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NEW JERSEY
STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE
OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

DAVID L. CRAWFORD
TASK FORCE CHAIRPERSON
NOVEMBER, 1990

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New Jersey

EXECUTIVE BRANCH WORKGROUP
(technical support group)

Patrick R. Brannigan

Department of Higher Education
NJ Institute of Technology

Michael G. Curran

Department of Education

William H. Foster

Department of Labor

Elizabeth S. Garlatti

Office of the Governor

Dennis F. Marco

Department of Commerce and
Economic Development

Richard J. Porth

Department of Community
Affairs

William Waldman

Department of Human Services

"Without major changes in the ways schools and firms train workers over the course of a lifetime, no amount of macroeconomic finetuning or technological innovation will be able to produce a significantly improved economic performance and a rising standard of living."

M.I.T. Commission on Industrial Productivity (1989)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

America's ability to compete in an increasingly complex global economy will depend upon the quality of its workforce. Unfortunately, there is a widespread feeling among employers that the nation's occupational education system is no longer the best in the world. Many corporate leaders look enviously to Europe and Japan as models of worker education. During the 1980's, companies complained that there were not enough entry level workers to fulfill the needs of an expanding economy. More recently, they have become concerned that there are too few highly skilled workers to meet the requirements of a more technologically sophisticated workplace.

Because these same challenges must be met at the state level, the State Employment and Training Commission established an Occupational Education Task Force to develop recommendations for a statewide occupational education system. The ultimate goal of the Task Force is to define a system that will provide quality programs that are responsive to the needs of both workers and employers.

During its deliberations, the Task Force identified a host of issues and problems related to the current occupational education system:

- * Effective communication is difficult because there is no common definition of occupational education. Terms such as "job training", "vocational training", and "employment and training" are used interchangeably and mean different things to different people.
- * There is no comprehensive statewide plan that coordinates all occupational education efforts across agency lines.
- * There is a need for a better labor market information system to support informed policy making and facilitate consumer choice.
- * There are no consistent standards for evaluating the State's occupational education programs.
- * Although private proprietary schools play a key role in training workers, State regulatory and oversight functions are inconsistent and fragmented.
- * New Jersey needs a comprehensive, accessible occupational education system that emphasizes work-based learning.

FINDINGS

In assessing the current occupational education system in New Jersey, the Task Force reached out to a wide audience of experts and lay people. Four public hearings were held, and service providers and consumers were asked to comment on a series of preliminary Task Force recommendations.

During this information gathering process, the Task Force saw the excellence in employment, training, and education programs throughout the State.

The Task Force recognizes the significant investment made by the State, the counties, and local municipalities in constructing some of the finest facilities in the nation. The Task Force is also impressed by many of the professionals working in various local and state programs and institutions. These individuals deserve special praise for their dedication and commitment to the quality of the workforce and the welfare of the client.

While many components of the current occupational education system are excellent, there is far too much fragmentation of authority and responsibility at all levels of the system. At the State level, there are too many programs administered by too many departments to allow the coherent delivery of services. Differences in planning procedures, funding requirements, and policy orientation all frustrate rational program development. Without coherent state-level priorities and standards, local institutions and programs do not function together in an integrated way. The fact that education, employment and training programs do not coordinate with each other or with related economic development and human services efforts is a major shortcoming of occupational education in New Jersey.

The Task Force acknowledges the importance of the local planning process but notes that there needs to be better vertical connectivity between local and state entities. This will be achieved through the sharing of information and the development of mutual objectives. The vertical link should promote horizontal coordination among programs at the local level which will result in better integration of related efforts. Through enhanced local planning, a continuum of higher quality employment, education, and training services will be delivered to clients and employers.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon its analysis of occupational education issues in New Jersey, the Task Force offers the following recommendations:

- * The State of New Jersey should adopt a single definition of "occupational education"; a proposed definition is in the Task Force Report.
- * The State Employment and Training Commission should coordinate the development of a single State plan for occupational education; the plan should cut across departmental lines and link efforts to address common employment, training and education needs.
- * The Department of Labor should convene an inter-departmental committee to develop an enhanced labor market assessment system; the system should provide accurate and timely information about the occupations and skills needed to build a world class workforce.
- * The State Employment and Training Commission should develop an accountability measurement system to provide a basis for the funding, restructuring and termination of occupational education programs.
- * A single State agency within the Department of Education should have the primary responsibility for developing consistent and coordinated statewide policy for private vocational schools; this agency should also be responsible for the oversight and support of these programs.
- * The State of New Jersey should make occupational education programs available to all prospective and experienced workers.
- * A single agency within the Department of Labor should have primary responsibility for expanding and coordinating work-based learning activities, including apprenticeship.

TASK FORCE REPORT

The Task Force's initial goal was to assess the current occupational education system in New Jersey by reaching out to a broad audience of experts and lay people for their opinions. In pursuit of this objective, four public hearings were held and opinions from employment and training service providers and consumers were solicited based on a series of preliminary recommendations developed by the Task Force. During this process, the Task Force was impressed by the excellence that exists in employment, training and education programs throughout New Jersey. Vocational high schools, the higher education system, particularly county colleges, proprietary schools and the regular school system have established highly successful programs to address the needs of the workforce. Additionally, the Job Training Partnership Act has been responsible for developing many admirable and creative training opportunities for citizens throughout the state.

In assessing individual programs, the Task Force was impressed with the dedication and commitment of the professionals who worked in the various local and state institutions and programs. These individuals are deserving of special praise for their dedication and commitment to the quality of the workforce as well as the welfare of the client. The Task Force also acknowledged the significant investments made by the State and localities in constructing some of the finest education, employment and training facilities in the nation.

While the Task Force was impressed with many of the components of the occupational education system, it was less impressed with the system itself. There appears to be far too much fragmentation in the current system, at both the state and the local level. For the former, there are too many programs administered by too many departments to allow for the coherent delivery of services. Differences in planning procedures, funding requirements and policy orientations frequently frustrate the ability to develop rational programming. For the latter, this lack of a coherent set of priorities and standards leads to a failure of separate local institutions to function together in any integrated way. Failure to coordinate related employment programs with one another or with related economic development and human service programs constitutes a major shortcoming of the occupational education system in New Jersey.

In its deliberations, the Task Force acknowledged the importance of the local planning process. Yet it was also understood that there needs to be a more fully developed concept of vertical connectivity between local and state entities, suggesting the sharing of information and the development of mutually understood objectives.

This should translate into horizontal coordination within local

programs to assure more integration of common efforts. A key objective of the Task Force's recommendations is to enhance the ability of local planning efforts to deliver a higher quality continuum of employment, education and training services to the client and the employer.

PRINCIPLES

The Task Force identified three principles which form the foundation for the implementation of its recommendations. These core elements for the system design are:

Market Driven and Consumer Based Focus

All occupational education programs must be responsive to the needs of the labor market, as well as those of the firm. It makes little sense to train individuals for jobs that do not exist or are becoming obsolete. Similarly, training individuals on outdated equipment simply because that equipment is available makes no sense.

Programs should be designed based on the needs of the individuals participating in the training, the consumers. Although these programs often appear to be designed with the consumer in mind, a closer look indicates that, all too often, programs are delivered piecemeal or in a categorical mode. Thus it is left to the trainee to discover how to access other needed services such as basic skills instruction, health services and child care, among others. To remedy this deficiency and enhance the prospects for success, all programs must have a consumer based focus to address the broader needs of clients.

Literacy and Basic Skills

Today's labor market demands that workers must be literate in order to learn new jobs and skills. There are many recent reports that correlate basic literacy skills with economic success. Critical thinking and communication skills are among the requisite basic skills. No occupational education program can succeed in teaching advanced or job related specialties, if the participants lack fundamental literacy and basic skills.

Full Utilization of the Potential Workforce

Demographic information for New Jersey indicates a slowdown of growth in the workforce. To meet the needs of the State's employers for trained individuals, all sources of human capital must be tapped. Groups of citizens who have not traditionally participated in the workforce must be trained for skilled jobs providing them with the wages necessary to enter the economic mainstream. Persons with disabilities, at-risk youth, displaced homemakers, dislocated workers and non-English speaking people are among those who may need special help.

Traditional barriers to equal employment opportunity such as sex, race or other stereotyping factors must be confronted and eliminated.

OTHER ISSUES

A number of other issues were identified as being important to the success of the occupational education system. These issues should be among those the State Employment and Training Commission addresses in the future. The issues include:

- * a means for providing a unified approach to policy guidance, planning and oversight of the employment, training and education system at the local level;
- * a technologically up-to-date data system which allows service users and providers: to access, share and exchange information on the availability of programs and support services; and, to share such data as applicant characteristics, assessment findings, individual employability plans and program results; and
- * a comprehensive workforce readiness plan that incorporates all of the State's efforts to provide New Jersey with a world class workforce.

During its analysis of New Jersey's occupational education system, the Task Force identified a number of issues and problems which have formed the basis for its seven recommendations. A detailed narrative of the findings and recommendations can be found in the Technical Paper. Public comments on the recommendations are summarized in the report entitled Public Comments on the Technical Paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DEFINITION OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Currently, occupational education is defined in terms of those programs and agencies which provide job specific or career-related training. This approach can confuse both potential users and service delivery practitioners as to what constitutes occupational education. Further, this approach does little to either clarify or correct public misconceptions about occupational education.

The Task Force recommends the following definition for occupational education:

Occupational education is any organized program of study, whether intellectual, technical or skill-based, directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment, or to skills enrichment or retraining for individuals already in the workforce. Occupational education programs can be offered at all educational levels and can be credit or non-credit programs. Occupational education programs must provide individuals with the skills and abilities necessary for them to become and remain viable, flexible and mobile in the workplace, and to participate in further training or education as necessary or desirable.

This definition needs to be understood in the context of three critical considerations:

Occupational education is a part of the larger "workforce readiness" continuum, that is, the full array of training, education, and support services that exist to help prepare individuals of every skill level, with a variety of points of entry and exit. The occupational education system must include a wide variety of instructional methods and approaches in order to provide access for individuals in need of job training, especially those most at risk of failure.

All students in the K-12 grades should be provided with career-related information which will enable them to make informed choices regarding employment or post-secondary occupational education opportunities.

Many important elements of the workforce readiness system (such as occupationally related remedial education, English as a second language, general intellectual skills, preemployment and work maturity skills, and "life skills" should be considered occupational education in cases where the student or trainee requires such services

to become employable and to have a career.

In order to enhance the image of occupational education, a group of public and private sector individuals should be formed to develop strategies to promote the importance of occupational education programs and career preparation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Numerous occupational education programs are administered across five State departments: Community Affairs, Education, Higher Education, Human Services, and Labor; however, there is no common purpose or interconnection bringing them together to function as a whole. State department planning consists of developing applications for funding from two singular approaches: planning by department for state funding and planning by program for federal funding. There is no master plan that guides all departments in working together toward an integrated employment, training and education system.

A single State level plan should be developed for occupational education that: is recognized by all state departments as the operational state plan for employment, education and training; includes objectives that are collectively addressed by departments; is adhered to by all departments; and is the document by which each department's responsibilities for employment, training and education programs are evaluated.

The State planning process, coordinated by the State Employment and Training Commission, would begin by assessing the current labor market within the context of the Governor's priorities. The members of the Executive Branch Workgroup representing Labor, Education, Higher Education, Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs, and Human Services, should cooperatively develop objectives within those priorities. As background for the process which develops the single State plan, each participating agency will develop a plan for its potential role. A draft plan should then be jointly developed and submitted to the Occupational Education Task Force or the Planning Committee of the Commission for review and comment. The draft plan should be submitted for the Commission's review. Once approved by the Commission, the State plan should then be forwarded to the Governor in early November of 1991 for implementation by July 1, 1992. When the single State plan is developed, individual agencies should adjust their draft plans so they will be consistent with the single State plan. Once initiated, this process should become an ongoing effort of the Commission and the State departments administering employment and training programs.

In the interim, the Commission should continue its efforts to coordinate and integrate the delivery of occupational education

programs and the other State administered employment, training and educationally related efforts. These programs include activities under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, the Job Training Partnership Act, and the REACH welfare reform program.

LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENT

The responsibility for the current labor market information system rests with the Department of Labor. The system contains most of what is needed to support the development of a statewide occupational education system of both public and proprietary schools to meet the needs of New Jersey's employers and workers. However, improvements are needed in the quality and presentation of labor market information, its dissemination, and utilization.

The labor market assessment process must be improved to the point where an individual seeking training can have confidence that the system is providing training in areas in which job openings exist now or will exist in the future. Similarly, employers must be confident that they can make sound business decisions based on the same information. In order for decision-makers to take responsive, accurate, and timely actions concerning employment, training and education, a Labor Market Information System must exist that is:

- * comprehensive, timely and reliable
- * accessible and in a format which users agree is appropriate for their needs;
- * includes statewide standardized competencies for occupational clusters, which reflect the skill levels required by employers;

The Department of Labor should convene an inter-departmental committee to develop an enhanced Labor Market Information system. This committee would review labor market information materials which are currently distributed. This information would then be revised and fine tuned to make it more usable to program planners and other users of labor market information, such as employers, youth entering the labor market and adults seeking to change their occupations.

PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Each of the major agencies delivering occupational education has their own separate systems for measuring accountability. Data collection requirements and standards are set by individual departments, program operators, and in some cases by federal law and regulation. Definitions of terms and outcomes vary from

program to program, as does the method and base year for collecting the data. In addition, there is no statewide, consistent system to measure competencies achieved through occupational education or the wages paid to program completers.

An accountability system for occupational education should be outcome oriented and labor market based and include:

1. performance indicators and standards which measure:

- a) the effectiveness of the planned employment and training strategies to meet the needs of employers and workers in the labor market;
- b) the increases in the ability of trainees to compete in the workforce and to improve their standards of living;
- c) the delivery of services to individuals who might not otherwise be able to achieve economic self-sufficiency; and
- d) occupational competencies acquired during education and training.

2. the use of common terms, time frames, and definitions where ever possible;

The criteria specified above must be used to develop fair, but uniform, statewide measures and standards for the evaluation of occupational education programs. The measures should be outcome oriented, as well as indicative of the extent to which services are provided to those who are most in need of assistance. The accountability system should provide a means for the Executive Departments of State Government to identify the need for new programs or program improvement, restructuring or termination.

PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

In New Jersey, over 240 private vocational schools train about 60,000 individuals and collect more than \$150 million in tuition revenues, much of which is publicly supported. Although 10 organizations review, approve, monitor, and support these activities, no single agency has primary responsibility for all proprietary vocational schools in the State. The result has been a fragmented and duplicative system of approval and oversight of programs which vary tremendously in quality and in responsiveness to labor market needs.

Of vital importance to the occupational education system is the creation and implementation of a consistent and coordinated statewide policy for proprietary vocational school oversight and support. To achieve this goal a number of changes would have to be made:

- (1) Consolidate oversight and support functions into a single unit within the New Jersey Department of Education with primary responsibility for private vocational proprietary schools;
- (2) Fully support the Agency's approval and regulating activities through vendor fees and state and federal funding. Funds should be redirected to the new Agency from agencies that would be relinquishing current responsibilities for proprietary schools.
- (3) Create a broad based advisory board to develop recommendations for uniform policies and procedures.

The Department of Education would be responsible for: developing statewide policy; establishing consistent standards and uniform procedures for school and program approval and oversight; setting vendor fee schedules; participating in accrediting team visits; conducting monitoring and oversight reviews; establishing formal relationships with New Jersey Department of Higher Education, proprietary schools, accrediting associations and licensing agencies; and other functions described in the Technical Paper on Occupational Education. The Casino Control Commission would retain approval authority over the casino schools and the New Jersey Department of Higher Education would remain responsible for degree granting proprietary schools and the approval of student loans.

To implement these changes the Task Force recommends that the following actions be taken:

- . Designate the New Jersey Department of Education to approve and oversee the proprietary school sector;
- . Select representatives for a broad based advisory board;
- . Draft legislation to support the proposed new structure;
- . Identify existing public funds and establish approval fee structure to fund activities;
- . Develop uniform policies for oversight and approval of proprietary schools;
- . Develop a report format for a consumer guide to occupational education programs including those offered by proprietary schools.

PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

The current system of occupational education programs and support systems is fragmented at both the state and local level. Individuals seeking to gain entry into programs are often confronted with a situation in which services are geographically dispersed, administered by separate agencies and operated under varying rules and regulations. All too often, agencies compete with each other for scarce resources, are reluctant to share client information and fail to see themselves as partners in a common effort to serve the client.

State level recommendations include: A statewide campaign encouraging workers to upgrade their skills, new and improved methods for providing monitoring and technical assistance and an annual statewide conference on occupational education. Local level recommendations include: creation of a local analogue of the State Employment and Training Commission, development of universal career awareness and computer literacy curricula for the secondary school system, increased emphasis on workplace literacy programs, enhancement of cooperative education, community service and internship programs for high school and college students, development of additional transition programs that link school to college ("two plus two" programs, for example) and school to work.

State departments must agree to engage in a process which will result in the coordination of all state administered occupational education, training and supportive services. The Institute for Staff Development, housed in the State Employment and Training Commission, should build the capacity of local practitioners. Coordinated planning between those responsible for implementing this recommendation with those responsible for developing programs under the Quality Education Act must take place.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Work-based learning is an extremely promising strategy for improving the quality of the workforce and meeting the needs of the employer community. Work-based learning can be defined as the array of strategies that are used to teach occupational and literacy skills to workers while they are employed. As such, work-based learning is a market driven and consumer oriented approach to developing educational partnerships between the public and private sectors.

New Jersey's public and private school systems collectively educate and train approximately 100,000 students. However, the vast majority of the State's civilian workforce - about four million people - are dependent upon their employers for job training. The Commission on the "Skills of the American Workforce," estimates that employers spend \$30 billion nationally on formal training. At

most, only one-third of this amount is spent on the non-college educated workforce, affecting less than eight percent of the nation's front-line workers. The training that companies do provide is generally limited to orientation for new hires or team building among long-term employees. From this study, and other research, it does not appear that sufficient investment is being made in skill improvement after secondary and post-secondary education has ended.

Work-based learning should be encouraged and expanded by a single State agency within the New Jersey Department of Labor. Because this department focuses on workers and employers, it is particularly well suited to bridge the gap between that group and the education community. The Department of Labor should be charged with the responsibility for setting policy and initiating cooperative relationships and expanding existing efforts such as apprenticeships, with education, labor, and industry in order to provide and promote the types of work-based learning programs necessary to successfully develop a highly skilled workforce. No changes in the local apprenticeship delivery system is recommended in this report.

NEXT STEPS

The Occupational Education Task Force has taken the first steps to improve the occupational education system of New Jersey. However, occupational education is only one aspect of the entire workforce readiness system. In pursuit of the objective of creating a workforce readiness system that will produce an economically self-sufficient world class workforce, the following next steps are proposed. First, it must be understood that the burden of this report and its companion piece on restructuring State government (The Future: The Workforce Readiness System In New Jersey) has been the establishment of a coherent decision-making framework for the current workforce readiness system. To help fulfill the policy mandates explicitly outlined in these reports, the following issues should be addressed:

The enhancement of the image of occupational education.

As the Task Force report indicates, occupational education programs have not been given the priority and status they deserve. Career awareness curriculum, apprenticeship, community service work and job counseling, among others, have been insufficiently integrated into New Jersey's educational system. The importance of upgrading the skills of the existing workers through a series of work-based learning efforts, including workplace literacy needs to be more fully appreciated. A continued effort must be initiated to put

occupational education in either the classroom or on the job site in its proper perspective.

The creation of an accountable occupational education system.

The Task Force has laid the foundation for a uniform statewide accountability system for occupational education programs. Criteria for performance evaluation have been recommended that are both fair and comprehensive. These criteria must be translated into specific performance measures and standards. The Task force should continue to work with appropriate individuals and groups to implement an effective accountability system.

An assessment of the resources needed to sustain a workforce readiness system.

The State of New Jersey is currently implementing, through the Quality Education Act and a number of other initiatives, bold policy changes that will affect the shape of education for years to come. Specific recommendations on the allocation of these resources, and other possible sources of funds which could benefit the quality and quantity of programs effecting the workforce, need to be developed.

The development of local decision-making analogues to the State Employment and Training Commission.

In developing the recommendations in this report the State Employment and Training Commission and the Occupational Education Task Force has created a State level forum through which a number of major policy recommendations have been promulgated. Representatives from six State departments as well as the broad based representation from the Task Force have been able to reach consensus and lay a solid foundation for future discussions on pertinent issues. For a workforce readiness system to succeed, a similar process must take place at the local level. Local program administrators must be able to engage in a rational planning process that places the needs of the "customer" first. Recognizing that local conditions vary across the state, grassroots groups must be assisted in the identification or creation of an entity which can bring about a coordinated effort to serve the needs of workers and employers.

The work of the Task Force has been to help forge a consensus among government officials, program operators and employers about the vital importance of occupational education for the economic future of the State. The above stated series of goals must be seen as the

natural continuation of this work and as well as an extension of the policy implications of the Task Force recommendations to the Governor. The ultimate goal of the Commission and the Occupational Education Task Force is to insure that New Jersey builds the highest quality workforce readiness system possible.

CREDITS

The Task Force acknowledges the following individuals for their contributions to the development of the recommendations in this document.

Marguerite Beardsley
Department of Higher Education

Lutz Berkner
Department of Higher Education

Homer Bruno
Department of Labor

Bonnie Diamond
Middlesex County College

Roger Emig
State Employment and Training Commission

Roberta Francis
Department of Community Affairs

Robert Guadagnino
Department of Labor

Suzanne Guibert
State Employment and Training Commission

Marcy Hoffman
Department of Higher Education

Maurice James
Department of Education

Carmela Joseph
Department of Education

Paul Kaleda
State Employment and Training Commission

Charles Kunkel
Department of Education

Joseph Laufer (Loaned Executive to the Commission)
Burlington County College

Brett Lief
Department of Higher Education

Adriano Marinelli
State Employment and Training Commission

Charles McMahon (Loaned Executive to the Commission)
Department of Labor

Henry Plotkin (Loaned Executive to the Commission)
Department of Community Affairs

Deborah Rago
Department of Human Services

Phyllis Reed
State Employment and Training Commission

Dee Rosebrock
State Employment and Training Commission

Laurence Seidel
Department of Labor

William Smith
Department of Education

William A. Tracy
State Employment and Training Commission

Hector Ramon Villafane
Department of Education

Barbara Wagner
Department of Higher Education

Dennis Weaver
Dover Business College

Louise Wilson
Department of Higher Education

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS
PROVIDING COMMENTS

During the week of October 1st approximately 500 copies of the White Paper on Occupational Education were mailed to employment and training programs, schools, employer associations, organized labor and other groups and individuals. The purpose of this document was to gain public input into the preliminary recommendations for improving New Jersey's occupational education programs. It should be noted that the comments the Task Force received indicated the interest in and importance of occupational education in New Jersey.

The task force would like to publically thank those individuals who took the time to review the White Paper on Occupational Education and provide well thought out questions and ideas.

William H. Adams	NJ Council of County Vocational Technical School Administrators
Howard R. Cooper	Garden State Employment & Training Association
Nathaniel N. Dunn	Salem County Vocational Technical School
Rosita Fletcher	Union County Department of Human Services
Hon. Thomas P. Foy	Assemblyman, 7th Legislative District
Renee Gast	NJ Assoc. of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors, Inc.
Edward Goldberg	Department of Higher Education
Robert Guadagnino	Department of Labor
David R. Hedlund	United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America
John Karaska	Gloucester County Vocational Technical Schools
Frank Maddalon	F. R. Maddalon Plumbing & Heating
Frank P. Mancuso	Warren County Vocational Technical School
Charles H. Marciante	New Jersey State AFL-CIO

Robert C. Messina	Burlington County College
Lawrence A. Nespoli	NJ Council of County Colleges
Arthur O'Neal	Department of Labor
Joseph A. Papp	Casino Control Commission
Timothy Rogers	Private Career School Association of New Jersey
Robert A. Scott	Ramapo College
Barry Semple	New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning
Douglas Shearer	GM-UAW Apprentice Committee-Trenton Plant
James E. Shelton	Ames Rubber Corporation
Steve Sherman	Langston Company
Robert Sieminski	Bergen County Technical Schools
Henry Smolen	Association of NJ Apprenticeship Coordinators
Karen Spinner	NJ Association on Correction
Robert C. Sweeney	International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers
John Zachau	Burlington County Vocational Technical School

APPENDIX

NEW JERSEY
STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION

TECHNICAL PAPER
ON
OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
DAVID L. CRAWFORD
TASK FORCE CHAIRPERSON
November, 1990

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TECHNICAL PAPER ON OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

During the months of September and October of 1990 the Occupational Education Task Force, along with a subgroup of State department representatives, developed preliminary recommendations for improving New Jersey's occupational education system. Prior to finalizing its report, the Task Force felt it was important to receive input from the public. A White Paper was developed for that purpose. The White Paper was modified to reflect the input from the public and other sources and retitled Technical Paper on Occupational Education.

A Public Hearing was held on October 16, 1990 at Burlington County Vocational Technical School in Westampton, New Jersey. The comments on the Task Force's preliminary recommendations and Task Force responses are summarized and included in a document entitled Public Comments on Technical Paper.

