2006

Some Perspectives on and Examples of Business Education Collaboration for Workforce Development

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Citation
http://research.upjohn.org/presentations/20

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Some Perspectives on and Examples of Business Education Collaboration for Workforce Development

Presentation to CSG Midwest Economic Development, Workforce Development & Labor Committee

by

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August 20, 2006
Outline

1. Historical Context
2. Collaborative Barriers
3. Examples of Business-Government-Education Collaboration
4. Legislative Recommendations
Historical Development (1): Major Systems

State & Local Government

1st Chance
- K-12 Education
- Higher Education

2nd Chance
- Government-sponsored training programs

Federal government

Careers in
Business/Industry
Historical Development (2): Workplace Skill Development Subsystems

1st Chance

State & Local Government

K-12 Education

Vocational (CT) education

Higher Education

Community College applied and technical programs

Business/Industry

On-the-job training
Paradigm Shifters

   -- legacy: career development is a legitimate activity of K-12 education

2. Brain research (90s)
   -- effectiveness of applied learning for majority of students

3. International competitiveness concerns (recessions in 80s, 90s, 00s)
   -- worker productivity could be enhanced with business involvement in workforce development
   -- federal training programs got broadened eligibility (WIA)

4. Accountability movement (90s)
   -- NCLB; new Perkins, etc.
   -- driven by; analogous to business/industry QC
Bottom Line

- Education system less “silo-ed”; more collaboration; more “open” to collaboration

- Larger federal role than historically true
Barriers to Collaboration

1. Nature of production processes
   
   Education – product is human; therefore cautious, slow-to-change, stimulus-response-feedback means “curriculum” development.
   
   Industry – nimble; able to focus resources to resolve problems; short product cycles that are getting even shorter.

2. Logistics of place, time, numbers of individuals involved

3. Requires resources and may have little payoff
Some Best Good Practices to be Encouraged by Policy

1. Voyager Program (Kalamazoo County)
   Description: High school teachers spend a week in business/industry setting during school year or summer; develop lesson plans.

2. Massachusetts Workforce Training Grants (also California Employment Training Panel)
   Description: Companies with help of trainers (community colleges or private consultants) compete for training grants – in MA, about $100K that covers 2 years; funded by surcharges on UI payroll tax; match required.

Brings up issue of Bricks & Mortar vs. Market approach
Some Best Good Practices to be Encouraged by Policy (Cont’d)

3. **Indiana 21st Workplace Skills Initiative**
   Description: Uses state administration WIA funds to “pilot” training for low-functioning workers (basic literacy, math, ESL); developing a “certificate” (competitive grants).

4. **Michigan Regional Skills Alliances**
   Description: Uses state administrative WIA funds plus a significant grant from Mott Foundation to develop local area sectoral collaborations; lets local area define workforce development priorities.
Some Best Good Practices to be Encouraged by Policy (Cont’d)

5. University High School (Ferndale, MI)
   Description: Grant-supported public high school whose purpose is to attract relatively disadvantaged youth into automotive sector with high quality, employer-driven, college prep curriculum focused on three aspects of the automotive sector: pre-manufacturing, manufacturing, and post-manufacturing services and marketing.

6. School-to-Work Seminar (discontinued)
   Description: Multi-disciplinary class, project-based, heterogenous enrollment (including special ed.). Discontinued for bureaucratic reasons – not in a department, hard to put on transcript, multi-period, students often outside of school.
Recommendations

Funding

- Use competitive grants to encourage collaboration in portfolio of educational support and economic development programs
- (Mainly K-12). Support professional development that involves business/industry

Accountability (K-12 now; higher-education in future?)

- Include collaboration in school improvement systems
- Fund research on effectiveness of applied learning on test scores
Recommendations (Cont’d)

Curriculum Mandates
- Allow innovation/“out of box” thinking
- Encourage dual enrollment (collaboration within education system)

SDE and Higher-Education Oversight
- Assure educational/learning content
- Legislative reporting on collaboration effectiveness