



VISTA 2025 Goal 2:

Position Chester County as a magnet for attracting talent and a model for developing an employer ready workforce.

VISTA 2025 Goal 2 Team Meeting

March 23, 2018

Meeting Notes

Team Members Attending: Kathi Cozzone, Trish Faidiga, Chaya Scott, Angela Tekely, Ralf Weiser

Also Attending: Pat Bokovitz, Marybeth DiVincenzo, Michael Katch, David Sciocchetti, Gary Smith, Andrea Vaughn

Kathi Cozzone

Welcomed those in attendance and asked if there were any comments on the meeting notes from the previous meeting. None were presented.

David Sciocchetti

Continued the review of the status of Goal 2 strategies from the previous Goal 2 team meeting.

2.3.1 Status - (Work with CCCVB to broaden outreach efforts) – On Hold

2.3.2 Status - (Joint marketing theme) – Eliminate from Goal 2 strategies

2.3.3 Status - (Link on CCCVB website) – Done

2.3.4 Status - (market and attract key companies) – Eliminate from Goal 2 strategies

2.3.5 Status - (Database of Chester County quality of place statistics) – Ongoing

2.3.6 Status - (Inventory of quality of place contributors) – Eliminate from Goal 2 strategies

David Sciocchetti

Noted that the main focus on marketing the county was being addressed by the Goal 3 team to explain the proposed removal of certain strategies from the purview of Goal 2. Indicated that an informational piece called Discover Chester County had been developed.

Ralph Weiser

Asked how it was being distributed, noting printed distribution was not necessarily the best method. Suggested electronic distribution was better.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Explained that it was a general marketing piece with inserts for specific industry sectors. Added that an electronic version was next on the list.

Ralph Weiser

Responded that hard copies worked best for networking and individual meetings. Suggested that recruiters might like to use this document in their efforts.

General consensus that status of strategies as presented is accurate.

2.4.1 Status - (Design a branded initiative describing middle skill job opportunities) – Done

2.4.2 Status - (Hold annual career days) – Ongoing

2.4.3 Status - (Organize industry tours) – Ongoing

2.4.4 Status - (Create additional apprentice/internship opportunities) – Ongoing

Ralph Weiser

Stated that the public perception of vocational training is disheartening. Agreed that an initiative to change that was necessary. Suggested that it needed to be as early as middle school and that it also needed to be parent focused. Added that it needed to discuss the economics of working first and then going to college.

Mary Beth DiVincenzo

Suggested that some form of apprentice model might be possible.

Trish Faidiga

Offered the idea of a co-op in the last two years of high school.

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that parents and their expectations are the key.

Trish Faidiga

Noted the need to get kids moving as an alternative to playing video games in the basement. Asked the current status of guidance counselors.

Chaya Scott

Responded that there were not enough of them to provide real access and opportunity.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Questioned how their performance was measured noting that it may be based on how many students go to college.

Pat Bokovitz

Suggested that one way to reach the desired population was to employ the technology they are familiar with.

Chaya Scott

Agreed with the need to try new and different approaches.

David Sciocchetti

Commented that the target message seemed to be that most everyone should consider going to college but that not everyone should go right out of high school.

Ralph Weiser

Suggested the need for a new brand or image for middle skill jobs. Noted the need to better explain the range of options available. Agreed with the use of technology that kids use including especially smart phones. Offered the idea of a career path calculator type app. Noted the need to appeal to children's intellectual aspirations but with cost comparisons.

Angela Tekely

Reinforced the need to target the parents as well as they are a major influence on their children.

General consensus that status of strategies as presented is accurate.

Ralph Weiser

Suggested that in advance of the next meeting Goal team members could submit comments on the remaining strategies whose status has not been discussed.

Kathi Cozzone

Noted the need to move on to the next agenda item. Introduced Andrea Vaughn and Michael Katch from the Chester County Intermediate Unit to discuss the CCIU Ascend program.

Andrea Vaughn

Stated that the Ascend Program is a program to provide early exposure to the jobs of the future. Noted that it started with manufacturing and has expanded to horticulture and other skill areas. Added that it provides opportunities for career exploration across multiple companies and the ability to earn college credits. Noted that there are 8 different programs that students can choose from.

Gary Smith

Questioned what sacrifices students would have to make to access the program noting the challenging schedules that they already have.

Andrea Vaughn

Responded that it is built into the system at the Technical College High Schools.

Ralph Weiser

Commented that to many the Technical College High Schools are still just “vo tech”.

Kathi Cozzone

Asked whether a student can enter a TCHS from 10th grade in high school and was advised that they could.

Andrea Vaughn

Explained that an important part of the program was the partners that provided the job experience and identified the four current partners in the manufacturing area including Aerezen, CNC, IFM Effector and Omega.

Michael Katch

Explained the new government support for a career path approach noting that schools are required to track student contacts with job opportunities. Noted that 6 contacts were required in grades 3-5, 6 contacts in grades 6-9 and 8 contacts in grades 10-12. Explained that schools need a system to track contacts and are working to establish procedures. Added that one way to make the Ascend program more popular was to introduce competition for the available slots.

Andrea Vaughn

Noted that the Ascend program provides 4 tours at 4 partners during 10th grade to determine student interest followed by an interview with the company. Provided a short video with examples of several tours

Kathi Cozzone

Commented that no girls were shown in the video tours

Andrea Vaughn

Responded that that is one of the major challenges in that girls express less interest in the Ascend program.

Marybeth DiVincenzo

Noted that there is an ecosystem of initiatives all focused on this issue of raising awareness of middle skill jobs noting Ascend, Girls Exploring Tomorrow's Technologies, What's So Cool About Manufacturing and others. Added that we need to continue to spread the information on these programs.

David Sciocchetti

Commented on the need for an approach to encompass and coordinate the delivery of the overarching message of these efforts.

Chaya Scott

Offered that Coatesville Area School District offers dual enrollment but cautioned that school districts need to know that there are teeth to ensure implementation of career path concept. Added that Octoraro School district is doing a good job of blending both academic and technical skills.

Kathi Cozzone

Restated the need to engage parents to get them to better understand the issues and their options.

Andrea Vaughn

Added that it is also important to expand the network of business participants to allow for more career exploration opportunities.

Chaya Scott

Suggested the United Way corporate engagement model might be something to consider.

Andrea Vaughn

Described that in the 11th grade students spend time at companies as part of a 2 year interview process. Added that 12 graders can enter into a co-op with a company partner.

Chaya Scott

Asked what type of sign up schedule was used and was advised that it was an open process.

Gary Smith

Asked how many students were currently in the Ascend program.

Andrea Vaughn

Noted that there are 8 students in the 11th grade and 6 students in the 12th grade at this time.

Meeting was adjourned.