

**Alabama Workforce Development – Evaluating the Efficiency of the Alabama
Local Workforce Investment Board Structure**

by

Matthew J. Ulmer

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Auburn University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Auburn, Alabama
May 8, 2016

Keywords: Alabama Workforce Development, Workforce Investment Boards,
WIOA, WIA, Workforce Development System Structure

Copyright 2016 by Matthew J. Ulmer

Approved by

James Witte, Chair, Professor of Education Leadership, Foundations and Technology
Maria Witte, Associate Professor of Education Leadership, Foundations and Technology
David DiRamio, Associate Professor of Education Leadership, Foundations and Technology
Jane Teel, Clinical Professor of Education Leadership, Foundations and Technology
Johnny Green, Associate Professor of Political Science

Abstract

This study provided an assessment of the Alabama Workforce Investment Board structure by surveying board members of each of Alabama's three local workforce investment boards. The survey instrument was inspired by a similarly focused survey administered by a local workforce investment board in northwest Missouri, and focuses on a variety of topics workforce investment board members are uniquely qualified to address. The survey was administered online via the Qualtrics Survey system in July of 2015.

A factor analysis was performed on the survey instrument to determine underlying constructs influencing the data. Of the sixteen survey items directly analyzed through the factor analysis, nine successfully loaded onto one of two factors. The first factor was named Board Culture and the second Board Autonomy. It was determined 70.89% of the variance was explained by the items found within the two factors. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the variance of the survey instrument. Factor one reported a Cronbach's alpha of .869 while the second reported a .867. These figures suggested a strong indication of the reliability of the survey instrument's items.

In addition to the factor and instrument reliability analyses, the researcher performed independent samples t-tests on the nine items which successfully loaded onto one of the two factors. The means of the three local boards were compared by combining the responses of two boards each representing one county and the means of the balance of state board representing sixty-five counties. Of the nine items, seven of the t-tests found statistically significant

differences between the two groups. The themes of the items reaching statistical significance include: the appropriateness of the geographic scope of the board, board decision making capabilities, external engagement and partnerships, board autonomy, and board assessment of service providers.

From the data cited, a conclusion can be drawn suggesting the smaller, locally focused boards perceived themselves as being more efficient and effective relative to their peers on the balance of state board. Optional items on the instrument provided anecdotal evidence to support these findings; however, they also illustrated strong qualities found among those on the larger boards.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have come to fruition without the guidance, support, and encouragement of so many individuals. First and foremost, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee. My committee represents a group of people who have made a significant impact on my academic, professional, and personal lives, and have been instrumental in my success at Auburn University.

Dr. Jim Witte, thank you for going above and beyond the call to ensure this project was of the caliber and quality I sought to achieve. Without your guidance, vision, and support, this process would have been far more difficult than necessary. Thank you for always being available to be a sounding board and advocate. You are a great mentor and friend.

Dr. Green, your friendship and unwavering support over the years means more to me than you know. Thank you for being such a loyal friend and for all of the lunches you spent investing in my professional and academic growth.

Dr. DiRamio, in all likelihood, my return to Auburn University would not have happened without your willingness to take an interest in me. Thank you for investing so much of your time and energy into my academics, research, and professional interests.

Dr. M. Witte, thank you for all your help and guidance over the past twelve months to navigate this process. Your eye for detail and eagerness to help were most certainly appreciated.

Dr. Teel, thank you for your willingness to jump into this project in the midst of starting your new role. I suspect it is rare for someone to teach students both at the undergraduate and

graduate levels, but am lucky to be one of the few. Your professionalism and heart for your students has only grown over the years, and it was a pleasure to learn from you once again in this process.

I would be remiss to not recognize another key faculty member who was instrumental in the success of this dissertation: Dr. Leslie Cordie. Dr. Cordie, your passion for adult education, warmth, encouragement, and friendship have been one of the highlights of my time spent in this program. Your capable leadership and guidance helped me navigate this often overwhelming topic. Your encouragement often served as a great motivation – especially as unexpected hurdles emerged along the way.

Next, I'd like to thank the countless workforce development professionals, senior leaders, legislators, and others across Alabama who have helped me navigate the complicated history and policies around workforce development policy in Alabama. A very special thank you to Dennis Hopper, Mickey Hutto, and Steve Walkley for all the time and energy you invested into making sure my research instrument was appropriate for this study. Your willingness to trust me with a research project of this level and sensitivity was deeply humbling, and I sincerely hope this research will be of value to your work. I'd also like to thank Roger Fortner for helping me connect with so many in these communities. I deeply appreciate your willingness to be a sounding board and resource on this dissertation and so many other projects.

Other Faculty mentors:

The next two groups represent friends and family whose gratitude I have for them cannot adequately be expressed in words. To my ECDI colleagues, thank you all for the support and encouragement you have shown me these past two years. A special thank you must be made to the following three individuals. Mike Easterwood, thank you for your friendship and your

encouragement. You have always been a great source of guidance and support in this process, and I am extremely grateful. Amelia Stehouwer, your fierce friendship and loyalty means more to me than you will ever know. Your willingness to dig deep into thinking through this project with me, and your unwavering belief in me, have been such a fun part of making this work possible. Lastly, but certainly not least, I'd like to express my sincerest gratitude to Joe Summers. Your heart for making Alabama the best it can be, and your heart for others, has helped me find my professional passion in workforce and economic development. Thank you for investing in me. Thank you for challenging me. Thank you for providing me an avenue to thrive in my work and my research. But most importantly, thank you for being a great mentor and friend. My time at ECDI has been everything I had hoped for and more, and I look forward to the months and years ahead working with you to help Alabama meet and exceed its potential.

To my parents and brother, thank you for all of the love and support you've given me throughout this endeavor. Each of you has been a tremendous source of encouragement and support. Thank you for celebrating the small wins with me, and putting up with me when I was grumbling my way through the hurdles. Your continued faith in me gave me the endurance and strength to finish this project. We all know the work doesn't stop here, but I know wherever it takes me, the three of you will always be behind me. I love you all more than words can express.

Lastly, and most importantly, I'd like to thank God for the talents and abilities He has given me to fulfill His will for my life. My academic and professional careers have been full of possibilities, but I am extremely grateful for His continued wisdom and guidance in ensuring I follow His will for my life.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
List of Tables	x
List of Abbreviations	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Purpose of the Study	7
Research Questions.....	8
Significance of the Study.....	8
Limitations	9
Assumptions.....	9
Definition of Terms.....	9
Organization of the Study	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
Legislation and Policy Related to U.S. Workforce Systems and Funding	18
Federal Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA).....	18
Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA)	19
Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)	19
Carl Perkins Act of 1984.....	20

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998	22
Assessment of WIA Implementation and Policy	30
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014	46
Local and Regional Economic and Workforce Development	49
Politics of Planning – Examining the Internal Dynamics of Adult	
Education Board Members	59
Conclusion	62
Chapter 3: Methods.....	64
Research Questions.....	65
Research Design	65
Sample.....	67
Instrumentation	68
Validity	69
Data Collection	70
Data Analysis	71
Conclusion	72
Chapter 4: Findings.....	74
Introduction.....	74
Research Questions.....	74
Data Analysis	75
Descriptive Statistics.....	77
Inferential Statistics	77
Factor Analysis	77

Independent Samples t-Test.....	79
Summary.....	101
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations, and Summary.....	102
Introduction.....	102
Research Questions.....	104
Summary.....	105
Conclusions.....	112
Implications.....	114
Recommendations for Future Research.....	114
Summary.....	115
References	117
Appendix A: Information Letter	122
Appendix B: Workforce Investment Board Survey Instrument	123
Appendix C: Descriptive Statistical Tables.....	130

List of Tables

Table 1	Local Workforce Investment Board Data by State	14
Table 2	Estimates of Training Impacts for JTPA/WIA Adults, by Study	36
Table 3	Estimates of Training Impacts for JTPA/WIA Dislocated Workers, by Study	37
Table 4	Services Received by Adult Exiters: JTPA/WIA Side-by-Side Comparison	41
Table 5	Service Emphases Among Local Workforce Areas.....	42
Table 6	Factor Analysis Results.....	78
Table 7	Instrument Reliability Test Results.....	79
Table 8	Comprehensive t-Test Results Comparing Statewide Board Member Responses to those of the Combined Local Workforce Investment Board Member Responses.....	80
Table 9	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of Their Ability to Shape Board’s Mission and Direction – Means Comparison.....	82
Table 10	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of Their Ability to Shape Board’s Mission and Direction.....	82
Table 11	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Localities/Regions Served by Their Board – Means Comparison.....	84
Table 12	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Localities/Regions Served by Their Board	84
Table 13	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Board Involvement with Workforce Development Councils – Means Comparison.....	86
Table 14	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Board Involvement with Workforce Development Councils	86
Table 15	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Education Community Members on the Board – Means Comparison	88

Table 16	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Education Community Members on the Board	88
Table 17	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Government Affiliated Members on the Board – Means Comparison	90
Table 18	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Government Affiliated Members on the Board	90
Table 19	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Discussion Promoted prior to Decision-making – Means Comparison .	92
Table 20	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Discussion Promoted prior to Decision-making.....	92
Table 21	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Number of External Engagement Efforts Made by Board Means Comparison	94
Table 22	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Number of External Engagement Efforts Made by Board Staff.....	94
Table 23	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of the Number of Service Provider Assessments Conducted by Board Members – Means Comparison	96
Table 24	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of the Number of Service Provider Assessments Conducted by Board Members	96
Table 25	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding theAmount of Time Allowed to Assess Board Approved Service Providers – Means Comparison	98
Table 26	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Time Allowed to Assess Board Approved Service Providers.....	98
Table 27	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Size of the Area/Region Their Respective Board Serves – Means Comparison	100
Table 28	t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Size of the Area/Region Their Respective Board Serves	100

Appendices

Table C1	All Survey Participant Board Membership Data	127
Table C2	Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – All Respondents	128
Table C3	Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board Members	129
Table C4	Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board Members	130
Table C5	Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – Mobile Works	131
Table C6	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – All Participants	132
Table C7	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board Members	133
Table C8	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board Members	135
Table C9	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – Mobile Works	136
Table C10	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – All Respondents	137
Table C11	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board	138
Table C12	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board	139
Table C13	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – Mobile Works	140
Table C14	Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – All Respondents	141

Table C15 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board	142
Table C16 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board	143
Table C17 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – Mobile Works	144
Table C18 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – All Respondents	146
Table C19 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board	147
Table C20 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board	148
Table C21 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – Mobile Works	149
Table C22 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – All Respondents	150
Table C23 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board	150
Table C24 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board	151
Table C25 Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – Mobile Works	151

List of Abbreviations

ACCS	Alabama Community College System
AWC	Alabama Workforce Council
ADECA	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs
CETA	Comprehensive Job Training Act
ITA	Individual Training Account
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
GOWD	Governor's office of Workforce Development
MDTA	Manpower Development Training Act
NAWB	National Association of Workforce Boards
WDC	Workforce Development Council
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board
WIOA	Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Across the United States, politicians, business leaders, and educators alike are discussing the importance of advancing policies charged with growing our economy and creating quality, well-paying jobs. It is no secret that developing and strengthening the size and quality of our workforce is critical to the long-term viability and success of our economy. Consequently, we must continue to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of our workforce development and education delivery systems to ensure we are meeting and exceeding market demands for our economy (Lautman, 2011).

