State Workforce Development Board

Department of Workforce Services

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE APPROVED BY BOARD

DATE: October 8, 2026
TIME: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Google Meet: meet.google.com/enu-ixea-vko
Phone: 1-516-268-6796
PIN: 240 363 432#

FOR IN PERSON & PUBLIC COMMENT:
Davis Catalyst Center
1265 Sportsplex Dr, Kaysville, UT 84037

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Megen Ralphs, Angella Pinna, Alesha LeMmon, Celina Sinclair, Greg Paras, James Jackson, Martha Stevenson, Jody Katz, Jordan Hill, Kendall Thomas, James Robertsen, Rich Fullmer, Sarah Brenna, Shawn Milne, Shawn Newell, Tyler Low, Wendy Simmerman, Aaron Thompson

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT (VIRTUAL): Whitney Harris, Vic Hockett, Deanna Hopkins, Spencer Loveless, Lauren Navidomskis, Stacey Taylor

QUORUM: Yes

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Gary Harter, Jeff Worthington, Michelle Hill, Matt Loo, Debra Fiori, Steven Olson, Tannen Graham

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Brian Vermouth, Jeremy Haslam, Laurel Timmins

OTHER ATTENDEES: Benjamin Crabb, Amie Graff, Chris Williams, John Talcott, Weston Miller, Zac Whitwell, Kristie Noble, Allison Keller, Saige Palsson, Stephanie Patton, Samantha Teh

OTHER ATTENDEES (VIRTUAL): Janette Hernandez, Leah Labato, Nate Peterson, Joshua Rodeback, Tashina Williams

BOARD STAFF PRESENT: Liz Carver, Alexia Murphy, Amira Mijic, Cheyenne Wall, Heather Mousley, Natalie Garrett, Nycole Tylka, Lindsay Cropper

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Welcome and Opening Business Megen Ralphs

A. Acknowledgments and Introductions
    a. Megen reminded everyone that we aren't using AI note takers.
    b. Steven Olson, Deanna Hopkins and Kendall Thomas are no longer going to be on the board. Megen thanked them all for their service to the board.
    c. We are at Davis Catalyst Center for today's meeting, Megen thanked the Youth Committee for organizing.
B. Approval of July 9, 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes
    a. Motion to approve
        i. 1st Shawn Milne
        ii. 2nd Sarah Brenna
        iii. No discussion or comments.
        iv. All in favor, minutes passed.
C. AJC Recertifications
    a. Nycole shared her screen with results from the AJC recertifications.
        i. All of the recertifications passed. The board certified 12 centers in the last 2 and a half months.
        ii. Megen thanked the board for taking the time to help with certifications.
        iii. Megen shared how impressed she was with the staff in rural areas. Rural area staff have small teams and they have to know all the programs.
    b. Motion to approve all 12 affiliate recertifications:
        i. 1st Celina Sinclair
        ii. 2nd Shawn newell
        iii. No discussion or comments.
        iv. All in favor, all 12 recertifications passed.
    c. Motion to approve the comprehensive one stop in Tooele.
        i. 1st Kendal Thomas
        ii. 2nd Jordan Hill
        iii. No discussion or comments.
        iv. All in favor, the Tooele comprehensive once stop passed.
D. 2026 Annual State Workforce Development Board Report
    a. The report is published every year highlighting the accomplishments of the board with a message from Commissioner Cameron and the Board Chair.

National Governors Association (NGA) Insights Megen Ralphs

A. Utah was able to send a couple of individuals to the NGA summer policy institute.
    a. Megen shared some key takeaways from the meetings.
        i. Aligning education and workforce across the state agencies, simplifies employer engagement and improves retention and wage progression.
        ii. Expanding youth employment and moderate apprenticeship programs.

iii. Workforce Pell funding, enabling states to provide targeted high demand credentials.
iv. AI upskilling and talent accelerators to help workers adapt to technological shifts.
    1. DWS is launching the AI Literacy workshop in November for job seekers.
v. Cross-sector collaborations with higher education and organizations.
vi. Megen appreciated something that Governor Lee said: "We (the government) are not in the business of creating jobs, we are in the business of creating environments where business can create jobs and growth".