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PROLOGUE

During the past few months, the Task Force has gathered a great deal of information about New Jersey's occupational education system. It was impressed by the excellence that exists in the employment, training and education programs. The Task Force found many practitioners who are committed to providing high quality services to their clients and students. The Task Force commends these individuals for the significant contributions they have made and continue to make.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

During the past several decades, there has been a dramatic decline in America's economic strength relative to the rest of the world. Some of this decline is clearly attributable to two major events: the recovery of the European economies in the aftermath of the Second World War and the rise of the expanding economies of the nations of the Pacific rim. These events, when combined with remarkable technological changes, have created a global marketplace where a high premium is paid to those nations that are the most productive. It is in this new global marketplace where American industry must compete. As the world economies regained their strength, America's inability to develop new ways of competing has become glaringly evident. In no area is the loss of the competitive economic edge more telling than in the failure of the workforce readiness system to create a highly skilled workforce. The workforce readiness system includes all of the services and programs which enable youth and adults to acquire the skills needed by employers. In this broad category of programs and services are occupational education, primary, secondary and postsecondary education, child care, transportation, housing and health services.

The simple truth is that America has not succeeded in mobilizing its educational institutions, financial resources and the intellectual capital necessary to create a high quality workforce. Business leaders complain that there are neither sufficient entry level nor skilled workers to meet their needs. Academic and government studies conclude that there is a mismatch between the skills of those who need jobs and the requirements of the private sector. The level of literacy of the work age population is at an appallingly inadequate level.

There have been those who would conclude that America's economic ills are simply a reflection of the decline of the work ethic among

this generation of Americans. Yet, a recent book, Made in America, by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Commission on Industrial Productivity concludes that:

"the loss of our ability to compete is not in the disappearance or weakening of basic American values and capabilities but in the institutions that educate Americans for work. Without major changes in the ways schools and firms train workers over the course of a life time, no amount of macroeconomic fine-tuning or technological innovation will be able to produce significantly improved economic performance and a rising standard of living."

This Technical Paper addresses the fundamental changes that must be made in order to assure that New Jersey's workforce will be able to compete effectively in the future. The analysis and preliminary recommendations of the Occupational Education Task Force are offered in that spirit.

Statement of Need

New Jersey's economy is rapidly moving into the 21st century. The labor market will not only require higher skill levels, but will also require that workers be more mobile and adaptable to change. The State's demographics are also changing. Individuals making up the workforce will be older and include more females and minorities and fewer young people. In contrast to the economy, the workforce will grow at a slower pace. To insure the health of the economy, as well as the economic self-sufficiency of its citizens, the State must take a lead role in ensuring that the workforce has the skill requirements for the jobs of the new economy.

Continued success of New Jersey's economy in the years ahead will depend upon its ability to develop the high quality labor force essential to efficiently produce the goods and services demanded by the marketplace. To achieve this goal, a number of things must happen. The skills of working people will have to be enhanced. The disadvantaged will need to be brought more fully into the economic mainstream. The coordination and the productivity of the human resource systems will have to be increased through greater collaboration by government, business and labor. Job discrimination and stereotyping must be eliminated. To address these critical issues, the Occupational Education Task Force ("Task Force") has been created, at the request of the Governor, by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission to develop recommendations to improve this State's occupational education system.

Purpose and Goal of the Task Force

The recommendations of the Task Force are intended to form the basis of a coherent and integrated system of employment, education and training programs and services. These programs and services, in concert with the efforts of the private sector, will provide all citizens of the State with equal access to the learning opportunities needed to attain and maintain high levels of productivity and earning power. The recommendations that are produced by this group will be reviewed by the Commission and, upon its adoption, forwarded to the Governor.

The specific goal of the Task Force is to develop recommendations that will provide for a statewide occupational education system that will help public schools, colleges and proprietary schools meet the needs of New Jersey's employers and workforce. The establishment of a linked state and local delivery system for occupational education is envisioned to provide quality programs responsive to the needs of the labor market.

As the Task Force proceeded with its deliberations, it has identified and grappled with a series of complex problems and issues, none of which have lent themselves to easy solutions. Yet, by constructing a framework that contains the outline of what a revitalized and inter-connected training and education system should encompass, the Task Force will have taken an important first step in ensuring that New Jersey will produce a world class workforce.

Charge to the Task Force

The opportunity for substantive change does not come along too often. The Governor and the Commission have provided the Task Force with the chance to be bold and visionary in developing its recommendations for the policies that will shape the future of the State's economy and workforce.

Task Force Membership

The Task Force is chaired by David L. Crawford, a business sector member of the State Employment and Training Commission. Membership on the Task Force includes Commission members along with additional representatives from organized labor, the private sector, the education community and the public.

Task Force staff support is provided from the Commission, the Departments of Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs, Education, Higher Education, Human Services, Labor and the Governor's Office of Policy. An Executive Branch Workgroup is working with the Task Force and provides support, technical assistance and expertise.

Process for Accomplishing Task

The Task Force is carrying out its mission through the following process:

- A. an analysis of the current occupational education system;
- B. identification of the barriers and constraints which preclude the existing occupational education system from meeting the needs of the State's employers and workforce;
- C. the development of a consensus on what an occupational education system must do in order to prepare the State's employers and workforce;
- D. an exchange of ideas through public hearings and other means with representatives from groups integrally involved in the employment, training and education system. These groups will include representatives from public and proprietary institutions and professional organizations; and
- E. the identification of preliminary steps for implementing the changes that are needed to strengthen the system.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

During the preparatory work and discussions with State department representatives in the Executive Branch Workgroup and members of the Task Force, a host of issues and problems with the current occupational system were identified and discussed. Attention was paid to the problems attendant to the lack of a common definition for occupational education. Terms such as job training, vocational training, employment and training are used interchangeably and mean different things to different people. The absence of a comprehensive statewide plan for occupational education was noted. The need for improved labor market assessment and information systems was also identified. Such data is necessary to facilitate informed policy-making.

The Task Force found no consistent means for evaluating the State's occupational education programs. Particular concern was expressed about private proprietary schools in terms of their role in preparing the workforce and the fragmentation of State regulatory oversight. Additionally, there was agreement that the State needed a comprehensive and accessible occupational education system. Work-based learning was seen as an important element of such a system.

In order to develop a superior occupational education system to meet New Jersey's needs, the specific issues noted above have been translated into the following seven objectives:

Objective #1: formulation of an operational definition for occupational education and identification of activities needed to prepare individuals to participate in the workforce.

Objective #2: a framework for developing a single State plan for occupational education that cuts across departmental lines and links State department efforts to address common employment, training and education areas.

Objective #3: a labor market assessment system which will provide accurate and timely information on the occupations and skills necessary to meet employer needs for a world class workforce.

Objective #4: development of accountability measures, based in part on wages paid and duration of employment, to evaluate the occupational education system.

Objective #5: identification of a single State agency to provide a consistent and coordinated statewide policy for proprietary vocational school oversight and support.

Objective #6: an assurance that occupational education programs are available to all individuals who are about to enter the labor market, or are desirous of upgrading their skill levels or are underemployed.

Objective #7: the full utilization of the best ideas concerning work-based learning, including apprenticeship, to train and upgrade the State's workforce.

The following issues were pertinent to the workforce readiness system and will be addressed separately:

- a means for providing a unified approach to policy guidance, planning and oversight of the employment, training and education system at the local level;
- a technologically up-to-date data system which allows service users and providers: to access, share and exchange information on the availability of programs and support services; and, to share such data as applicant characteristics, assessment findings, individual employability plans and program results; and
- a comprehensive workforce readiness plan that incorporates all of the State's efforts to provide New Jersey with a world class workforce.

PREFACE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

PRINCIPLES FOR OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

During the Task Force's deliberations on the issues in this report, three underlying principles became evident. These principles, even when not specifically mentioned in the recommendations, are to be considered as the guiding policy base for planning and implementing occupational education programs.

Market Driven Focus and Consumer Based

All occupational education programs must be responsive to the needs of the labor market. It makes little sense to train individuals for jobs that do not exist or are becoming obsolete. Similarly, training individuals on outdated equipment simply because that equipment is available makes no sense either.

Programs should be designed based on the needs of the individuals participating in the training, the consumers. Although these programs often appear to be designed with the consumer in mind, a closer look indicates that, all too often, programs are delivered piecemeal or in a categorical mode. Thus it is left to the trainee to discover how to access other needed services such as basic skills instruction, health services and child care, among others. In order to remedy this deficiency and enhance the prospects for success, all programs must have a consumer based focus to address the ancillary needs of clients.

Literacy and Basic Skills

Today's labor market demands that workers must be literate in order to learn new jobs and skills. There are many recent reports that correlate basic literacy skills with economic success. Critical thinking and communication skills are among the requisite basic skills. No occupational education program can succeed in teaching advanced or job related specialties, if the participants lack fundamental literacy and basic skills. Occupational education must provide the broad educational and life skills upon which a career can be based and which makes lifelong learning possible.

Full Utilization of the Potential Workforce

Demographic information for New Jersey indicates a slowdown of growth in the workforce. In order to meet the needs of the State's employers for trained individuals, all sources of human capital must be tapped. Groups of citizens who have not traditionally participated in the workforce must be identified and trained for skilled jobs which will provide them with the wages to enable them to enter the economic mainstream. Disabled

individuals, at-risk youth, displaced homemakers and non-English speaking people are among those who may need special help.

Traditional barriers to equal employment such as sex, race or other stereotyping factors must be confronted and eliminated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DEFINITION OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Objective #1: formulation of an operational definition and identification of the activities needed to prepare individuals to participate in the workforce.

Current System

Currently occupational education is defined in terms of those programs and agencies which provide job specific or career-related training. In the current reference, occupational education is often expanded to include the mastery of basic educational competencies, particularly remedial education and the provision of work maturity and pre-employment skills including career exploration and work ethic values.

Further differentiations in the current system separate traditional or mainstream occupational education from the so-called "second chance" system. Examples of institutions identified for providing "traditional" occupational education include comprehensive high schools and secondary vocational schools, community and four year colleges, and private proprietary training schools. In addition there exists a "second chance" system of occupational training which includes state or federally funded programs such as REACH/JOB, JTPA, New Jersey Jobs Training Program, School Based Youth Services Program, and the New Jersey Youth Corps. In many areas, community colleges and the local secondary education systems provide second chance opportunities.

Other programs such as adult education, apprenticeship, vocational rehabilitation, Job Corps, the armed services and private non-profit community organizations are target-group driven providers of services broadly defined in an occupational education context.

Without a common definition for occupational education, the programs offering this service become lost in the vast array of employment and training and educationally related programs. This creates difficulties for policy makers, program planners and most importantly, the individuals for whom these services are intended. Additionally, it becomes difficult for agency staff to determine the kind of services provided and how these services should be interconnected to serve eligible individuals who have multiple barriers to employment.

Another problem with which we must grapple is the negative connotation of vocational or occupational education. Unfortunately, parents, youth and even many educators often feel that being trained for a job or career is not important.

Today, occupational education consists of a mosaic of programs and

structures which have evolved over a 60-year period. All too often agencies that deliver employment and training programs are unclear about both who their constituency is and what the purpose of their programs entails. Many times the specific services offered by providers, whether occupational training, basic skills instruction and counseling, among others, are not clearly distinguishable from the recognized identity and belief systems of the sponsoring agency or program.

This reluctance to specifically define the elements and components of occupational education, apart from their role and value within each institution, is a significant barrier to the development of a rational operational definition of occupational education. All too frequently definitions of occupational education are reflections of what institutions do, rather than what clients need.

RECOMMENDATION

The following definition is proposed.

A DEFINITION OF OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Occupational education is an organized program of study, whether intellectual, technical or skill-based, directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment, or to skills enrichment or retraining for individuals already in the workforce. Occupational education programs can be offered at all educational levels and can be credit or non-credit programs.

Career Orientation

Occupational education programs must provide individuals with skills and abilities necessary for them to become and remain viable, flexible and mobile in the workplace, and to participate in further training or education as necessary or desirable. All students in the K-12 grades should be provided with career related information which will enable them to make informed choices regarding employment or post-secondary occupational educational opportunities.

Essential Components

Many important elements of the workforce readiness system (such as occupationally related remedial education, English as a second language, general intellectual skills, pre-employment and work maturity skills, and "life skills") should be considered occupational education in cases where the student or trainee requires such services in order to become employable and have a career.

Holistic Approach

Occupational education is part of the larger "workforce readiness" continuum, that is, the full array of training, education, and support services that exist to help prepare individuals for employment. It is a set of programs open to individuals of very different skill levels, with a variety of points of entry and exit. Like the larger system, the occupational education system must include a wide variety of instructional methods and approaches in order to provide access for the widest possible array of individuals in need, especially those most at risk of failure.

Other elements of the workforce readiness system which need to be defined in this context include:

- 1) what constitutes basic educational competencies and initial skill mastery;
- 2) how do work maturity skills and self esteem get introduced within the workforce preparation framework;
- 3) within what value context does occupational education occur.