In 2013, the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB), a consortium of policy analysts, economists, government officials, and economic development professionals, released a report which outlined the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the economies of Southern states. The report's key theme emphasizes the critical nature of promoting and sustaining a skilled workforce capable of meeting the needs of employers in their respective areas. According to the report,

While many things today are hotly debated and much of the future is unpredictable, most economic realities are things we already know. We know the United States and the Southern economies are changing. Globalization has rewritten the rules of competition. Workforce demographics are changing. The talent bar for success is rising. Life cycles are changing. The tools for learning and skill acquisition are changing. The expectations

for Return on Investment (ROI) for our education and workforce dollars are rising.
(SGPB, 2013, p. 3)

Alabama's workforce development system largely relies on the public K–12, postsecondary, and higher education systems to prepare workers for the jobs needed today and in the future. Many of the jobs available in the United States can be found in the advanced manufacturing, product production, and high technology sectors (Zakaria, 2011). As a result, economic developers and politicians alike are seeking to find ways in which we can develop programs and partnerships with educational entities and state agencies that can provide the necessary training in these fields.

One of the largest drivers in creating successful programs to address these emerging needs is funding sources. In 2014, Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). According to a report created by the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) and the Public Consulting Group, the group outlines the historical precedent and goals of the new law as it seeks to build upon the shortcomings of the preceding legislation known as the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The report states,

The Workforce Investment Act was authorized in 1998. Over the past 11 years the public workforce system has long awaited reauthorization that would address the evolving workforce needs as well as the limitations in WIA with respect to training, funding, and service delivery design... The purpose of the WIOA is to better align the workforce system with education and economic development in an effort to create a collective response to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state, and local levels.
(NAWB, 2014, p. 3)

The report further describes WIOA's introduction of new performance accountability measures for the state and local systems. These new measures will be imposed on state and local boards and seek to provide metrics that will allow board members to have more consistent guidelines to evaluate program effectiveness and outcomes (NAWB, 2014). The introduction of these measures marks a new challenge for board members and service providers alike; consequently, states must prepare to address these rising guidelines with proper assessment measures in accordance with the new law.

For decades, the federal government has provided a substantial amount of funding to every state to support workforce development and education. Prior to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, there were a number of bills that addressed workforce and vocational education. The Smith Hughes Act of 1917, the Vocation Act of 1963, Carl Perkins Act of 1984, and the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 were passed over the last nine decades and incrementally addressed specific needs of America's workforce development system (Gordon, 2008). The Workforce Investment Act has served as a very impactful piece of legislation directly related to workforce development, in that, it rebranded and strengthened many of the local and regional workforce development service providers and boards that will be continued under the WIOA. The Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are a combination of state governing and local boards tasked with disbursing federal workforce development funds and establishing contractual relationships with regional service providers to develop and execute workforce programs for the general public (Association for Career and Technical Education [ACTE], 1998). In Alabama, these local workforce investment boards are supported by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs ([ADECA], 2012).

ADECA's role in the allocation of these federal resources is paramount. Like many states, ADECA has elected to conform to the WIA and WIOA policies, which stipulate each state create Workforce Investment Boards to determine how these federal monies are best spent. Members of these boards are chosen by ADECA's leadership in concert with the State WIB chairperson (ADECA, 2012). Given the language of the WIA, the WIB membership is comprised of state industry leaders who are presumed to be up to speed on the workforce needs of industry and business in their respective areas. Some may also include local foundation board members, educators, political figures, business leaders, economic developers, and others (ADECA, 2012).

Today, Alabama has four Workforce Investment Boards or WIBs. The first board is the Alabama Workforce Investment Board. This board oversees the disbursement of the state's overall allotment of WIA or WIOA funds. The remaining three boards are defined as local workforce investment boards. The first regional board, the Alabama Workforce Investment Board, serves 65 of Alabama's 67 counties, and includes the Huntsville and Montgomery metro areas, Dothan, eastern Alabama, and the Tuscaloosa area (ADECA, 2014). The other two regional WIBs are local boards that serve the Jefferson County (Birmingham) and Mobile County areas respectively. In 2012, the Workforce Investment Act allocated roughly 36 million to Alabama to disperse. Roughly 3.5 million was supplied to the Jefferson County WIB, 2.5 million was allocated to the Mobile County WIB, and the remaining 30 million was made available to the Alabama Regional WIB (ADECA, 2014).

In addition to the Workforce Investment Boards, Alabama also has ten Workforce Development Councils which report to the team formerly known as the Governor's Office for Workforce Development (GOWD). In the mid-2000s, the Governor's Office of Workforce

Development was moved to the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) in an attempt to streamline the efforts of postsecondary institutions and the needs of business and industry in the communities they served. The ten Workforce Development Councils (WDC) are similar to the WIBs in their structure and purpose. However, rather than disburse funds, these councils determine the workforce needs of business and industry in their regions and implement policy to align regional postsecondary institutions to address them.

Statement of the Problem

Alabama Governor Robert Bentley has expressed concern with the efficiency and effectiveness of Alabama's Workforce Development System in its work to develop and administer workforce development programs across the state (AWC, 2015). Many feel there could be more effective ways in which these structures could align that would maximize the work and the relationships of these agencies, institutions, boards, and councils. In 2014, Alabama Governor Robert Bentley convened the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) to examine the state's workforce system and to make recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness. On January 31, 2015, the 33-member council presented their recommendations to the Governor. Included among the recommendations were the interest in further examining the relationships and efficiencies of the current WIB structure (AWC, 2015).

For the purposes of this study, research was conducted under the belief there is a lack of information regarding the efficiency of the local workforce investment board (WIB) system structure in Alabama.

Theoretical Framework

The current workforce development system in Alabama incorporates a substantial number of public agencies conducting duplicative efforts to educate and train Alabama workers. These overlapping responsibilities have caused several internal and external leaders to question the efficiency of several entities and the structure of the reporting lines they operate within. Consequently, modifications to the current structure could spark the reallocation of resources and personnel to more effectively utilize the components of Alabama's workforce system.

The case of Alabama's local workforce investment boards prompts further investigation. According to data compiled by Workforce Investment Works, a site promoted and supported by the National Association of Workforce Boards, there are 558 local WIBs across the United States (NAWB, 2014). The average number of local boards per state currently stands at 11.16. Some states, such as Delaware and Rhode Island, do not have any local boards due to their geography and population size, whereas larger, more populous states such as California, Florida, and New York, each have over 24 local investment boards. The overall average number of individuals served by the local WIBs is 669,826 (NAWB, 2014). In Alabama, there are currently 3 local WIBs – one of which serves 65 of Alabama's 67 counties. Based upon an initial review of these data, one could argue the existence of merit to further examine if Alabama's current three local WIBs are the best organizational structure to meet statewide workforce development and investment needs.

In addition to the initial optics of the data provided by the NAWB, the internal structures and composition of the WIB membership also pose a unique dynamic to their overall operation and effectiveness. WIB members bring a wide range of interests and experiences to the table as they seek to develop and implement workforce solutions in their respective areas. One possible

issue in Alabama's current structure stems from the Alabama Local Workforce Investment Board, Alabama's 65 county local WIB, as representatives are often making decisions impacting individuals from every corner of the state. For example, a business leader from rural Alabama will periodically be faced with making collective decisions about areas of the state in which they may not be familiar. While their decision may be made with good intentions and quality data, one could argue understanding the local perspectives and attitudes related to certain industries or education service providers could add tremendous value upon the board membership's decision making process. With the new assessment components of the WIOA compelling WIB leaders to supply additional assessment information to the federal government as an additional accountability measure, the AWC may view this as an opportune time to reevaluate how these WIBs are structured.

Through surveying regional WIB members, data were collected which aided in highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Alabama's local WIBs. These data will also inform policymakers and workforce leaders as they explore, and potentially implement, any future changes to Alabama's workforce development system. One survey instrument was developed to accomplish these data collection goals. The survey instrument was developed with items specifically designed to collect data pertaining to the observations, practices, and experiences of those who serve on the state and local WIBs.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the perceptions of the roles, responsibilities, and structural effectiveness of individuals who currently serve on Alabama's local WIBs. In an effort to support the State government's evaluation of workforce development related agencies and

service providers, this study will help inform policymakers as to the impressions and recommendations of those currently serving on Alabama's local WIBs.

The results found through the survey instrument will help policymakers better understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the local WIBs, and will allow for further informed conversation to take place regarding any possible reforms directed to these boards, and the state agencies who support them.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used for this study:

1. What are the perceptions of the statewide and local WIB members regarding their organization's efficiency?
2. What relationship, if any, exists between the views of single county local WIB members and the members of the multiple county local WIB regarding their efficiency?
3. Should Alabama's local workforce investment boards be restructured?

Significance of the Study

Alabama Governor Robert Bentley and the Alabama Workforce Council are actively exploring opportunities to modify Alabama's workforce development system. In this effort, they hope to identify areas of inefficiency where work is being unnecessarily duplicated by multiple entities and where restructuring service providers or governing bodies can provide greater efficiency and effectiveness. The Alabama Workforce Investment Board structure has been identified by the AWC as being one of the top areas needing to be evaluated more closely. Given the new accountability measures placed on local WIBs through WIOA, coupled with the AWC's interest in delving into the operational and structural efficiencies of the WIBs, this study

could provide valuable interest to any policymaker tasked with evaluating these boards (AWC, 2015).

Limitations

This study has several limitations:

1. Data were only collected in the State of Alabama; therefore may not be directly applicable to other states.
2. The sample taken does not reflect the views of every possible group or individual impacted by the local workforce investment boards.
3. Data from professionals within the realm of the Alabama workforce development community are limited to the statewide and local WIB members.
4. The number of WIB members who elected to complete the survey was lower than desired by the researcher.

Assumptions

The researcher makes the following assumptions:

1. The responses to the survey instruments were truthful.
2. Responses were only provided by the individuals invited to participate in the survey.
3. The data were entered correctly.
4. The instrument used correctly reflects the views and perspectives of those who completed it.

Definition of Terms

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) – Alabama’s key state agency tasked with the administration of programs and services in support of furthering economic and community prosperity. Through partnerships with state, federal, local and non-

profit entities, ADECA seeks to make lasting, positive impacts. According to the ADECA website, ADECA is actively engaged in the following areas: “economic development projects, infrastructure improvements, job training, energy conservation, law enforcement, traffic safety, recreation development and assistance to low-income families” (ADECA, 2015).

Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) – an advisory council appointed by the governor tasked with providing consultative support to key leaders in Alabama’s workforce, education, and governmental arenas regarding workforce policy. Members of the board largely represent Alabama’s private sector interests (AWC, 2015).

