public funds**
- **However, there is very little data that assesses program outcomes and looks at the programmatic effects longitudinally**
- **Therefore, this area of the findings and recommendations takes a broader look, examining which programs nationally have been identified as having the greatest return on public investment in the short, medium, and long term**

Brief Statement of Primary Conclusion

- **State's workforce system organizational structure should be changed to:**
 - **Provide for focused leadership for the best opportunity to achieve desired outcomes**
- **OWC should be an independent office that reports directly to the Governor and is housed for administrative purposes only within the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). The head of the OWC should be an individual with workforce development and policy experience**
- **Provide OWC with the authority, on behalf of the Governor, to assure accountability of all agencies and organizations with workforce system related responsibilities**

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Organizational Structure and Leadership**
- **Data and Information**
- **Education and Business/Industry Link**
- **Where Can Connecticut Achieve the Greatest Return on Taxpayer Investment**

Study Findings

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- **Connecticut needs to raise education and workforce training to the highest strategic priority**
- **Goal of the state's economic growth plan is to not only create and grow businesses, but to fill the jobs in these new businesses with Connecticut residents**
- **Leadership gap in the state with a lack of accountability by entities involved in education and workforce training**

Study Findings

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- **OWC lacks the authority to successfully provide leadership and visibility for state workforce programs and initiatives, and to overcome state agency resistance to system improvement to achieve desired outcomes**
- **There are often many pilot programs conducted throughout the state but these programs are rarely brought to scale statewide**

Recommendations

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- **Implement a new model to ensure effective oversight of major federal and state workforce funding streams**
- **A new model will:**
 - **support CETC in its policy-making role**
 - **increase accountability**
 - **increase coordination and collaboration so funds can be leveraged, maximized, and serve residents in the most efficient and effective manner**

Evaluating Workforce Program/System Effectiveness

VIBRANT GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE ECONOMY
ECONOMIC WELL BEING OF CONNECTICUT CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES



Recommendations

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- 1. OWC should be designated to serve as the entity that has the authority to work directly with the Governor to:**
 - **set objectives, monitor progress, and hold accountable the education, economic development and workforce program entities regarding workforce issues;**
 - **assess the implementation of the strategies related to workforce;**
 - **create a system that can address and adapt to transformations and globally emerging techniques; and**
 - **manage the comprehensive longitudinal workforce data system (with guidance from CETC's Planning and Performance Committee)**

Recommendations

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- **OWC should become a stand-alone entity that reports to the Governor and housed within OPM for administrative purposes only. The head of the OWC, an individual with workforce development and policy experience, should report directly to and be appointed by the Governor**
- **The Governor should provide an overall workforce vision for the state to:**
 - **raise the level of recognition and importance of workforce development**
 - **develop workforce system goals with guidance from OWC/CETC**
 - **rely on OWC for data and analysis for decision-making and accountability**

Recommendations

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- **CETC should provide the strategic guidance related to workforce issues including a vision for targeting resources and for focusing OWC activities**
 - **Further, OWC should develop in consultation with CETC a process to provide businesses with information regarding all workforce related programs**
- **A General Assembly *Select Committee on Workforce* should be created to receive and review data and metrics for monitoring and policymaking related to workforce alignment**

Recommendations

Organizational Structure & Leadership

- **When a new initiative is launched, (*for example Connecticut's Innovation Ecosystem or First Five Program*) OWC should be responsible for ensuring that all workforce related-issues are coordinated and that funds are leveraged to increase the efficient and effective use of public funds**
- **OWC should serve as the convener and facilitator of the various state partners involved in STEM to create collaborations that would make the state more competitive for federal funds**
 - **OWC should create a clearinghouse of all STEM initiatives in the state, disseminate information and create awareness about existing and new programs to reach the maximum number of students possible**

Recommendations

Organizational Structure & Leadership

2. Add representation of independent colleges and University of Connecticut to CETC board
3. Consider offering and co-locating comprehensive *services (including Adult Education, among others)* at the One-Stop Centers

Study Findings

Data & Information

- No central authority that consolidates, analyzes, and synthesizes all workforce program data, labor market data, and economic development related data
- Important to go one step beyond analyzing the data by using the information to adapt programs, terminate ineffective programs, or implement new programs based on emerging trends or future needs
- No systematic method of collecting data to determine what business needs are in the future so that workforce programs could be developed to meet those future needs

Recommendations

Data & Information

1. **Employ a hybrid method for understanding short and medium term workforce needs**
 - **Incorporate the best data that is currently available for predicting future trends:**
 - 1) ***DOL occupational projections;***
 - 2) ***Real-time job posting data; and***
 - 3) ***Create and administer a quarterly employer survey that assesses current vacancy rates and future hiring plans***

Recommendations Data & Information

2. The longitudinal data system must be supported and promoted by the state

All agencies and entities in the state that are part of the workforce system must provide their data and protocols for data use and sharing must be established

OWC should lead the effort in convening an interagency workgroup to determine the future sustainability of the longitudinal data system

Recommendations

Data & Information

3. **OWC should be responsible for creating a central repository for workforce programs that will:**
 - 1) *provide information about workforce programs in the state; and*
 - 2) *inform about the quality of the programs for the purposes of statewide implementation (scale-up)*
4. **Enhance DOL's research capacity to produce more comprehensive data to inform the workforce system**

