

Maryland's Youth Workforce Policy Whitepaper: Draft Report

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A Cautionary Tale

Far too many of our country's young people are leaving high school ill-equipped and unprepared to be successful in today's workplaces. America's students are transitioning into a knowledge-based, global economy, one that requires more education and technical skills than ever before. If we are to remain competitive in the 21st century economy, the United States must make new demands on the preparedness of its emerging workforce. Unfortunately, we are witnessing a growing mismatch between the needs of our marketplace and the skills and attributes of our workforce pipeline. While the fastest growing jobs over the next decade will require some level of post secondary education and/or training, we are seeing more young people attempting to enter the work place lacking even basic academic and occupational competencies. This bodes dire consequences for the future, particularly as the baby boom generation begins to retire and critical shortages of experienced workers loom greater.

Adding to this picture is the large number of youth who are falling out of the educational system before acquiring requisite credentials and workforce familiarity. Completely outside of the talent pool, these disconnected youth are not in education nor training, not employed nor seeking employment. These young people are facing severely restricted employment opportunities and limited lifetime income. Their prospects in the labor market are extremely bleak and they are most likely to be represented in statistics on poverty, crime, and incarceration.

There is a short window of opportunity to focus commitment and innovation to change the trajectory of all Maryland's youth.

As Americans, we are facing an economic crisis. But, we are also facing a human crisis, with growing numbers of young people unable to attain a reasonable quality of life, impacting this generation and generations to come.

A Situation of Crisis Proportion

Maryland, like the nation, is in the throws of a great shift. The need for highly educated, highly skilled workers is increasing.

Here are some facts: Nationally, between 2000 and 2015, at least 85 percent of newly created jobs will require education and/or training beyond a high school diploma¹. By 2012, it is estimated that there will be a shortage of more than seven million workers with an associates' degree or higher and a surplus of three million workers with the least schooling². In Maryland, current middle and high skilled jobs make up the largest portion of current work opportunities (65 percent), with diminishing need for lower skilled workers (35 percent). Maryland's industry sectors with the most robust growth this decade exemplify this shift - aerospace, bioscience, construction, health care, education, and hospitality/tourism – all requiring a highly specialized, highly educated workforce³.

The demand for workers adept in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) continues to grow at rapid pace – crosscutting industries. Globalization, technology, and scientific advances are changing the nature of work and how it is performed, in observable ways now, but in ways that we cannot even begin to predict in the current generation of youths' lifetime.

In Maryland, while we face real economic development opportunity as Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) moves from planning to reality, we must also be concerned about the state's ability to generate

enough qualified workers to fill the jobs that BRAC will bring. Maryland's labor pool must be ready to provide a labor force of engineers, computer scientists, information technology specialists, and workers in telecommunications and management. However, we are woefully lacking in adequate numbers entering and completing this important talent pipeline.

The labor force is in generational transition. Nationally, by 2010, the largest part of the labor force will be comprised of our current teens and young adults. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of workers 35 to 44 years of age will decrease by 10 percent and those aged 16 to 24 will increase by 15 percent¹. Maryland's Baby Boomers, to the tune of 1.5 million, begin to reach the retirement age of 65 in 2011. Maryland workers, ages 55 and older, represent 18 percent of all of the state's workers. It is projected that, by 2020, one in four Maryland workers will be 55 years of age or older compared to less than one in five in 2005. Maryland's industry sectors with the highest percent of aging workers include education, public administration, real estate, health care, and social services³. This generational transition, which is right at our doorstep, presents an enormous challenge with respect to the existence of a capable workforce to assure critical jobs and knowledge/experience transfer to a new generation of workers.

Young people are not sufficiently prepared to meet the demands of 21st Century careers.