Occupational education programs must emphasize the importance of values and ethics to all job, family and community relationships. The goal should be to develop within individuals a sensitivity and commitment to basic values which are critical to the establishment of trust between individuals and between groups. Increasing the ability of a person to build trusting relationships may be more difficult than increasing competency in occupational skill areas, but it is just as important to the individual's future success.

Plan of Action

Statewide adoption of the definition of occupational education as detailed in this report.

There must be an ongoing effort to define the components of the workforce readiness system so that policy makers, program planners, counselors and individuals in need of services can readily identify appropriate programs and services. These definitions must also be applicable to programs at the local service delivery level.

To enhance the image of occupational education, a group of public and private sector individuals should be formed to develop strategies to promote the value of preparing for a career, and to highlight the variety of options, including occupational education, that are available.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Objective #2: a framework for developing a single State plan for occupational education that cuts across departmental lines and links State department efforts to address common employment and training and education areas.

Current System

State department planning consists of developing applications for funding from two perspectives: planning by department for state funding and planning by program for federal funding. These two processes are summarized as follows:

Each of the 20 State departments is required to submit on a yearly basis a one year implementation plan and a long range five year plan/update to the Department of Treasury, Office of Management and Budget. The Integrated Planning and Budgeting Process includes a narrative, which outlines, among other requirements, the individual department's mission and objectives, providing justification for its requested budget amount.

All State departments must also submit plans for the federally funded programs it administers. For example, the Department of Education is responsible for the Carl D. Perkins Act program, the Department of Labor administers the Job Training Partnership Act program and the Department of Human Services manages the JOBS/REACH program. Although each of these employment and training programs targets the economically disadvantaged population, they have different funding authorities, planning cycles, plan implementation schedules, missions and objectives.

In short, there is no operational master plan that guides all departments in working together toward an integrated employment, training and education system.

Numerous occupational education programs are administered across five State departments: Community Affairs, Education, Higher Education, Human Services, and Labor; however, there is no common purpose or interconnection bringing them together to function as a whole. Although some requirements exist for coordination agreements and joint planning between programs, experience has shown that these efforts often fall into the "I'll sign yours, if you'll sign mine" category, rather than being an example of true collaboration.

Review of occupational education plans under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and the Wagner Peyser amendments (Employment Service) is required at the state level by the State Employment and Training Commission, but there is no mechanism by which the entire system is reviewed

and evaluated.

At the local level, planning is conducted on a singular program approach by a multiplicity of service providers. This process lacks a number of elements: a system for lateral planning of all programs for occupational education; strong vertical communication of policy direction from the state level down; and, uniform information flow from the local level up. Furthermore, there is no specific body at the local level which currently has the responsibility for developing and overseeing a broad based plan for occupational education.

RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation is to develop a single State plan for occupational education that:

- * is recognized by all State departments as the operational State plan for employment, training and education;
- * includes objectives that are collectively addressed by departments;
- * is adhered to by all departments;
- * is the document by which each department's responsibilities for employment and training programs are evaluated; and
- * balances State priorities with local needs.

A single comprehensive State plan for occupational education must be developed which addresses the needs of both New Jersey's workforce and the employer community. This will require an assessment of the current labor market and agreement among State program administrators about how their programs would address labor market demands as well as the needs of the individuals to be served. Objectives would have to be agreed upon and then resources and programs identified that could meet those objectives. Federal resources provided through the Carl D. Perkins Act or the Job Training Partnership Act would be utilized, within federal regulatory requirements, to meet the State objectives. In other words, the agreed upon State objectives would become the driving force for planning rather than a single State department's goals or the availability of federal funds.

An example of how this planning process would work is included for clarification. Objective: to increase services to dislocated workers. Services for these individuals could range from job search assistance to long term remediation or vocational training. A plan for meeting this objective could identify a lead agency

responsible for dislocated workers and the state and local programs which would be delivering the required services to the individuals. An important element in the plan would be the procedures and policies that would insure joint planning and collaboration at the local level. Specific service goals would be established so that the plan could be evaluated and, if necessary, modified to meet the objective during the next planning cycle.

Plan of Action

The development of a single State plan for occupational education must have:

- the agreement and full commitment among the State departments to actively participate in a joint planning process;
- consensus among State departments on plan objectives and strategies; and
- a local analogue of a single State plan for occupational education.

The State Employment and Training Commission will be responsible for facilitating the single State planning process by bringing together all elements of the occupational education system. Its independent position within State government and responsibility as an employment, training and education policy making, non-operating agency make the Commission the appropriate entity for implementing this process.

The single State planning process will begin during the next few months with an assessment of the current labor market and identification of the Governor's priorities for the occupational education system. The members of the subcabinet workgroup, which include representatives of Labor, Education, Higher Education, Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs and Human Services, will cooperatively develop objectives within each of the Governor's priorities. Broad based objectives, which will bring to bear all available State resources, may be approached from the various standpoints of function, program, target group, or issue. Examples of these would be: function (remediation, literacy); program (JTPA, vocational education); target group (dropouts, dislocated workers); issue (dropout prevention, increase the literacy rate). These objectives include supportive elements of the occupational education system, such as life skills and basic skills, which are necessary to meet the needs of individuals with barriers to entering the labor market or improving their status in the workplace.

Strategies for achieving these objectives will be recommended by the Planning Committee of the Commission. Upon endorsement by the Commission, the strategies will become the coordination criteria specified in the Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan. In April of 1991, the Commission will issue planning instructions to the departments, which will be followed up with meetings among department representatives to jointly develop responses. A draft plan, which will have been reviewed and commented upon by the Planning Committee or the Occupational Education Task Force, will be presented in June of 1991 for the Commission's review and approval, and the single State plan will be forwarded to the Governor in early November of 1991 for implementation on July 1, 1992. This planning process is scheduled to coincide with, and eventually become part of, the State budget process. Once initiated, this process should become an ongoing effort of the State departments administering employment and training programs.

In the interim, the Commission should continue its efforts to coordinate and integrate the delivery of occupational education programs and the other State administered employment and training and educationally related programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, activities under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Education Act, the Job Training Partnership Act and the Realizing Economic Achievement program.

The planning process is not completed with the development of the single State plan. Subsequent to its submission, the single State plan will guide each of the departments in preparing funding applications for federal or state programs. All employment, training and education program applications will reflect the State's objectives and strategies.

Each department will also be required to report to the Commission every six months on its progress in meeting the objectives. The Commission will conduct an end-of-year evaluation to determine how effectively the occupational education system has integrated its resources to meet the needs of New Jersey's citizens and employers. Individual plans will be modified, where necessary, to reflect any problems, coordination issues, or new ideas for collaborative efforts each year.

LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENT

Objective #3: a labor market assessment system which will provide accurate and timely information on the occupations and skills necessary to meet employer needs for a world class workforce.

Current System

The responsibility for developing, managing and overseeing a statewide comprehensive labor market supply and demand system to meet the information needs of training and job placement programs is assigned to the New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NJOICC) and the Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research in the Department of Labor. The NJOICC includes the Commissioners of Commerce and Economic Development, Labor, Education, the Chancellor of Higher Education, and the Chairman of the State Employment and Training Commission.

Labor market supply and demand information produced and maintained by NJOICC includes the Computerized Occupational Information System New Jersey Occupational Outlook Handbook, New Jersey Career Information Delivery System, and the Annual Occupational Information Supply and Demand Report. In addition to these principal resources, the Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research publishes N.J. Labor Equation: Demand vs. Supply Through 2000, which presents the labor force requirements of the State's future economy and compares it to what will be available to fill the jobs. They also periodically produce Regional Labor Market Reviews which provide detailed analysis of the latest short and long term trends of an area's demographics, labor force, employment income, construction activity, labor supply and demand and occupational outlook.

The infrastructure for a labor market information (LMI) system appears to be in place. It contains most of what is needed to support the development of a statewide occupational education system of both public and proprietary schools to meet the needs of New Jersey's employers and workforce. However, weaknesses appear to exist in the quality of information, its dissemination, and utilization.

- Data that makes up the Occupation Information System is not received from all potential contributors of LMI, and thereby restricts its application.
- Employer based training is not a part of the supply side data.
- Data of program completers from a number of programs

serving the disabled population is not included.

- There is a belief that demand data does not reflect the needs of small business.
- Information from private vocational/technical(proprietary) schools is not mandatory. Response rate to an annual survey is approximately 50%.
- The degree of accessibility and utilization of LMI is unclear.
- The information needs of users of labor market information have not been examined. For example, the question of "to what extent are LMI products used and what value are placed on them?" should be asked on a periodic basis.
- A unified labor market information system which defines occupational clusters and specific job skill levels is not available.

RECOMMENDATION

We must continue to enhance the labor market assessment process to the point where an individual seeking training can have confidence that the system is providing training only in areas in which job openings exist now or will exist in the future. Similarly, employers must be confident that they can make sound business decisions based on the same information.

In order for decision makers to take responsive, accurate, and timely actions concerning employment, training and education, a LMI system must exist that:

- is comprehensive (i.e., contains all data elements pertinent to the labor market), timely (i.e., reflects the latest data and is available at the beginning of program planning cycles), and reliable (i.e. accurately predicts labor market trends);
- is accessible and in a format which users agree is appropriate for their needs;
- includes statewide standardized occupational competencies, for specific jobs and occupational clusters, which reflect the skill levels required by employers;
- includes the representation on the NJOICC of all departments involved in administering employment, training and education programs.

Plan of Action

The Department of Labor should immediately convene an interdepartmental committee to develop a labor market information package. This package will provide the best possible information which will enable occupational education program planners to make informed policy decisions. This committee will review currently distributed labor market information materials and revise and refine those materials so they make the most sense for program planners. A similar process should be followed for other users of labor market information, such as employers, youth entering the labor market and adults seeking to change their occupation. The Task Force expects the New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee to use its linkage with the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee to identify and adopt national and international strategies that would best serve the needs of this State.

In order to improve the supply side information of LMI, data from all training programs must be included. Specifically, data from Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Commission of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Division of Developmentally Disabled should be gathered. However, double counts from programs, such as JTPA and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation which broker programs, should be eliminated. Competency levels of program graduates should be a part of the data base. Methods should be explored by which data can be gathered on the numbers of individuals and occupations in employer based training programs. Program data from the private vocational technical schools should be made mandatory as part of their approval or licensing requirements. Dislocated worker statistics should be obtained from the New Jersey Department of Labor Response Team.

Demand side data should be refined to reflect the current and future trends of small as well as large businesses and should be projected beyond the limitations of a mathematical model. Steps to accomplish this can include approaches such as, reviewing Department of State data on new and incorporated businesses, developing access to strategic business plans submitted with loan applications, interacting with State and national business leaders and economic forecasters to assess future workforce needs; and integrating information from State agencies to provide insight into local economic and business developments.

The Department of Education should involve JTPA and the community colleges in developing statewide occupational competencies for use among all occupational education programs. A consistent set of competencies, reflective of the skills needed in occupations, could facilitate transition between training programs leading to the upgrading of the skills of the workforce.

The Technical Steering Group of NJOICC has been actively involved in providing advice and direction to the staff of NJOICC toward improving labor market information. For the purpose of obtaining a broader review and assessment of labor market information needs, this group should be expanded to include representatives of the Departments of Human Services and Community Affairs. Both of these Departments provide services to individuals and may be able to provide valuable insight into improving the labor market assessment process.

PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Objective #4: development of accountability measures, based in part on wages earned and duration of employment, to evaluate the occupational education system.

Current System

In 1989, \$1,245,624,591 of State and federal funds were expended on 64 programs. The programs included comprehensive, employment transition, fundamental preparation and financial aid programs. Besides occupational education, activities included a labor exchange, school based youth services, school to work transition programs, career guidance, dropout prevention, workplace literacy and many other efforts to prepare individuals for work. Do the citizens of this State get a good return on the investment they make? This is a complex question.

Each of the major agencies delivering occupational education -- public vocational schools, community colleges, four year colleges, private vocational schools, and other training agencies (JTPA, Job Corps) -- have their own separate systems for measuring accountability. Data collection requirements and/or standards are set by individual departments, program operators, and in some cases, federal law and regulation. Definition of terms and outcomes vary from program to program, as does the method and base year for collecting the data.

In addition, there is no statewide, consistent system to measure competencies achieved through occupational education, or the wages paid to program completers. The relationship of the performance standards to labor market supply and demand data is also not used as a factor to measure performance.

Currently, the Division of Vocational Education is developing a comprehensive statewide data bank and studying occupational competencies. A JTPA work group is also studying occupational competencies in relation to their system.

