

State Electrical Construction Apprenticeship Advisory Committee

April 18, 2016

NECA-IBEW
Madison, WI

Draft Minutes

Members Present	Employer/Organization
Allen, Don (Co-Chair)	IBEW Local 158
Balthazor, Michael	Michaels Power
Grundahl, Carol	IBEW Local 159
Habermehl, Sylvia	Habermehl Electric
Miller, Dean	IBEW Local 388
O'Leary, Loyal (Co-Chair)	NECA-- WI Chapter
Pohlman, Mike	R.J. Nickles Electric Co.
Steiner, Rick	Steiner Electric (ABC)
Walsh, John M.	IBEW Local 14
Warsh, Dean	IBEW Local Milwaukee
Young, Greg	IBEW Local 577

Members Absent	Employer/Organization
Bzdawka, John	IBEW Local 494
Kryzaniak, Rick	Faith Technologies (Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC))
Sokolik, Leo	IBEW Local 890
Tourdot, Kelly	Associated Builders & Contractors

Consultants & Guests	Employer/Organization
Alt, Meredith	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Anderson, Cindy	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Anhalt, Tim	NECA-IBEW Apprenticeship & Training
Emrick, Leigh	ABC
Gage, Joan	Department of Safety and Professional Services
Harding, Burt	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards – Green Bay
Jackson, Troy	Department of Safety and Professional Services
Kiel, Todd	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Large, Dan	Local 494 JATC
Montgomery, Mark	Waukesha County Technical College
Pierce, Mary	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards – Central Office
Staab, Joy	Department of Safety and Professional Services
Tschillard, Clay	NECA-IBEW Apprenticeship & Training
Wagner, Mike	NECA-IBEW Apprenticeship & Training

1. The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Don Allen, Committee Co-chair, in conformity with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
2. A roll call was conducted and a member sign-in sheet was circulated.
3. The committee reviewed the current roster for accuracy of contact information, soon-to-expire terms, vacancies, geographic representation, and industry representation. No updates were necessary.

4. **Old Business**

a. **Review the follow-up items from the previous meeting:**

i. For action: approve the minutes

The committee approved the minutes as written.

ii. Discussion with Department of Safety and Professional Services

Owen reviewed that the state committee had requested that the Bureau include several questions from the committee in an official letter to the Department of Safety and Professional Services. In response, several personnel from the Department of Safety and Professional Services attended this meeting to answer the original questions and additional questions in person.

The committee had the following questions and comments:

- *Several apprentices have complained that they did not receive postcards indicating their license needed to be renewed.*
The postcards are mailed biannually for all credentials. A postcard is mailed to each credential holder, as long as DSPS has a current address for the individual on file. An apprentice must contact DSPS to change his or her address. The best way to renew a license is to send in a brand new application because it confirms that the application is from an existing individual. Licenses cannot be renewed online currently due to the sheer volume of licenses, holders, and related data. However, DSPS has requested that their database and website be updated to do so.
- *Is DSPS notified of changes in status of the apprentice contract?*
Yes, DSPS received a letter from DWD if an apprentice is cancelled, and then DSPS issues the denial letter. That is the only status update DSPS receives. If an apprentice is beyond the sixth year, DSPS is in the position that we ask the apprentice to give us information or a letter that they are allowed to continue to renew the license. If not, the license is declared null or void. Inspectors can research the status of a license online through the DSPS website.
- *Some apprentices already have a previous license. Can they convert is or do they have to reapply?*
The administrative code is clear that there are two specific, different credentials and what is require to obtain and renew each. They cannot be intermingled. DSPS uses the date of the apprentice contract to determine the appropriate status. Most importantly, when renewing any license, please contact DSPS a few weeks in advance of the expiration date to allow for processing time. Often, individuals will apply two days before the expiration date.
- *When we start an apprentice without prior work experience in the industry, it could be 45-60 days before the apprentice contract is signed and processed. Is there some way of getting a temporary permit or license? The individuals are recognized as apprentices and work on the jobsite, but the contract takes time to fully administer, so the license is subsequently delayed.*
DSPS cannot issue the credential until it has the apprentice contract. The individual could pay a fee to get the registered electrician status and nothing else, which doesn't hurt, and then have some overlap with the license.

ii. Discussion with Department of Safety and Professional Services, continued

- *Applying for and tracking two separate credentials is time-consuming and confusing for new apprentices. Apprentices who contact your customer service department with questions have had good experiences, but the process of having two separate credentials and two separate fees is still complicated and confusing. Perhaps DWD could issue a temporary document with three signatures that says the contract is imminent? Unfortunately, it will continue to be like that into the future. The fees are in the statutes, so DSPS cannot change them, but it could look at providing flexibility with dates.*

The Bureau currently issues a credential notice that states the application has been approved as of the specific date and who the apprentice is working for. It is signed by the ATR. DSPS would need signatures from DWD, the employer and the apprentice. DSPS is open to suggestions for how it can be more efficient, so it is open to proposals one-on-one with DWD.

