



The Office of Alabama Governor
Robert J. Bentley

Governor Bentley Appoints Members to the Alabama Workforce Council; Releases College and Career Ready Task Force Recommendations

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Press Releases

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley on Tuesday announced nearly 30 appointments to the Alabama Workforce Council to advise and support members of the State School Board, the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System, college and university presidents of Alabama’s four-year institutions and the Superintendent of the Department of Education on ways to more closely tailor the state’s workforce education programs with the workforce needs of new and existing Alabama business and industry. In addition, he released a summary of recommendations from the College and Career Ready Task Force.

“There is nothing more important to our state than job creation and having students who are college and career ready is one of the critical components of economic development,” Governor Robert Bentley said. “The Alabama Workforce Council is a world-class representation of many of the state’s top business and industry leaders and will be vitally important to building and maintaining high-quality partnerships between industry, education and workforce training institutions. Preparing Alabama workers for high-wage, high-demand jobs is our number one priority.”

The council is one of the recommendations from the Governor’s College and Career Ready Task Force created in 2013 to address ways to improve educational outcomes and promote workforce and economic development. Senate Bill 217, sponsored by Senator Paul Bussman (R-CULLMAN), created the council in the 2014 Legislative Session. The council will serve as an advisory body to ensure Alabama’s workforce development programs are meeting the most pressing job needs of the state’s business and industry.

Governor Bentley appointed Zeke Smith, Executive Vice President of External Affairs at Alabama Power, to chair the council.

“It is important there is an open dialogue between industry and education,” Smith said. “I am optimistic the council will make a difference helping our educational leaders develop a robust workforce that can step right in and fill the needs of industry and business.”

The workforce council will be tasked with reviewing and developing recommendations associated with, but not limited to, the following:

- Streamline and align the existing workforce development functions of the State.
- Increase awareness and educate students on available opportunities in the various industry sectors.
- Create a statistical feedback loop between industry and education.
- Propose funding opportunities to increase established industry-funded and Education Budget allocations to be used as scholarship programs for college technical education and dual enrollment programming.
- Enhance public relations and marketing associated with career readiness and skilled craft trades.
- Develop a mechanism that will ensure continuous emphasis on pre-kindergarten through graduate education.

- Provide leadership and recommend standards for increasing membership and expanding operations of the existing ten Regional Workforce Development Councils.
- Identify and address critical unmet needs such as specialty skills in a specific region of the state.
- Develop a methodology to guide program decisions and gauge the success of students as they enter the workforce.

The first meeting of the Alabama Workforce Council will be July 21, 2014, in Montgomery.

The Governor's appointments can be seen [here](#).

The recommendations from the College and Career Ready Task Force can be seen [here](#).

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The Governor's Press Office can be reached at 334-242-7150.

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