"It is clear that high school graduation is no longer an adequate end goal for youth"⁴, yet nationally, almost a third of our 9th graders do not complete high school four years after entering, with black and Hispanic students achieving an on-time graduation rate of about 50 percent⁵. High school students living in low-income families have incidence of dropping out of school that is six times the rate of their high-income family peers⁶. While we are proud of Maryland's number one ranking of public schools in our country, yet we cannot ignore that, of the 330,779 youth ages 16 to 19 in Maryland, over 21,000 do not have a high school diploma and are not enrolled in school. Nearly two thirds of these out of school youth are also out of work³. If Maryland's high schools and colleges were to raise the graduation rates of Hispanic, African-American students to the levels of white students by 2020, the potential increase in personal income in the state would add more than \$6.0 billion to Maryland's economy. (Alliance for Excellent Education Briefing, *Demography as Destiny: How American Can Build a Better Future*, October 2006)

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As mentioned previously, 85 percent of new jobs require education or training beyond high school. However, slightly over half of Maryland's high school graduates enroll in college the following fall, and only 65 percent of students pursuing a four-year degree earn that degree within six years. Additionally, the percentage is substantially decreased for African American students (44 percent) and Hispanic students, compared to white students (71 percent). At the community college level, slightly more than half of Maryland freshman return for their sophomore year⁷.

Our school systems are challenged to provide solutions. Using research-based indicators of potential school drop out - truancy, multiple suspensions, expulsions, school disengagement/boredom, low achievement, substance abuse, pregnancy, non-English language learners, learning disability and emotional disorders - many local school districts are implementing a variety of intervention efforts, focusing particularly on the transitional periods from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school. These types of initiatives are critical in helping to keep our most at risk youth in school. And while Maryland is clearly seeing increases in students progressing from high school to postsecondary education, much more must be done on a statewide effort to support the school

systems' effort to retain and graduate all students with a high school diploma.

Additionally, catalyzed by the federal School to Careers legislation in the late 1980's, enormous advances have been made in our school districts to deliver rigorous curriculum, to infuse career preparation targeted to demand industries, to promote school based accountability, and to improved student and school performance. Indeed, Maryland's public schools are among the best in the nation. However, our 21st century workforce needs are exponentially greater than the progress we have witnessed.

Across the country, employers express a high degree of dissatisfaction with the competency of high school graduates. A landmark survey of more than 400 employers in the United States has yielded some very troubling results. Only 9 percent of employers report that new entrants with 4-year college

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degrees have excellent knowledge and applied skills. Employers report high school graduates, at every level of employment, as having important deficiencies – particularly with respect to written communications, professionalism, and critical thinking⁸. The Maryland Business Roundtable cites lack of skilled employees as having an impact on business in terms of decreases in productivity, inability to meet deadlines, and a reduction in the quality of products or services⁹.

More than ever before, we need to focus our attention and action on youths' acquisition of 21st century applied skills. Where this happens, employers express positive results. For example, Maryland conducts an annual survey of employers who provide work-based learning opportunities for students enrolled in Career and Technology Education programs. In the 2008 survey, employers report: 98 percent of these students met or exceeded job requirements at the time of placement; 98 percent exceeded workplace readiness requirements; and 82 percent learned new skills faster than the average worker¹⁰.

Entering the labor market is growing more difficult for youth. Research has shown that early work experiences are crucial to youth acquisition of 21st Century skills. In an analysis of Maryland data, Sum et al. found that the employment success is strongly linked to individual's prior work experience. The more teens worked in earlier periods, the more likely that they are working today. This holds true for years worked, number of weeks worked, and hours worked. Nationally, since 2001, the teen employment rate is on a downward trajectory and is at historic lows. In Maryland, the decline in teen employment was 9.2 percent between 2001 and 2007, exceeding all of our neighboring states¹¹. Access to employment for Maryland high school students varies enormously across race, class, disability, and gender groups portending the enormous need to expand work experience opportunities for students, particularly those from low income, single parent, and minority families, especially males.