In Fiscal Year 1988, individuals completing education/training in occupational specific areas were as follows:

- county/local vocational technical schools
 - youth - 26,166 (includes 6,996 co-op students)
 - adults - 17,963
- county colleges - 7,326 (2 year degree completers)
- private proprietary schools - 60,000
- Job Corps - 376

In addition, large numbers of individuals participate in short

term, avocational, part time or employer-based occupationally related programs and may not be included in the proposed accountability system. County colleges, for instance, enroll over 100,000 students into these types of programs.

In that same year, JTPA had approximately 14,000 terminations, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR) had 7,138 closures, the REACH program had 500 cases completed. However, with the exception of JTPA on-the-job training contracts, these agencies use the above organizations to provide most of their occupational training. Thus, these figures cannot be totaled.

All of these agencies collect data in a different manner and with varying degrees of completeness. Some of the most complete data is provided through the Department of Education's Annual Enrollment Completers Survey which is a survey of 591 schools. In addition, the Department also issues a six month follow-up report on vocational and technical school completers. This data includes characteristics of the students but not social security numbers.

The county colleges report data on 2 year degree completers to the Department of Higher Education, which includes characteristics of the students and their social security numbers.

The majority of private proprietary schools are approved through the Department of Education which has an extensive data collection system including aggregate data on enrollments, dropouts, completions, graduates, placements, etc. The data does not include characteristics of students or social security numbers.

The best information in regard to job placements and wages received, is found in the JTPA, DVR, and REACH programs. This duplicates, to a large degree, the basic data of the various school systems, since the program operators use the public and private educational systems for most of their occupational training.

The Wage Report System, housed in the Department of Labor offers a means to obtain follow-up information. The system collects from all employers in New Jersey on a quarterly basis: social security number, employee name, weeks worked, and wages earned. Since the federal government pays for the system, it requires the State to develop a "cost allocation system" which distributes costs incurred by accessing information from the Wage Report System to those agencies requesting the data. The only organizations that do not pay a fee to use the system are federal agencies such as the IRS. The current cost, per access by social security number is \$1.00.

Other factors which complicate determining accountability within the occupational education system are listed below.

- There is no single repository for information on the

occupational education system.

- The current data gathering system is labor intensive and costly. In addition, it can be costly to make changes in computer generated reporting systems.

- Agencies do not have a common purpose for collecting data and thus may have a different outlook on what is required to measure accountability.

- The data currently available does not measure occupational competencies attained in occupational education programs.

- The available data does not specifically relate employer needs for trained workers to the type of occupational education provided, either on a state or substate level.

- The current system does not provide consistent information on the characteristics of participants which can be used to help measure accessibility of the various target groups to the occupational education system.

RECOMMENDATION

An ideal accountability system for occupational education should be outcome oriented and labor market based and include:

1. performance indicators and standards which measure:

- a) the effectiveness of the planned intervention strategies to meet the needs of employers and workers in the labor market;

- b) the ability of trainees to compete in the workforce and maintain a high standard of living;

- c) the delivery of services to individuals who might not otherwise be able to achieve economic self sufficiency; and

- d) occupational competency [needs to be assessed] at conclusion of the education and training programs.

2. the use of common terms, time frames, and definitions;

The Task Force recommends that the criteria specified above be used to develop fair, but uniform, statewide measures and standards for the evaluation of occupational education programs. The measures should be outcome oriented as well as indicative of the extent to which services are provided to those who are most in need of

assistance. Where appropriate, the employment data generated by the Wage Report System should be used as part of the performance measures.

The accountability system should provide a means for the Executive Branch of State Government to identify the need for new programs or program improvement, restructuring or termination.

Plan of Action

A single set of measures will be developed to evaluate all occupational education programs. These specific measures will be developed by representatives of the technical sections of the Departments of Education, Higher Education, Labor and Commission staff and then submitted to the Executive Branch Workgroup, the Occupational Education Task Force and Commission for consideration. Once agreement is reached on appropriate performance measures, the same process will be used to develop corresponding standards.

The following factors will be considered in developing measures of evaluation:

- capacity for individuals participating in programs to enter employment;
- length of time worked after training;
- wages earned after training and, for those individuals employed prior to training, wages before training;
- occupational competencies achieved during training;
- characteristics of individuals in programs; and
- costs of programs.

A plan and an agreement should be developed to utilize the Department of Labor's Wage Report System by State departments administering occupational education programs as a means for collecting labor market participation data on program participants and completers.

Issues which must be addressed and resolved are listed below.

Occupational education programs and category of students to be included in the accountability system.

Data items to be collected from individuals participating in occupational education programs.

On whom and how data will be collected and how costs of this process will be allocated and reimbursed.

Deciding on whether to use the same performance measures and standards for programs serving either youth or adults.

PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

Objective #5: identification a single State agency to provide a consistent and coordinated statewide policy for proprietary vocational school oversight and support.

Current System

In 1988, the Department of Higher Education formed a task force to address concerns associated with "proprietary schools" which include all for-profit, postsecondary vocational institutions in New Jersey. After studying the issues, the task force prepared a report entitled State Agency Regulation, Oversight, and Funding of Programs at Proprietary Vocational Schools in New Jersey.

This report clearly documents the significant investment made by the public and government into the proprietary school industry. In New Jersey, there are at least 240 proprietary schools training about 60,000 individuals and collecting more than \$150 million per year in tuition revenues. Approximately 75% of these funds are secured from the federal and state governments in the form of student loans, federal grants, job training funds, and other forms of reimbursement.

Through its power to certify new schools and recertify existing schools, the Department of Education serves as the primary regulatory agency of private vocational programs. The Department of Higher Education also plays a key role by acting as the guarantee agency for student loans at eligible schools. The Departments of Labor, Law and Public Safety, Insurance, Environmental Protection, and Health provide a lesser degree of oversight by setting standards for the particular schools that fall under their jurisdiction. Since each of these departments sets its own standards for the regulation and oversight of proprietary schools, the quality of the training received and the extent to which the consumer is protected varies widely and may well depend upon the State agency which regulates a school.

The task force report also identified the major issues concerning the management of this sector:

- . oversight and control of the licensure, regulation, and funding of proprietary vocational programs is fragmented;
- . the development of educational policy and oversight of these schools is not a central mission of any single State agency;
- . the agencies do not have sufficient resources and staff expertise to maintain an adequate level of oversight of the educational programs offered;

- . the State agencies do not share information with the accrediting associations which certify the quality of educational programs and the integrity of the school administration;
- . there are no common standards for school licensure, on-site monitoring, educational program accountability, or skills assessment of students;
- . there are no consistent standards for protecting consumers such as pro-rated tuition refund policies;
- . the State agencies which administer funding programs (student loans and job training) depend on the licensing agencies for program oversight and approval; however, there are few formal mechanisms for exchanging data, reviewing programs, sharing results, or notifying other agencies of school closings;
- . there is no systematic collection, tabulation, and publication of fundamental data about performance measures such as drop-out rates, graduation rates, and placement rates.

Because of the number of agencies involved and the lack of coordination among them, the current approval and oversight system for proprietary schools is extremely complex. The activities of these agencies have evolved from many different pieces of legislation which have been enacted over a period spanning more than 20 years.

Current Legislation

Both state and federal laws apply to the regulation of the system. Unfortunately, the legislation often makes contradictory or conflicting demands upon the agencies responsible for proprietary school programs. There is no requirement for any coordination among these agencies.

Fragmentation

Because each piece of legislation assigns responsibility to a different department, board, or commission, there are now at least 11 distinct bodies with responsibility for approving and overseeing proprietary schools. Each of these bodies is autonomous, and a consensus would have to be built before any consolidation of function could be achieved.

Funding

Current funding would not be sufficient for full staffing of a consolidated agency.

Data Collection

There is now a lack of basic data about schools and programs. Data collection mechanisms are often inconsistent or nonexistent. Time and funds would be required to build a unified system to collect and report information for all proprietary school programs.

RECOMMENDATION

Of vital importance to the occupational education system is the creation and implementation of a consistent and coordinated statewide policy for proprietary vocational school oversight and support.

To achieve this goal would require a number of changes in current legislation, regulation, oversight, and funding functions. These changes would include: (1) the formal consolidation of functions into a single existing State Agency within the New Jersey Department of Education which would have primary responsibility for approving, regulating, and monitoring the private vocational proprietary schools; (2) adequate support for the Agency's approval and regulating activities through vendor fees and existing federal funding; (3) the creation of a broad based advisory board to develop recommendations regarding uniform policies and procedures; and (4) the development of a formal relationship between the Agency and the New Jersey Higher Education Assistance Authority.

The approval process would be concerned with the proper operation of proprietary schools with regard to instruction, qualifications of instructors, facilities, financial responsibility and business practices. The single agency would not be responsible for the licensing of graduates.

Initially, the Agency could take over the functions currently carried out by the Departments of Education and Labor. A first step would be to establish basic policy and monitoring procedures. Within two years, it could take over the regulation of schools now under the jurisdiction of the Board of Cosmetology and Motor Vehicles Services (tractor-trailer schools only).

Within this period, the Agency should review the programs regulated by the Real Estate Commission and the Departments of Environmental Protection, Health, and Insurance to determine the appropriateness of assuming these functions as well. Because of the highly

specialized regulatory nature of the activities under the Casino Control Commission, the Task Force recommends that the Casino Control Commission retain its responsibility for the regulation of gaming schools.

Within the Department of Higher Education, the New Jersey Higher Education Assistance Authority (NJHEAA) is empowered by State law to make and guarantee student loans. Since the Agency and NJEAA could complement and augment each other's efforts, a formal relationship should be established to strengthen the ties between these groups.

The consolidation of responsibility and control into a single entity and the creation of an broad based advisory board would solve a number of basic structural and jurisdictional problems which have hindered the effective regulation of proprietary schools. These changes would establish an agency for which proprietary school issues are the central focus; they would also create a formal and on-going forum for the discussion of proprietary school issues and the development of policy.

The primary functions of the Agency would be:

- . develop statewide policy in coordination with other agencies;
- . establish consistent minimum standards for school and program approval (including business, operational and equity standards);
- . establish criteria for testing and assessing minimum basic skills required for admission;
- . set consistent standards for the financial stability of the schools and provide consumer protection through fair and consistent tuition refund policies;
- . establish vendor fee schedules to generate revenue to support the Agency;
- . establish job placement and minimum vocational competency testing standards;
- . carry out site inspections and program reviews for reapproval, monitor regulatory compliance;
- . collect data about schools, publish an outcome oriented consumer guide and a "bill of rights" for students;
- . participate in accrediting team visits;
- . monitor all accreditation reports, program reviews, and

- audits carried out by other agencies; serve as the central repository for this material;
- . investigate complaints against schools;
- . issue an Annual Report to the State Employment and Training Commission.

To be able to fulfill these responsibilities, the Agency should have the following powers established by legislation:

- . ability to assess penalties and suspend approvals for failure to comply with regulations
- . authority to participate in accrediting visits and receive accreditation reports
- . ability to require contributions to a Student Protection Fund to remedy problems caused by school closures

The membership of the broad based advisory board should include representatives of:

- . State Departments of Education, Higher Education, Labor, Public Advocate and Law and Public Safety including Motor Vehicle Services;
- . other State agencies: Board of Cosmetology, Casino Control Commission, and New Jersey Higher Education Assistance Authority;
- . private postsecondary vocational schools;
- . proprietary school accrediting associations;
- . State Employment and Training Commission; and
- . the general public.