Economic Development – a program, group of policies, or set of activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base (IEDC, 2011).

Individual Training Accounts – accounts established with WIA funds for approved individuals to use at eligible education or training provider of their choice. Limitations may exist with respect to the cost, length, or types of training programs and services funded through training accounts (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003).

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – an agreement established between two or more groups. In this scenario, memorandum of understanding refers to agreements initiated between education and training service providers and local workforce investment boards to provide specific programs and services to individuals in the community. The agreements stipulate costs of services provided and performance metrics which must be met by the providers (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003, p. 8).

Workforce Development – education and training activities and programs which seek to bridge the gap between demand and supply through skills enhancement of existing workers and/or improving basic skills of entry-level workers (IEDC, 2011)

Workforce Development Councils – a council comprised of volunteers tasked with engaging in workforce development planning activities in a specified region. Alabama currently has ten workforce development councils. The councils were established by the Alabama Community College System (ACCS, 2015).

Workforce Investment Board – statewide and local boards tasked with disbursing federal workforce development funds and establishing contractual relationships with regional service providers to develop and execute workforce programs for the general public (ACTE, 1998).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – officially replaces the Workforce Investment Act, and represents the first major piece of legislation passed in fifteen years related to the public workforce system (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration [DOLETA], 2015). WIOA’s vision is to “provide the state and local areas the flexibility to collaborate across systems in an effort to better address the employment skills needs of current employees, jobseekers, and employers” (NAWB, 2014, p. 2).

Workforce Investment Act of 1998 – A major piece of federal legislation aimed at aligning federal workforce development activities with public sector employment and training services across the United States. This legislation also created the workforce investment board structure implemented from 1998–2015 (Ellis, 2001).

Organization of the Study

The study is organized in the following manner. Chapter 1 introduces the study, which includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the research, theoretical framework applied to the problem, research questions, limitations of the study, and the definition of terms. Chapter 2 is a review of related literature concerning a brief history of the legislation pertaining to workforce development and education, reports and academic papers critiquing WIA and WIOA provisions of note, and economic and workforce development trends of importance. Chapter 3 reports the methods utilized in this study, including the population and sample, instrumentation, data collection and the data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the overall findings of the study. Lastly, Chapter 5 features a summary of the study, conclusions, and the implications and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purposes of this study, the review of related literature provides a broad, cross-disciplinary background from which to approach today's workforce development challenges – with a special interest taken into the funding sources and policies impacting the work of workforce investment boards. Across the United States, workforce investment boards represent a collective federal effort to support workforce development at the state and local levels. Through federal funding sources, ties to other federal programs and services, and policies found within the Workforce Investment and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Acts, the workforce investment boards seek to make positive, impactful change among members of the workforce within the communities they serve.

Alabama's workforce investment board structure is comprised of one statewide board and three local boards. According to data provided by the National Association of Workforce Investment Boards, there are a total of 558 local or regional workforce investment boards in the United States. The average population of individuals served by the local or regional workforce investment boards is 669,826, and the average number of boards per state is just above 11. Comparatively, Alabama has three local workforce investment boards with an average population of 1,611,241 residents served by each board (NAWB, 2014). Table 1 illustrates the data points related to number of investment boards, state population, and state population divided by the number of local workforce investment boards by state.

Table 1

Local Workforce Investment Board Data by State

State	Local WIBs	State Population	Population by Board
Alabama	3	4,833,722	1,611,241
Alaska	0	735,132	735,132
Arizona	12	6,626,624	552,219
Arkansas	10	2,959,373	295,937
California	49	38,332,521	782,296
Colorado	9	5,268,367	585,374
Connecticut	5	3,596,080	719,216
Delaware	0	646,449	646,449
Florida	24	19,552,860	814,703
Georgia	20	9,992,167	499,608
Hawaii	4	1,404,054	351,014
Idaho	1	1,612,136	1,612,136
Illinois	23	12,882,135	560,093
Indiana	12	6,570,902	547,575
Iowa	15	3,090,416	206,028
Kansas	5	2,893,957	578,791
Kentucky	10	4,395,295	439,530
Louisiana	18	4,625,470	256,971
Maine	4	1,328,302	332,076
Maryland	12	5,928,814	494,068
Massachusetts	16	6,692,824	418,302
Michigan	25	9,895,622	395,825
Minnesota	16	5,420,380	338,774
Mississippi	4	2,991,207	747,802
Missouri	14	6,044,171	431,727
Montana	1	1,015,165	1,015,165

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

State	Local WIBs	State Population	Population by Board
Nebraska	3	1,868,516	622,839
Nevada	2	2,790,136	1,395,068
New Hampshire	1	1,323,459	1,323,459
New Jersey	17	8,899,339	523,491
New Mexico	4	2,085,287	521,322
New York	33	19,651,127	595,489
North Carolina	23	9,848,060	428,177
North Dakota	1	723,393	723,393
Ohio	20	11,570,808	578,540
Oklahoma	9	3,850,568	427,841
Oregon	7	3,930,065	561,438
Pennsylvania	22	12,773,801	580,627
Rhode Island	2	1,051,511	525,756
South Carolina	12	4,774,839	397,903
South Dakota	1	844,877	844,877
Tennessee	13	6,495,978	499,691
Texas	28	26,448,193	944,578
Utah	1	2,900,872	2,900,872
Vermont	1	626,630	626,630
Virginia	15	8,260,405	550,694
Washington	12	6,971,406	580,951
West Virginia	7	1,854,304	264,901
Wisconsin	11	5,742,713	522,065
Wyoming	1	582,658	582,658
TOTAL	558	315,203,090	
AVERAGE	11.16	6,304,062	669,826

With the exception of a few states with smaller populations or smaller land areas, many states have determined employing the use of more workforce investment boards a valuable tactic to approach implementing WIA/WIOA policies in their respective regions and localities. Consequently, Alabama's decision to maintain a three local workforce investment board structure sparks the research question: should Alabama's local workforce investment boards be restructured? To address the greater research question, two related research questions must be addressed simultaneously. What are the perceptions of the local WIB members regarding the efficiency of the local workforce investment board structure? What relationship, if any, exists between the views of the memberships of the three local WIB regarding their operations, membership, staff support, and overall efficiency?

Before these research questions can be addressed, it is important to understand the history and purpose of federal workforce development policy in the United States, particularly the policies and regulations directly impacting local WIBs found within the WIA and WIOA, the interrelated nature of local and regional economic and workforce development, and the human dynamic found within boards tasked with implementing educational plans for adult learners. More specifically, the literature review is organized as follows: first, a discussion of relevant legislation with a particular emphasis placed on the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The review of the foundational legislative introductory information provides an overview of related criticism and assessment of the Workforce Investment Act, as one of the key components of the research problem lies in the complexity and importance of understanding the roles and responsibilities placed upon state and local workforce investment boards, their supporting agencies, and the local service providers with whom they contract. Following the discussion of the WIA will be a brief introduction to the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, which went

into effect in January of 2015. This section will discuss the primary reforms brought forth by the WIOA, and how the state and local workforce investment boards will be impacted.

In the remaining sections of the literature review, literature related to the local nature of economic and workforce development is introduced. Further, an examination of the politics of adult education program planning is discussed to emphasize the critical impact board members, and their motivations, can have upon the discussions and ultimately the decisions they make related to adult and workforce program planning and services.

Literature related to the topic was collected by an extensive search utilizing Internet sources such as ERIC and Google Scholar, and the Auburn University Libraries. Studies directly addressing state decisions and policies related to their respective structures of local workforce investment boards were not readily available; however, numerous research studies, conference papers, books, evaluative reports, and industry journals were consulted to find literature related to the examination of the Workforce Investment Act's implementation and detailed assessments of the Act's policy implications, literature addressing the prevalence, and importance, of local economic development, and lastly literature directly related to the political dynamics at play in the context of boards tasked with strategic workforce education program and services planning and resource allocation. The references found within the initial sources, discovered via web and library based searches, provided the significant portion of literature reviewed in this chapter. Once collected, data related to the concepts and principles found from these resources were reviewed and analyzed under the context of how they may interrelate to the tasks and decision-making processes assigned to local workforce investment boards.

The sum of this literature review will provide a sound knowledge and theoretical basis with which to approach the research problem asserted in Chapter 1, and will work to frame the

methodology and organizational approach from which the results and recommendations will be addressed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Legislation and Policy Related to U.S. Workforce Systems and Funding

Since the 1980s, there have been several significant pieces of legislation passed impacting the funding mechanisms for public and some private workforce education programs. For the purposes of this study, those bills most closely related to the systems and structures under examination are highlighted. Through these bills, states were given a specific amount of funding based upon a variety of factors to support many different types of workforce development and education programs.

The primary objectives of government sponsored workforce programs in the United States center around the needs of the country's underemployed and disadvantaged. The Great Depression of the 1930s brought forward a need for employment support for many Americans. According to Eberts and Erickcek's (2002) work, the first key pieces of federal legislation directly addressing the needs of the economically disadvantaged and the unemployed were the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 and the Social Security Act of 1935. The Wagner Peyser Act established the U.S. Employment Service, and the Social Security Act set forth the unemployment insurance program (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). These two pieces of legislation set forth a precedent for government involvement in workforce and labor relations, and also established a strong federal-state-local partnership approach in delivery of workforce services (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002).

Federal Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA)

In 1962, Congress passed the Federal Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA), which established the first public training program across the United States. This bill operated

under the belief that those without necessary job skills or training were essentially excluded from employment. This predicament was found to be far more prevalent among economically disadvantaged Americans (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). Programs established under this legislation included remedial education, job skills training, career coaching, and practical experience through apprenticeship programs (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002).

Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA)

Following the MDTA was the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). CETA improved workforce development by establishing local advisory councils, the first iteration of the eventual WIBs, aimed at guiding and implementing statewide and local workforce education and training programming. In addition, CETA set the initial council membership precedent, which requires the council to include a membership comprised of people from the business community, education, and agencies related to labor and human services (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). While the perceived efficiencies and effectiveness of these councils varied from market to market, the precedent these councils set recognized the value of local perspectives – particularly business and education – as public policy related to workforce development was being developed and implemented.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

In an attempt to strengthen and address problems left unsettled by CETA, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was passed in 1982 (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). JTPA established a greater emphasis on federal-state-local partnerships by strengthening the role of the local councils and highlighting the need to more closely match the skills training programs provided to the needs of local business and industry (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). JTPA also

served as the precursor to the longstanding workforce investment bill – the Workforce Investment ACT (WIA).

Carl Perkins Act of 1984

Prior to the Workforce Investment Act’s passage in 1998, the Carl Perkins Act of 1984 came as result of amendments made to its principle precursor, the Vocation Act of 1963. According to Howard Gordon (2008), the Vocation Act of 1963 was the single most important piece of legislation pertaining to career and technical education since the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (Gordon, 2008). Further, Gordon suggest, “the major goals [of the Vocation Act of 1963] were to maintain, extend and improve existing programs of vocational education, and to provide part time employment for youth who needed the earnings to continue their schooling on a full time basis” (Gordon, 2008, p. 92). Unlike MDTA, CETA, JTPA, and WIA, the Carl Perkins Act focuses largely on workforce skills training at the K–12 level.

