

## Upstate Youth Alliance Meeting

**Date of Meeting:** February 17, 2014  
**Time of Meeting:** 8:30 a.m.  
**Place of Meeting:** Swofford Career Center

### Members Present

Ms. Dana Becker  
Ms. Johnnie-Lynn Crosby  
Ms. Kimberly Gist  
Ms. Melissa Green  
Ms. Carolyn Harris  
Ms. Theresa Perry  
Ms. Susan Rogers

### Staff Present

Ms. Shannon Wilkins  
Ms. Dana Wood

### Guests

Ms. Kathy Bell  
Ms. Michelle Hawkins  
Ms. Helen Merriweather

### Members Absent

Mr. Doug Bryson  
Mr. Richard Butler  
Ms. Ashley Campbell  
Ms. Liberty Canzater  
Ms. Tammy Cooley  
Mr. Chuck Ewart  
Ms. Lisa Hannon  
Mr. Christopher Hendrix  
Ms. Patrena Mims  
Ms. Patricia Paul  
Ms. Kelly Reid  
Ms. Cherie Pressley  
Ms. Ulrike Schmidt  
Ms. Mary Lou Stackhouse  
Mr. Evander Thomas

### **Welcome:**

The meeting was called to order at 8:43 a.m. by Ms. Theresa Perry. Ms. Perry welcomed all in attendance. The Upstate Youth Alliance reviewed the meeting minutes from the last Youth Alliance meeting in December; no changes were made.

### **Swofford Career Center Presentation:**

Ms. Perry introduced Mr. Scott Simpkins, Director of the Swofford Career Center, to speak about the courses offered at Swofford Career Center. Mr. Simpkins stated that the career center offered elective, honors, and dual credit courses, which can be used as high school or college credit. Mr. Simpkins also stated that the majority of the educators in the career center have not obtained a degree in education, but are experts in their industry. Ms. Perry, Student Services Coordinator at Swofford Career Center, played a recruitment video, which the career center used at different events to recruit students. After the video, Ms. Perry continued to speak about the courses offered at the career center. Swofford Career Center offers 14 programs. The most popular programs are Auto Mechanics, Health Science Tech, and Graphics. The career center is funded through the Perkins Grant. In order to receive funds, the center must have a completion rate of 86%, which means 86% of their students must enter a job-related field, the military or post-secondary education. Swofford serves four local high schools: Chapman, Landrum, Boiling Springs, and Chesnee, and continues to see a growth in the student body. Ms. Perry offered a tour of the facility directly following the meeting for those who were interested. Ms. Dana Wood stated that the students in the Graphic Design Program designed the logos for the Upstate Youth Alliance and the Upstate Workforce Future's Corporation.

### **Dashboard & Contractor Reports:**

Ms. Shannon Wilkins distributed several handouts prior to the start of the meeting, which included the January dashboard and contractor report from each youth provider. Ms. Wilkins asked the Upstate Youth Alliance to review each handout. Ms. Helen Merriweather mentioned that the number listed on the ACHIEVE Program's dashboard, under occupational credentials earned, only showed one credential per student, even if they earned more than one credential. Ms. Michelle Hawkins stated that the dashboard did not show any of the YouthStop™ participant's WorkKeys scores because their participants will take WorkKeys in the spring.

#### **Youth Coordinator's Update:**

Ms. Wilkins shared that the Upstate Youth Alliance Leadership Program has been successful to date. The next session was scheduled for February 12<sup>th</sup>, but was cancelled due to inclement weather. Ms. Wilkins encouraged all Youth Alliance Members to attend a session and stated the next session, which is Job Shadowing, has been rescheduled for the last week in February.

Ms. Wilkins announced that the Upstate Youth Alliance Mentoring Committee will reconvene in March, and the committee is currently searching for mentors. This year the committee will be looking for 6-8 mentors and 3-4 mentees from each youth program. She expressed that the goal of the Mentoring Committee is to find suitable adults who are willing to invest their time to make a difference in a young person's life. Ms. Wilkins also stated that she will email the mentor requirements and the mentor application to the Youth Alliance Members, so that they will be able to recruit new mentors.

Ms. Wilkins asked Ms. Merriweather to give an update concerning the ACHIEVE Program's GED testing issues. Ms. Merriweather stated that the curriculum on the new GED test is more difficult, and they have encountered technical issues with on-line registration. She has had to call the GED helpline multiple times for technical assistance, which has postponed testing at times. Ms. Merriweather also stated that they have had problems finding testing sites, and the cost of the test has increased to \$150.00 per student. She has encountered issues transporting their students to Greenville to test, which they must do multiple times, due to the fact students can only sign up to take one portion of the test at a time and their other portions may not be available that the same time and location.

Lastly, Ms. Wilkins asked Ms. Bell to give an update about the Alternative School Program. Ms. Bell stated that the students in the program started on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. They enrolled 12 students, from Spartanburg and Dorman High schools, and have offered courses such as First Time Credit, College Success, Work Readiness Training, and other online programs, with virtual teachers. Ms. Bell stated that the students are staying all day, which was unexpected, so they have determined ways to provide lunch. She said that they have been using vendors, such as The Butterfly Foundation, and District 7 has provided funding to pay for their students' lunches. Ms. Bell announced that they plan on having no more than 15-20 students.

#### **Other Discussion:**

After general announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m. The next Upstate Youth Alliance meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 2, 2014.