

10 Year Statewide Strategic Plan
Grow Local Talent Work Group - Meeting 2
February 24, 2021; 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
Zoom Mtg

Meeting Attendees:

- Kim Moore
- Jen Fullmer
- Erica Watson
- Colleen Quint
- Dwight Littlefield
- Rosa Redonnett
- Ben Gilman
- Guy Langevin
- Janet Sortor
- Jason Judd
- John Herweh
- Diana Doiron
- Colleen Hilton
- Martha Bentley
- Kelsey MacKinnon, DECD Staff

Meeting Objectives:

- Introduce new members
- Present Grow Local Talent strategy area synopses
- Determine process for prioritizing projects in GLT strategy area

Notes:

Request for Collaboration (RFC) Concept (Martha Bentley)

- Martha is leading Strategic Plan implementation at DECD and is chairing the Attract Talent work group
- Strategic Plan Steering Committee decided to put out a Request for Collaboration around implementation
 - 2 goals:
 1. To recognize that a lot of the Strategic Plan work does not live directly in state gov't – there are existing public-private partnerships doing this work. We want to give people an opportunity to opt in to this implementation process, and give us a chance to track/promote what is happening.
 2. To map the network of people/organizations/collaborations doing this work to understand where there are overlaps within and across work groups, as well as to identify who isn't at the table and whose voices aren't being represented
- RFC is posted on [DECD's website](#) and will be shared more broadly
- The RFC is not a procurement process – it's an invitation for private sector groups to tell us the work they're already doing and to opt in to this process
 - From there, we can potentially try to marshal resources together

Strategy Report Outs

A1: Maine's Career Exploration (Colleen Quint, John Herweh, Erica Watson, Colleen Hilton)

- **Overview:**
 - Looked at the 10-Year Plan and ERC Report on macro, micro, short-term, and long-term dimensions
 - Aspirations for students (pre-K through adult) are an important macro, long-term component
 - If we're trying to build these aspirations in the long term, we have to determine what plans, pathways, and resources are available to help people take those steps (micro piece)
 - Synopsis includes key ideas and brief overview of specific resources/programs that already exist
 - Next, will need to identify where there are gaps and overlap, both in content areas and geographically

A2: Web Portal matching students and employers (Ben Gilman)

- **Overview:**
 - Identified existing portals and evaluated what is already going on in this area – what resources already exist?
 - Will likely need a hub and spoke model, rather than one place for internship listings
 - Maine Career Compass by Educate Maine (with FocusMaine) could potentially serve as a central clearinghouse for internships in Maine
- **Questions/Discussion:**
 - We might want to include Roux Institute's work with coops, as well, rather than just internships
 - Should also consider how to incorporate apprenticeships
 - Need to make sure resources are consolidated so that it's intuitive for the user (rather than the institution/sponsoring organization)
 - No portal for high school students at this point – would be good to have a portal to connect high school students with the statewide business community
 - Growing number of high schools are incorporating extended learning opportunities for students (unpaid/for credit internships, job shadows, apprenticeships)
 - Diana and Dwight are on a group that's working to define the terminology and expectations around internships, apprenticeships, and job shadows for high school students – want employers and high schools to understand what the guidelines look like
 - Intent is for these experiences to align with the newly adopted Maine Learning Results standards, and the idea is to give students experience in work environments so they have realistic understandings that can inform their choices in high school/post high school
 - Maine Community Coordinators Collaborative ([Maine C3](#))
 - Need to be clear about terminology and purposes of high school internships/extended learning opportunities – is the purpose to expose them to different careers and/or to get them work experience that they can then use once they attain a credential of some sort?
 - Maine Career Compass – Educate Maine partners with Live & Work Maine
 - LWM posts the internship positions and is connected with the largest print media
 - Interested in figuring out how we can expand and support high school folks
 - OnWard system is another potential option that will be rolling out soon
 - Next generation of Maine JobLink also gives the ability to list apprenticeships, volunteer opportunities, etc.; can also tag if opportunities are paid or unpaid

A3: Align curriculums with digital economy skills (Chris Quint)

- **Overview:**
 - Need to provide workers with fundamental technical skills and understanding that will help them adapt successfully over their careers
 - Synopsis looks at some of the specific recommendations (e.g., increasing access to broadband/mobile devices/digital literacy) and lists some organizations we could potentially engage with
- **Questions/Discussion:**
 - This section addresses digital literacy, but doesn't as explicitly address computer science. Need to consider how computer science connects to digital skills in our workforce.
 - A lot of good work is happening with the Dept of Education, nonprofits, higher ed, and employers in Maine to think about computer science in K-12 and the higher ed space
 - Also consider the MTLI laptop program – what will that look like moving forward?

