



APPROVED
MAY 1, 2025

**Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board
Innovation Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 30, 2025, via Zoom 2:00 PM**

Members Attending	Members Absent	Staff & Guests Attending
Seth Thurman	Anne Fugate	Andrea Dillard
Billy Givens	Tony Adams	Meagan Dobbins
Selina Moore	Selittia Johnson	Ginger Fussell
	Robin Baldree	Alyssa Spaulding
	Greg Jones	

The Northern Middle Tennessee Workforce Board Innovation Committee met via Zoom on January 30, 2025, at 2 PM.

With a quorum confirmed, Chairman Seth Thurman called the meeting to order. Selina Moore moved to approve the minutes, and Billy Givens seconded. With no further discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved. Andrea Dillard introduced a new board member, Selina Moore. She has worked for the TN Department of Labor for 20 years and serves on the Southern Middle Board. She is replacing Ryan Jolley.

CSP Performance Update

Andrea Dillard delivered the CSP Performance update for Q2, which ended in December 2024. MAC, the youth provider in Davidson County, narrowly missed 100% of their enrollment goals for in-school and out-of-school youths. MAC is back on track with enrollments since the start of the year, so Andrea is not concerned. They have met their cumulative goal (50%) in every category but exits. MAC and EDSI were directed to clean up their caseloads to remove long-term individuals, which has slightly affected their exits. They are slowly removing these cases each quarter to avoid too many negatives simultaneously. EDSI has exceeded their enrollment goals in adult/DW and youth. Cumulatively, they are also behind on exits. Both contractors are currently failing to meet their MPCR.

Andrea then reminded the Committee about the pilot projects happening in the region. In Clarksville, the Board began delivering Title I and III services in October 2024. So far, they are only behind in youths, also likely due to the holidays. In Sumner, the state has taken charge of delivering services. They have not met enrollment goals. Andrea believes their problem stems

primarily from staffing issues. Only two Title I and two Title III staff are in the center; some staff are entirely new to WIOA. State staff have experienced turnover. Andrea has been having weekly calls with state leadership to discuss all three projects and work towards resolving issues.

Federal Performance

Meagan Dobbins delivered the Federal Performance update. She reminded the Committee that this report focuses on the performance of individuals enrolled up to two years ago. All adult and DW measures were met at least 90%, which is passing. There is one measure, the employment rate 2nd quarter after exit, which is very close. The 90% goal is 78.84%, and it is currently at 78.7%. This report will not be finalized until the middle of February, so there is still time to improve. These individuals were exited in 2023, so contacting them and obtaining employment information can be challenging.

Andrea Dillard reminded that Marla protested the state's substantial increase in Federal Performance standards. Her issue was that the better an area performed, the higher its standards were raised. How high can the standards go. Continuous improvement doesn't always have to be higher. Board staff will always work towards exceeding the goals assigned, but it has become increasingly difficult to perform at this percentile.

Eligible Training Provider Requests

Andrea Dillard then delivered the Eligible Training Provider List report. The first section contains two new providers. The first is Tech Impact, which offers an Information Technology course that results in a CompTIA+ certification. Marla has personally met with them and thinks they have a good program. However, since they are not a state training provider, they must be approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). Andrea put them on the report for consideration because she believes they will receive the approval, but THEC covers the entire state, meaning their turnaround can be slow. She asked the Committee to consider approving them pending approval from THEC so that they can be added as soon as possible. The second provider is CDRS Academy of Beauty, which offers several beauty programs. Every program results in a state licensure, which counts as a credential. The second section contains programs from Tech Impact, CDRS, Austin Peay, TCAT Nashville, and Vol. State. All programs presented result in a credential and have bright outlooks locally and nationally. The third section is a provider, Motlow State Community College, who had a program drop off the ETPL because of non-renewal. There was a cost increase. Billy Givens asked what the increase was. Andrea answered that she was unsure of the exact percentage, but it had to be less than 25% because anything above 25% requires Board reapproval. Seth Thurman commented that an increase in price from 2022 is not surprising. He then suggested a motion to recommend that the Board approve all providers and programs, including contingently approving Tech Impact based upon final approval from THEC. Billy Givens made the motion, and Selina Moore seconded. With no further discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

