

**WDB APPRENTICESHIP & INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT**  
**December 9, 2025**

**Participants**

Gregory Davis, Chair	Melissa Eckstein, Gateway Regional High
Brett Guetens, DWD	Alicia Battaglia, Commissioner Aide
Amanda Terpstra, Business	Alisha Thompson, DWD
JaNea Wilson, NJLWD	Krista Lope, DVRS
Pavi Lakshminarayan, NJLWD	Alice Smith, WDB Staff
Shannon O'Brien, WDB Staff	Allison Spinelli, WDB Staff
Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff	

**Visitor**

Kristy Straub, Business

Greg opened meeting at 8:30am.

**Guest Speaker**

Heather Simmons stated governor-elect Mikie Sherril as part of her transition, she has put together 10 advisory panels in different topics of relevance to us in various fields. Several of the panels are particularly related to workforce development and specifically apprenticeship. Governor-elect is combining what they're identifying as priority areas in each of the ten teams with what's already happening in the legislature and front office as well as defining agenda for upcoming session. She will share the list of 10 teams/panels and asked for review of the list and if there is something they feel is missing, to please let her know. Greg invited me to speak about legislation and policy. Heather currently has 2 bills to be introduce in the next session that are specifically focused on incentivizing employers to engage in apprenticeship and to receive additional incentives if the keep those employees for a specific amount of time following completion of apprenticeship.

**New Business**

A motion to approve June 2, 2025 minutes was made by A. Smith, seconded by A. Thompson.

**Committee Updates/Action Item Update**

We updated /revised some of the objectives; marketing material was created for healthcare and advanced manufacturing; we hope to identify and reach out to local employers for potential tour to showcase successful apprenticeship programs; need to fill in gaps on hospitality/health industry/teaching; develop ½ day workshop for business following spring mega job fair-will meet with Nicole Field to work on agenda in January. Greg stated he received a call from Ira Weissman who said there is an apprenticeship program called aviation maintenance technician mechanic. The mechanic is part welder, electrician, & mechanic and only work on planes. Ira is also speaking with Jeff Schwarz from Camden County WDB. A meeting will be scheduled in early 2026 with regional workforce development boards to discuss aviation program. Melissa stated she has been engaged with Ira for many years and expressed importance of engaging the high schools about the program. Pavi suggested while planning for the lunch & learn session as employers get overwhelmed and recommend breaking up & fully explain each section of information regarding apprenticeship. She also stated there have been discussions at the State level about workforce in the defense system and the high number of recent early retirements.

A motion for adjournment was made by A. Spinelli, seconded by A. Thompson.

The next meeting will be February 24 (approval by WDB).

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget A. DiGiambattista, WDB Staff