Governor's Council on Workforce & Apprenticeships
Meeting 4 | June 12, 2025
MINUTES

Council Members Present: Co- Chairs Sen. Eddie Settle, Sec. Lee Lilley, and Pres. Jeff Cox, Andréa Allard, Rep. Vernetta Alston, Mark Bolton, Chad Bouffiou, J.B. Buxton, Brian Floyd, Cecilia Holden, Steven Mange, Cecilia Holden, Angela LeMay (Trey Michael), Anna Perkinson, Dr. Travis Reeves, Eric Shoults, Tammy Simmons, Karen Wade, Shun Robertson (Dr. Thomas Walker), Wendy Walker-Fox, Tom West, and Rep. Matthew Winslow

Absent: Jennifer Allen, Sherry Carpenter, Sen. Val Applewhite, and Edsel McDonald

Subject Matter & Resources Experts: Caroline Bailey, James Bain, Andrew Beal, Morgan Crawford, Jeff DeBellis, Dr. Andrea DeSantis, Kindl Detar, Tracie Ford, Jonathan Guarine, Morgan Hopkins, Dr. Annie Izod, Jordan Matheney, Emily Roach, Allan Sandoval, Caroline Sullivan, Jamie Vaughn, and Misty Wolfe

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Welcome and Opening Remarks

Co-Chair Sen. Settle opened the meeting by welcoming council members and other attendees and expressing appreciation for their attendance. He noted that the meeting would be livestreamed on YouTube and that it's the fourth meeting of the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships (the Council). He thanked the attendees for their engagement over the past meetings and the hard work that everyone has put into creating the goals. Sen. Settle noted the challenges that come from Zoom meetings and reaffirmed his appreciation for Pres. Cox and Sec. Lee Lilley in helping him run Council meetings. Sen. Settle acknowledged that Sec. Lilley was joining the meeting virtually as he was in Greensboro working on an important project with Governor Josh Stein.

Sec. Lee Lilley thanked Sen. Settle for his leadership. Sec. Lilley then shared that he was in Greensboro to help announce the largest job project in North Carolina history, welcoming JetZero to Greensboro, Guilford County, and the Triad region. He shared that this project would create 14,500 jobs paying $31,000 more than the county average and investing $4.7 billion in North Carolina. Sec. Lilley acknowledged that the credit for economic development is shared amongst the Commerce team, the General Assembly, the community colleges, and residents. He apologized that he could not attend the Council meeting in-person and emphasized that the work the Council was doing would benefit the future workers who are part of the 14,500 new jobs.

Dr. Cox echoed the enthusiasm of Sec. Lilley's announcement. He emphasized that 14,500 new jobs and an $89,000 annual wage was a great win for the Triad region and the state.

Sen. Settle followed up with the roll call, the reading of the Conflict of Interest, and announcement of Ethics Awareness Training. The training is required for all Council members that are not state government employees. The deadline for completion of the training is June 18, 2025.

Next was the approval of the minutes. Pres. J.B. Buxton made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mark Bolton. The motion was carried.

Sec. Lilley shared his thanks with Chair Sen. Settle and members of the Council in developing goals to submit to Governor Stein with a deadline of Sunday, June 15. He announced that he will review the final survey responses and goal language at this time. He gave thanks for the feedback shared and notes that the feedback has been incorporated into the 11 goals to be shared with the governor. He acknowledged that they would continue to collect data regarding the quantifiable goals which may be used to revise or add to a goal. Sec. Lilley noted that the primary mission in phase one of the Council meetings was to develop time-limited goals that the council can hold themselves accountable to. He shared that the next step in phase two will be to move to strategies to implement the goals.

Next, Sec. Lilley announced that he would review the goals for everyone, noting that through survey responses there was over 90% acceptance on each of the 11 goals. He gave credit to staff who reached out to Council members with questions or comments.

Workforce Development Goals:

Goal 1: Ensure 2 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 will have earned an industry-valued credential or degree.

