



County of Mercer Workforce Development Board

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Christian Estevez
WDB Director

Dan Benson
County Executive

Keith Secrest
Chairperson

WDB Quarterly Committee ♦ Chairperson: Keith Secrest

October 28, 2025

♦ 12:00 p.m. ♦ Zoom Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Keith Secrest, Chair (Kinetics Industries); **Scott Elliot** (Disabilities Chair); **Carlos Hendricks (CM)**, **Lesley Jack (DVRS)**, **Terrell McCain (DOL ES)**, **Deana Mottola (NJ Citizen Action)**, **Dawn Paquette (NJM)**, **Peter Tindall (Homasote)**, **LaToya Wilson (YIC Chair)**, **George Gent (MCTS)**, **Dave Nash (MCTS)**; **Anthony Carabelli (Economic Development)**; **Ray Agliata (Literacy Chair)**; **Joan Desmarais (DOL)**, **Iliana Ivanov (DOL)**, **Umesh Naik (DOL)**, **Isabel Jimenez (DOL)**, **Kathleen Donnellon (DHS)**, **Troy Long (MCTS)**, **Abigail Pangolinan (DOL)**, **Dr. Gonzalo Perez (MCCC)**, **Cindy Jackson (Child Care Connection)**, **Kevin Snyder (Bristol Myers Squibb)**, **William Stanislaw (RWJH)**

WDB/ MCOTES Staff: Christian Estevez, Jamelette Negron, Frank Stillitano, Chiara Tramo, Shanelle Gooch, Eddie Roberts, Susan Rauscher, John Raines

Welcome & Introductions

Keith Secrest opened the meeting at 12:01 p.m. and everyone introduced themselves before getting started.

Review and approval of August 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Carlos Hendricks & seconded by LaToya Wilson.

Motion passed and the minutes were approved.

MCTS

- MCTS have received the grant for the AI and are almost finished with that and developing the curriculum for the entire State of NJ and it goes along with the new STEM Lab.
- A new restaurant is being build and it's almost complete.
- The greenhouse has been updated and getting new trailers.
- Offering new course pathways in addition to AI is junior ROTC.

MCCC

- MCCC cut the ribbon on the Aseptic Biomanufacturing Mobile Lab located in Warren St.
- Title II funding is back for the JKC Campus.
- Received a Digital Equity Training Grant.
- MCCC manages the Bridges Program which is for at risk, homeless or aging out of foster care youth.

MC Economic Development

- On the final stages of some of the Grants Programs.
- Closeout Phase of the Signage and Façade Program, November 1st to apply.
- On final steps for Business Builder Rebate Grant Program that reimburses business eligible costs.

Executive/Oversight Committee Report

- Executive & Oversight Committee will split and Oversight Committee will need volunteers to be members.

Committee Reports:

❖ Disability Issues Committee:

Trying to give some specific attention around employer activity and trying to get some employers to the meeting. A proclamation will be release around disability employment awareness month which is October.

❖ Literacy Committee:

Literacy Committee is in the process of obtaining more readers for the Early Mercer Reads Program. Literacy will have some guest speakers on the future meetings like Dr. Perez and a representative from Burlington English. Literacy is looking into increasing the literacy into digital literacy, financial literacy and workplace literacy. Looking into having new members in the committee. Cindy Jackson share information about Early Mercer Reads like the flyer and that this will be the first year, after COVID, that it will be in person.

❖ Youth Investment Council Committee:

LaToya Wilson reported that Christian Estevez invited someone from Isles to report in their activities and looking into visiting them. NJCAR reported about their apprenticeship that they host and also YIC will like to visit them. With Youth Career Connections, we are working on exploring additional partnerships. 2025 Summer Youth Work Experience program had around 550 applicants, that means, we getting attention to what's happening and showing interest. LaToya also attended the October 2025 Job Fair to kind of see the resources and looking into partners.

❖ Health Care Committee:

Still looking into getting a new Chair for the committee.

❖ Advanced Manufacturing Committee:

A connection with a local auto dealer was made with pre-apprenticeship and a student from MCTS will work there.

WDB Reports

- The Mercer County Executive, Dan Benson, the Board of County Commissioners read off a joint proclamation whereas the County of Mercer recognizes National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- Motion to adopt the Subrecipient Monitoring Policy was made by Deana Mottola and Seconded by Latoya Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion to approve Supportive Services Policy was made by Latoya Wilson and Seconded by Carlos Hendriks. Motion passed unanimously.
- Motion to approve the Program and Interest Reporting Policy was made by Carlos Hendriks and Seconded by Deana Mottola. Motion passed unanimously.
- The annual report is being prepared and will be discussed on the next General Meeting.
- All the ITA providers are ready for procurement.
- 9 vendors were monitored in September 2025 to close out PY24.

Expenditures Updates:

- \$184,000 left and planning to expend it by the end of October report.
- State audit came back pretty well.

Common Measures Performance:

- It hasn't changed a lot since the last report but working in increasing the population.

One Stop Operator:

- For WFNJ roughly 1,000 new participants.
- Increase in customer flow.
- Summer Youth Program is coming to an end and preparing for next year.
- Fall Job Fair had 519 attended and 67 employers and 23 additional resources.

BUSINESS/ISSUES/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Keith Secrest report about a meeting with the County Executive regarding collaboration with Chamber of Commerce. Motion to adjourned the meeting made by Dave Nash and seconded by Latoya Wilson.

Next meeting: **January 27, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.-1:30 p. m.**