- Dept of Education has also developed and is implementing a computer science plan for K-12
- Should also consider innovation skills/innovation inquiry – not just technical computer science skills, but also the hypothesis-based questioning and design thinking around that
 - Muskie School Gateway to Opportunity program focused on 21st century skills might be relevant
- Three key points in this section: digital literacy, access to broadband, and preparation for careers in digital economy (including skills beyond technical skills)
- Adaptability component is foundational to all of them. Should intentionally design experiences that develop adaptability in kids and provide that sense of self efficacy in order to navigate the large rates of change they'll continue to face throughout their lives
 - This point and the non-technical skills point could tie into A5, too – how can we help adults integrate professional development for digital economy skills into their curriculums?

A4: Engage today's workers in continuing education to achieve credentials for career advancement (Erica Watson, Kim Moore, Guy Langevin)

- **Overview:**

- Big picture ideas:
 - Many jobs that will be created in next decade don't exist today. How do we get people ready for that?
 - Strategic Plan identifies 4 thematic areas where Maine has strength and there's growing demand – and they intersect:
 - Food/Marine
 - Technical services
 - Making/Manufacturing
 - Forest Products
 - 20% of adults have some number of college credits but haven't completed a degree
- Goals:
 - Employers will strengthen partnerships with Adult Ed programs, etc.
 - Maine CTE system will play a critical role
- ERC Report:
 - Investing in higher ed programs and increasing degree attainment – big task
 - Talent development – create education and training pathways for people of all experience levels to access careers in high demand fields
 - Tie together and increase support for Adult Ed programs, CTEs, and libraries
- National Governors Association (NGA) grant submitted last week
 - Applied for technical assistance grant that aligns well with strategy A4
- Synopsis provides an initial assessment of entities already engaged in some of this work, and existing examples of work/collaborations
- Related points:
 - How many jobs won't return to Maine due to technology/AI developments due to COVID?
 - How is Maine keeping/developing/training the leaders working in these 4 thematic areas? Do we have the educators to meet the demand if we increase training/education programs? There are some industries in Maine where it's hard to find and keep educators.

- **Questions/Discussion:**

- A lot of entities are already working in this space – why does the perception of a skills gap in our workforce continue to exist if all this work is going on?
 - Do we promote these programs well enough?
 - Are the programs on target or slightly off target?
 - The more we can engage employers in this process, the more success these programs will have
- There are 2 sets of needs (those of job seekers and employers), but they don't seem to come together despite all of the amazing work happening. The technical assistance grant could really help – focused on the user of the system. How do you find the user where they are?
- One challenge: for a lot of these careers, you have to get kids on the pathways really young – before high school.

- If they graduate from high school and aren't prepared with the foundational skills they need, they start these programs and get discouraged. Need to build a pipeline of people understanding what the work looks like and what skillset is needed.
 - Project>Login an example to consider
 - Connects to the idea of aspirations, and to strategy A5 around STEM teacher professional development
 - Also a demographic question – do we need more children in Maine?
- Recognition of foreign credentials is important aspect – there are a lot of groups working on it, but we don't seem to make much progress. Could have a big impact if we dig deep into that one element as part of this planning and future work – want to do it collaboratively across the state
 - Foreign Credentials is included in the “Attract Talent” strategy in the 10-Year Plan
 - Professional & Financial Regulation department (Anne Head) is putting in legislation looking for more flexibility around the recognition of credentials, but it is a slow process
 - Are there any quick adjustments we can make in the meantime so people can use the talents/skills they're bringing to Maine?
 - Portland Office of Economic Opportunity (Julia Trujillo) had a pilot project with a national organization focused on helping immigrants have their credentials recognized in the US. Got great work and research out of that partnership, but haven't made much further progress.