Goal 2: By graduation, every high school student will have completed coursework that results in transferrable credit or credential/certifications in preparation for the postsecondary pathway of their choice, such as dual enrollment, Career & Technical Education (CTE) concentrator, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate, and work-based learning courses.

Goal 3: For graduating high school students, increase postsecondary enrollment, employment, or enlistment in the military within 12 months of high school graduation.

Goal 4: Double the number of registered apprentices.

Goal 5: Increase participation in work-based learning:

- Double the number of work-based learning experiences through the NCWorks system with funding from Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and the Native American Workforce Program.
- Double the number of high school students participating in work-based learning.
- Increase by 25% the number of community college students participating in work-based learning courses.
- Increase by 25% work-based learning experiences including Correction Enterprises roles and work-release at state correctional facilities.
- Increase by 15% work-based learning experiences for individuals with disabilities through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title IV funds.

Goal 6: Engage 50,000 employers to partner with the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships on achieving its goals.

Goal 7: Establish and expand coordinated partnerships between education and workforce agencies and employers to increase alignment of resources to better address current and projected employer needs. Partnerships will result, on an annual basis, in the identification of local industry-valued training across the education continuum, shared planning for educational courses to meet these training needs, and increased use of available federal and state funds to support training in these programs.

Goal 8: Create statewide sector-based workforce development strategies for at least three key industries, including, but not limited to, advanced manufacturing, education, and health care.

Goal 9: Develop a plan to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) skills development into sector-based strategies and work-based learning in key industries to build a future-ready workforce.

Goal 10: Reduce state government vacancy rate to 15%.

Goal 11: Launch a coordinated statewide public outreach effort to broaden awareness and participation in workforce development programs by employers, learners, jobseekers, and incumbent workers, with an emphasis on reaching under-tapped talent pools like rural communities, veterans and their families, individuals with disabilities, and the justice-involved.

Sen. Settle thanked Sec. Lilley and shared his appreciation for the hard work that has gone into these goals and the feedback from the Council. He asked if there is a motion to accept the goals as written, and Cecilia Holden made the motion to accept the goals, seconded by Dr. Travis Reeves. The motion was carried.

Sec. Lilley noted that the Council would move forward as the goals are accepted, shifting to strategies to accomplish the goals. He thanked the Council again for their work. He reviewed the timeline that goals would be submitted June 13th to the governor, on June 25th a full public report of the Council's work will be submitted. Between the 25th of June and the 25th of July, staff will divide the Council into subcommittees, to meet in early August. In late August, the Council will meet in-person, in early October the Council will meet virtually, in early November the Council will meet in-person, in early December the Council will meet virtually, and on December 15th a report with strategies will be due to Governor Stein.

Breakout Groups

Pres. Cox explained that the Council would divide into four groups, which were just for the purposes of this exercise during the June 12th meeting. He encouraged Council members to focus on the two key questions below:

- Who is missing from our conversations and who do we need to invite when we start developing strategies?
- What data and presentations do we need to hear to help us develop our strategies?

Pres. Cox shared an example of conversations regarding healthcare initiatives already underway across the state and posed the question; what are the current programs that are working across the state?

The council divided into 4 groups, representing Education and Credential Attainment, Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships, Employer Engagement and Public-Private Partnerships, and Public Sector Workforce Strengthening and Future Skills.

Results of the Working Group Discussions:

Group 1: Education and Credential Attainment

Goal #1: Ensure 2 million North Carolinians aged 25-44 will have earned an industry-valued credential or degree.

Goal #2: By graduation, every high school student will have completed coursework that results in transferable credit or credentials/certifications in preparation for their postsecondary pathway of their choice, such as dual enrollment, Career & Technical Education (CTE) concentrator, Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate, and work-based learning courses.

Goal #3: For graduating high school students, increase postsecondary enrollment, employment, or enlistment in the military within 12 months of high school graduation.

Who is missing?