Disconnected youth are at an enormous disadvantage. An estimated two out of three high school graduates (ages 16 to 19) were employed in Maryland versus one in three school dropouts. This results in labor market disadvantages that will continue throughout their lives¹¹. Of 20-year old high school dropouts, 92 percent had not enrolled in some type of programming to get back on track – whether continued schooling, youth development or job training. Only 55 percent of these young people had some type of employment¹². In 2006 in Maryland, there were nearly 74,000 youth, ages 16 to 24, who were both out of school and out of work and that number surely has escalated given the current economy. Of young adults not enrolled in college, employment rates vary quite widely across educational subgroups – with 56 percent of high school dropouts holding some type of job versus 90 percent of youth with an Associate's degree¹¹. Wages and employment are clearly and directly related

to educational attainment. Each dropout, over his or her lifetime, costs the public approximately \$260,000, with about \$60,000 in lost taxes alone¹³. In Maryland, nearly nine of every 100 high school dropouts between the ages of 20 to 24 were institutionalized in jails, prisons, and mental hospitals, with one in four Black males in this age range incarcerated in 2006. These financial costs and human capital costs have huge implications for a civil society and future generations¹¹.

A Window of Opportunity

In Maryland, we have a vision of a future workforce that is qualified to meet the expectations and demands of the 21st Century labor market. We recognize that a highly educated, highly-skilled, and capable workforce is vital to the innovation and productivity that will strengthen our state's economic status, competitiveness, and the well being of its citizenry.

Maryland prides itself on being on the cutting edge of many workforce issues. Meeting emerging workforce challenges is no exception. Governor Martin O'Malley has made workforce development a priority. In response to his charge, the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) created the **Emerging Workforce Committee**, comprised of representatives from a broad spectrum of educational and human services agencies, non-profit organizations and the corporate community. The committee was tasked with initiating a critical dialog leading to an agreed upon set of recommendations for ensuring Maryland's emerging workforce is and will continue to be exceptionally equipped to maintain our competitive status nationally and globally. This white paper is a beginning step in that process – recognizing that Maryland needs to close the gap between vision and current reality with clear and guiding state policy and strategic policy actions to improve the career readiness and transitions of all of Maryland's youth.

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Positive Work Is Already Underway

Maryland has a strong foundation on which to build renewed commitment and action and much good work is already taking place. However, what is needed is **an overarching youth workforce policy framework** that would enhance our ability to connect the dots, and move systems and stakeholders forward to achieve a shared vision. Renewed commitment and action begins with recognizing the importance of youth workforce readiness and mobilizing our collective will to invest in sustainable strategies to prepare and assist youth in making positive transitions. We do not begin this effort with an empty plate. Maryland has important building blocks in place, including such things as:

Policy initiatives, such as the **P-20 Leadership Council of Maryland**, established by Executive Order, bring together leaders in the business community, P-20 education, and local and state government, with the mission to better prepare Maryland students for the jobs of the 21st Century. **Ready by 21**, led by the Governor's Office for Children, is a five year action agenda focusing on youth successfully transitioning into adulthood. The goal is that all Maryland youth will be ready for school, work and life by the time they are 21, with a focus on youth transitioning out of public systems - foster care, juvenile services and youth with disabilities. The Ready by 21 report includes recommendations with comprehensive strategies and resources designed to address the needs in education, employment, housing and health.

Statewide service systems, such as **Career and Technology Education (CTE)**, operating in every school system in Maryland and articulated with higher education, provide career preparation in crucial high skill, high demand, high wage career pathways. CTE was developed based on industry standards and leads to industry recognized certifications, incorporating skills for success and high quality workplace-based

Time Tested/Research Supported: We Know What Works

Fortunately, the solutions to many of these challenging issues exist. We know that specific elements are consistently identified as crucial to promoting youth workforce readiness and the successful transition of youth to careers and are consistently found in programs and strategies that demonstrated effective youth employment outcomes:

