

# **EDUCATION/ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ROUNDTABLE CLEARFIELD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SEPTEMBER 1, 2005**

## **ATTENDEES**

Jodi Brennan, Director of Clearfield County Planning Office  
Meredith Krejny, Planning Specialist of Clearfield County Planning Office  
Susan Reed, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee  
Dr. Dennis Bruno, Superintendent of Glendale School District  
Dr. Denise Keltz, Superintendent of Clearfield Area School District  
Norman Hatten, Superintendent of Curwensville Area School District  
Dr. Richard Makin, Superintendent of Purchase Line School District  
Dawn Datt, Lock Haven University- Clearfield Campus  
Lois Richards, Executive Director of Clearfield County Career & Technology Center  
Terry Khoury, DuBois Business College  
Carolyn Grecco, CIU 10- Development Center for Adults  
Ann Harper, Mid-State Literacy Council  
Kelly Pisarchick, Career Link/ North Central Regional Planning & Development  
Gene Kephart, Cen-Clear Child Care Services  
Bonnie Caldwell, Clearfield County League on Social Services

## **INTRODUCTIONS**

After introducing one another, the question was asked, “who’s missing from this roundtable that should be contacted?” Response from participants included the Penn State Extension Office.

## **PURPOSE**

County Planning Director Jodi Brennan explained that the input collected at today’s roundtable would be used for the purpose of updating the county’s comprehensive plan. She then briefly explained what a comprehensive plan was and the purpose it serves. She also stressed that they would accept input after the meeting as well and asked for participants to share any data sources or reports that would be useful in the development of this plan. The roundtable participants will be sent the final draft of this comprehensive plan section for final review and comment.

## **PROCESS**

The Director also explained the process in which today’s meeting would be run to obtain this input. The SWOT analysis, a commonly used planning process, would be utilized which simply stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. These items would then be used to develop a list of goals.

After lengthy discussion, participants developed a list of the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and goals. Participants were then given five stickers, which they used to vote for the top five goals they felt were the most important. Participants were allowed to use more than one sticker per goal if they so desired. These “votes” were then used to prioritize the goals.

## **STRENGTHS**

- Increasing # of residents earning GEDs and/or obtaining higher education despite decreased resources

- More residents see need for additional education
- Large numbers of volunteers
- Training opportunities (higher education institutions, career schools, etc.)
- Early childhood training opportunities
- Large # of regional training centers, courses & opportunities
- Many youth do return after higher education
- Collaboration board (help with funding)
- Close proximity to education institutions
- Cooperation among school districts (rare elsewhere)
- Use of technology in education above average compared to elsewhere
- High level of commitment to education (community support)
- Proximity to Interstate 80
- National recognition for school programs
- Proximity to Penn State, a large research university

### **WEAKNESSES**

- Some people still don't see need for education, but this is changing
- Lack of infrastructure prevents better opportunities (cell service, broadband/ WiFi, etc.)
- Brain Drain (loss of educated youth)
- Narrow range of experiences for people creating closed mindedness
- Declining enrollment (affects school funding, expenses-can't always cut back to maximize resources- large schools cost a lot to operate & maintain)
- School funding decreasing as businesses leave area, tax abatements increasing
- High unemployment rate
- Higher paying jobs being replaced by lower paying ones
- Not many private funding sources
- Decreasing in state & federal funding

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Increase collaboration among education institutions
- Dual enrollment options
- Educate people about education opportunities that exist here
- Use weaknesses to obtain state, federal funding (making lemonade out of lemons)
- I-99 technology corridor- Clearfield County should take advantage of this
- Try to bring in additional higher education opportunities/ Take existing programs & expand them
- Increase conversations among education stakeholders (via Collaboration Board)
- Improve dialogue between county & education entities
- Use County elected officials influence to achieve education funding reform
- Show elected officials this area differs from rest of state- help improve understanding of our needs

### **THREATS**

- Transportation cost increasing
- Increasing cost in general, increasing health care, increasing food, fuel and Their affects on families
- Availability of drugs in our area
- Declining enrollments (when schools die out, jobs are lost and communities often die)

- Not enough new families moving in (ties back to enrollment being down)
- Isolation / Apathy of schools from other development, certain population (seniors)
- Loss of services i.e. medical keep people from moving here
- Loss of good jobs with benefits, family – sustaining wages
- Poor or inadequate transportation infrastructure (affects access to schools, jobs)
- Loss of skilled workers who will replace them

**GOALS (in order of priority as voted on by roundtable participants)**

1. Equalize education funding among our area and rest of state (i.e. rural schools seem to get less \$\$)- would equalize ed. opportunities and lessen local burden of funding schools (11 votes)
2. Bring back good jobs to end brain drain – need to get people to stay (7 votes)
2. Instill in youth, workforce leaders – everyone transferable skills like (7 votes)
  - Flexibility / adaptability
  - Networking / communications
  - Strong work ethic
  - Problem solving skills

Not just job specific skills
3. Get county elected officials to support education, represent our interests (ties into funding equalization) (6 votes)
3. Increase mass transit opportunities (6 votes)
4. Support infrastructure; sewer, water, broadband, etc. (5 votes)
5. Build closer relationship between schools and economic development (4 votes)
6. Look beyond county limits when setting standards (we can do better) (2 votes)
7. Utilize technology for global job opportunities i.e. telecommuting (1 vote)
7. Increase career awareness at younger ages and among parents (1 vote)
8. Need more mid – level housing (affordable to teachers) to attract workers (0 votes)
9. Increase opportunities for work experience job shadowing (0 votes)

Handouts containing statistical information were provided by North Central Regional Planning & Development Office as well as the CIU 10/Development Center for Adults.

Participants were informed that they would receive minutes from this roundtable with the results of the prioritization of goals in the near future. An invitation will follow for a second follow up meeting to develop a plan of action to implement the top 5 goals established at today's roundtable. Participants were encouraged to provide additional goals.