The intention of ensuring anyone of any age could have access to affordable, quality education in a wide range of professions is clearly maintained and expanded in the amendments found in the Carl Perkins Acts of 1984 and 1990. Like the initial Vocation Act of 1963, the Carl Perkins Act of 1984 aimed to expand the purview of federal programs in a greater effort to expand the skills base of the American workforce (Gordon, 2008). In 1990, the Carl Perkins amendment took a more targeted approach to workforce development and education by highlighting the importance of technology. Vocational education was now to be referred to as Vocational and Applied Technology Education, and began the practice of developing articulation agreements among workforce education related providers. Funding for the Vocation Act of 1963 and succeeding Carl Perkins Acts was provided by Congressional budgetary allocations (Gordon, 2008).

The latest versions of the Carl Perkins Act were passed in 1998 and into the 2000s respectively. Congress passed these bills as a means to reauthorize and expand the previously authorized funding bills for career and technical education programs. One of the biggest implications of the reauthorization act passed in 1998 was the creation of Tech Prep. According to Gordon, Tech Prep is “two years of secondary education with a minimum of two years of postsecondary education in a non-duplicative, sequential course of study. [It] integrates academic and vocational/technical instruction, and utilizes work-based and worksite learning where appropriate and available” (Gordon, 2008, pp. 108–109). Further, the program seeks to expand student knowledge in the area of STEM disciplines, agriculture, health occupations, applied economics, etc. as it aims to lead students to job placement in their chosen field, or to further their education (Gordon, 2008).

Overall, the Carl Perkins Acts are considered to be largely successful. Congressional attention paid to the education and skills development for the American workforce served as a clear indication of the federal government’s interest in ensuring the United States could compete economically (Gordon, 2008). Further, the legislation’s provisions related to streamlining processes through articulation agreements among education providers, and adopting more programs and services related to technology education, acknowledge Congress’ foresight into the importance of technology related skills among American workers. However, the emphasis each of these acts place on making quality career and technical education accessible and affordable to Americans of all ages, socio-economic statuses, or career fields can receive the skills and professional certifications necessary to be successful in their chosen field (Gordon, 2008).

Despite their numerous strengths, Gordon argues there are some significant shortfalls to the legislation as well. Like most legislative acts related to program funding, stipulations must

be met in order for funds to be disbursed. The Carl Perkins Acts were no exception. According to Gordon, the purpose of the legislation and the stipulations for funding did not match, thus causing more barriers for education providers than previously existed. Further, the legislation micromanaged the educational component of the implementation, requiring many provisions that created a standardized curriculum with broad learning outcomes that became troublesome to educational entities. Consequently, the legislation was difficult to implement for many on the local level (Gordon, 2008).

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Over the past 16 years, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has served as the primary piece of legislation driving the work and funding of state and local workforce investment boards. The nuances policies and procedures found in this bill are important to understand, in that to provide perspective as outside entities assess the amount of work being addressed by individual local workforce investment boards and their intermediary educational providers.

In August of 1998, President Clinton signed the WIA into law. According to the Association for Career and Technical Education's (ACTE) Guide to the Workforce Investment Act, the bill's passage marks the culmination of a five-year discussion regarding America's workforce development system (ACTE, 1998). WIA came into effect at a time where concerns among U.S. employers regarding the skill sets of their emerging workforce were starting to fall short of the mark. Ellis (2001) described the WIA as a "major piece of social welfare policy that compliments the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. [It was] designed to streamline public sector employment and training services" (Ellis, 2001, p. 1).

Decker (2010) cited a 2005 survey from the National Association of Manufactures and Deloitte and Touche which reported over 80 percent of manufacturers in the U.S. found themselves struggling to find skilled workers. The manufacturers suggested nearly half of the individuals currently employed had skill levels rated poor at best. He furthers his comments regarding by suggesting this skills shortage is a likely cause of the growing income disparity between those who are highly educated and skilled versus those who are not (Decker, 2010). As a result, he argues the substantial changes brought forth by the passage of the WIA marks the end of the business as usual approach to modern workforce development and education in the United States (Decker, 2010).

The overarching purpose of the WIA has a two-pronged focus. The first prong focuses on the primary system role of organizing and structuring the system for federally supported workforce training and collecting and measuring labor market data. The second prong involves an optional component where states can adopt a unified workforce plan (ACTE, 1998). The primary changes made to workforce development and education in the United States came through WIA's new provisions, which brought additional federal dollars and regulations, over and above JTPA, to the states. According to the guide, "the WIA framework places additional authority at the state level to establish formal links between the separate public and private governance structures, such as K-12 and postsecondary education training bodies, state agencies, and local units of government" (ACTE, 1998, p. 9).

The WIA has five titles or major subsections:

- "Title I – Workforce Investment Systems authorizes a new workforce investment system and provides services for adults, youth, and dislocated workers.

- Title II – Adult Education and Literacy reauthorizes adult education and literacy programs.
- Title III – Workforce Investment-Related Activities contains amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act and mainly makes changes to the nation’s employment statistics system. It also provides for linkages with other programs and authorizes the Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission.
- Title IV – Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 contains amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.
- Title V – General Provisions contains general provisions relating to the act” (ACTE, 1998, p. 9).

Upon deeper review of the WIA, it is clear Congress sought to take the strengths and missed opportunities found from implementation to refinement of the JTPA, and built them out into a more aggressive system. The WIA is designed to provide state and local governments with increased funding and organizational structure options, which allow greater flexibility in implementing programs with increased accountability measures as well. These accountability measures will also increase again with the implementation of the WIOA (NAWB, 2014).

The WIA also mandates the creation of a state workforce investment board tasked with supporting state leaders as they develop a multi-year strategic plan. Each of these strategic plans must be submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Labor (Gordon, 2008). In addition to the statewide workforce investment board, the WIA also authorizes the creation of local or regional workforce investment boards (WIBs). Like their statewide counterparts, each of these boards will be tasked with creating strategic plans and policies, which will influence workforce development in the specific localities and regions they serve (Gordon, 2008).

The state workforce investment board is designed to help the governor:

develop a five year strategic plan describing statewide workforce investment activities;
develop and continuously improve a statewide system of workforce investment activities;
designate local workforce investment areas; develop an allocation formula for
distribution of funds; develop comprehensive state performance measures; prepare the
annual report to the secretary of labor; develop statewide employment statistics; and
apply for incentive grants for performance. (ACTE, 1998)

Each state WIB must submit a five-year plan outlining their statewide goals and strategies. The report must describe the board composition, state required policies for workforce investment activities across the system, accountability metrics, compile data related to projected workforce needs and employment statistics by occupation, and the specific job skills related to each occupation, and the types of available workforce investment and education activities statewide (ACTE, 1998). Should a state elect to submit the optional state unified plan, they must “cover one or more of the following bulleted activities ... and may cover one or more of the remaining [options provided by WIA’s language]” (ACTE, 1998, p. 11). “A state may submit a unified plan for two or more of the following [areas, mentioned above]:

- Secondary vocational education programs authorized under Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act;
- Postsecondary vocational education programs authorized under Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act;
- Activities authorized under the WIA’s Title I (Workforce Investment Systems) and Title II (Adult Education and Literacy);

- Work requirements and employment and training programs authorized under the Food Stamp Act” (ACTE, 1998, p. 12).

Following WIA regulations, Alabama’s governor must initiate and/or approve the creation or modification of local workforce investment board service areas (ADECA, 2012). State WIB and government leaders must determine what services and training offerings each area should have within its jurisdiction to justify its structure. For example, each workforce area should include a number of schools, technical programs, career centers, types of employers, etc. (Gordon, 2008).

Compared to the Carl Perkins Acts, the WIA took deeper steps to address the increasing need for more targeted approaches to workforce education. Some of the most significant inclusions included: codifying One-Stop Career Centers, consolidating workforce activities, realigning existing programs, emphasized youth programs, accentuated the need for greater customer information and choice, addressed a greater need for program accountability, increased employer engagement, and outlined a greater need for longer-term strategic planning (ACTE, 1998).

The One-Stop Career Centers were designed to be the backbone of the workforce delivery system in the United States (ACTE, 1998). The One-Stop Centers provide a wealth of resources to prospective employees including, but not limited to: résumé critiques, interview practice, and job search skills, just to name a few (ACTE, 1998). The Centers are often regionally located in order to best serve the general population.

The One-Stop Center services, and the subsequent referral training, are commonly referred to in three service categories: core services, intensive services (does not include training), and training (training provided by an intermediary training service provider). Core

services are provided to any individual who visits a One-Stop Center. These services include determination of eligibility to receive federal assistance, intake procedures such as worker profiling, providing the individual orientation information, and initial skills assessment (ACTE, 1998).

Intensive services are made available to those who have received core services, yet are unable to obtain employment, and are recognized by the One-Stop operator as in need of more intensive assistance to gain employment. In addition, those who are employed and need additional intensive services to become more self-sufficient are also eligible under the intensive services protocol (ACTE, 1998). Intensive services include: comprehensive assessments of skill levels and specific needs through interviews and diagnostic testing, group and individual counseling, interviewing and personal maintenance training, soft skills training, and the development of an employment plan (ACTE, 1998).

Lastly, training services are made available to individuals who are eligible to receive intensive services but are unable to gain or keep a job, have skills, other qualifications, or an interest in programs directly related to primary employment needs in the area, ineligible for Pell Grant, or need greater financial assistance above and beyond federal grant aid (ACTE, 1998). At this point, the participant is considered for an individual training account (ITA), and may participate in programs such as on-the-job and customized training, training provided by intermediaries through MOUs, and other programs which combine training and related instruction (e.g. formal education program through a community college) (ACTE, 1998).

One of the signature components of the WIA was the consolidation of workforce development activities. As government budgets continue to tighten, legislators often find themselves seeking ways to stretch their resources as far as possible. According to the

Government Accounting Office (GAO), there are roughly 154 programs or funding streams dedicated to workforce related programs or services (ACTE, 1998). Consequently, the GAO made recommendations for similar organizations to partner on relevant projects to help maximize the fiscal return on investment in these programs (ACTE, 1998). In addition, the WIA encourages the governor's office and local government leaders to create a unified plan with providers where partnerships could be formed with like entities across a state, rather than a small portion of localities (ACTE, 1998). While servicing adult workers is key, the WIA took specific steps to encourage the creation and development of youth programs pertaining to workforce development. The WIA policy created youth councils in each workforce region to help business, industry, and government leaders develop programming related to the workforce needs of the region's youth (ACTE, 1998)

Another key component of the WIA is the greater emphasis placed on program accountability. Like its replacement, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), program accountability will be greatly encouraged on the state and local levels (ACTE, 1998; NAWB, 2014). These accountability measures are derived from the most basic of specific, measurable outcomes, such as skill and degree attainment, all the way up to employment rates of those served by the program (ACTE, 1998). Local WIBs are also held accountable for these metrics as well. Individually, they cannot specifically serve as a provider of workforce development training and services; consequently, they must enter into MOUs with local public and private education and training providers to create customized programs and services for regional workers.