- Personalized, supportive learning environments where strong relationships are established with caring adults that guide, mentor, teach, and support youth
- Early identification and provision of support to students who are likely to need extra help and coaching along the way to meet Maryland's challenging curriculum standards
- Rigorous, relevant, and engaging classes that meet young people where they are and propel students to higher levels of competency, with authentic projects so students apply and connect learning to the real world
- Early and sustained career development provided throughout the years of schooling, with access to high quality career information and resources
- Exposure to workplaces and workers, offering multiple opportunities to explore careers and interests, apply academics, and build transferable skills through workplace-based approaches – from job shadowing and internships to summer work experience and on-the-job training
- Multiple pathways for high quality career preparation, credentialing learning, and transition support to provide different avenues for youth to achieve academic and career related credentials and
- Employer leadership and involvement in delivering an array of programs, extra-curricular experiences, and workplace-based learning opportunities to promote acquisition of 21st Century skills and knowledge of careers.

experiences. **Locally delivered workforce development opportunities** provide a range of emerging workforce services in the different regions of the state, including One Stop Center services, summer youth work experience and a cadre of academic and job training programs which connect out-of-school youth to the workforce. .

Local programs, initiatives, and services, include **career academies**, schools that combine academic and career preparation in specific pathways. **Small learning communities** are schools divided into smaller entities, with each providing immersion in a theme or special interest area, such as law, government, health, technology and the arts. Small learning communities often operating in partnership with community organizations, government agencies, higher education, and/or employers; and a variety of special programs focused on preparing young people for careers. These local efforts offer some of the greatest potential for expansion, bringing effective initiatives and programs to scale where evidence-based practices exist.

Business engagement opportunities include the **Maryland Business Roundtable for Education (MBRT)**, a coalition of employers dedicated to preparing young people to meet the skills demands of 21st Century workplaces. MBRT activates their commitment by supporting education initiatives that demand high standards, partnering with local school systems and schools and conducting the comprehensive Achievement Counts Campaign. The Achievement Counts Campaign entices youth to make good choices for academic achievement and engages the business sector in helping students understand the importance of their choices. The state's **Tax Credit for Approved Work-based Learning Programs** provides employers 15 percent tax credit of wages paid for up to a \$1,500 credit per student, ages 16 to 23, employed a minimum of 200 hours. Students must be participating in approved work-based learning programs that meet specific criteria and requirements, are school or post-secondary sponsored and supervised, are connected to classroom learning and bear academic credit.

Other Promising Practices and Innovation

Throughout the nation, several interesting initiatives demonstrate ways to strengthen youth workforce preparation and transitions to meet 21st Century labor market demands. These can serve as beacons and inform our efforts, as we work to improve opportunities for young people and strengthen our capacity to meet this 21st Century challenge. Illustrative examples include:

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.21stcenturyskills.org) brings together the business community, education leaders, and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education and to ensure that students emerge from our schools with the skills needed to be effective citizens, workers, and leaders in the 21st century. Having defined 21st Century skills outcomes, the Partnership has developed a framework of the skills, knowledge, and expertise students need to succeed in work and in life.

Phelps Architecture, Construction, and Engineering High School in Washington, DC is a new partnership innovation and a unique public school, where all three fields of architecture, construction and engineering technologies are combined. Housed in a “green” school, students attending Phelps engage in a project-based curriculum.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) (www.pltw.org) is an approach to teaching and learning that adds rigor to traditional technical programs and relevance to academics. By engaging in hands-on, real-world projects, students understand how the skills they are learning in the classroom can be applied in everyday life. PLTW integrates science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) so that students

pursue challenging learning within the context of engineering or biosciences.

Northrop Grumman Corporation, a Maryland-based employer, makes substantive investments in public education, using a multi-prong partnership approach to increase students' interest, knowledge, capacity for careers that require science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Among Northrop Grumman's key initiatives are an internship program preparing middle school teachers about STEM careers; an engineering scholarship program providing \$240,000 of scholarships; senior level and retired engineers, and company employees prepared and serving as mentors to teachers and students; and a network of hundreds of employees that go into Maryland's classrooms to familiarize students with careers that require mathematics, technology, science, and engineering.

Philadelphia's Project U-Turn (www.projectuturn.net), a citywide campaign to focus public attention on the dropout crisis, designs strategies and leverages resources for dropout prevention in Philadelphia's public schools. Project U-Turn's extensive data analysis efforts have pinpointed specific challenges and needs, beginning to shape policy and programs within school districts in the region.