To ensure inclusive and effective planning for education and credential attainment strategies, we must engage a **broad spectrum of stakeholders**, categorized as follows:

Education Stakeholders

- Teachers
- High School Principals
- Superintendents at Community Colleges
- Counselors (CDC)
- Education-regulatory bodies
- Licensing Boards

Students, Parents, and Learners

- Students
- Parents
- Potential adult learners
- Opportunity youth

Military-Affiliated Groups

- Armed services
- Exiting military
- Military spouses
- Transitioning military

Community and Support Services

- Behavioral health providers
- Coaches
- Influencers

Industry and Economic Partners

- Businesses/HR directors
- Economic development representatives
- Regional partners (e.g., EDPNC)
- AdvanceNC

What data is Needed?

Strategic planning should be grounded in **data, proven models, and best practices** from both within and outside the state. These resources fall into the following categories:

State & National Models and Programs

- Tennessee SCORE/THEC
- Texas, Indiana, Washington State industry-recognized credential
- Florida CTE/Dual Enrollment programs
- Wisconsin CTE Apprenticeships
- NC Reconnect
- Inside Track
- Virginia: Military medics certification model
- UNC Greensboro Nursing (Dr. Letvak)
- Identify examples of accelerated learning programs
- Identify other models of excellence to expand and replicate

Data, Research & Metrics

- Disaggregated Student-level data to identify gaps
- Surveys for high school student interests
- myFutureNC county attainment data profiles
- County attainment files
- Wages/hourly positions
- General data collection
- Time to completion data by program

Credential Alignment & Awareness

- Industry-recognized credentials
- Certificates for employees to upskill
- Credit for Prior Learning
- Credit equivalency in the UNC system
- Core competence definition
- Expanding the speed of the pipeline

Access & Affordability

- NCSEAA - Loan programs for colleges

- Pell Grants including newly proposed Workforce Pell Grants

Outreach & Communication

- Advertising to attract specific demographics

Group 2: Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships

Goal #4: Double the number of registered apprentices.

Goal #5: Increase participation in work-based learning:

- Double the number of work-based learning experiences through the NCWorks system with funding from Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and the Native American Workforce Program.

- Double the number of high school students participating in work-based learning.

- Increase by 25% the number of community college students participating in work-based learning courses.

- Increase by 25% work-based learning experiences including Correction Enterprises roles and work-release at state correctional facilities.

- Increase by 15% work-based learning experiences for individuals with disabilities through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title IV funds.

- Double the number of students participating in the state government internship program.

Who is missing?

- Council of Governments
- SHRM (The Society for Human Resource Management)
- Local Society of SHRM
- Local Government
- Temp Agencies
- NC4Me (North Carolina for Military Employment)
- Small Business
- Trade Associations
- Licensing Boards
- Local School Districts
- Local Chambers
- Local Economic Development
- EDPNC (The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina)
- Nonprofits
- Legislators involved in Education and Workforce Initiatives

What Data is Needed?

- Council needs a WBL and RAP session
- Examples of Small, Medium, Large employers in different sectors and regions who do WBL and RAPs well
- Business to Business Sessions
- Grant for Data on employers in WBL
- WBL concierge
- Workforce Initiatives Air traffic controller
- Training for partners on how to braid funding
- Governor pledge for WBL
- ROI data on RAPS, pre-apprenticeships and WBL
- Look at other states SC and CO
- College internships
- Talent Inventory Pipeline

Group 3: Employer Engagement and Public-Private Partnerships

Goal #6: Engage 50,000 employers to partner with the Governor's Council on Workforce and Apprenticeships on achieving its goals.

Goal #7: Establish and expand coordinated partnerships between education and workforce agencies and employers to increase alignment of resources to better address current and projected employer needs. Partnerships will result, on an annual basis, in the identification of local industry-valued training across the education continuum, shared planning for educational courses to meet these training needs, and increased use of available federal and state funds to support training in these programs.

Goal #8: Create statewide sector-based workforce development strategies for at least 3 key industries, including, but not limited to, advanced manufacturing, education, and healthcare.