Lastly, private sector engagement, through partnerships and planning efforts, are essential to the success of workforce development program planning and implementation. The local

WIBs are intrinsically tasked with building and sustaining these relationships; consequently, it is imperative they are founded and comprised of a broad cross section of leaders from representative businesses and industries in their region with a shared vision of developing sustainable and effective workforce programs (ACTE, 1998).

The general consensus among scholars, workforce practitioners, and policymakers alike is the WIA was moderately successful (Decker, 2010; Hollenbeck, 2009; Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003; O'Shea & King, 2001). Building upon the foundation developed by the Carl Perkins Act and the Job Training Partnership Act and its subsequent amendments, the WIA of 1998 and its subsequent amendments in 2005, appear to have made workforce education policy at the state and local levels more efficient and effective. The additional autonomy by state and local leaders enabled customized solutions related to workforce to be developed and assessed by those who best understood the implications of those actions.

Education and public policy scholars alike have attempted to study the effects and relative effectiveness of the WIA with mixed reviews. Given the complexities and intricacies of policy analysis, academic approaches to studying this particular law are difficult to find measurable quantities of validity due to their wide range of approaches to assess the law's outcomes. While many used quantitative approaches reviewing statistical data from targeted participant employment and wage data from a range of individual programs, others sought to find similar comprehensive data types across groups of dissimilar states. Overall, the impression of the law's effectiveness is positive, but not without noteworthy criticism and recommendations for improvement. In addition, the law's later amendments have prompted further academic study of the law's outcomes and policy implications from the early 2000s into the next decade leading up to the passage of WIOA.

In sum, local workforce investment board members have a great deal to consider when utilizing federal resources to implement WIA policies in their regions. While opportunities to collaborate and partner with other federal programs are available, many workforce investment boards must enter into MOUs with local service providers to ensure one-stop centers have the resources and offerings in place to best serve their customers. When framed with these considerations in mind, board members with local networks, knowledge of the local economy, and the community education and training providers would be a significant asset.

Assessment of WIA Implementation and Policy

Given the long history of federal legislation pertaining to public workforce development and employment services programs, many scholars from a variety of fields have conducted research to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of each bill. For the purposes of this study, the literature reviewed in this section reflects scholarly evaluation of the WIA in the broader context of WIBs, to include their membership and any full-time professional staff, as they attempt to interpret and implement the law's policy and procedures.

O'Shea and King's (2001) work was one of the first major attempts to examine the law from a public policy and human resources standpoint. According to the authors, the WIA's arrival marked,

the creation of a system based on informed consumer choice regarding career development, universal access to employment and training services, more systematic accountability, performance based management, strong local governance, active private sector participation, and increased labor market responsiveness at the state and local levels... What is certain is that the WIA provides a platform for substantive changes that

states and localities may build upon in accord with their own goals, context and capacity.
(O'Shea, et al., 2001)

Their initial assessment of the bill seemed to hold true after their review of several states introductory efforts to implement the policy. O'Shea and King's study involves their assessment of local and statewide approaches to preparation efforts to implement the WIA in Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. Further, their research approach entailed utilizing state monitoring reports, technical assistance guides, policy directives, and other resources as each of the respective states implemented WIA (O'Shea & King, 2001).

O'Shea and King highlighted several areas of strength and shortcomings of the WIA. First, the authors discuss the degree to which the federal government relinquishes to the states to implement the various components of WIA. O'Shea and King question the degree to which the federal government is delegating unabbreviated authority to the state and local WIBs through the WIA. In terms of statute interpretation and implementation flexibility, the authors were unable to determine to what extent the states and localities will try to exercise their own judgment in conducting their work under these new guidelines (O'Shea & King, 2001). They cite data from their participants suggesting WIA required substantial funding constraints, categorical planning requirements, and exhaustive reporting requirements to account for monies spent. Further, they suggest other scholars view WIA as "coercive federalism; that is, it offers states greater authority, but adds significant constraints as it does so" (O'Shea & King, 2001, p. 13). In addition, the authors suggest, "The reality is that WIA accounts for only a very small share of the funds potentially available for workforce development, yet state and local WIBs are expected to provide leadership and direction to this larger workforce system over which they have little or no authority" (O'Shea & King, 2001, p. 14).

For the purposes of this study, O'Shea and King's (2001) greatest point of emphasis relates to the cumbersome nature of WIA's planning and reporting requirements. While the authors believe this legislation takes a number of steps to develop a more partnership driven, local approach to implementing workforce development structures and programs, the reporting and planning requirements mark the lack of tools and degree of autonomy necessary to develop relationships and partnerships with workforce related entities the WIA sought to encourage (O'Shea & King, 2001).

Given the responsibilities placed on WIBs by the WIA, it is important to examine the roles and responsibilities WIBs have in securing public and private intermediaries to perform workforce development training programs and employment services. Macro, Almandsmith, and Hague's (2003), study examines how the WIA was implemented in sixteen local market areas within eight U.S. states (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). This qualitative study was conducted through extensive interviews among key stakeholders from the intermediaries, the WIB membership and leadership, and One-Stop Career Center staff (pp. 2–6). Interview topics included selection and operation of One-Stops, selecting and contracting with intermediaries, monitoring and oversight of intermediaries; data collection and reporting mechanisms, and the overall impact of WIA's implementation on their local market (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). According to the report,

Long before the implementation of WIA, contracting with intermediary organizations was a common way of delivering publicly funded employment services. Functions performed by intermediaries have often included intake and eligibility determination as well as training, job placement, and other employment related services... Thus, a large portion of federally funded employment and training services since the 1960s has been

contracted to outside organizations by the administering public agencies. (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003, p. 2)

This study is one of a few studies focusing on the role and outcomes facing intermediaries in the context of providing employment services on behalf of public entities.

The WIA drastically changed the ways in which training intermediaries work with the workforce development system. In the past, training providers were contracted to perform certain tasks on behalf of the public entity. However, under the WIA, local boards must utilize individual training accounts (ITAs) to compensate service providers for their services (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). Individuals may use their ITAs at the eligible provider of their choice, but limitations may exist with respect to the cost, length, or types of training programs and services funded through training accounts (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004; Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). Interestingly, some studies have suggested that while WIA programs come at a lower price tag and require less time in training than those programs offered by formal education providers. Further, fewer than half of those seeking WIB connected services participate in any form of training (Heinrich, Mueser, & Troske, 2008; Hollenbeck, 2009; Hollenbeck, Schroeder, King, & Huang, 2005).

Ellis (2001) contends the eligibility requirements for ITAs may not be as constructive as they may appear. In an earlier cited text, Ellis' work examines the value of choice in the context of using ITAs in the education and training realm. Contrary to Macro, Almandsmith, and Hague (2003), Ellis suggests ITAs will likely be awarded to primarily those who are most economically disadvantaged. Traditionally, she points out those who are economically disadvantaged generally tend to be poorly educated and unskilled and are likely to hold less than a high school diploma. As a result, the combination of user choice related to the training services offered

coupled with a lackluster education and skills background, make predominantly offering this populations ITAs a risky proposition in terms of return on investment and overall outcomes (Ellis, 2001). The author backs up this claim by citing a study regarding the Seattle-Denver Income Maintenance Experiments in which researchers found that the choice component of the vouchers employed caused the economically disadvantaged individuals social and professional harm by allowing them to form unrealistic employment expectations resulting in earnings reductions (Ellis, 2001). While WIBs may not have full control over the federal policies stipulating the eligibility requirements to receive ITAs, the important distinction or conclusion to draw from this concept is WIB autonomy provides opportunity for WIB members to use cost and performance information, provided by the training provider, to select the most qualified training providers possible (Ellis, 2001).

Overall, the report found the WIA's implementation has made a profound impact on the way in which local WIBs go about their work. The authors suggest the role of local boards from JTPA to WIA has shifted their concerns to workforce system design, external partnership development, and strategic oversight of workforce service providers or intermediaries. Boards who were determined by the researchers as being more collaborative and united in mission and approach were those who actively assessed and monitored their progress with their external partners (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). One of the main key findings spoke to the value of localized knowledge of board members. The report states,

WIA places a premium on innovation and flexibility in the provision of workforce services. As a result, local boards experience a tension between greater flexibility [in terms of entering into MOUs with service providers] and assuring that service delivery is

consistent across different organizations and locations. (Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003, p. 8)

While it appears WIA has made great strides in providing avenues for local boards to create opportunities for the populations they serve, the success or failure of their efforts is predicated on the availability of qualified service providers coupled with the notion they must meet and exceed WIA stipulated metrics and goals. For local WIBs servicing a significant number of communities, collecting broad swaths of data may satisfy the reporting requirements of the WIA; however, one could argue the cumbersome nature of dissecting the data by region, locality, or city makes it more unlikely the board would effectively utilize the data to drive decisions regarding workforce investment than their more narrowly focused, local or regional centered peers.

The responsibility of local WIBs to invest WIA funds into training programs, or intermediaries tasked with providing training, is one of the most important components of their work. Hollenbeck (2009) reviewed the effectiveness of WIA programs by examining and comparing the results of several workforce-training studies. His methodology argues one can compare similar workforce programs based on factors such as pre- and post-program training earnings over set periods of time, the similar regions in which studies were conducted, and employment rates upon completion of the programs; however, he expresses concern similar data and methodologies yield different conclusions (Hollenbeck, 2009). Taken in a broad context, researchers can make the case the validity of this work is fair considering the studies, subjects, and outcomes being compared were similar workforce training programs administered under the employment service guidelines under the Workforce Investment Act.

Overall, Hollenbeck (2009) argues recent evidence supports the notion of the labor market outcomes for youth, adults, and dislocated learners are relatively positive, and the federal programs supporting those populations may be having a significant impact. Hollenbeck also notes WIA programs and services appear to prepare workers to reenter the workforce more quickly and less expensively than many formal education programs. His analyses of other studies seem to indicate a higher rate of effectiveness for training programs for adult learners and a lower rate of effectiveness for dislocated workers (Hollenbeck, 2009). Tables 2 and 3 show how Hollenbeck develops encompassing data retrieved from five studies describing the impacts of WIA one-stop programs or trainings utilization on populations found within other respective studies.