Service Project Megen Ralphs

A. We have a table full of books here at Davis Catalyst and Nycole's Venmo code shared for donations.
    a. Megen thanked the board for donating books and giving donations to purchase books.
B. Megen let the group know that we will start to think about a service project in January. If you have any ideas please share with the board at the next meeting.

Workforce Pell Vic Hockett

A. The Workforce Pell slideshow was shared with the group.
B. There has been some expansions into pell grants and Vic shared Utah System of Higher Ed, USHE, has been asked to take the lead for the state. He shared the following information:
    a. How utah got here
        i. July 4, 2025: Federal legislation enacted
        ii. July 25, 2025: Federal negotiated rulemaking announced
        iii. December 5, 2025: USHE workforce pell committee convened
        iv. December 8-12, 2025: AHEAD Committee meets; Negotiated rulemaking consensus
        v. February-March: Committee considers; communication of eligibility requirements with institutions; projection of existing eligible programs
        vi. March 10-April 8: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)
        vii. May 6: Utah Code 53H-11-417 establishes delegated Board responsibilities
        viii. May 19: Final federal rule published
        ix. JuneL USHE implementation planning and policy development
        x. July 1: Federal application process opens
        xi. July 9: Workforce peril policy approved by the board
    b. Overview
        i. What makes the workforce pell different?
            1. We look at shorter programs.
            2. Workforce aligned
            3. Performance-based
            4. Stackable or occupationally required credential
            5. State + federal approval
        ii. Federal program requirements
            1. Meet federal length requirements: 8-15 weeks of instruction, and either 150-599 clock hours or 4-16 semester hours.
            2. Be offered by an eligible institution.

3. Align with the workforce.
4. Lead to a recognized credential.
5. Meet performance standards: At least 70% completion and 70% employment. Beginning in later award year, the employment measure must relate to the programs training.
6. Meet the earnings/value requirement: Tuition and fees cannot exceed the program's federally calculated value-added earnings.
7. Have sufficient operating history: The program must have met applicable requirements for the 12 months preceding the federal approval process
8. CertificationL The Utah Board of Higher Education must determine that the program meets the applicable federal and Utah requirements before being submitted to the U.S. Department of Education for approval.

iii. Value-added earnings
1. Looking at the ROI aspects of short-term pell.
a. They want to see what the median earning of the candidates that are getting a credential, that are getting employed. Comparing that to 150% of the federal poverty guidelines and then looking at the actual cost of education.

c. What is complete
i. Federal framework
ii. Utah Law - section 53H-11-417
iii. Board of higher education policy
iv. Federal pathway
v. Early program work
vi. Implementation planning
vii. Vic commented that the programs are really about the occupation.

d. Roles and responsibilities
i. Utah Governor: Confirm the state’s designation authority for the purposes of the federal State Workforce Pell Certification Form.
ii. Utah Board of Higher Education: Hold the statutory responsibility for the Workforce Pell.
iii. Commissioner of higher education: Leads the Office of the Commissioner in carrying out the Board’s responsibilities.
iv. State workforce development board: Provides consultation. We want to ensure we have the proper ability to provide consultation on whether or not the programs are aligning.
v. Institutions of higher education.
vi. Institutional financial aid
vii. ORDS
viii. Department of workforce services
ix. Institutions

e. Data and outcomes

i. Putting together collaboration and making sure everyone knows and understands their roles and responsibilities.
ii. A 12 month charter is being built out .

f. Application and certification.
   i. USHE is in the process of developing a website.
   ii. It is up to the institution to decide if they want to be involved or not.

g. First glance
   i. Workforce pell pilot approach
      1. Start from what is already known by USHE/DWS.
      2. Existing programs have met other, similar standards.

h. Criteria for identifying potential programs.
   i. Technical education certification between 5 and 20 credit hours.
   ii. No distance education
   iii. Stackable
   iv. Aligns with the workforce

i. Vic shared a list of some preliminary workforce pell pilot occupations
   i. There are all occupations we need more of. These again are up to the institutions, they are not approved yet.

j. What happens next
   i. Establish the foundation, build and prepare and implement/launch.

