

**Aligning Education and Careers (Grades 4-12) Action Team Meeting
13 July 2010 Meeting Notes**

Members present: Leo Sullivan, Jen Collard, Cimbria Badenhausen, Alice Krysiak, Bill Arnold, Carl Olson, Andy Johnson, Bud Martin David Rudewick (via phone)

The team focused on four areas from their action plan – students self-identifying as successful after high school, the % of youth with goals, and the amount of community participation (connection between businesses, citizens, organizations and schools) and communicating with businesses about the skills kids need to be successful. The group agreed to develop a data collection sheet in order to gather consistent information from the various schools/communities and businesses. Finding out what already exists would be a good place to start.

Leo and David will put together a draft of both the information we would collect from the schools and a questionnaire for businesses and share it out with the group for input. The group felt it was important to get input from students as well. Carl volunteered his daughter to review it. Doing a focus group with teens could be another way to get their input on what to put in the survey, too. There might already be existing business surveys that were put together in Moultonborough or by the MWV Economic Council and Chamber of Commerce. There might also be example questions in one of the books Dan Kennedy gave to the group early on. The chambers and economic councils may be willing to assist with reaching out to businesses.

The information the group would like to collect to inform next steps is below. Across all of the topics, it is important to ask the schools to highlight what is working particularly well.

Data to be collected on “successful after high school” include. *(Some data will be collected from schools, some is available on-line and some collected from students.)*

- #freshmen in a class (cohort)
- #graduates in that same cohort
- #students going to 2-year and 4-year programs
- #students going into the military or to work
- (InterLakes Regional High School also collects data from students that includes where they’ve been accepted, if they’re going into business with their parents, or if they’re going to work. At least, this information was available for the students who received scholarships.)
- How are youth tracked after leaving the high school (it is likely the team will have to develop a way to collect this information. Moultonborough is collecting post-graduate information and perhaps Granite State College. Who is doing this now that we could follow/learn from their model?)
 - What is a kid’s definition of success? How is the team going to frame this?
- Are students deciding to stay in the area or move and why?

Data to be collected on “youth with goals” include

- What are schools doing now to help youth set goals? (elementary, middle, and high schools)
- Which programs are seen as successful?

Data to be collected on “community participation” include

- Existing programs in the schools that involve community participation at the elem., middle, and high schools (ex: mentoring, reading with kids, job shadowing, etc.)

- Which programs are particularly successful?

Business Input

- What are employers looking for in potential employees; including entry level?
- What skills do young people need to succeed?

Individuals volunteered to reach out to the following groups once the data collection sheets are completed:

- Bill Arnold – Moultonborough, KA Brett, Madison Elementary
- Alice Krysiak – Moultonborough
- Andy Johnson – Kingswood/Governor Wentworth Regional School Districts
- Jen Collard – Kennett Middle School
- Leo Sullivan – Bartlett Elementary School
- Bud Martin – Sandwich Central School

The group talked about focusing on the 3-4 main school systems first but then decided there should be an effort to collect information from all the schools from the beginning. The committees already have ties with Sandwich/Interlakes.

Alice K. reported out to the group what she found out about what programs the Moultonborough School District has in place (copy of her report is available electronically). Programs include a mentor program, apprentice program, business shadowing opportunities, and the use of the vocation education center at Kingswood High School. She said that the superintendent, Mike Lancor, is very willing to help the team reach out to other school administrators and share any resources he has.

One might be a survey they had put together in connecting with businesses. This is something the team would like to do and could use the Moultonborough survey as a template or a place to start in putting together their own survey.

Another point Alice mentioned was that one cost to be aware of is the cost of doing a criminal background check, which costs \$25-35 each. She also mentioned how important she felt it was to get parents involved. It's not that parents don't care, but that they are worn out and discouraged.

Some of the existing efforts going on around the county include those listed in Moultonborough, the RED program (Read Every Day) at Kennett Middle and (soon-to-be) High School, the team approach used at the K.A. Brett School (team of teachers that look at students' behaviors and grades and follow their progress over the year), and the "smart goals" used at SAU 9 at earlier and earlier ages.

Two topics the group discusses as possible areas for the group's future work:

- What is sending kids home before they have completed college? Are they not prepared to be away from home? Are the finances too much? Do they not have the work ethic to take on college work? Have they been sold something that's not right for them? Were they not academically prepared to be there? They may also not understand the implications of the finances/debt. Other possibilities include parents not having the previous experience with going to college, so they're not aware of what the student is getting into.

- Other issues that were discussed included some of the pressures students face, particularly to attend college: is there a bias among schools & parents toward college as the 'correct' next step after high school so what results is a push to send kids to college when it might not be appropriate for them. Or is their consideration that attending a particular school might put kids and families at financial risk if the college isn't a good fit academically or financially.

Many are going into the community college system and taking the liberal arts classes because they can't afford to go into a university – do what classes they can at a less expensive community college before focusing and going to a university.

- Are the vocational programs lined up with what the kids need to learn to succeed at local jobs? Example shared that there are kids who are going into auto mechanics programs that are not able to make it in the workforce even after that program.
- What are the jobs that aren't being filled? What skills are needed in those jobs? (Why are kids coming out of tech school and are not successful mechanics?) Can there be better alignment of skills and jobs? What are the expected job growth areas for this county? (NH Works has this information by county.)
- What's going on with those 18+ who don't have jobs? Might we want to talk with these youth to find out what their barriers to work are? Work ethic? Skills? Some businesses are hiring foreign workers rather than local grads because they see them as more dependable and willing to work.

The group changed the date and time of its next meeting to Thursday, Aug. 12 at 5 p.m. at the Tri-County CAP building in Tamworth.