SPONSOR: Sen. Sokola & Rep. Baumbach
Sen. Pettyjohn

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
148th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 277

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

WHEREAS, in 2015, Delaware established the Delaware Promise, a commitment that the state will combine education and workforce efforts to provide opportunities for our students as they prepare to enter and advance in a career;

WHEREAS, Delaware has established "Delaware Pathways", a collaborative workforce development partnership which will create a fluid relationship between our public education system, post-secondary education, non-profit, and employer communities to ensure that the pathway to college and a well-paying job is accessible for every Delawarean, and to help the state fulfill the "Delaware Promise" of ensuring that 65% of our workforce earns a college degree or professional certificate by 2025;

WHEREAS, a Steering Committee is necessary to ensure that the program's long term sustainability and adaptation proceeds in a manner that aligns its offerings to the needs of the workforce and to the students and parents who participate, along with ensuring that the budgetary priorities of the program are identified and outlined in a transparent and collaborative manner;

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee, once formed, will appoint a Leadership Team who will be tasked with the operational tasks associated with Delaware Pathways, and the membership of the leadership team will be composed of a broad array of stakeholders, including members with educational expertise, members from an organization that advocates on behalf of educators, members who work closely with and who advocate for students with disabilities, and members with knowledge of the needs and changes in the state's economy and business sector;

WHEREAS, we must work to continue to expand access to these programs in order to provide Delaware students with the opportunity to earn an industry-recognized credential, early college credit, and relevant work experience in high-demand fields in our state and regional economy.

NOW THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Part V, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

Chapter 91. Pathways to Prosperity.

§ 9101. Short Title.

This Chapter shall be known as "Pathways to Prosperity".

§ 9102. Steering Committee.

(a) The Delaware Pathways Steering Committee ("Steering Committee") is hereby established to set the strategic direction of the Delaware Pathways work and provide recommendations for future development and growth of the program, and ensure that program offerings are properly aligned with current and expected employer demand.

(b) The Steering Committee shall consist of 15 members as follows:

(1) The Secretary of the Department of Education or the Secretary's designee;

(2) The Secretary of the Department of Labor or the Secretary's designee;

(3) The Director of Economic Development or the Director's designee;

(4) Chair of the Delaware Workforce Development Board or the Chairperson's designee;

(5) The President of the Delaware State Board of Education or the President's designee;

(6) The President of Delaware Technical and Community College or the President's designee;

(7) One superintendent of a public school district or the superintendant's or designee appointed by the Governor;

(8) Two business representatives appointed by the Governor;

(9) Two members of community or non-profit organizations appointed by the Governor;

(10) Two members of the Senate, one from each caucus, appointed by the President Pro Tempore;

(11) Two members of the House of Representatives, one from each caucus, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(c) The Steering Committee shall, at least annually, and no later than June 30th of each calendar year perform at least the following:

(1) Advise the Governor and the General Assembly on the priorities, policy issues, and specific plans for the ongoing implementation of Delaware Pathways;

(2) Review the policies of existing statewide programs and make recommendations on actions that should be taken by the state to align education, higher education, and workforce development programs in the state;

(3) Provide guidance and leadership to agency staff involved in implementing this work for the development, expansion and improvement of Delaware Pathways work;

(4) Set and track annual goals for Delaware Pathways;

(5) Assist in convening stakeholders and increasing participation in Delaware Pathways programs throughout the state.

(d) The Governor shall designate from the members appointed one Chairperson of the Steering Committee. The chairperson will be appointed biennially.

(e) Members appointed to the Steering Committee shall serve renewable terms of 2 years, except in the case of public employees continuing in the same designated position, and in the case of initial appointment terms, which shall be either one or two years.

(f) The initial appointment terms of non-public employees shall be either one or two years, such that half of the non-public appointees shall serve a one year term, and the other half shall serve a two year term. The terms of each individual appointment shall be at the discretion of the Governor, but after the initial term is served the position shall be for a renewable term of 2 years;

(g) The Steering Committee shall meet at the call of the Chairperson, but not less than semiannually.

(h) Any vacancy occurring in the appointed membership must be filled in the same manner as the original appointment not later than 30 days after the vacancy occurs.

(i) Administrative support shall be provided by the Department of Education

(j) The Steering Committee shall appoint a leadership team to manage the operational development of the Pathways Program. The team's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, development and improvement of Pathways curricula, oversight of professional development initiatives related to Pathways to Prosperity, oversight of internship programming related to Pathways to Prosperity, and budgetary tracking.

SYNOPSIS

This bill establishes a permanent steering committee for the Pathways to Prosperity initiative, in order to ensure the long term sustainability and adaptability of the program. The committee is comprised of a broad spectrum of representation across different phases of the educational, workforce development, and professional landscape.

Pathways to Prosperity is a workforce development initiative aimed at increasing career readiness amongst high school students. It combines career focused skill development with work based learning, while giving participants the ability to earn college credit and industry certifications while still in high school, giving them the ability to accelerate their career trajectory and improving educational outcomes.

Author: Senator Sokola