A5: Expand the professional preparation of educators at all levels – from those caring for children aged 0-3, as well as Pre-K to high school – in STEM and other digital economy skills. (Jason Judd)

- **Overview:**
 - How do you go from an Ed Tech and get on your pathway to becoming a full-time teacher?
 - Also connects to ERC recommendations around immigrants specifically – how do we diversify our workforce/help foreign educators become educators here in Maine?
 - There's a shortage of STEM educators in Maine, from the early childhood through the high school level
 - Good work is happening in this area with higher ed institutions and the Dept of Education, looking at how to diversify the workforce, get more people into education, and celebrate the industry
 - Wages are an important piece – early childhood educator wages are very low in the birth through 5 category.
 - How can we have steps so educators can transition from CTE programs, to community college programs, etc. and have wage steps along the pathway?
 - Synopsis includes a number of initiatives that support this work
 - How do we connect existing programs to resources to help them scale up their goals?
 - Which piece can we move/should we focus on to make a difference?
- **Questions/Discussion:**
 - We have to support professional preparation of all our educators, but we also have to make the case of why going into education as a profession is important in order to attract new people into the field. Where does that fit in this framework?
 - We don't have enough people that want to be STEM/computer science/digital literacy educators. We can provide a great curriculum and prepare them, but we need people to want to do this in order to have an impact.
 - Attracting people into teaching as a profession is challenging. Have to show them what's in it for them, why it matters, how it will benefit them and the state, and how they'll earn a livable wage.
 - The language in this strategy area is pretty connected to STEM/digital skills specifically. What does that look like when we're teaching K-5, K-12, etc. Definitely need to get more people onto the educator career pathways in these areas.
 - A5 recommendations overlap with A6. Could combine A5 and A6 to include early childhood educators and K-12 educators in the same conversation as STEM/digital skill educators.

A6: Improve the quality of care in our early childhood system by supplementing salaries for early childhood educators, rewarding them for their experience in the field and completing postsecondary programs. (Jen Fullmer and Kim Moore)

- **Overview:**

- 10-Year Plan focused on investing in the educational system for early childhood educators – higher salaries to put in on par with the rest of the system. Makes sense to consolidate this with A5.
 - More focused on the employee/worker than the ERC Report (salaries and professional development)
- Foundational skills – according to the Plan, almost 50% of kids in Maine are disadvantaged in skills by 4th grade.
 - Accessibility, quality, and amount of teachers could be factors impacting this
- ERC Report also discussed wage issues – need better pay to grow, sustain, and compensate early childhood educators
- ERC Report was focused on economic recovery, so it also addressed accessibility and how we get kids back into the child care system so parents can work
 - More focused on helping working families access quality care, ensuring all 4-year-olds have access to public pre-K, increasing availability, etc. How do we get kids into care, and how do we make it affordable?
 - Near-term priority for economic recovery
 - These questions probably fit better with the work group focused on child care (Infrastructure group – Children’s Cabinet)
- What’s already happening in Maine/who’s already working on this?
 - NGA state roadmap for workforce recovery highlighted a few states for best practices. Vermont’s near-term efforts related to child care for essential workers, etc. are mentioned. Need near-term solutions to bridge to the long term.
 - Recent program from Portland Adult Ed helps English Language Learners achieve their Child Development Associate (CDA) certification

- **Questions/Discussion:**

- The Children’s Cabinet (in the Infrastructure work group) is leading the early child care system pieces
- Any concerns about combining A5 and A6 moving forward?
 - Only concern: don’t want to overlook the second element of A6 (early care/education supports to ensure parents can go to work). Support of early childhood educators is perfectly aligned with A5, but that second piece is separate.
 - We should pass that second piece along to the Children’s Cabinet to make sure it’s being addressed. Then it makes sense to combine A5 and A6.

Next Steps

- Before next month’s meeting, we will meet in our individual groups again and start to identify tangible projects/products we can work toward in the short term
 - Kim and Chris will work with Martha to finetune the list of questions we should answer around these projects/provide a template for the groups to work from
 - Once we identify priorities in our smaller groups, we’ll reconvene and move forward together as a larger group
- **Updated group compositions:**
 - **A1:** Colleen Quint, John Herweh, Erica Watson, Diana Doiron, Colleen Hilton
 - **A2:** Ben Gillman, Jason Judd, Kim Moore, Colleen Quint, Janet Sortor
 - **A3:** Christopher Quint, Kim Moore, Jason Judd, Janet Sortor
 - **A4:** Erica Watson, Kim Moore, Guy Langevin, Janet Sortor, Rosa Redonnett
 - **A5 & A6:** Jason Judd, Dwight Littlefield, Jen Fullmer, Kim Moore, Rosa Redonnett