C. Questions
   a. Megen commented looking back at using workforce pell to enable states to provide targeted and high demand credentials; What this is allowing for is us recognizing the changing dynamics of career and education as a whole throughout the world.
      i. This helps students get approved for funds and have more opportunities. This does have to be in specific programs. Megen is excited about how creative we are being.
      ii. FYI: This will not be the last time we hear about this. At some point the board is going to be involved with finalizing this process.
      iii. Vic commented how huge this is for Adult Education as well. This can help with career changes or have other opportunities for all age groups.
   b. Jordan Hill asked if we are going to look at the different occupations annually to make adjustments. He also commented that it was determined that as a state we don't have a lot of definitions of minimum requirements in place. He is wondering if workforce Pell is a good place where we can have standards for credit.
      i. Vic responded that this could happen on an annual basis. The goal is occupations are looking to grow and want to have programs for those occupations. We want to find those ones that will benefit from a short term Pell.
      ii. Vic responded regarding the noncredit programs and let the group know that that will be outside of this.

Workforce Development Outreach Report Amie Graff

A. Amie did a brief summary and encouraged the group to read the report.
    a. Eagle Mountain Career and Resource Fair
        i. This was in response to the Tyson Foods closing.
        ii. The resource fair had 24 employers, 11 community organizations and reached approximately 180 people.
        iii. Tyson Food layoff affected over 725 employees. We have been working to help these individuals. We have had 6 resource support sessions with 200+ in each session. Bringing support for English and Spanish speaking.
    b. Onsite requirements
        i. Onsite recruitments are back and employers are excited to work with DWS
            1. Amies highlighted events at the Beaver Employment Center as well as the Cedar City Employment Center.
    c. Utah Valley Job Fair
        i. This connected over 114 employers and 3600 attendees.
    d. Employer workshop
        i. This was held September 1st, helping give employers the resources, support and education in hiring those with disabilities.
    e. Utah Native Tribal Consultation
        i. In these meetings the department discussed partnerships with tribes, supports provided, and opportunities for additional support.
    f. Annual Veterans Conference
        i. Held in the North building at the Capitol
        ii. 5 staff received awards as a result of outstanding service to veterans. One individual received a stars and stripes award.
    g. Apprenticeships
        i. 7 New apprenticeship programs have officially been registered in Utah.

Committee Report Out Committee Chairs

A. Apprenticeships
    a. Whitney shared details from their last meeting:
        i. Michael Toone with the Utah State Approving Agency.
            1. Utah has 208 GI bill approved apprenticeship programs.
            2. They also learned that the programs that are already registered with the Department of Labor have a pretty simple patch to get approval.
            3. The GI bill does not cover related technical instruction costs, but it does provide housing allowances.
        ii. They went over their charter and put together action plans.
        iii. Their Apprenticeship Navigator helped register 3 more occupations under Kelso Industries.
        iv. Voc rehab hosted a job fair on October 6th.
        v. SL Tech is building a dedicated apprenticeship area within their facility.

B. Youth- nothing to report.
C. Serving Individuals With Disabilities
    a. Deanna shared that they held the 52nd annual Golden Key Awards.
        i. Leah shared that all the videos are available on YouTube if you would like to look at those. We will be sharing at least one video in our January board meeting.
D. Career Pathways
    a. James shared that they reviewed their charter and action plans going forward.
        i. The key goal is to get action out of the committee and to report on the outcomes. They would also like to get more data and reports to create a structure.
E. Operations
    a. Shawn Newell shared that they helped with the recertifications that were voted on earlier
        i. He commented how phenomenal the staff are out in our rural areas. There are 6 more affiliates coming up and he encouraged board members to get involved. A comprehensive in Price and could use another person.
            1. Let Natalie know if you can help with the Price recertification on October 21.
        ii. Shawn shared details of upcoming recertifications in 2027.
    b. The operations committee has 2 more meetings coming up.

Public Comment & Closing Business Megen Ralphs

A. No public comment
B. Meeting adjourned at 2:09PM

UPCOMING SWDB MEETINGS: Thursday, January 7, 2027, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Thursday, April 8, 2027, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Thursday, July 8, 2027, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
jobs.utah.gov/edo/statecouncil/index.html