Plan of Action

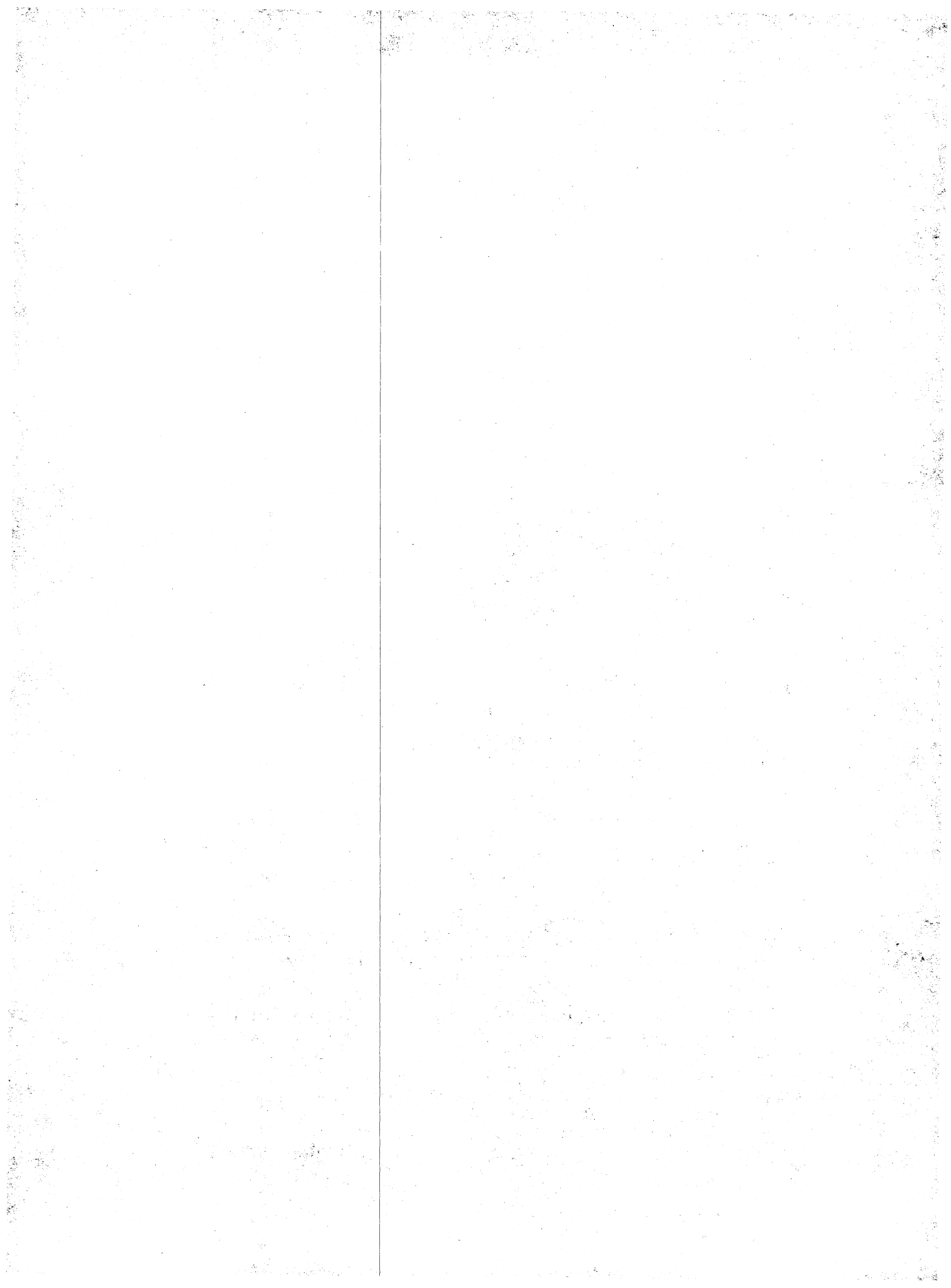
- . Identify a single agency within the Department of Education to approve and oversee the proprietary school sector;
- . Select representatives for the broad based advisory board;
- . Draft legislation to support the proposed new structure;

the law would:

- amend or repeal current legislation
 - provide target dates for a transition from current requirements to new legislative mandates
-
- . Provide a mechanism for linking the agency which approves schools with the agencies which license teachers, instructors and graduates;
 - . Identify existing general public funds and establish approval fee structure to fully and solely fund activities of the single Agency;
 - . Develop uniform policies for oversight and approval of proprietary schools; these would include standards for the approval process, on-site evaluation, data collection, complaint investigation, etc.;
 - . Develop a report format for a consumer guide to occupational education programs including those offered by private proprietary schools. The consumer guide should include:

Cost
Completion Rates
Placement Rates
Dropout Rates
Average Placement Wage

The consumer guide should be structured to include information that will enable individuals to make an informed choice about their investment of time and money in an occupational education program.



PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

OBJECTIVE #6: an assurance that occupational education programs are available to all individuals who are about to enter the labor market, or are desirous of upgrading their skill levels or are underemployed.

Current System

The current system of occupational education programs is too fragmented and inaccessible for far too many potential clients. What makes it especially difficult for individuals who seek training in order to enter or reenter the labor market is the multiplicity of vendors offering vocational and literacy-related services. This bewildering array of choices is frequently exacerbated by differences in agency quality and program requirements. The lack of common assessment standards also serves to inhibit the successful delivery of services. Additionally, local and State agencies that are responsible for employment programs do not communicate effectively with each other nor do they adequately coordinate and plan their activities.

Another area that is in need of improvement is the link between the employment, training and education community with the private sector and unions. Accurate labor market information and a thorough understanding of the work-related expectations of the private sector and the needs of unions are the pre-conditions for any employment and training system that wants to create a world class workforce.

Improving the System

An improved system for offering occupational education programs for entry and reentry to the labor market should be comprehensive and easily accessible. Such a system must have high quality and carefully integrated programs supported by a well-trained and sensitive staff and management. The delivery of services should be provided in such a way that it can offer support to clients as they negotiate their way through the employment and training and education system.

Programs must address the changes in the demands of the labor market in order to offer "relevant" career education. This will require tight integration of local programs where all service deliverers learn to subordinate their institutional interests to those of the client. Ultimately, a knowable and clearly articulated continuum of services should be offered to all those who seek to enhance their job-related skills.

It is also of vital importance that business and labor be fully

consulted and that they be made aware of all information pertaining to the employment training and education system. This closer link should lead to the establishment of improved customized training programs, a statewide school-to-work transition initiative, cooperative education options, on-the-job training and other work-based learning opportunities.

Discussions about occupational education encompass the entire array of programs that seek to improve the skills of the workforce. It is important to note that the Commission is concerned with the quality of the highly skilled professions as well as with the needs of entry level workers. The ability of New Jersey to produce computer scientists, engineers, chemists along with a host of other technologically sophisticated professions will have much to do with the future economic health of this State.

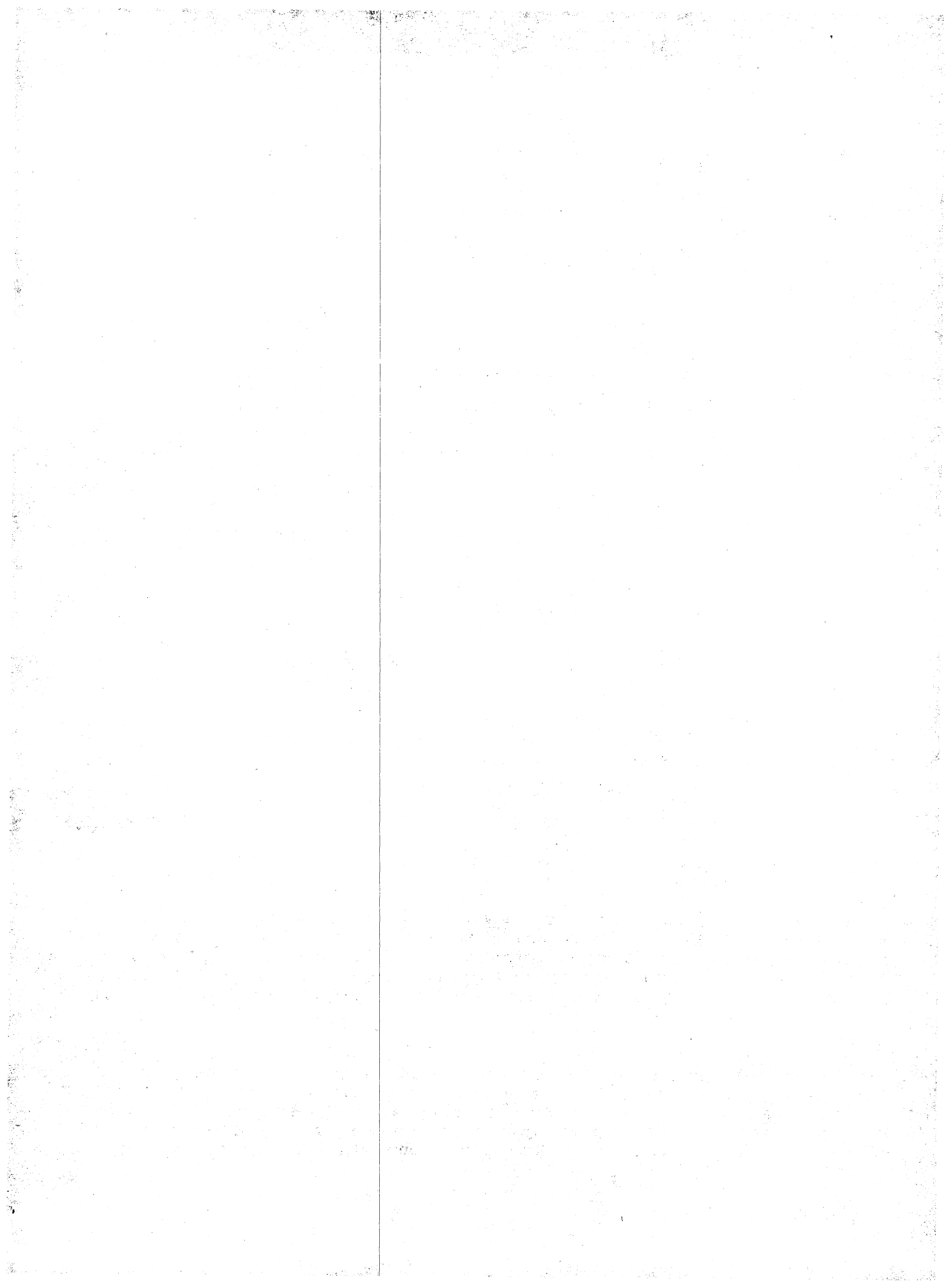
Ultimately, the State Employment and Training Commission must concern itself with the conditions that will allow all individuals to participate in a reformed occupational education system providing them with the skills to reach their full potential. Such a mission will involve the Commission in discussions about "Gifted and Talented" programs in the schools, job stereotyping, the support of technological development in the cutting edge disciplines, ceramic engineering, for example, and the link between the State economic development efforts and occupational programs that are adapted to meet the needs of such changes such as the newly emerging environmental professions.

Literacy

It should be understood that obtaining an appropriate level of literacy for the "customer" is a pre-condition or co-condition for any successful occupational education system. Literacy should be conceived as both a necessary condition for employment in the modern labor market, as well as essential to the creation of a good citizenry. While productive employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency for the individual is the primary goal of a revitalized occupational education system, equal weight must be given to the broader educational needs of that individual. Clearly, a literate and aware public, with the ability to understand the complexities of modern society, must be a goal for New Jersey.

Barriers to Accessibility

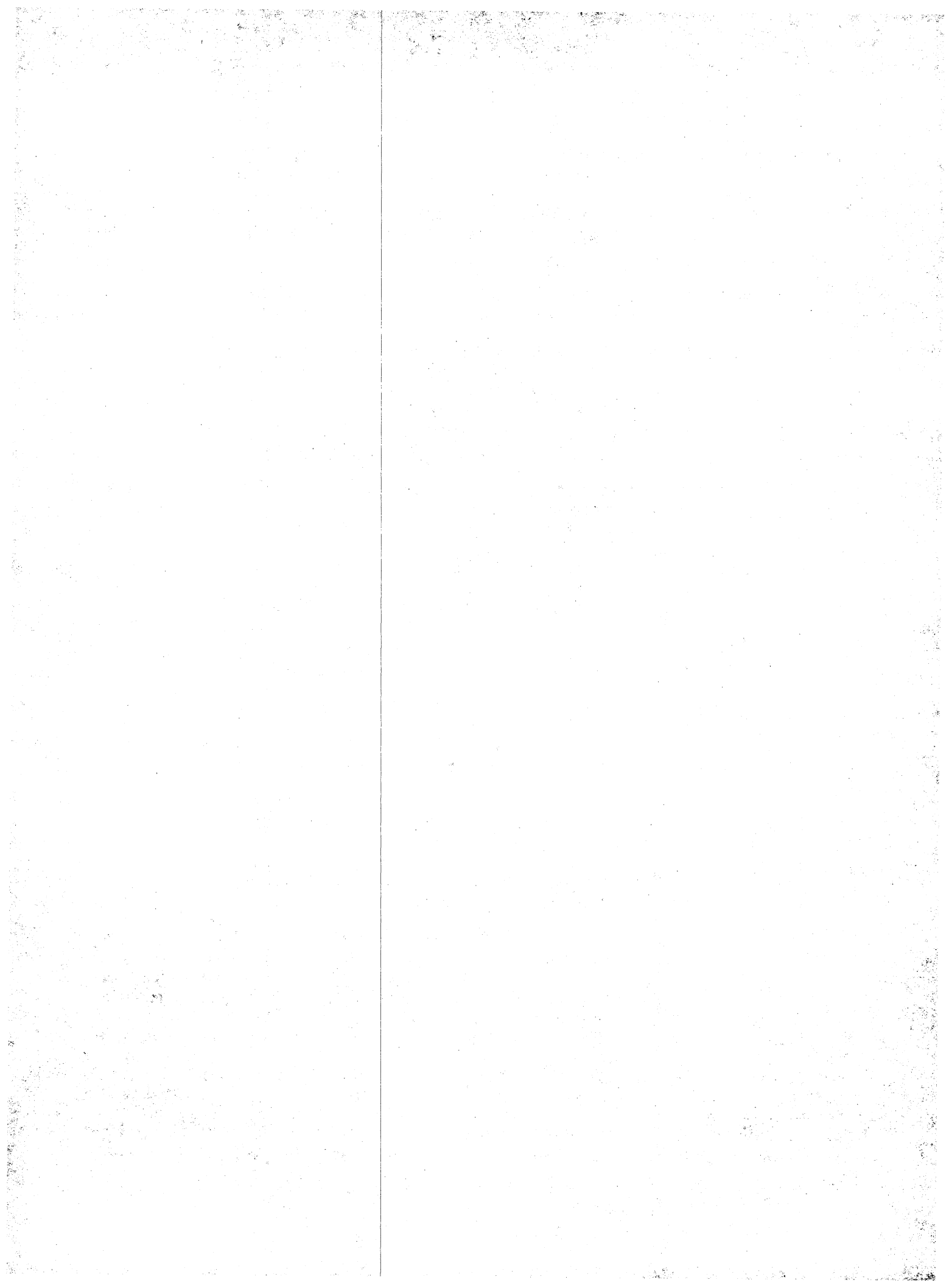
There are substantial barriers to achieving an occupational education system that is available and easily accessible to all those in need. In a general sense, the most difficult barrier is the "habits of mind" of program managers and their superiors at both the state and local level. All too often program managers seem unable or unwilling to share resources or expertise. The Employment Service, the Unemployment Insurance system and the JTPA



system are not integrated. Vocational Educational and Adult Education rarely do any joint planning. Higher Education charts an independent course in its programming. These examples can be extended to other programs and departments. This lack of State coordination is, all too often, mirrored at the local level by agencies that compete with each other for scarce resources, refuse to share client information and rarely see themselves as part of a common endeavor, which is service to the client. Specifically, some of the additional barriers to an integrated and accessible occupational education system are:

- 1) Different eligibility requirements and different program rules.
- 2) Divergent ideas about the utility of long term versus short term training.
- 3) Absence of a common access point to the array of training programs.
- 4) Certification issues that affect flexibility in selecting personnel.
- 5) Lack of quality staff.
- 6) Lack of flexibility of local institutions to meet the needs of "customers."
 - a) Too few full-time adult learning centers.
 - b) Occupation education programs are not always flexible enough to meet the needs of clients with multiple barriers to success.
 - c) The way performance-based contracts are written limit kinds of programs offered and clients served.
 - d) Lack of day care facilities and other support services.
 - e) Lack of adequate initiatives to counter job stereotyping and foster inclusiveness of all potential clients.
- 7) Local political environments that may serve to inhibit the availability of quality programming.
- 8) The absence of a common vision that "service to the customer" is the primary purpose of the occupational education system.

The above is meant to be only a sampling of some of the barriers that need to be overcome before an integrated, easily accessible and flexible occupational educational system can be established. The most significant barrier to creating an integrated system of services is that it was not, until recently, seen as an especially



important goal. While the desirability of coordination has never been questioned, the absence of any sense of urgency about problems in the current system has meant that coordination tended to be honored in the breach. While the America of a generation ago might have been able to afford the luxury of relative indifference about workforce preparedness, the America of today can afford no such luxury. Demographic, technological, sociological and economic changes of enormous proportion make the establishment of a comprehensive and comprehensible occupational education system a necessity.

RECOMMENDATION

The specific goal of this set of recommendations is focused on a somewhat narrower set of questions about how to reorganize and revitalize programs that deal primarily with entry level workers and those workers who seek to upgrade their skills. In order for a continuum of services designed to achieve this purpose to be created at the local level, the following must occur:

STATE LEVEL

- 1) All State departments which either fund agencies that deliver occupational education services or represent constituents who receive services must engage in a common planning process.
- 2) The allocation of State education, employment and training resources must be guided by a state plan which reflects state priorities.
- 3) These objectives must, in turn, be based on a strategic planning model that centers on a market-based analysis of the economy's current and future labor needs.
- 4) A unified State Request For Proposal(SRFP) process must be developed that reflects the need for coordination at the local level. The SRFP would be drafted to facilitate local coordination and collaboration and support program selection, planning and implementation at the local level. The process should also enable long term planning.
- 5) A statewide advertising campaign, such as "Take The Next Step" as suggested by the Department of Higher Education, must be established, replete with an 800 telephone number, to encourage existing workers to

upgrade their skills.

6) A statewide monitoring and technical assistance system that will assure the quality of programs provided by local deliverers must be established.

7) A statewide occupational education accountability system that will, in a sophisticated manner measure the cost-effectiveness of such programs. Additionally, this evaluation system should be used to establish state and local funding priorities as well as assist "customers" in making informed choices about what programs to enter.

8) An annual statewide conference on occupational education should be held. This conference should focus on changes in the labor market, examination of models of local cooperation, increasing the role of technology in worker preparedness and job stereotyping, among others.

LOCAL LEVEL

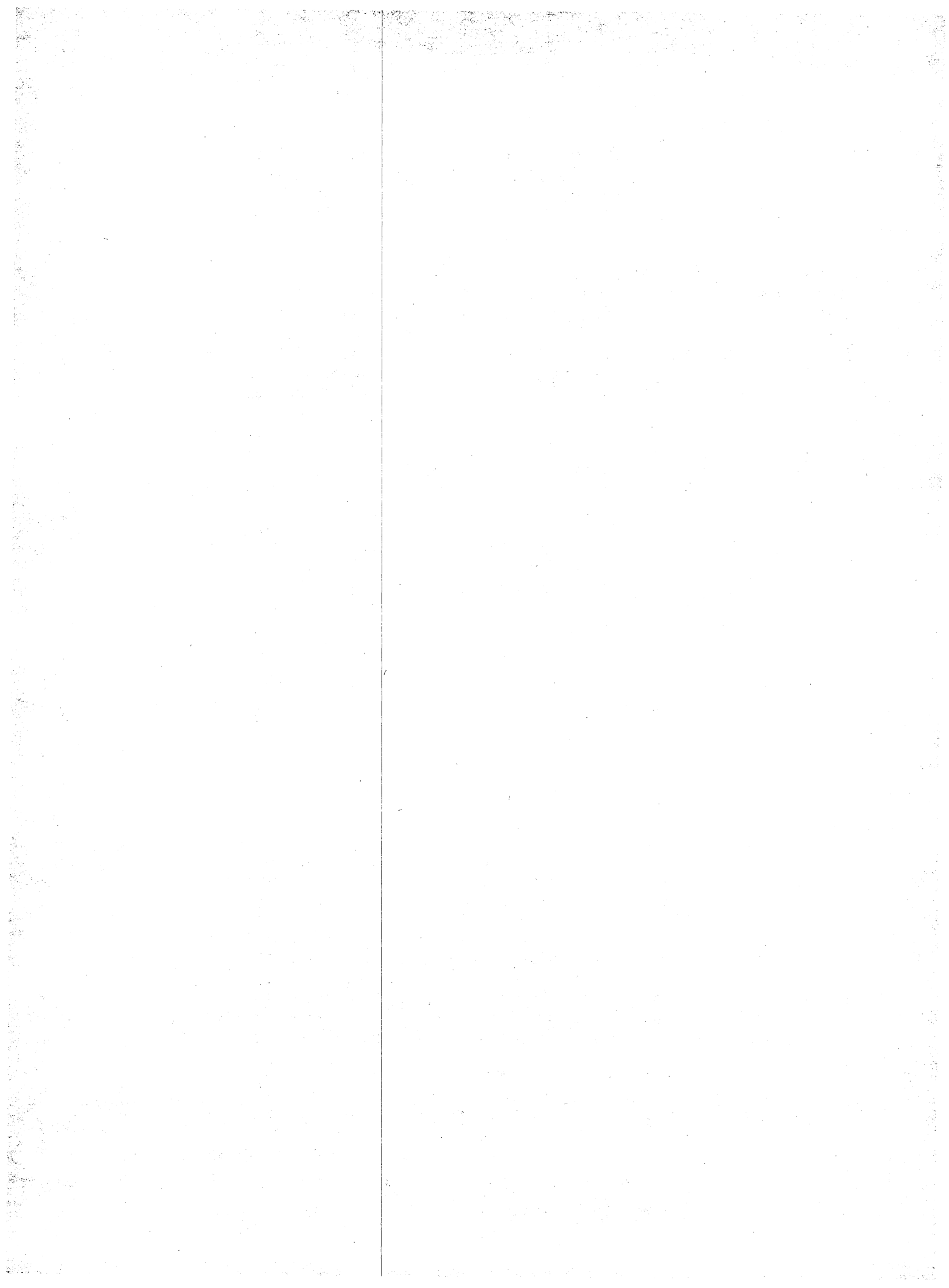
1) Equal access to all occupational education programs must be offered to women, minorities, dropouts, offenders, the disabled and other hard-to-serve groups. Special attention must be paid to Hispanics and others who need "English as a Second Language" instruction.

2) An analogue of the State Employment and Training Commission, the Private Industry Council, for example, must be established at the local level in order to plan for a comprehensive and flexible occupational education system.

3) A career awareness curriculum must be integrated into the high school course offerings. The private sector must play an important role in shaping such a curriculum.

4) A State plan for computer education must be adopted and implemented in New Jersey secondary schools. Corporate support and expertise should be sought for this endeavor. Such a curriculum must have specific goals, e.g. all students graduating from high school must understand the "logic of computing" along with specific skills such as basic word processing and data base management, among others.

5) Cooperative education, community service employment, apprenticeships, job shadowing, internship and on-the-job training opportunities should be dramatically increased for high school and college students.



6) Transitional programs that link school to work and school to college should be developed. Joint programming between high schools (both comprehensive and vocational), the colleges and the JTPA system need to be fostered.

7) A rational division of responsibility must be established at the local level to insure that services are not duplicated.

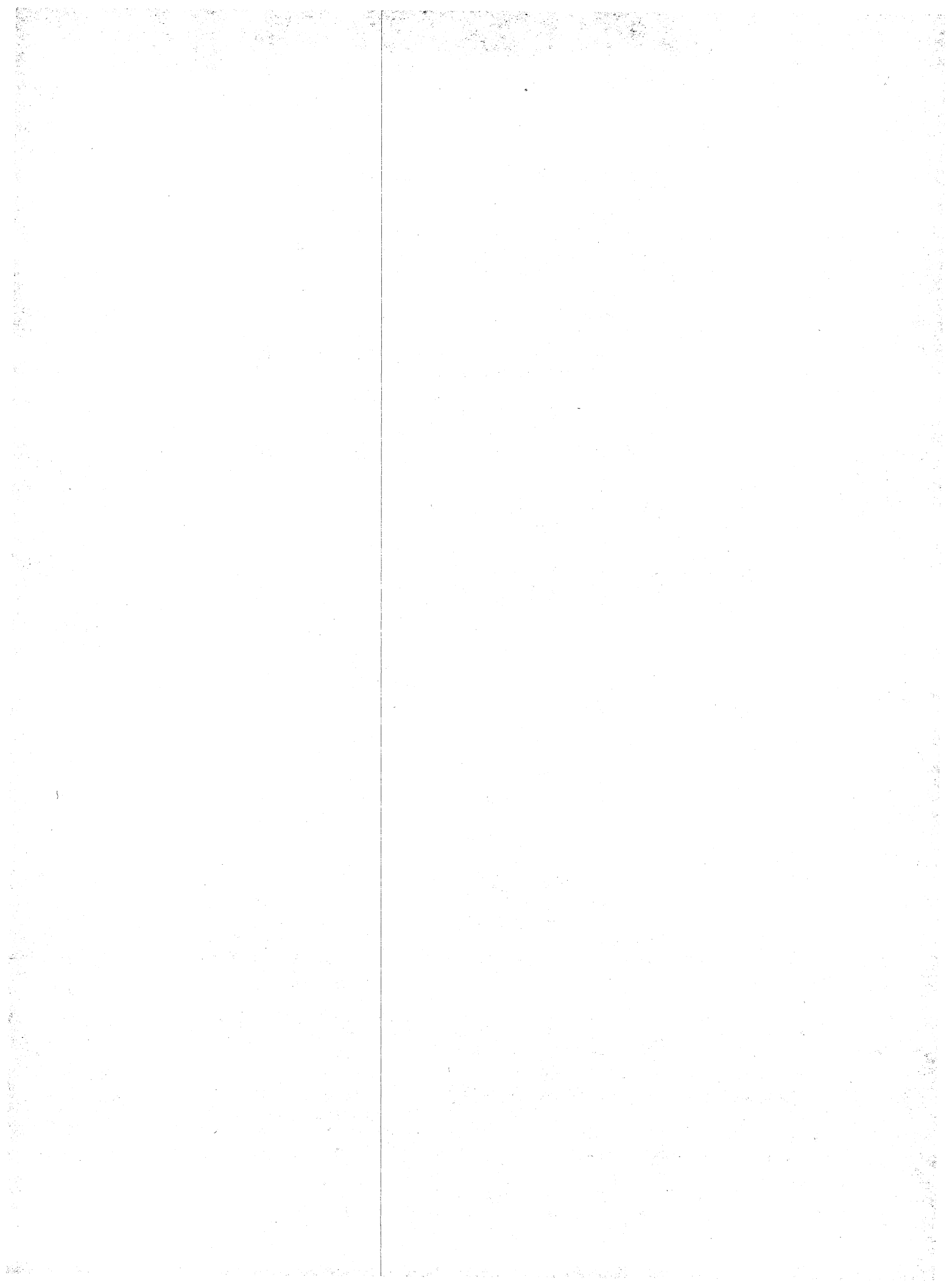
8) Workplace literacy and work-based occupational education programs should be established throughout the State.