- *Without that credential and paperwork, the apprentice and contractor could be fined on the worksite during the interim period in which the administrative processing is occurring. When is the apprentice legally permitted to work, as of the apprentice contract date or the license issue date?*
DSPS is aware of these issues. According to the administrative code, the apprentice is not able to work until the license is issued. BAS may be able to adopt an administrative process similar to that used for plumbing apprentices: the credential notice is issued ahead of time and copied to DSPS. DSPS would be open to discussing that.
- *Local committees have tied an apprentice's wage increase to the issuance of the license. So, it is important for the committee to know when the license lapses. However, many times the committee does not know when the license lapses. Would DSPS begin notifying local committees when an apprentice does not renew his or her license?*
License status is public information and available via the DSPS website through a function to request a list of current license holders. The function also allows the user to select specific output fields. The committee could visit the website, and retrieve the list on a monthly or quarterly basis. DSPS does not have a system that notifies us when licenses expire. Instead, DSPS runs renewals twice a month, eight weeks in advance, so there is a cushion of eight weeks for the apprentice to renew. If the card doesn't come back, that provides DSPS with the first indication.

The Bureau added that it is policy that when an apprentice's license lapses, they do not get credit for that time because they are not working legally. The committee reiterate that the problem is that nobody knows when the license lapses. DSPS noted that organizations involved with other occupations maintain their own lists, and suggested that the committee consider the same.

- *The ink doesn't hold on the actual physical license. It wears off, and we can't tell the name or date or make photocopies.*
DSPS is aware of that issue and has been researching solutions since last spring, including new ink, new printers, cards, etc. The research is still in progress.
- *Would DSPS offer more exams at more locations, such as a technical college where lots of apprentices from multiple trades are enrolled?*
DSPS currently offers the exam at three locations, two classes per day per location. Would changing the locations work? The committee replied that there is currently no location in the southwest or central area of the state. DSPS replied that it will research additional location, but cautioned that adding location is literally a case of resources. All exams are still on paper and graded by Scantron. So, it presents a serious capacity issues. However, it will look into adding an additional site. Northeast Wisconsin Technical College state it would be willing to host exams.

The committee asked whether the exam could be offered online. DSPS replied that it had researched this matter, but it is currently obstructed by exam fees stipulated in the state statutes.

ii. Discussion with Department of Safety and Professional Services, continued

- *Apprentices say there are night-and-day differences between exams. One is based on the code and another is based on the application.*
Each exam event uses a new test. That is intentional. All questions were written by the industry services division, and are selected from a database.
- *We used to receive notices of whether the apprentice passed or failed from ATRs. But we haven't lately. We don't know whose end it is on, but it would be very beneficial for us to receive them.*
DSPS sends a report of apprentices that changed to journey workers to the Bureau. The report is received by Karen Morgan. Committees could request the report from DSPS. BAS will research this, too.

If the apprentice does not provide two dates on the form, large delays can result. The processing alone takes up to three weeks because DSPS processes 80 types of credentials.

- *What is the deadline for renewing a journey worker license?*
The renewal needs to be received within 15 days of the expiration date. At that time, DSPS audits the credentials, and issues a warning notice. If the license is not renewed within an additional 15 days, it is rescinded. The only time DSPS would retest is if the credential lapses and then the individual was expired for the duration of the credential. For example, if the license was valid for three years, and you don't renew for three years, the license is considered expired.

Action: *DSPS stated that it will explore the idea of an interim license or notice that would allow apprentices to work legally before the apprentice contract is processed; research costs of lists of license holders; and research solutions to ink wearing off the credential cards. Last, DSPS will research the feasibility of adding exam locations in Green Bay and Dane County. DSPS encouraged all local committees to explore its web-based function of generating a list of license holders.*

iii. Proposed revisions to outreach booklet

Owen explained that he has not revised the booklet because he is still searching for the original file. The original publication was produced in the early 2000s and does not include an internal publication number for reference. He plans to contact the external firm that designed it. He has requested the assistance of an additional designer, as well.

iv. For action: proposed revisions to applicant assessment procedures.

Owen explained that the Bureau is discussing three recommendations with all state construction committees: continue using current assessments; accept ACT scores, as well; and implement uniform subjects, cut scores and timeframes for all scores. He noted that local committees for this trade utilize a proprietary assessment. Therefore, the recommendation to implement statewide subjects and cut scores does not apply. The committee previously did not pass a motion to require the ACT. Therefore, local committees are not required to accept it.

b. American Completion Award Program

Owen distributed the current program statistics. He explained that the total dollar amount of denied requests is substantially larger than the total dollar amount of approved requests for two reasons: apprentices fail to provide a proper receipt; and apprentices request more than the maximum reimbursement. He noted that the program will conclude on June 30, 2017, so local committees should continue to encourage eligible apprentices to apply.