Florida's Memorandum of Agreement among its Department of Children and Families, Department of Education and Agency for Workforce Innovation is designed to facilitate data sharing among agencies to reduce redundancy in data collection. The Memorandum specifies the use of a work order process that defines what data will be shared and how it will be shared—with a focus on verification, accountability, and reporting.

New York's new, innovative grant program recognized the importance of internships by providing high quality internships to 1,850 youth statewide in its first year of operation. A collaborative between education, economic development, the business community, and the workforce system, the endeavor will serve students who are 16 years of age and older and attending high school, post-secondary, or technical schools.

Project C3 (www.c3online.org) is Minnesota's Youth Portal. This project connects communities to services through facilitated collaboration, resource mapping, training, and advocacy for solutions to transition, employment, and accessing post-secondary education. It helps teens, young adults, and their families locate resources, particularly internships to help youth learn, earn, and engage in the community.

A Maryland Youth Workforce Policy for the 21st Century

Everything in this white paper thus far leads us to believe that more than ever before, there is a need to ensure all Maryland's youth are workforce ready and that they acquire the knowledge and skills that meet the demands of the 21st Century workplace. Leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners need a clear policy framework to unite in vision, work with common purpose, collaborate, and respond with a sense of urgency – so that our current and future generations of youth transition successfully to work and are able to contribute to Maryland communities, economy, and competitiveness in a global environment. The following policies are offered to activate a bold and committed stance in preparing our future workforce.

Emerging Workforce Policy Issues

1. Maryland needs to ensure that public schools, pre-kindergarten through grade 12, higher education, and community providers prepare youth to be workforce ready and support youth's transition to 21st Century careers.

Maryland schools need to view workforce readiness as a goal of schooling. All students must engage in **career awareness and exploration** and have exposure to a broad array of career opportunities to build a solid foundation for informed career planning and decision-making. This needs to be accompanied by a **career planning process** that begins in the early years and continues through the transition years so that young people have techniques and tools to determine their assets and needs, set goals and action steps for achievement, enact their plans, and can modify their course when faced with opportunity or circumstance. All youth must have easy **access to high quality, age appropriate career information and resources** to help them select, prepare for, and achieve success in their chosen career pathway.

Most importantly, it is imperative that all Maryland youth have multiple, **direct avenues of workplace experience** - from job shadowing and mentoring to internships and summer work experience - to learn first-hand about the world of work and develop the 21st century skills that employers seek under the tutelage of adults invested in their success. At every education level, students need to engage in assignments, projects, and assessments that focus on **authentic, real world applications** to foster the development of 21st century skills: problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork and leadership, communication, computer literacy, professionalism and work ethic, ethics, and social responsibility. These highly transferable skills are vital to today's workplace and crucial for the workplace of tomorrow. Just as importantly, real world applications engage students in learning, creating the "why" behind learning, and showing the relevance and connectedness of academic subjects and content. Maryland needs to expand opportunities for **career preparation and in-depth interest-based learning** to foster skills development for entry into fields of high growth – through career and technology education programs, career academies, and interest-based programs.

All schools need to infuse career and employability development in the learning process across the board, consistently in all schools, ingrained in the way we do business – with responsibility and with accountability.

The bridge from high school to postsecondary learning, including apprenticeship opportunities, must be more firmly built. This is particularly so with Maryland's community colleges – serving a large share of Maryland's high school graduates. Providing early exposure to pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities, college and college life, assessing college readiness, providing academic and personal support, and providing scaffolding and incentives for community college program completion and credentialing, will help Maryland's youth transition to the next learning level and meet with success.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends the following policy actions:

- a) The State needs to commit to improving graduation rates and requires the collection of consistent and accurate graduation rates. Any data collection system needs to follow the student throughout middle and high school and develop accountability procedures for improving graduation rates.
- b) All Maryland school systems should review programs of instruction to ensure that requirements are aligned with 21st century workplace skills. Additionally, Maryland school systems should ensure that every school develops and implements a comprehensive and meaningful “classroom to careers” plan that illustrates how the Maryland Career Development Framework (COMAR 13A.04.10.01 and .02) is put in place to promote career awareness and exploration, informed career decision-making, and acquisition of 21st century skills.
- c) Maryland teacher preparation programs and school system sponsored professional development should include training in career development, exploration of 21st century careers, acquisition of 21st century skills, mentoring youth and infusing problem/project-based learning, so that teachers can effectively integrate concepts, content, and skills within teaching and learning.
- d) The State should take an aggressive leadership role in providing high quality workplace-based learning for all youth, regardless of educational program or level of instructional support. These learning opportunities need to apply the academic skills through real world work experiences. These experiences can be gained through summer youth employment or after school experiences. Opportunities could and should be expanded by: pursuing legislation for increased availability of authentic internships for students, by promoting tax credits for employers who hire students in high quality work-based learning programs, including internships and by encouraging businesses to providing externships/work experiences to teachers enabling them to understand infuse workplace skills into the curriculum.
- e) The work of the Career and Technology Education Taskforce of the P-20 Council should be supported as it deliberates and makes recommendations regarding expansion of Career and Technology Education programs.
- f) Every local jurisdiction should have multiple pathways for youth to achieve academic and career success.

2. Maryland needs to expand and create programs and services that provide real options that engage students in learning and effectively re-engage disconnected youth; helping them achieve academic and industry-recognized credentials; and enter work within a career pathway with good prospects for the future.

Every young person is an asset to Maryland's future workforce. All of Maryland's youth need to be on a positive trajectory. Yet, youth who are not in school and not in the workforce provide unique challenges requiring our creativity and innovation. We know that one size fits all service strategies do not work.

Disconnected youth are those who are not connected to school or services provided by the school system; a mental or somatic health program; a job or a job training program. These youth are

statistically unlikely to become productive, law-abiding citizens. The needs and circumstances of disconnected youth differ. Failure to concentrate efforts on re-engaging youth will result in dire consequences to the economy and our communities – consequences that have multi-generational effect in terms of lost taxes, reliance on public systems of support, costs of incarceration, and quality of life. It is imperative that we seek solutions that provide multiple pathways for academic credentialing, attainment of applied skills, career preparation, achievement of industry-recognized credentials, and transition support. First rate options are needed for disconnected youth.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends that the following policy actions:

- a) The state needs to require systemic approaches to raise academic skills; promote school choice programs, especially those that are career relevant and engaging such as skills-based career preparation programs, encourage application for Smaller Learner Communities and other grants that support high school reform.
- b) The state needs to establish community-based hubs for easy access to culturally appropriate services, as well as processes that reconnect out-of-school youth to learning environments where they can achieve the Maryland high school credential.
- c) The state needs to develop and put in place, for disconnected youth, a system of incentives that provide employment opportunities upon attainment of the Maryland high school credential, Youth Entitlement Incentive Plan.
- d) The state should promote the Career Development Framework to community-based organizations so that all children and youth benefit from the same kind of career and employability skills development, as well as informed career planning and decision-making.
- e) The state should broaden the menu of job training programs and educational options, with flexible schedules, to encourage youth to reconnect and prepare for 21st century labor market participation – providing options that effectively engage youth who are currently detached.

3. Maryland needs to establish a policy framework and actions that connect agencies and organizations under a common vision of youth workforce preparation.

Improving the future of our emerging workforce involves many stakeholders – crossing a broad range of institutions, organizations, and providers. It is imperative that stakeholders understand that the current situation is a problem of crisis proportion – one that, without change, will have very significant negative consequences. It will take working together - driven by a common vision to alter this course. Maryland needs to find ways to increase **public awareness** so that the urgency of the problem and its potential impact is more broadly known. The public needs to see that real solutions are necessary and that these require a full range of involvement – employers, community groups, community colleges, universities, public schools, employment training agencies, human service agencies, political leaders – all have a stake and something important to offer to make this vision a reality. We know that “what gets measured gets done.” **Accountability** needs to be established. There needs to be a way to assess status, gauge progress, and determine trends to determine where investments are needed and whether policy actions, initiatives, and programs are accomplishing what they set out to do. We need to know what is working well to be able to bring promising practices to scale.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends that the following policy actions:

- a) The state should create a web-based portal linking information on all state and local youth resources, programs, and services, and providing contact information so that youth, parents, state and local child serving agencies, and community and faith-based organizations have easy access to career development and related resources.
- b) The state should undertake a public awareness campaign to increase stakeholders’ understanding

of the pending crisis, what is needed with respect to solutions, actions that need to be taken, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

- c) The state should explore the development of a data sharing system, similar to the State of Florida's, that allows organizations and agencies serving young people to exchange valuable information and track individuals through programs and services, using a unique student identifier.
- d) The governor should task the P-20 Council to look at establishing accountability measures that would permit the collection and tracking of outcome data to measure post-secondary success.

4. Maryland needs to engage the employer community as key partners in solution-building.

Youth are the talent pipeline. The employer community has a vested interest and a real stake in youths' workplace readiness. The impact of marginal performance, poor worker productivity, skills to job mismatch, high turnover, position vacancies – affects the bottom line in all workplaces – whether private or public sector. Employers need to be actively involved in helping youth become work ready. Doing so is not simply a matter of public good, but is in employers' self interest. There is no limit to the roles that the employer community can serve and no limit to the types of things that can be done. Youth need workplace-based experiences, career training, mentoring, and job opportunities; school-to-careers transition initiatives need advocacy, technical know-how, and funding/financial support. More than ever before, the employer community can learn that helping youth learn to work is an investment in their own economic vitality. For the education and workforce investment communities, it is important also to learn that linking youth with work is as much about meeting employer needs as it is about serving youth.

The Emerging Workforce Committee recommends that the following policy actions:

- a) The state should increase efforts to provide direct linkages between the public education system and non-traditional state-funded training providers, such as the Department of Juvenile Services and other youth serving organizations, with pre-apprenticeship, registered joint apprenticeship and employer-sponsored apprenticeship programs to provide Maryland youth with expanded opportunities to enter living-wage careers in high-growth sectors.
- b) The state should promote awareness of employers needs, the demand for skilled workers, to education and youth serving programs to better equip them for engaging employers as partners in providing youth with workplace exposure and experience.
- c) The state should solicit input from employers and business groups on effective incentives designed to increase employer engagement in workplace-based learning for students, provide teacher externships (work experience within the business community), as well as consider the following types of strategies:
 - Promote targeted tax incentives for hiring youth, such as the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the state's Tax Credit for Workplace-based Learning Programs;
 - Create set-asides for youth work experience in state contracts, as a condition of award
 - Legislate a statewide, state-funded internship program, with subsidized student stipends;
 - Establish a program that encourages state and local agencies to become actively involved in offering workplace-based experiences for youth; and
 - Develop a governor's awards program acknowledging employer community innovation and performance in support of workplace-based learning.
- d) The governor should take advantage of forums to express his leadership on these issues, using opportunities to communicate the importance of the employer community's involvement.
- e) The state should promote One-Stop Career Centers as intermediaries to link youth and employers.

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The Emerging Workforce Committee

The Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board, was established in the fall of 2008. The Committee is comprised of representatives from business, state, and local government, education, community and nonprofit organizations, and tasked to provide a set of recommendations to ensure the successful transition of all Maryland youth to careers, college, and productive adulthood. Of particular concern to the Committee, were the workplace prospects of young people with significant barriers to employment and youth who are disconnected from school and work. The Committee established three principles to guide its work:

1. As Governor O'Malley has stated, "There is no such thing as a spare Marylander." Every young person is a potential asset to Maryland's future workforce.
2. All young people can succeed given the opportunity and adequate support, along with multiple pathways to academic and career credentialing.
3. A number of promising efforts are already underway in Maryland. There is a need to connect the dots and fill in the gaps.

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The Governor's Workforce Investment Board is the Governor's chief policy-making body for workforce development.

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