Recommendations

Data & Information

- 5. OWC to serve as the office to systematically assess program performance and also analyze the state's overall performance on key metrics and benchmarks for comparison with other states, the nation, and globally**
- 6. Higher education performance metrics should be tied to meeting the needs of business**

Study Findings

Education & Business/Industry Link

- **In order to have an effective workforce system, there must be a linkage between the state's education system and business and industry**
- **State's universities and colleges are critical to the state's economic growth and prosperity for its citizens**
- **Higher education cannot help drive economic growth unless students' academic achievement is linked to the needs of the marketplace**

Study Findings

Education & Business/Industry Link

- **Progress has been made through consolidation of higher education system – but still opportunity to improve coordination**
- **Program approval process, administered by Office of Higher Education and the State Board of Education, impedes private universities from quickly responding to market need**
- **Gap exists in terms of the degrees and credentials conferred in the state and ensuring higher education is meeting the needs of employers**

Study Findings

Education & Business/Industry Link

- **National Governor's Association Best Practices for aligning post-secondary goals with state's economic goals**
 - 1. Set clear expectations for higher education's role in economic development***
 - 2. Emphasize rigorous use of labor market data and other sources to define goals and priorities***
 - 3. Encourage employers' input into higher education***
 - 4. Require public higher education institutions to collect and publicly report impacts***
 - 5. Emphasize performance as an essential factor in funding***

Recommendations

Education & Business/Industry Link

- 1. Strengthen universities and colleges as agents of workforce preparation and sources of more opportunity, economic growth, and increased competitive advantage**
 - create an education system that is accountable to the state's workforce system by creating metrics tied to performance evaluation and funding**
- 2. Education and training initiatives, through OWC's leadership, and in coordination with education and training institutions should be integrated into the state's key economic growth strategic initiatives**

Recommendations

Education & Business/Industry Link

- 3. Workforce development partnerships and collaborations that involve the private and public sectors including philanthropic funders can be utilized for meeting workforce needs to collaborate with education and training providers**
- 4. Create a visible marketing campaign to make students, residents and workers aware of the state's commitment to excellence in education and to attract talent to Connecticut**

Recommendations

Education & Business/Industry Link

- 5. Support the elimination of the program approval requirement for all independent colleges being approved by the State Board of Education.**
- 6. The SDE and State Board of Education should encourage and provide guidance to school districts to infuse existing K-12 curricula with cross-cultural experiences and learning opportunities to better prepare students to participate in a global workforce**

Study Findings

Greatest Return on Taxpayer Investment

- **Short-term**
 - On the job training
- **Medium-term**
 - Certificate programs
 - Apprenticeship Practices
- **Long-term**
 - Pre-Natal through Early Childhood Education

Recommendations

Greatest Return on Taxpayer Investment

Short-term

- **On the job training**
 - Pending further evaluation of program outcomes, the early results for the STEP-UP program present an opportunity for the state to scale a program beyond the pilot period and sustain it to obtain measurable results
- **Advocate for more flexible federal guidelines for federally funded programs**
 - To allow appropriate services to be offered with a more 'client-centric' approach customized for the needs of individual states and their businesses and workers

Recommendations

Greatest Return on Taxpayer Investment

Medium-term

➤ Apprenticeship Practices

- Create a workgroup of businesses – small, medium, and large manufacturers—to design the necessary components of an apprenticeship program that could have universal appeal to many businesses
- New model should extend beyond the traditional trades that are typically involved in an apprenticeship program and also include internship opportunities, certificate programs, and other appropriate creative solutions to hands-on-learning

Recommendations

Greatest Return on Taxpayer Investment

Long-term

- **Pre-Natal through Early Childhood Education**
 - Create a scholarship program so that all historically underrepresented children in the state can attend a high-quality preschool program. This is a market-based approach where programs are not funded — but rather parents receive scholarship money to choose the best high-quality program for their family

Concluding Remarks

- **Evaluating workforce system and programs requires ongoing analysis of data and information and outcomes with the principal goal of assuring that Connecticut's workforce is prepared to meet the needs of business and industry today and in the future**
- **System-wide leadership and expertise is needed to conduct comprehensive synthesis analysis to continually adapt programs and initiatives and allocate funding to those priorities that will have the greatest impact in meeting the needs of business and industry and the state's residents to maintain a vibrant state economy**

Concluding Remarks

- **Benchmark the state's workforce programs and initiatives with other similar states/regions to learn from other states and to ensure that Connecticut remains competitive.**
- **Best practices from other states, regions and countries should be continually identified for consideration for piloting or implementation in Connecticut.**

Concluding Remarks

- **Results and progress should be reported quarterly to CETC, the governor and the General Assembly**
- **The General Assembly should form a Select Committee on Workforce comprising the leadership of the committees of cognizance for workforce-related issues to:**
 - **Provide a mechanism by which all key committees could be informed about the status of workforce-related programs and initiatives**
 - **assure that both the executive and legislative branches of government maintain a keen awareness of the importance of workforce development to the economic well-being of the state and its citizens**

Thank You

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To access the study report online go to **www.ctcase.org**