Owen asked the committee how the program has been working for the local committees. One member asked whether the program would be renewed for another year. Owen explained that the program is part of the Governor's budget, so the Bureau does not know whether it will be renewed.

c. American Apprenticeship Grant / WAGE\$

Meredith Alt and Cindy Anderson reviewed the structure and purpose of the WAGE\$ grant. It is a \$5 million grant over a five-year period, during which the Bureau has committed to registering 1,000 new apprentices. The primary objective of the grant is to expand registered apprenticeship into new sectors of the economy, including health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing. The second objective is more pertinent to construction trades: increase the pool of qualified applicants by supporting youth apprenticeship programs and pre-apprenticeship readiness programs. To accomplish the second objective, the Bureau will sub-contract with the local workforce development boards across the state.

In addition, the construction electrical trade is one of the five trade-specific focus areas in the Architecture & Construction youth apprenticeship program. As part of the grant activities, the Bureau will convene additional industry focus groups to review the competencies because, although the competencies were originally reviewed by industry subject matter experts before the program was implemented, after the program was implemented, the Bureau heard from many stakeholders that they were not informed of the program and the development process. So, in order to increase industry involvement and ensure the competencies are appropriate, the Bureau will convene additional subject matter experts to review the competencies.

d. Wisconsin Apprenticeship Summit

Owen reported that two action items from the Summit have been completed. First, the Bureau formed a consortium of employers who use apprenticeship to review and develop employer-to-employer outreach material and strategies.

Second, before developing new material, the consortium wanted to gather current data on how registered apprenticeship is perceived by employers across the state. So, the consortium administered a statewide survey of the use and perception of registered apprenticeship among current sponsors, former sponsors and non-sponsors.

The survey results are as follows: the large majority of current sponsors highly value registered apprenticeship for its quality training; the large majority of former sponsors no longer use the program due to downturns in the economy; and the non-sponsors that participated in the survey did not report a clear alternative or substitute for registered apprenticeship, and are doubtful that their current training will sufficiently meet future work demands.

The committee shared related anecdotes from their professional experiences. Many expressed that the results were not surprising and confirmed their existing beliefs.

e. Other

No additional topics were discussed.

5. New Business

a. Revisions to www.wisconsinapprenticeship.org

Owen explained that the Bureau made several updates to the homepage of its website. No content was changed. The updates include a new top navigation bar that includes a link to the youth apprenticeship page; bottom navigation buttons for applicants, apprentices, and sponsors; and a slideshow of feature news articles, which will be updated monthly or quarterly.

Last, Owen noted that the statistic, data, laws, and regulations now appear on a single page, "Data & Resources," which is linked in the top navigation bar.

The committee shared positive comments on the updates.

b. Proposed revisions to CFR 29.30 (AA/EEO requirements)

Owen explained that the U.S. Department of Labor released proposed revisions to CFR 29.30, which governs affirmative action and equal employment opportunity requirements for registered apprenticeship. Much of the language came from federal contracting language and, as Karen Morgan has explained, would make "current requirements that are specific very broad and vice versa." The Bureau submitted comments and concern through the Advisory Council in January before public comment period closed at the end of that month. The U.S. DOL will be reviewing the comments through the summer, and is prohibited from commenting on them during that time.

Leigh Emrick noted that the proposed revisions to prior federal regulations generated hundreds of public comments. In contrast, these proposed revisions generated thousands. The impact on registered apprenticeship in Wisconsin could be significant.

The committee did not have questions.

c. Other

6. WTCS Update

Nancy Nakkoul shared items from the WTCS summary.

A guest stated that the technical colleges are in extreme demand for instructors, particularly night school instructors. A member suggested that the state committee could make a recommendation that the Apprenticeship Advisory Council visit each technical college boards throughout the state to reiterate the benefits of registered apprenticeship, particularly that it ranks high on performance-based funding. The committee cautioned that doing so would not encourage technical colleges to consider candidates that are less skilled than a journey worker.

***Action:** the committee recommended that the Bureau ask the Advisory Council to meet with technical college boards to promote the value of registered apprenticeship.*

7. Review the program participants.

Program participants included 1,186 apprentices and 296 employers with a contract in active or unassigned status on April 15, 2016.

8. The next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 17, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. at NECA-IBEW in Green Bay.
9. The committee adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Follow-Up Items

- i. DSPS will research solutions to exam locations, ink on the physical license, and temporary licenses.*
- ii. BAS will consider asking the Council to promote apprenticeship to local technical college boards.*
- iii.*

Submitted by Owen Smith, Program and Policy Analyst