BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARY NOTES

2017 Education Workshop
Career Connected Learning
Apr. 27 | The Foundry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview ................................................................. 1
Improve Workshops: Key Takeaways ......................... 2
Learn Panels: Key Takeaways ................................... 5
Introduction
The goal of the Inaugural Chamber Education Workshop was to bring business leaders from our region together to discuss how career connected learning is vital to creating talent pipelines. The breakout sessions were dedicated helping employers understand the variety of options available to engage with youth, and to collecting feedback on how we can improve the education and training system to work better for business needs.

What follows below is a summary of the common themes that were shared across many of the breakout sessions, as well as the key insights raised in each panel or workshop.

Common themes from the Breakout Sessions

- Best practices on career connected learning can be found throughout our region and state. The breakout session and panels highlighted programs and activities that are leading the way in career exploration, career preparation, and skill development for in-school and opportunity youth.
- Employers may not be aware of all the resources available to hire young people or help expose them to career pathways. Connecting into school districts and programs in the community is a way for employers to shape those pathways, expose youth to potential careers, and build a talent pipeline. Partnerships can help employers to scale their impact and reach a broader audience of young people.
- Career connected learning programs are easier for employers to engage with when they are structured and replicable. Employers can learn from peers in other industries to replicate career connected learning programs, and program providers can develop toolkits and standard processes to simplify engagement and effort required from employers.
- Personal connections and support are helpful to youth exposure to career connected learning. Mentors, Career coaches, and navigators can help youth to make connections along their career pathway, find the right roles, and be successful in a workplace setting. Without mentors, youth can sometimes get lost or be unclear on what success in a job looks like. Training the mentors and equipping them with the right tools is the first step employers should take to set youth up for success.
- Both soft skills and hard skills are needed in the workplace, but most youth in-school training focuses on technical skills. Career exploration, internships, first work experience, and apprenticeships all provide opportunities for youth to learn soft skills while on the job.
- Industries are shifting their thinking on the role and impact that youth interns can have in the workplace. By understanding youth, the skillsets they bring, and their needs, employers can design career connected learning programs that better engage youth and also bring more benefit to employers.
WORKSHOP A: SCALING YOUTH CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAMS

- **Challenge Statement:** How might we provide every high school student the opportunity to participate in a worksite tour?
- **Led by:** Kirsten Avery, “Avery,” College & Career Success Director, Community Center for Education Results and Mamie Marcuss, Director of Program, Challenge Seattle
- **Main Points:**
  - Worksite tours should also be designed around what engagement will most interest and benefit students. For example, fitting into the school schedule, providing interactions with young and diverse professionals at the employer site, and using activities to demonstrate work.
  - Making worksite tours replicable is important to growing and scaling employer commitments. Employers can be more engaged – and reap larger community engagement benefits for their employees – if the worksite tour program has a clear structure, timeline, and resource commitments.
  - Approaches to scale worksite tours may differ across organization size. Large organizations can tap into existing employee resource groups to find volunteers to lead the efforts. For small organizations, it may be valuable to centralize a few small businesses at one location and partner to showcase diverse career pathways.

WORKSHOP B: EMPLOYER INPUT INTO SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CTE CURRICULUM

- **Challenge Statement:** How might we involve employers in providing input and guidance on the development of high school career and technical education programs?
- **Led by:** Dan Gallagher, Director of College and Career Readiness, Career and Technical Education Department, Seattle Public Schools
- **Main Points:**
  - There is a challenge around awareness of career pathways for both students and employers. Pathways are not always clearly laid out, communicated effectively, or tied to market demands.
  - Employers diverged on what the educational gaps were for students - from math skills to soft skills to financial literacy. The commonality was an interest in students being taught how they can apply what they are learning to a future career.
  - Employers can start with light touch engagement with the school systems, providing feedback and guidance on a single curriculum or program, and grow involvement from there. Ideally, the school’s advisory council membership should target being reflective of the region’s labor market, and be refreshed annually to stay relevant.

WORKSHOP C: INCREASING YOUTH CAREER TRAINING IN SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- **Challenge Statement:** How might we, as employers, partner with the Seattle Skill Center to scale the output of trained youth, benefiting both local businesses and the community?
- **Led by:** Dan Golosman, Principal, Seattle Skills Center, Seattle Public Schools
- **Main Points:**
  - The Seattle Skills Center faces a perception challenge that career/technical education is where students go who are not going to be successful or are not college ready. In fact, there are a wide variety of students who participate (e.g. Advanced Placement, interested in college, and also some with Individual Education Plans), and it’s important to change that perception for employers, students, and the community.
  - There are many opportunities for employers to partner with the Skill Center to improve the programs’ sustainability and value to students. Employers can participate by hosting site tours, coming to the class to present, helping to pay for a bus that could bring students out to a company for a half-day tour, participating in advisory groups, or supporting the start-up of new classes.

**WORKSHOP D: INVOLVING LOCAL BUSINESS IN YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS**
- **Challenge Statement:** How might we increase our local businesses’ participation in youth internship programs?
- **Led by:** Andrea Greenstein, Program Manager, Educurious and Sasha Gourevitch, Youth Employment Development Manager, Office of Economic Development, City of Seattle.
- **Main Points:**
  - Preparing to host interns requires thinking more broadly than just a need for entry-level administrative work or data entry. Interns can help solve unique problems in the organization if a company can plan an intern’s project by breaking down a large challenge or problem into a smaller component of work the intern can focus on. This can make the experience interesting for an intern and valuable to the sponsoring organization.
  - To get buy-in for internship programs, employers shared suggestions to frame the ROI message. There are many benefits the workforce of hosting interns, including increased employee satisfaction and employee retention, and reverse mentoring (youth can teach the workforce on skills and expertise that they use every day such as social media management).
  - Employers don’t have to recreate the wheel to identify interns. Instead, they can tap into existing city and region-wide efforts in career connected learning.