Table 2

Estimates of Training Impacts for JTPA/WIA Adults, by Study

Study/Outcome	Any Service	Training	Training Impact	Percent Trained
Study 1 (2003)				93.7
Employment	7.4	7.9	13.7	
Quarterly Earnings	\$697	\$767	13.7	
Study 2 (2005)				54.0
Employment	8.7	4.4	na	
Quarterly Earnings	\$929	\$836	na	
Study 3 (2006)				56.0
Employment	6.6	8.1	15.9	
Quarterly Earnings	\$504	\$709	23.7	
Study 4 (2008)				28.6

Study/Outcome	Any Service	Training	Training Impact	Percent Trained
Employment	6.5	5.5	9.1	
Quarterly Earnings	\$565	\$782	\$33.2	

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued)

Study/Outcome	Any Service	Training	Training Impact	Percent Trained
Study 5 (2009)				58.1
Employment	13.7	18.2	28.6	
Quarterly Earnings	\$463	\$682	21.6	

Note. Earnings are in 2008 \$. All entries, unless denoted with a † are significant at the 0.05 level. na = not available. Study 1 is Hollenbeck and Huang (2003); Area: WA; Treatment: exit in '97/'98; Follow-up period: 8–11 quarters after exit.

Study 2 is Hollenbeck, Schroeder, King and Huang (2005); Area: 7 states; Treatment: exit in '00/'02; Follow-up period: 2–7 quarters after exit.

Study 3 is Hollenbeck and Huang (2006); Area: WA; Treatment: exit in '01/'02; Follow-up period: 9–12 quarters after exit.

Study 4 is Heinrich, Mueser, and Troske (2008); Area: 12 states; Treatment: entry in '03/'05; Follow-up period: 11–14 quarters after entry.

Study 5 is Hollenbeck (2009); Area: IN; Treatment: exit in '05/'06; Follow-up period: 7 quarters after exit.

Table 3

Estimates of Training Impacts for JTPA/WIA Dislocated Workers by Study

Study/Outcome	Any Service	Training	Training Impact	Percent Trained
Study 1 (2003)				66.5
Employment	7.3	6.7	9.8	
Quarterly Earnings	\$598	\$354	4.0	
Study 2 (2005)				57.5
Employment	13.5	5.9	na	
Quarterly Earnings	\$1,189	\$483	na	
Study 3 (2006)				61.9
Employment	6.4	4.2	6.5	
Quarterly Earnings	\$855	\$391	6.8	

(table continues)

Table 3 (continued)

Study/Outcome	Any Service	Training	Training Impact	Percent Trained
Study 4 (2008)				31.5
Employment	6.8	1.4 [†]	2.3 [†]	
Quarterly Earnings	\$371	-\$36	-0.1 [†]	
Study 5 (2009)				49.1
Employment	16.5	15.9	21.2	
Quarterly Earnings	\$310	\$394	6.0	

NOTE. Earnings are in 2008 \$. All entries, unless denoted with a † are significant at the 0.05 level. na = not available.

Study 1 is Hollenbeck and Huang (2003); Area: WA; Treatment: exit in '97/'98; Follow-up period: 8–11 quarters after exit.

Study 2 is Hollenbeck, Schroeder, King and Huang (2005); Area: 7 states; Treatment: exit in '00/'02; Follow-up period: 2–7 quarters after exit.

Study 3 is Hollenbeck and Huang (2006); Area: WA; Treatment: exit in '01/'02; Follow-up period: 9–12 quarters after exit.

Study 4 is Heinrich, Mueser, and Troske (2008); Area: 12 states; Treatment: entry in '03/'05; Follow-up period: 11–14 quarters after entry.

Study 5 is Hollenbeck (2009); Area: IN; Treatment: exit in '05/'06; Follow-up period: 7 quarters after exit.

While these data make a compelling case to support Hollenbeck's assertion indicating the interventions provided by the one-stop centers and intermediaries, it is important to note each of the five studies found in these tables represent a vast array of methodological decisions related to how these data points were aggregated and statistically treated (Hollenbeck, 2009).

Hollenbeck (2009) ultimately concludes the Workforce Investment Act seems to be effective in meeting its general policy goals in support of workforce development; however, he qualifies this assertion by suggesting results will largely vary based upon the individual decisions made by state and local WIBs. Further, Hollenbeck argues the WIA does not provide nearly enough support to serve all individuals in need, suggesting stringent service qualification barriers to entry and limited federal funds forces WIBs, and the one-stop operators, to essentially cull out

only those individuals with the specific qualifications set by the WIA to serve (Hollenbeck, 2009). Building upon the theoretical basis regarding the importance of local WIB decision making set forth by Hollenbeck, it is necessary to understand the strategic choices state and local WIBs can make as they utilize their prescribed autonomy to allocate federal resources as they set their priorities to address the workforce needs within their state and local regions.

D'Amico and Saltzman's (2004) chapter from the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research's report took a closer look at the policy shift in terms of local WIBs providing direct training to workers through JTPA as it progresses to more of a work first model under the WIA (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004). They sought to do so by comparing and contrasting WIA and JTPA data made available through the WIA standardized record data (WIASRD). They also utilize qualitative data from qualitative studies which were collected through non-randomly selected site visit interviews; however, they justify this decision based on the geographic coverage represented by the 23 states the data were collected (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004).

The authors expressed their shared concern, with policy-makers and practitioners alike, of issues pertaining to duplication of efforts among the numerous federal and state employment training programs provided by entities like the WIBs. Some 150 separate programs operated among these entities as a result of limited or a complete lack of coordination among entities funded under JTPA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Vocational Education, Wagner-Peyser, and others (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004). Consequently, participants in these programs suffered from a robust offering of redundant programs and services from a broad swath of providers. To further exacerbate the issue, these duplicated services were limited only to individuals who met stringent eligibility criteria, thus precluding those individuals from accessing the skills training they needed to gain or regain entry into the workforce (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004). For

example, under JTPA, these training services were only provided to those individuals deemed economically disadvantaged. Of those individuals served among the economically disadvantaged population, no less than 65 percent of participants must have been identified as hard to serve by having one or more of seven requirements determining they have a significant barrier to employment (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004).

D'Amico and Saltzman (2004) next examine the WIA's intrinsic struggle between the conflicting priorities of unilaterally adopting the work first approach and meeting the education and training needs of low skill and or low income customers of WIB training intermediaries (D'Amico & Saltzman 2004; O'Shea & King, 2001). The authors leverage reported JTPA and WIA customer data to assert a causality suggesting while JTPA's overall figures related to customer training completion and exiting figures appear to be more effective than WIA's. However, it is important to note the shift to WIA's more local autonomy driven approach that enables local WIBs the ability to devote federal monies to the areas of greatest concern to their communities (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004).

Given the interpretation of WIA, localities were left to determine the best approach needed to address the local workforce customer needs in their respective regions. Data supplied by D'Amico and Saltzman (2004) suggest those entities adopting a more literal interpretation of the WIA, or the work first approach, are making full use of the one-stop operator's three levels of services described in more depth earlier by investing more of the collective funds to support the one-stop centers' services. Others resorted to invest more of the federal resources into intermediary training programs and services through ITAs to eligible one-stop customers (D'Amico & Saltzman, 2004). According to D'Amico and Saltzman (2004, "In just over one-half of the nation's local areas, about half of the WIA exiters have received training service,

while much smaller numbers of local areas give more emphasis to core services or to intensive services” (p. 110). Further, the data suggest those WIBs who opted to initially adopt a work first mindset with their resource allocation eventually began shifting back to a more balanced approach (D’Amico & Saltzman, 2004).

Tables 4 and 5 from D’Amico and Saltzman’s 2004 report illustrate the percentages of those customers who reached the various levels of core services provided by the one-stop centers, as well as the overall percentages of the funds spent on each of the primary core areas across the board. Data from the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data were utilized to supply these tables.

Table 4

Services Received by Adult Exiters: JTPA/WIA Side-by-Side Comparison

	PY 1998	PY 2001 WIA Exiters			
	JTPA Exiters	Total	Core Only	Intensive–No Training	Training
Number of Cases	163,223	160,529	36,344	57,648	66,537
Highest Tier of Service					
Core Only	NA	22.6	100	—	—
Intensive (No Training)	NA	35.9	—	100	—
Training	NA	41.5	—	—	100
Service Received					
Basic Skills Instruction	18.1	2.1	—	0.1	5.1
On-the-job Training	9.4	5.1	—	—	12.8
Other Occupational Training	63.1	32.9	—	—	82.1
Months of Participation					
Up to 3	26.4	34.1	52.9	38.5	20.1
3–6	26.6	24.1	21.2	24.0	25.7
6–9	16.6	1.3	11.7	15.4	19.7
9–12	10.0	10.6	6.3	10.2	13.5
More than 12	20.4	14.8	7.9	12.0	21.1

NOTE. All figures (except Number of Cases) are given as percentages. SPIR data represent figures for adults (Title II-A) and older workers (Section 204d) who received more than only an objective assessment. Data from PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures and exclude JTPA carry-overs. A ‘—’ represents a percentage near zero. NA = not available.

Table 5

Service Emphases Among Local Workforce Areas

High Emphasis on Core Services	11.5
High Emphasis on Intensive Services	18.0
High Emphasis on Training Services	57.8
Mixed Emphasis	13.7

NOTE: Figures represent the percentage of local areas. “High Emphasis” is defined as having more than 50% of WIA exiters, exclusive of JTPA carry-overs, exit at the service level indicated. Data are from the PY 2001 WIASRD, excluding JTPA carry-overs.

These figures not only represent the entirety of all WIA funding allocations by services provided by one-stop operator, but also reinforce the importance of the WIB membership and staff considering the respective needs and interests of the individuals and businesses they serve. This report further illustrates the importance and difficulties each WIB faced when working through the moderately stringent policy structures within the WIA. Each WIB has the ability to leverage the pool of federal funds provided through the relative autonomy found within the WIA, and it is important to note the immense value this construct provides the WIBs as they fulfill their role in serving the workforce, business, and industry of their local areas or regions.

Workforce investment boards can also be significant partners to business and industry. Many WIB members are from the business world, thus creating a natural outreach approach into the business community. Dunham, Saltzman, and Koller’s 2004 report explored examples of what the researchers determined to be innovative partnerships between WIBs and state and local business partners. Their methodology incorporates the use of staff to collect significant qualitative data from nine selected sites. Further, each of the day-and-a-half site visits

incorporated comprehensive interviews with regional and local public officials, one-stop center leadership, WIB members, one-stop intermediaries or service providers, Chamber of Commerce and economic development professionals, and regional employers who work closely with the area WIB (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004). Innovative sites were chosen after 35, unduplicated nominations were received from Department of Labor personnel, major business organizations, and national organizations interested in workforce development and education (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004). The study yielded some compelling findings.

The first finding of note addressed the WIB recruiting function. Some areas expressed difficulty in recruiting board members, while others maintained a fairly stable membership. Of those boards, the researchers considered more sophisticated or elaborate than their peers; they observed WIB members opted to self-impose a regional coverage structure. Others determined a significant portion of those actively serving on WIBs from the business community were connected to their firm's human resources department and/or held a high level position in their organization's administrative structure (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004). Additionally, board members often cited their community spirit as their inspiration to serve on their local WIB. With respect to board member turnover, WIBs in this study valued longevity among members – suggesting an increased presence of community spirit (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004).

