



## **READY NWI Education Team Meeting Notes**

**Thursday, December 16, 2021**

**8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. CST**

**Zoom Meeting**

### **Call to Order & Welcome**

Peggy Buffington and Mark Sperling, Education Team Co-Chairs for K-12 and Higher Education, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and introduced the agenda items for the meeting. Roy Vanderford announced that he is retiring and shared that he was grateful for all of the years serving as a team for the community. Roy stated that when he attends meetings across the country he always mentions the innovative work that the READY NWI team is doing. Multiple people thanked Roy for his years of service and offered best wishes in his retirement.

Materials from the December meeting will be available on the READY NWI website at [www.readynwi.com](http://www.readynwi.com). Below are a few highlights and points of emphasis from the presentations.

### **Purdue Northwest 2022 Industry Day (Natalie Connors, PNW)**

Natalie Connors, Executive Director of Employer Relations & Career Services at PNW, presented on upcoming events, including the Spring Career Expo and the Purdue Northwest 2022 Industry Day. Purdue University Northwest is celebrating 5 years since its unification, and 75 years as an institution. To celebrate their anniversaries, PNW is hosting several 575 events.

- The Purdue Northwest 2022 Industry Day is an open house event that will take place on April 30<sup>th</sup> at the Hammond Campus. There will be employers there to speak about career pathways in NWI industries. This is designed to help potential students identify opportunities for 4-year degrees, jobs, and internships in NWI. Natalie shared that she would love to have some Principals and Superintendents in attendance to talk about the education industry.
- The Spring Career Expo is being offered as a hybrid event. The virtual date is Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. The in-person event is taking place on Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at the Hammond Fitness Recreation Center from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. CST. This event is open to high school students that are college-bound. The dress code for this event is as if the students were attending a job interview. Flyers and more details to follow. If interested in this event, please contact Natalie Connors at [Natalie.connors@pnw.edu](mailto:Natalie.connors@pnw.edu).
- Maceo Rainey, Director of TRIO Educational Talent Search, PNW, discussed opportunities for first-generation students, including providing access to college and career prep and the

21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars. Students join the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and can potentially enter a 4-year institution with free tuition.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Construction & Skilled Trades Day Recap (Barb Grimsgard, CWI)**

Barb Grimsgard, Director of Communications, Center of Workforce Innovations, shared information about the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Construction & Skilled Trades Day event that took place on November 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Lake County Fairgrounds. Each year we collaborate with the Construction Advancement Foundation (CAF), WeBuild, Indiana Plan, and local chapters of the Trades

- 17 Trades participate with over 100 volunteers – apprentices, trainers, coordinators, and retirees all came in to talk directly to students and offer hands-on experience
- Close to 1,200 students from 29 area schools were in attendance
- More parents were in attendance this year
- The students were sent some information ahead of time with myths, facts, and top characteristics needed to succeed in the industry
- Feedback from the schools was that representatives spoke about employability skills and that the students were able to get hands-on experience with tools; there were more female apprentices and tradespeople this year, in which more female students felt comfortable to ask questions; students saw former classmates participating as apprentices which helped to make the connection that they can do it too; the event is a great opportunity for parents, community members, and youth.
- Barb shared that Kevin Comerford from the CAF to come to your classrooms and talk to students. Please contact Barb Grimsgard at [bgrimsgard@cwicorp.com](mailto:bgrimsgard@cwicorp.com) to make the connection.

### **Northwest Indiana READI Application (Shaun Sahlhoff, CWI)**

Shaun Sahlhoff shared that Governor Holcomb announced a grant opportunity that will be matched with private funding. CWI, in collaboration with the NWI Forum, economic developers, and business and community leaders, submitted an application for our seven counties.

- Governor Holcomb awarded funding to regions across the State
- NWI will receive \$50 million, which will go towards the projects that were submitted in the proposal, including infrastructure, placemaking, entrepreneurship & innovation, talent, business development & marketing
- Some of the specific projects include dedicated funding for the READY NWI group, expansion of programs for Jobs for America's Graduates, and additional funding for work based learning with apprenticeships, internships, and connecting students with local opportunities.
- Aco Sikoski, Campus President, Ivy Tech Valparaiso – shared information on the work that Ivy Tech and CWI are doing with the Electricians Union (IBEW Local 531), including

mechanical electrical engineering and solar power installation training. Large solar power projects are happening in Jasper County, South Porter County, and in Starke and Pulaski Counties, which will create over 600 jobs.

- Dr. Peggy Buffington shared information on a partnership between the School City of Hobart, AK Smith, and NIPSCO created 10 years ago, focusing on renewable energy to provide pathways to students to have credentials for these jobs.

### Announcements & Adjournment

Announcements included:

- Let us know if there are focus areas you would like to have at our Education Team meetings in January through May of 2022

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

***Next Meeting: Thursday, January 20, 2022, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. CST***

READY NWI Education Team will continue to meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month for the remainder of the school year. Meetings will continue as virtual until further notice.

Please contact ***Beki Vogelpohl*** ([rvogelpohl@cwicorp.com](mailto:rvogelpohl@cwicorp.com)) or ***Shaun Sahlhoff*** ([ssahlhoff@cwicorp.com](mailto:ssahlhoff@cwicorp.com)) if you have questions or comments, updates on members to be added or deleted, or ideas for content for our meetings for the remainder of this school year.