**WORKSHOP E: IMPROVING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT TRANSITIONS AND GROWTH**
- **Challenge Statement:** How might we partner with employers to help youth transition into employment and advance in their careers?
- **Led by:** Caitlin Cordell, Career LaunchPad Program Supervisor, King County Employment and Education Resources (DCHS)
- **Main Points:**
  - Many young people are unaware or untrained in workplace practices and what is appropriate. Part of a work experience is training youth about the company culture, and soft skills.
Employers should recognize that youth may come with social / economic barriers that infringe their engagement at work. Providing youth information about available support services can help them to access resources that they may need, but would not otherwise ask for. Wrap-around support and services (such as providing Orca cards for transportation assistance and access to emergency employee assistance rent funds) can help youth stay fully engaged in the workforce.

A coach or navigator can be very helpful to provide these introductions to culture and to share resources on how to access support services. It is helpful for youth to have a place to go to ask for advice about challenges.

**WORKSHOP F: DEVELOPING YOUTH HIRING PRACTICES**

- **Challenge Statement:** How might we, employers and the organizations that prepare youth, jointly develop preparation, hiring, and onboarding practices in support of youth entering careers?
- **Led by:** Darius Mensah, 100,000 Opportunities Initiative Program Manager, Educurious and Suzanne Towns, Senior Advisor, Workforce & FUSE Fellow, Office of Economic Development, City of Seattle
- **Main Points:**
  - Engaging with young people through channels that they use – including social media – can help to reach, motivate, and prepare youth. It is also useful to engage young people in the development of content for their audience.
  - Expectations should be set and clearly defined for employers and youth at the beginning of a new job, or even earlier in the application process. Employers should be realistic about the skills needed in youth and help youth understand what it means to be successful in the workplace.
  - Preparation for job applications and interviews is important even for entry level jobs, and coaches/mentors can provide valuable insights as to what employers are looking for. Is it important to provide youth mentors with the tools to effectively provide mentorship and an understanding of what is required to be a mentor.
  - Diversity and recruiting strategy starts at the top. Commitment to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in the organization needs to come from leadership.
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PANEL A: CAREER EXPLORATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH
- **Moderator:** Michelle Thomasian, Career Access Manager, Highline Public Schools
- **Panelists:**
  - Michelle Burreson, Senior Manager of Workforce Development & Integration, Commercial Planes, Boeing
  - Jennifer Butler, Manager, Government Relations & Public Affairs, Zillow Group
  - David Watkins, General Manager, Inn at the Market
- **Main Points:**
  - Investing in high school career exploration programs has helped many companies address open jobs needs earlier and enhance the talent pipeline. Waiting to engage until students are at the university level may be too late.
  - It is important to design career exploration programs around the students’ needs. It’s very helpful for students to understand how what they are learning in school will apply in the real world / in the workforce.
  - There are many ways to engage. Employers can start small and leverage existing connections to engage youth in career exploration activities like worksite tours or mentoring programs. Smaller companies can build partnerships to invest in building pathway programs or join an advisory board.

PANEL B: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND FIRST WORK EXPERIENCE
- **Moderator:** Mariko Lockhart, National Coordinator – 100,000 Opportunities Initiative – Demonstration Cities
- **Panelists:**
  - Jennifer Hill, Youth Services Coordinator, Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Director’s Office / Employment and Education Resources (EER)
  - Marie Kurose, Workforce Development Project Manager, Economic Development Division, Port of Seattle
  - Nancy Yamamoto, Workforce Development Manager, Office of Economic Development, City of Seattle
  - Mary Wideman-Williams, Deputy Director, Seattle Center
- **Main Points:**
  - There is a challenge for internship programs in making students aware of the internship opportunities. It is helpful to be connected to partners in the community in advance of the internship need to get the word out.
  - Internships and job descriptions must be structured in a way that creates opportunity to recruit, hire, and train diverse youth. Making sure that youth employment and first work experiences are paid could help attract a larger pool of candidates.
It is important to provide mentorship to interns in a formalized program. Over the summer, interns can be coached on soft skills to better prepare them for future workplace interactions.

PANEL C: YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP AND CAREER TRAINING

- **Moderator:** Jennifer Carlson, Executive Director, WTIA Workforce Institute & Apprenti
- **Panelists:**
  - Lynn Strickland, Executive Director, Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC)
  - Matt Poischbeg, VP/General Manager, Sea-lect Plastics
  - Morgan Stonefield, Program Director, ANEW
- **Main Points:**
  - The best starting point for an apprenticeship program is to contact L&I and then partner with other employers in the same industry to create a program together. As an industry group, employers can create programs for more than one niche job and share the development process.
  - Apprenticeships provide students education and career options, and offer unique benefits to both apprentices and the workforce. Students earn college credits during the apprenticeship program, and exit with the opportunity to work or to continue in school. Apprenticeships generate skilled workers, who can help fill in jobs from a retiring workforce.
  - Mentorship is a critical part of apprenticeship. Apprentices learn how to build relationships, ask questions, and develop soft skills while learning on the job.
  - Technology advancements and an aging workforce are changing the skills that workers need in industries such as manufacturing and maritime, IT, and healthcare. Apprenticeships provide a bridge to enter specialized career pathways.