CDL Schools Update

During the November 2023 Board meeting, there was a lot of discussion regarding private CDL schools' performance. Board policy is that to be on the ETPL, programs must have a 60% credential attainment rate and a 60% employment rate. After their first year, they will be reviewed to ensure they meet these rates. If they meet both rates, they are renewed for two years. If they meet one rate, they are renewed for one year with the understanding that if they fail to meet both rates at the second renewal date, they will be removed for two years and have to reapply. If they pass at that second renewal, they are renewed for two years. During that November 2023 meeting, 160 Driving Academy and Tennessee CDL School were removed from the ETPL. 160 Driving Academy appealed, and the Board elected to reinstate them with a plan to increase their outcomes over the next year. Currently, they have a 39% obtainment rate and a 60% employment rate. Board staff met with the owner, Steve Gold, and staff, who offered ideas on how to improve performance. One was to hold off on billing for participants until they pass a drug screen. Andrea pointed out that of the 25 individuals who dropped out, only 3 were related to a drug test. Tennessee CDL School, has been working to improve its tracking and reporting. She added that they have complied with everything asked of them. They are now at a 67.7% credential and 64.5% employment rate. Armored Trucking was accidentally approved for only one year at renewal when they should have been given two years. This will be corrected, and their renewal date will be in 2026.

Andrea then asked for any questions regarding 160 Driving Academy. Selina Moore asked if they could be approved for a year-long contingency to monitor performance. Andrea explained that this is what was done over the last twelve months. Selina replied that it feels like common sense that if they were given a chance to make changes and still are not meeting their goals, they should be removed. Seth Thurman agreed and pointed out everything Tennessee CDL School has changed in the same timeframe. Selina then asked if any TCATs offer CDL training. Andrea replied that there are not any as of now, but TCAT Clarksville is breaking ground to start a transportation program, and APSU has just started one. Billy Givens made a motion to recommend approving TN CDL School, and Selina Moore seconded. For 160 Driving Academy, Billy Givens made a motion recommending to wait to hear from them at the Board meeting before making any decisions and Selina Moore seconded. With no further discussion, the motions passed.

Programs and Grants

Andrea Dillard reviewed the employer grants. The Board approved setting aside \$300,000 for employer grants, of which all has been obligated. Two employers that were given \$10,000 have finished their training and were under budget. This is not reflected in the amount obligated since the final invoices have not been received. The State Apprenticeship Grant has been obligated. The State Apprenticeship Expansion Funds grant has approximately \$7,500 left to obligate. The grant has specific eligibility criteria, and she is still identifying qualified employers. There should be no issue allocating the remaining funds by June 30.

Recently, the Governor's office has issued approximately \$6M towards rural health care opportunities in rural communities. Northern Middle was awarded a grant and will partner with Volunteer State Community College to upskill advanced EMTs into paramedics in Cheatham, Dickson, Robertson, and Stewart counties. \$119K in seed money has been granted until June 30 to purchase equipment and necessary items for training. There will then be an additional \$240K in funding available from June 1, 2025, until July 30, 2026. Several other agencies in the NM region were also awarded.

CSP Procurement Update

EDSI and MAC have been the providers for 4.5 years. State procurement policy states that the maximum a contract can be extended for is 5 years. Andrea explained that Marla would like to speak to the local workforce development stakeholders such as county mayors and ECD boards to gather opinions on the AJCS and what can be improved. Workforce Essentials previously served as the CSP and delivered services in all 13 counties. During that time, the AJCs had a local connection with community involvement, but that seems to have decayed. Andrea believes delivering services in smaller counties is much easier because it is easier to connect and engage with the community. She continued that Marla is considering having the Board act as the CSP and involving other local workforce development stakeholders to be involved in delivering services. Selina Moore commented that as someone who has worked under both models, she liked having a local connection when providing services. She believes that the Board would be more in touch and have a quicker reaction to any issues that arise. Seth Thurman added that, as someone from a smaller community, it would be nice to have a local go to person.

Thomas P. Miller was contracted during the previous request for proposal to provide an independent third-party procurement. However, staff were not satisfied with their involvement level and would prefer to do the RFP in-house. This has been done in the past. Seth Thurman asked for the timeline and Andrea replied that the contract ends June 30, 2025. Marla plans to meet with local stakeholders over the next two weeks so that decisions can be made ASAP.

Adjourn

Andrea Dillard reminded that the Board meeting will be held on February 12, 2025 at the Montgomery County AJC. Then, with no further questions, Seth adjourned the meeting.