9) A mechanism must be established to provide individuals with information and access to all available programs no matter where they choose to enter the system.

Plan of Action

Through the Executive Branch Workgroup mechanism, agreement must be reached with all participating departments that they will engage in both the process of internal restructuring and the coordination of all occupational education activities. A common "public philosophy" about the centrality of occupational education in the education system needs to be developed at the State level. Once this is accomplished it must be clearly communicated to local providers. In short, State leadership is required in order to restructure the way New Jersey provides occupational education. It is no longer acceptable for departments to define themselves in terms of the constituencies they either serve or regulate.

The assurance that literacy skills, work maturity skills, vocational training and skills upgrading are available to those individuals in need will best be accomplished through the acceptance of all seven objectives that are currently being discussed by the Occupational Education Task Force. Accessibility to the system is a reflection of all the other issues under review. The next step in the process is to design a mechanism to insure implementation of an integrated system. Once recommendations are accepted by the Governor, an appropriate interagency committee must be established at the operational level to assist in the implementation of the new occupational education system. The current "Educational Technical Assistance Team" consisting of representation from the six relevant State departments or some similar group is recommended to be the appropriate vehicle for this task. Additionally, a committee of local providers and State officials should be formed to develop the details for local implementation.



The Institute for Staff Development, housed in the Commission, must be used to provide training to build the capacity of the local occupational education planning groups. It is of vital importance that this local group be infused with the same ethic of cooperation that is reflected in the proposed State planning process.

Joint planning to establish career oriented programs in the schools should take place between the individuals responsible for implementing the recommendations in this report and those individuals developing plans for the Department of Education's "Quality Education Act". Such discussion must take place at both the State and local levels.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

Objective #7: the full utilization of the best ideas concerning work-based learning, including apprenticeship, to train and upgrade the State's workforce.

Current System

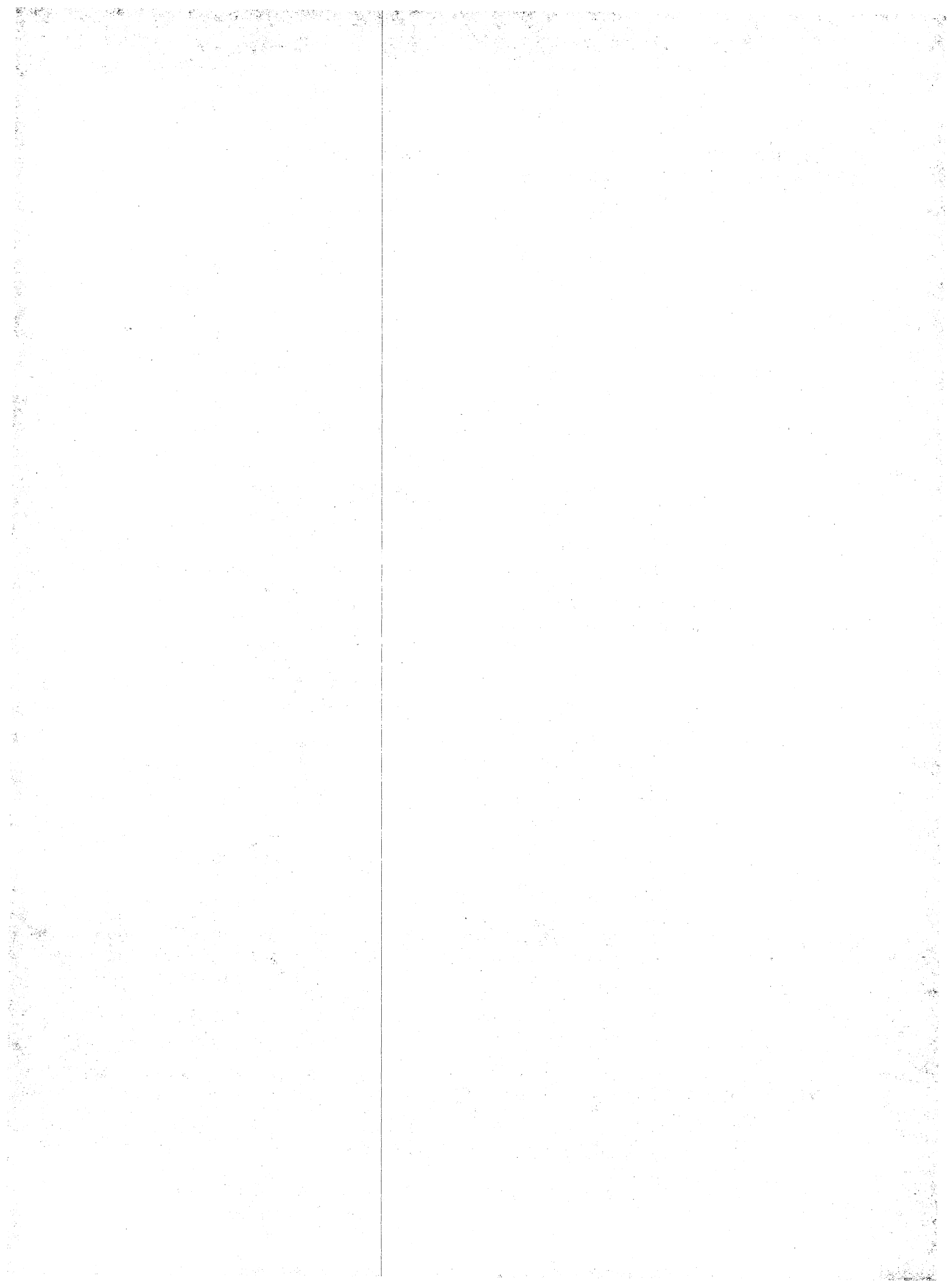
Approximately 100,000 individuals are enrolled in formal occupational education programs in New Jersey's public and private school system and job training programs. Another undetermined number are involved in short-term self-improvement programs which they pay for and participate in to improve their vocational or academic skills. However, the vast majority of this State's civilian workforce, about 4 million people, are dependent upon their employers for their job training.

According to the report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce this nation's employers spend an estimated \$30 billion on formal training. At most, only one-third of this amount is spent on the non-college educated workforce, affecting no more than eight percent of the front-line workers. The occasional training which companies do provide for these workers is generally limited to orientation training for new hires or team building for long-term employees.

The American Society for Training and Development reports that \$27 billion of that \$30 billion was paid out by 15,000 employers (one-half of one-percent of all employers). Of this small number of employers that do offer training, only 100 to 200 of the largest companies with significant professional and managerial staff, spend more than 2 percent of their payroll on formal training. From this data, it does not appear that sufficient investments are being made to improve the skill level of the workforce once secondary or post-secondary education has ended.

If the State is to have an impact on the quality of our workforce, and meet the needs of the employer community, then it must be able to make a significant impact right at the work site. Occupational education programs should be delivered at the job site or customized to meet the immediate needs of the worker(s) or employer. The means to this end is through work-based learning. Work-based learning can be defined as the array of strategies that are used to teach occupational and literacy skills to workers while they are employed. The training can take place at the job site or other location and be either part or full-time.

For young persons just starting out in the world of work or individuals in need of retraining, work-based learning has important advantages. It offers an efficient way to learn skills since the training is planned and organized through the work site



and is not a hit or miss proposition. Individuals in these programs would earn a salary as they learn and develop their skills.

Industry would benefit from work-based learning programs because these efforts would produce well-rounded workers competent in all facets of their occupations. These employees would be able to work without close supervision because their training had been tailored to meet current and future skill requirements of the employer. Unfortunately many employers do not have the resources, staff or time to do this by themselves.

The current work-based learning system is an amalgam of public sector programs, with a variety of program specific connections to the employer community.

The system's components include:

- secondary and post-secondary cooperative education, work study and internship arrangements between schools and employers;
- a formal apprenticeship process for a limited number of occupations, predominantly in the construction trades;
- an unstructured set of work experience programs which provide for world of work or community service experience; some of which are coupled with a role model/mentor relationship; and,
- a public and private sector employee development system which concentrates almost exclusively at the high end of the occupational skills and critical thinking skills.

This system is characterized by a lack of purposeful connections between the business and education sectors in the strategy and design of programs. Most programs are under utilized, too narrowly applied and ineffectively linked to the broader issues of workforce readiness and global competitive demands.

Currently there is no single government agency whose primary focus is to promote and expand the work-based learning approach to upgrading the skills of the workforce. This approach has been used at the option of the agencies delivering these services, but the efforts have been fragmented and it requires program operators to enter into nontraditional areas.

Resistance by employers to train individuals for fear of losing them to other employers along with a lack of interest in the skills development of employees has lessened the effectiveness of the work-based learning system. Concerns among some elements of labor community that a work-based learning initiative may negatively

impact on the existing apprenticeship system in New Jersey also exists.

RECOMMENDATION

A clear need exists to refocus attention on enhancing work-based learning by broadening the use of this approach as a means of narrowing the skills gap. Work-based learning is a market driven and consumer orientated approach to developing educational partnerships between the public and private sectors. Therefore, it is appropriate to institute this concept in a single State department. The New Jersey Department of Labor is recommended. This change should result in a new awareness of the efficacy of work-based learning as a technique to meet the needs of the workforce, as well as training requirements of the employer community.

The ideal system to foster the work-based learning approach to occupational education would include a single lead agency within the Department of Labor with ties to both workers, organized labor and educational programs acting as a catalyst and/or facilitator between public and private programs and employers to provide training to workers. The purpose of this agency would be to bring the occupational education system, as well as basic skills and literacy, closer to the market place. Through its relationships with employers, unions and schools this agency would help to introduce and expand such programs and strategies as:

- school to work transition initiatives such as cooperative education, tryout employment (JTPA), internships, summer job opportunities;
- closer relationships between schools and employers through mentoring, job fairs, adopt a school projects;
- customized occupational education opportunities through vocational schools, community colleges, four year colleges, and job training programs such as JTPA and REACH;
- workplace literacy training opportunities through adult education programs and community colleges;
- need to increase the number of registered apprenticeship programs, and the number of occupations currently being taught under the work-based learning. As part of that process, is the need to link the apprenticeship concept with such programs as cooperative education, on-the-job training and tryout employment, and other school-to-work transition programs.

- increasing the number of women and minorities in apprenticeable trades;
- employer based job training programs such as vestibule training, on-the-job training through JTPA and supported employment programs;
- input into the labor market assessment process by identifying high demand occupations, areas in which occupational education programs are needed or should be expanded and requirements for occupational competencies;
- creation of consortia approaches to meet the training needs of small employers; and
- outreach to employers, especially small businesses, to provide them with information about work-based learning strategies and "best practices" approaches to upgrading skills of their employees. This effort should be coordinated with recent work-based learning initiatives of the United States Department of Labor.

No changes in the local delivery systems for work-based learning programs are contemplated at this time by the Task Force.

Work-based learning, given the appropriate attention and direction, can become a formidable force in the effort to train the State's workforce. With proper leadership from both the business community and the public sector, the work-based learning concept can be expanded into many new career areas, and become a reliable and cost effective method for statewide job-related education and training.

The mission of the agency would be to promote continuing education and skills enhancement for workers; to structure career paths that provide for skills enhancement and upward mobility; to create partnerships between employers and the occupational education system; and, to find ways of sharing the costs of expensive occupational education with the business community.

Plan of Action

In order to implement this proposal for a work-based learning approach to preparing the workforce the following steps are suggested.

Designate the New Jersey Department of Labor as having the primary responsibility for linking the business sector with the education community.

Restructure that department so that a single agency can be given the lead responsibility for work-based learning.

Develop a joint plan among the departments administering employment, training and education programs to implement and evaluate the work-based learning initiative.

Create strategies or identify model programs in which business and workers can participate to alleviate literacy and basic skills deficiencies.

Provide for cross membership on the State Employment and Training Commission and the State Council on Vocational Education and any other appropriate advisory bodies which could impact on work-based learning.

Support national legislation, including tax incentives for employers who provide training, which encourages or supports work-based learning.

