



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

February 9, 2022

The Education and Workforce Development Roundtable of the City of Mesa met in the Mesa Fire and Medical Coyote Conference Room, 708 W. Baseline Road, on February 9, 2022, at 1:33 p.m.

BOARDMEMBERS PRESENT

Councilmember Spilsbury,
Chairperson
Dr. Lori Berquam
Dr. Perry Berry
Kevin Broeckling
David DiDomenico
Dr. Andi Fourlis
Sally Harrison
Rich Nickel
Dr. Joe O'Reilly
Jonathan Schmitt
Katie Lohec Sondej*
Dr. Chad Wilson
Vince Yanez

BOARDMEMBERS ABSENT

Councilmember Heredia
Toni Morales Broberg
Dr. Dawn Foley
Dr. Shane McCord

STAFF PRESENT

Lisa Anderson
Lisa Cartwright-Harris
Natalie Lewis
Holly Moseley
Erin Romaine
Sarah Staudinger
Kelly Whittemore

(*Participated in the meeting through the use of telephonic equipment.)

1. Call meeting to order and welcome announcements from the Chair.

Chairperson Spilsbury welcomed everyone to the meeting. She excused Councilmember Heredia and Boardmembers Broberg, Foley, and McCord from the entire meeting.

2. Take action to approve the Roundtable Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2021.

It was moved by Boardmember DiDomenico, seconded by Boardmember Harrison, that the November 9, 2021, Education Roundtable meeting minutes be approved.

Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES – Spilsbury-Berquam-Berry-Broeckling-DiDomenico-Fourlis-Harrison-Nickel-O'Reilly-Schmitt-Sondej-Wilson-Yanez

NAYS – None

ABSENT – Heredia-Broberg-Foley-McCord

Chairperson Spilsbury declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

3. Participate in electronic brainstorming and group discussions with Doug Griffen of Advanced Strategy Center to identify a shared strategic framework that will drive and focus the work of the Roundtable in the areas of: Early Learning through High School; Post-Secondary Education; and Workforce Development. Topics of discussion will include, but are not limited to:

- a. The importance of the Roundtable's work to Mesa;
- b. The goal(s), top priority(ies), and the data/metrics needed to monitor progress;
- c. The shared direction for each Strategic Focus Area;
- d. The roles of each Strategic Focus Area and the Roundtable as a whole, and how to effectively execute those roles;
- e. The shared vision for Mesa's education and workforce future.

Chairperson Spilsbury stated she enjoyed her conversations with each Boardmember to obtain their feedback and have taken the information to move the Roundtable forward in a positive way. She indicated common themes shared in making the Roundtable work were deciding what will make the most impact for Mesa's future in education and workforce development, being priority-driven, and having more clarity and focus. She said there were differing versions of the mission, vision, and goals, which make this challenging.

Councilmember Spilsbury introduced Doug Griffen, Founder and Director of the Advanced Strategy Center, to facilitate the electronic brainstorming session. She mentioned the information gathered today will be passed on to the strategic focus areas to provide direction. She believes the results will enable the working teams to come back to the Roundtable with ideas, information, and updates that will respond directly to the goals and priorities that are identified.

Mr. Griffen stated everyone in the country is thinking about education access and quality, as well as the workforce skills that are needed. He explained the process will be seeking input from the Boardmembers about priorities, things that can be done, and the three- to five-year vision. He discussed the platform that will be used for Boardmembers to share their knowledge and get a sense of the areas that are important for further developing education, access, quality, continuity, and leaning into workforce development pathways that are important for Mesa moving forward.

Mr. Griffen asked the Boardmembers to respond electronically to the question, "What do you enjoy most about your role in education and workforce development and why is it so important to you personally?" He summarized the responses as follows:

- Changing people's lives
- Changing community trajectory
- Impact on young people and families

- Ideas for the future
- Collaboration
- Breaking the cycle of poverty

Mr. Griffen requested the Boardmembers to think about the current state in Mesa right now and the most significant issues related to education and workforce development. He outlined the responses as follows:

- Aligning workforce and education
- Creating more equal access to opportunities
- Increasing pathways out of high school
- Attracting and retaining teachers
- Improving our workforce quality
- Having a workforce ready for new business
- Reducing bias in the system
- Promoting a positive vision for students and families
- Ensuring technology access for all
- Rebuilding trust in the education system
- Improving the quality of applicant pools

Mr. Griffen moved to the next activity assessing the importance of addressing and focusing on the ideas presented. He mentioned that each response is important which makes it more difficult to prioritize and find ways to accelerate impact in certain areas that will have a broader impact on multiple areas.