Business related partnerships are another key way to connect the publicly funded workforce development system to the business community. The authors highlighted several key observations made among the nine WIB regions surveyed which include: leveraging WIB member board memberships with other similar organizations to their advantage; senior WIB staff exercising strong, visionary leadership which conveyed a more serious, business-oriented approach to their work; conducting joint meetings related to planning and strategy between

business and industry and the WIB membership; developing industry sector initiatives where the interests of workforce development and economic development meet; and establishing a rapport with business and industry aimed to develop a deeper understanding of your partners workforce needs to mutually benefit both entities (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004). Through incorporating these best practices into their strategies, the researchers argue local WIB members can be far more impactful in their work.

Lastly, Dunham, Salzman, and Koller (2004) place a great deal of emphasis on the importance of developing business services that go above and beyond the expectations of businesses. In doing so, businesses are more likely to want to engage with you given your WIB's enthusiasm and dedication to the role and service you provide the business and employee communities. The authors recommend making the WIB staff and board members business centered in their work. For example, creating a single point of contact for business community members to call upon is highly recommended. This allows for a steady channel of communication, which ultimately will lead to stronger working relationships and a deeper understanding of business needs in your local workforce area (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004). Further, collaborating closely with other business services suppliers will strengthen your local credibility. Lastly, invest the time, energy, and resources needed to make sure business services and programs for job seekers are tightly interwoven. In doing so, job seekers are far more likely to have the skills businesses need to employ them, and businesses are more inclined to continue working with them given the positive track record (Dunham, Saltzman, & Koller, 2004).

This study serves as a clear indication that local WIBs are fully capable of finding solutions that can entice and retain the interests of business. As relationships are formed, and

open lines of communication to business community, local economic developers, and public administrators exist, collaborative strategies can emerge with the potential to make lasting, positive impacts on the local communities all parties seek to serve and advance.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act officially replaces the Workforce Investment Act, and represents the first major piece of legislation passed in fifteen years related to the public workforce system (United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration [DOLETA], 2015). WIOA's vision is to "provide the state and local areas the flexibility to collaborate across systems in an effort to better address the employment skills needs of current employees, jobseekers, and employers" (NAWB, 2014, p. 2). While little has been written about the impact of the WIOA due to its recent implementation, it is important to review the most pertinent incoming policy changes and how they are slated to impact existing WIA structures and policies.

Like its predecessor, the WIOA places an additional degree of authority, and autonomy to the governing bodies tasked with developing and implementing public workforce development strategies. The WIOA makes significant strides toward aligning public sector goals and targets by increasing accountability measures for programs, and by making more employment data available to the public. According to DOLETA, the WIA seeks to align performance indicators for primary job programs and adds new ones related to services to employers and postsecondary credential attainment. Performance goals must take into consideration local and regional economic conditions and participant characteristics. It will also make available data on training providers' performance outcomes and requires third party evaluation of programs (DOLETA, 2015). The WIOA also promotes the development of more prevalent workforce services to job

seekers, improves services available to individuals with disabilities, and makes it easier for WIBs to use public resources to provide workforce services by pooling funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services through American Job Centers (AJCs) (DOLETA, 2015). Further, it gives WIBs more opportunities to directly contract with service providers, and enables more service providers, such as community colleges, the ability to take on greater roles as training providers (DOLETA, 2015).

The WIOA also stipulates several mandatory functions of local and state WIBs. Among those functions are:

- Economic analyses of regional conditions;
- Establishing and directing efforts to engage businesses/possible employers;
- Leading efforts to develop, implement, and sustain viable career pathways;
- Identifying and educating other entities on proven and good practices;
- Establish committees to more effectively accomplish the work of the local boards;
- Advocating for consumer choice of participants among providers;
- Enhancing coordination with education service providers and partners. (DOLETA, 2015)

Like the WIA, the WIOA increased the responsibilities of the local WIBs significantly. The transition from WIA to WIOA for local WIBs will also include increased accountability measures – particularly as it relates to WIB expenditures of federal funds. The WIOA creates a common collective of performance indicators that must be met for funding to continue in future fiscal years. Consequently, WIOA language indicates an expectation that decisions of local WIBs regarding federal dollars spent on education and training programs and services will be driven by accurate data and evidence based (DOLETA, 2015). These performance indicators are

indicative of a desire for these WIBs to work more closely in a regional context through closer coordination of planning among workforce development service providers and educational institutions within their respective areas (DOLETA, 2015).

The National Association of Workforce Boards contends,

WIOA puts WIBs in the center of these community systems like never before and ascribes to the WIB responsibilities implied in WIA, but now clearly articulates the WIB's responsibility as a convener, a collaborator and charged with hosting community conversations to better align workforce resources and better understand the complexity of their regional markets. In essence, Boards will begin to serve as activist boards with the opportunity to have a greater impact on their communities. (NAWB, 2014)

As a result, WIBs are now tasked with more responsibilities than ever before.

With greater autonomy and funding resources comes greater accountability and expectations. WIBs will be successful under the WIOA model if they can structure their efforts behind a collaborative spirit, driven by evidence based, data driven approaches to addressing the specific workforce needs of their communities.

In sum, the WIA and WIOA have demonstrated the federal government's desire to make meaningful, impactful change in the public workforce system in the United States. By allocating significant resources to state and local entities, policymakers are stating workforce development needs are best addressed at the local and state levels. The WIA prescribed the roles and responsibilities local areas and regions must undertake to meet the policy directives set forth by the law. Through the use of local WIBs, the federal government can leverage the networks of local leaders from the private and public sectors to democratically assess the economic and workforce development needs in their communities. While the WIA and WIOA have

progressively provided the local WIBs more latitude to accomplish the goals set forth by the legislative regulations, they have increased the level of accountability for the system's programmatic outcomes as well.

Local economic and workforce development efforts often support one another in tandem to ensure existing and incoming business and industry have both the human and physical capital needed to sustain meaningful economic growth. The next section will discuss the collaborative and complicated efforts, employed by a number of stakeholders, undertaken to facilitate meaningful economic development at the local level.

Local and Regional Economic and Workforce Development

The key ingredient to successful economic development in any community across the world is for primary stakeholders (elected officials, business leaders, economic developers, utility providers, etc.) to own a collaborative mindset aiming to utilize the resources at their disposal to follow a sound vision for their community or region (International Economic Development Council [IEDC], 2011). When these leaders and stakeholders are unified behind their vision and purpose, their collective efforts will achieve far greater progress than segmented individual efforts. The same principle holds true for workforce development as well. When leaders from government, education, business and industry, and the non-profit world collaborate effectively, the workforce development needs of local areas and regions are far more likely to be met (IEDC, 2011). This portion of the literature review aims to highlight relevant literature, which describes the unique nature of local and regional economic and workforce development, and discusses examples of where communities found success when developing and executing collaborative approaches to meet their area's workforce and economic development needs.

The term ‘economic development’ holds multiple meanings to the public. For many, the term ‘economic development’ often means job creation in their respective communities. Speeches made by sitting and aspiring politicians on the federal, state, and local levels only reinforce this perception. According to the IEDC, a body of economic development professionals responsible for administering the highest credential offered in the field of economic development, economic development can be defined as, “a program, group of policies, or set of activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base” (IEDC, 2011, p. 6). Often the role and importance of community development is not emphasized enough. While the end result of job creation through business recruitment and expansion is desirable, and often the primary goal of economic development, it is easy for officials and the public to neglect the importance of cultivating communities where businesses have the resources necessary to thrive for the near and long terms (IEDC, 2011). Communities who invest in their K–12 and postsecondary schools, infrastructure, and area amenities tend to find themselves in a more competitive position to retain and recruit businesses and industry to their community than their peers who tend not to (IEDC, 2011).

There are many organizations and entities charged with economic development activities. According to the IEDC, these actors and agencies include but are not limited to: government (federal, state, and local), special authorities (airport, power, industrial), chambers of commerce/public-private partnerships, universities and community colleges, workforce development organizations, community/neighborhood groups, utility companies/cooperatives, and religious/philanthropic organizations (IEDC, 2011).

The U.S. workforce is in constant flux due to the continuously changing nature of the global economy (Lautman, 2011). As industrial technology advances, manufacturing-type jobs, once held by trained individuals, are now being completed by computers and robots (Lautman, 201). Consequently, workers must be prepared to gain the skills and tools necessary to be successful in the near and long terms of their careers.

Lautman (2011) discussed the many challenges facing the U.S. economy with respect to workforce and economic development. In the text, the author writes about the strengths of successful cities, referred to as winnervilles, and the steps other communities can take to place themselves in a greater position to win economically. Lautman argues the U.S. workforce will not have enough qualified or properly skilled workers to fill the jobs of the future. Further, every individual businesses will hire in the next twenty five years has likely already been born (Lautman, 2011).

Area populations require a balance between those producing (workers) and those consuming (dependents) to ensure economic stability in the long run. As the generation of baby boomers leaves the workforce, the influx of dependents versus the number of workers will offset the economic balance causing economic instability in unprepared markets (Lautman, 2011). Baby Boomer dependents are living longer lives thus prolonging the need for continued financial support from the producers. Consequently, Lautman (2011) argues communities need to create an economic engine that is growing and producing jobs/revenues faster than the rate of population increase.

Lautman (2011) also describes a formula for economic development success. Localities and regions that are excelling are markets where the ecosystem is sound, the public education system is excellent, citizens have access to quality healthcare, there is little to no crime,

affordable housing is available, the infrastructure meets the needs of the residential and business communities, and the economy is growing faster than the population. If communities are to be successful economically, they must actively pursue and maintain the quality of these factors and others in their area (Lautman, 2011).

It is also important to note the existing relationship between local and regional economies with the world's economy at large. With the advent of the Internet and other business optimization technologies, the global economy is rapidly changing. Thomas Friedman (1999) discusses this notion in his article entitled "Manifesto for a Fast World", in which he argued, Globalization involves the integration of free markets, nation-states, and information technologies to a degree never before witnessed, in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations, and countries to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper, and cheaper than ever. It is also producing a powerful backlash from those...left behind. (Friedman, 1999)

The low cost and ease of access to modern technology through inexpensive computers, software, and widespread access to the Internet is flattening the world by leveling the economic playing field between producers and consumers (Friedman, 1999). Consequently, consumers have new, unbridled access to producers in ways the global economy has never seen before (Friedman, 2005).

The global economy can be harnessed at home by addressing several important issues discussed previously in this section. Fareed Zakaria (2011) lays out several key strategies the U.S. should pursue in order to create a strong economy built for the long term. These strategies include recruiting manufacturing businesses/jobs back to the U.S., retraining our labor force,

emphasizing economic development investment in our growth industries, cultivating and supporting small businesses, and strengthening the jobs we currently have (Zakaria, 2011).