Who is missing?
- Regional Council of Governments
- NC4Me
- Employer Trade Associations
- Chambers of Commerce (Local and NC)
- Presidents of Educational Institutions
- Licensing Boards
- High School (Students, Parents, Counselors, Principals, Etc.
- Community College Advisory Boards
- CTE Advisory Groups
- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- AHEC (Area Health Education Centers)
- EDPNC Regional Partnerships
- Employers Call to Action (Industries, Mid-Range Employers, Small Businesses)
- Biotech

- Specific Industries (Healthcare, Aerospace)
- High Turnover Rate Fields
- SHRM-NC (Human Resources)
- Military (Transitioners and Spouses)

What Data is Needed?

- Workforce Data by Sector/High-Need Areas
- Corresponding Training Availability by Area
- Jobs of the Future
- TAP (Transitional Assistance Program)
- Regional Data (Wages and Jobs)
- Unemployment Data by Sector
- Sheps Center Data
- Real Time Data on Jobs Announcements
- Lightcast Data
- Case Studies (Toyota)
- Regional Health Data Alliance (Where the Need is)
- Duke Health
- Reentry/Justice Involved/Currently Incarcerated

Group 4: Public Sector & Workforce Strengthening & Future Skills

Goal #9: Develop a plan to integrate AI skills development into sector-based strategies and work-based learning in key industries to build a future-ready workforce.

Goal #10: Reduce state government vacancy rate to 15%.

Goal #11: Launch a coordinated statewide public outreach effort to broaden awareness and participation in workforce development programs by employers, learners, jobseekers, and incumbent workers, with an emphasis on reaching under-tapped talent pools like rural communities, veterans and their families, individuals with disabilities, and the justice-involved.

Who is missing?
- Communications Firms
- High Schools Students and Parents
- AI Programs in Local Community Colleges (examples: Fayetteville Tech, Alamance Community College)
- AI Expert from NCDIT
- Career State Employees/New State Employees/Funders of State Employee Salaries
- NGA-Resources
- Marketing /Communications Expert
- Laura Ullrich—Richmond Federal Reserve/Indeed.com
- Applicant who was offered a government job through NCOSHR/one who accepted and one who declined/Potential Job Applicant (Student)

- NCSU Experts on McKenzie Study
- Andrea Crowley NCCCS AI Study
- Jobs For the Future Group
- Builders/HVAC/Plumbers Associations
- Healthcare Community
- Individual from Licensing Board
- CTE Director
- Veteran/Justice Involved/Individual with Disabilities
- Representative from AI Driven Tech company

What Data is Needed?

- McKenzie Study
- Inventory of Existing Resources
- Utilization of Websites (what is driving the difference in usage)
- High Schoolers as a captive audience for awareness
- Breakdown of State Vacancy Rate
- Other State Examples (state government apps)
- Projected Economic Impact of goals/workers
- Example of Early Engagement (pre-apps)
- Wage Differences Between Public and Private Sectors
- AI-Data on Workforce/Education/Including Other States
- How applicants access state jobs VS. How they access other jobs

Dr. Cox called the Council to reconvene. He opened the floor briefly for any takeaways or comments that Council members want to offer on the exercise:

- Wendy Walker-Fox emphasized that there was a lot of overlap between the goals and that the Council did not have to recreate the wheel for each of the goals.
- Dr. Cox acknowledged that Brian Floyd had good ideas from a business and industry perspective on the healthcare industry and asked if Brian would share any observations with the group.
- Brian Floyd highlighted that the "Who?" seemed to be the convening organizations between industries.
- Dr. Cox highlighted the need for determining where there are pockets of excellence that can be showcased as examples around the state. He emphasized his appreciation for the Council and for Sec. Lilley.

Sec. Lilley extended his gratitude to the Council and applauded their great work over the past couple months. He said Governor Stein would be pleased with the Council's work and commitment. He issued a last thank you to the Council and staff for all their hard work. Pres. Cox thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.