Boardmember Broeckling remarked on his general observation that there is a lot of focus on post-secondary preparation and obtainment. He mentioned the group represents Pre-K through post-secondary and there is very little mentioned regarding Pre-K.

Mr. Griffen concurred with Boardmember Broeckling and stated early childhood education is a critical area because studies show students that fall behind in early grades have a difficult time catching up. He added Pre-K will be discussed under the three strategic areas.

Mr. Griffen invited the Boardmembers to provide their opinions on how well-positioned Mesa is to address issues in education and workforce development. He summarized the responses as overall well-positioned. He continued by asking the Boardmembers to identify roles that the Roundtable can use to move education and workforce development forward. He advised the responses included being an advocate, influencing, creating connections, building pathways, connecting key partners, and providing all-inclusive programs.

Discussion ensued relative to the core purpose of the Roundtable being to connect, collaborate, and create opportunities for students.

Mr. Griffen transitioned to the three strategic areas of early learning through high school, post-secondary education, and workforce development. He encouraged the Boardmembers to think about the desired goals to be accomplished beginning with early learning through high school. He identified the top responses as follows:

- Equitable access to early childhood education
- Better retention of teachers in this range
- More information to middle school and high school regarding post-secondary options
- Increase graduation rates
- Better connect students to an individual passion and career
- More quality pathways post high school

Mr. Griffen articulated that by narrowing the areas down to a few priorities, those priorities will have a residual effect on influencing other areas.

Mr. Griffen shifted to the strategic focus area of post-secondary education. He asked the Boardmembers to think about what is trying to be accomplished in post-secondary education. He discussed the responses and requested each Boardmember choose the five that resonate the most with them. He listed the top responses as follows:

- More partnerships with businesses and post-secondary institutions
- Better communication of different pathways
- Matching education to industry needs
- More student engagement
- Better connection of purpose and passion
- More graduates that can adapt to skill changes required

Discussion ensued between the Boardmembers regarding the importance of building partnerships with businesses and post-secondary institutions. Consensus was that partnerships can create direct pipelines to workforce placement and can create the outreach needed to develop a better understanding of the available career paths and what skillsets are required, which do not necessarily equate to needing a four-year degree.

Mr. Griffen advised the Boardmembers to focus on two areas that would be the highest priorities of focus and the metrics and data needed to gauge the impact and progress over the next three to five years.

Mr. Griffen asked the Boardmembers to consider the area of workforce development and provide feedback on the goals that are perceived as most important. He commented on the responses and urged the Boardmembers to rate the top five that resonate with workforce development. He reported the leading focus areas include:

- Make Mesa a model of workforce and education partnerships
- A more seamless pipeline between K-12, post-secondary education, and employers
- Better understand the needs of tomorrow's employers
- Increase understanding of career pathways
- A more diverse talent pipeline
- Communicate the importance of workforce development and community quality of life

Mr. Griffen summarized the priorities relative to workforce development and mentioned the metrics and data to follow up on workforce development provided include the following: tracking

open jobs and frequency of industry specific postings for job demand, unemployment rates, business program enrollment, as well as turnover and demand for positions.

Mr. Griffen presented the final activity inquiring into the takeaway from this event from a leadership perspective, and how education and workforce has been transformed five years in the future.

Mr. Griffen thanked the Boardmembers for their participation to generate focus areas for the Roundtable to work on.

Chairperson Spilsbury thanked Mr. Griffen for leading the session.

4. Review direction, next steps and the next meetings scheduled.

Chairperson Spilsbury recognized the limited time restricted the dialogue portion; however, there was progress. She expressed frustration regarding the broad spread on the focus areas but looks forward to receiving the results. She stated the input will be shared with the Boardmembers to provide clear direction moving forward. She announced the next Roundtable meeting will be Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 1:30 p.m. at the same location.

Chairperson Spilsbury thanked the Boardmembers for their engagement.

5. Call to the public.

There were no items from citizens present.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Education and Workforce Development Roundtable meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Education and Workforce Development Roundtable meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 9th day of February 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



HOLLY MOSELEY, CITY CLERK