Each level of government, particularly local governmental entities, should be exploring opportunities to address each of these areas of need to help strengthen their economies. Manufacturing jobs were outsourced and/or eventually offshored due to high labor costs or the unavailability of quality labor in the U.S. Consequently, government policies affecting manufacturing businesses should be explored and reformed accordingly to help remedy the concerns of the current domestic manufacturing businesses (Zakaria, 2011). This will also help recruit new business to the states as well. If we elect to maintain the status quo, we may continue to lose the battle for the manufacturing industry and jobs that come with it.

Zakaria (2011) also argues cultivating and maintaining a high quality, skilled American workforce should be a top priority for government officials on all levels. Governmental entities must take advantage of the resources the business and educational communities have to offer to establish and bolster current workforce development training programs. Business leaders can prescribe the desired skills and abilities they need their workforce to possess now and in the future. Educational institutions can modify curricula and develop programs to cultivate interest in and prepare workers for jobs that will be waiting for them upon completion of their certificate or degree programs (Zakaria, 2011). If government does not step up and take a more proactive role in preparing and retraining our current and future workforce for the jobs available today and in the future, we will continue to see some state and regional economies stagnate or wither and fall to the wayside (Zakaria, 2011).

The relationship between government and business is critical to the economies of the nation at large and states (IEDC, 2011; Lautman 2011; Zakaria 2011). Government policies and

regulations can greatly influence the behaviors and decision-making processes of domestic and international businesses seeking to engage with consumers and producers within the United States. Consequently, all levels of government should be concerned with how these policies and regulations may influence business decisions and behaviors (IEDC, 2011; Zakaria, 2011).

Communities and regions around the world are consistently addressing economic and workforce development concerns. Two examples from the literature, which clearly articulate the full breadth and scope of the major collaborative effort that must be undertaken, examine the cities of Richardson, Texas and Chicago, Illinois. Both cities demonstrated varied levels of success and failure through leveraging the strengths and abilities of local resources through a collaborative approach to achieve their desired outcomes.

The Richardson example provides an excellent example of how government, industry, and other local leaders can work in concert to accomplish the economic development goals. Aaron and Watson examine Richardson's case in a manner that conveys justification for local economic developers to adopt a specific business recruitment strategy as opposed to approaching everyone and see what comes through type mentality (Aaron & Watson, 2008). The authors contend the general objective of professional economic developers is to recruit and retain businesses in an effort to facilitate job creation, which, in turn, will expand the tax base of the region (Aaron & Watson, 2008).

In the broader sense, economic developers could adopt a come one, come all mentality in terms of corporate recruitment, but the city of Richardson's public and private sector leaders came together and developed a different strategy. Richardson opted to leverage one of the largest industries in their area, the telecommunications sector, as an economic driver for their future. Richardson's leadership understood the value of developing a team approach to address

the city's economic development strategy, and focused on leveraging the networks of public managers to do so (Aaron & Watson, 2008). Richardson's strategy sought to continue fostering a strong climate for high tech related industries, marketing Richardson's place in the high tech space in Texas and beyond, encouraging targeted retail growth, and taking advantage of redevelopment opportunities (Aaron & Watson, 2008). In economic development terms, creating a competitive edge over similar cities is essential. The authors include comments made from Hill and Brennan's work, which asserts, "competitive advantage is gained when various factors of production are combined, genius is harnessed, and business strategies are executed" (Hill & Brennan, 2000, p. 66).

The authors are quick to point out the struggles public managers face in wake of consistent budget cuts and increased regulations. Economic development efforts among cities can take many forms, but a more common approach is through public-private partnerships (IEDC, 2011). Aaron and Watson contend public managers must be savvy in their use of personal and professional networks to be successful. They cite a work by Goldsmith and Eggers (2004) who posit,

The era of hierarchical government is coming to an end. It is being replaced by an entirely new model that requires public managers to be coordinators of resources with other public, nonprofit, and private entities that must be brought into the network. (p. 24). Richardson Texas' case study supports this assertion, as their collaborative, network-driven approach produced a significant positive outcome: a \$3 billion investment by Texas Instruments (Aaron & Watson, 2008).

Richardson, Texas is the home of the Telecom Corridor – a stretch of Interstate 75 that now calls over 700 telecommunications and information technology businesses. Further, the

University of Texas at Dallas has a main campus adjacent to many of these industries, which provides many workforce and research related opportunities (Aaron & Watson, 2008). The authors suggest the resulting economic surge is a prime example of Koven and Lyons (2003) growth pole theory. According to the theory, as more businesses from one industry, or closely related industries, elect to locate within a specific area, suppliers and other major businesses follow and a large pool of talent begins to exist (Koven & Lyons, 2003). Richardson saw a 24,000 net job increase from 1997–2001 due to the growth in the Telecom Corridor. In addition, the city’s tax base grew by \$1.5 billion (Aaron & Watson, 2008).

Overall, Richardson’s public managers took advantage of the political and social networks they held by leveraging them to their fullest. Through deep collaboration, their collective inputs, and commitment to the vision, developed a strategy, which yielded very positive results. While workforce development leaders were not specifically addressed in the context of this work, it is clear their purpose aligns well in the context of local economic development planning and strategy. If WIB members, education system entities (e.g. K–12, postsecondary, four-year) are involved in the planning and strategy phase, they can be invaluable in their ability to prepare workforce services and training programs geared toward the industries being recruited and sustained in a location or region.

The city of Chicago represents an excellent example of bridging workforce development programs and services into the economic development recruitment, expansion, and retention program fold. Greg Schrock’s 2013 article from the *Economic Development Quarterly* entitled, “Reworking Workforce Development: Chicago’s Sectoral Workforce Centers” focuses on how American cities, like Chicago, find ways to take advantage of federal, state, and local programs and resources to both address promoting economic development and business recruitment and

retention, while also working toward achieving social goals such as social equity and poverty reduction (Schrock, 2013). Early in the article, Schrock identifies the issues of economic growth and societal prosperity as being consensus national priorities, but is quick to suggest these problems are more aptly addressed at the local and regional level (Schrock, 2013). According to Schrock, “Poverty is increasingly a suburban phenomenon, whereas firms and industries that drive economic development fortunes operate within the context of local labor markets that do not adhere to political boundaries” (Schrock, 2013, p. 163).

Considering the primary dynamics at play, workforce development and education rests centrally in the midst of the matter. From the federal government’s standpoint, programs executed through WIA funds are consistently being reworked to afford local input to address the economic development needs of their respective regions (ACTE, 1998; NAWB, 2014; Schrock, 2013). Further, Schrock argues two primary factors have acted as the motivation to develop workforce development policy. The first has been an ever-evolving pursuit of determining the most efficient and effective workforce structures yielding the best results of reducing poverty by lowering unemployment rates by increasing incomes (Schrock, 2013). The second entails redirection of workforce development programs and services being inextricably linked to the value business and industries, new and existing to a region, place on human capital (Clarke & Gaile, 1998; Mathur, 1999; Schrock, 2013).

The City of Chicago enacted an innovative approach aimed at linking the effective cluster recruiting approach to economic development to a proactive approach to workforce development training programs designed to attract and train professionals to meet area employer’s workforce needs. The City of Chicago called this new program the Chicago Sectoral Workforce Center Initiative, which utilized funds reallocated through the Chicago area WIB from one-stop center

resources to sector specific training programs and recruiting services, and treated the employers as the customer rather than the consumer (Schrock, 2013). Essentially, Chicago leveraged the federal dollars of the WIA to create business and industry training and recruiting programs, for their service and manufacturing industries, to entice underemployed, unemployed, and unskilled labor to their industry specific sector workforce center in hopes that they could successfully recruit the labor force needed to sustain their human capital needs (Schrock, 2013).

While this innovative approach was successfully able to engage and establish positive relationships with employers, the workforce center for manufacturing consistently struggled to deliver enough candidates to meet the needs of regional industry. Further, communication between the businesses and the sector workforce centers began to break down, ultimately straining the relationships between the sector centers and private firms (Schrock, 2013). In contrast, the sector center working with the service industry was deemed to be quite successful (Schrock, 2013).

In conclusion, successful communities require the attentions of many public and private sector actors. Lautman's case for substantial investment in major community actors and infrastructure rings true for many communities eager to grow their local economies. The work of economic development professionals is intrinsically easier if the region they work to serve gives them every positive attribute necessary to recruit new and sustain existing industry. Aaron and Watson's (2008) example reinforces that assertion illustrating a community whose private and public sector interests leveraged their networks and worked collaboratively to accomplish their economic development goals. Schrock's example extended Aaron and Watson's premise further by illustrating the importance of stakeholder collaboration that incorporates the local workforce development system.

Overall, local WIBs can be a powerful ally to private and public sector partners. Through open communication and careful collaboration, WIB programs and services can turn into one of a region's most advantageous resources to business and industry. As a result, ensuring the state and local workforce structure facilitates opportunities to engage in these collaborations is paramount – particularly in the case of workforce investment boards.

Politics of Planning – Examining the Internal Dynamics of Adult Education Board Members

Guided by federal policy, WIB members are tasked with the significant challenge of making decisions regarding the interpretation and execution of federal workforce policy. To further complicate matters, board members must attempt to not only build a consensus among their group, but also seek and secure collaborative input from government figures, economic developers, business leaders, the education community, and local non-profit leaders as well. Today's economic development landscape requires communities to make strategic decisions aimed to best address the short and long term economic and workforce development issues.

Negotiations and decision-making in any group setting can be challenging. Adding political and economic implications to the discussion, brought forth by the specialized interests of economic developers, government officials, and business stakeholders, only complicates the matter further. Consequently, WIB members could consider facilitating a collaborative approach to creating the most effective strategy to address workforce programs and services in their communities.

There are many ways with which to approach the development of the design and execution of education programs and employment services. Cervero and Wilson (2006) examined the unique responsibilities, challenges, and internal dynamics of those serving on non-

profit boards related to education. The text introduces a four-pronged theory, which addresses what they argue are the most important factors influencing the decision-making processes of board members. Further, the book utilizes the construct of the planning table to examine how the theory applies to three distinct case studies (Cervero & Wilson, 2006). According to Cervero and Wilson (2006), their theory asserts,

[There are] four key dynamics that operate at the planning tables... (1) power relations enable and constrain people's access and capacity to act at the planning table, (2) people represent interests at the table, (3) ethical commitments define who should be represented at the table, and (4) negotiation is the central practical action at the table. These four dynamics are linked to form a definition of program planning as a social activity in which people negotiate with and among interests at the planning tables structured by socially organized relations of power. This activity produces programs that have educational and political outcomes for multiple stakeholders. (p. 84)

This four-pronged approach addresses the primary dynamics largely at play for any non-profit entity; however, for workforce investment board leaders, the stakes are significantly higher. Given the power and status of many of the board members present, coupled by the intrinsic importance of the workforce development needs of Alabama, it is important for policymakers to consider taking steps to mitigate any possible negative outcomes the power and influence board members may bring to the planning table. The authors further describe the planning table itself as merely a construct designed by to objectively suggest the actual planning itself may occur in a number of places such as: actual conference tables, over the phone, in hallway meetings, at the water cooler, and beyond. It is suggested the power relations, interests

represented, ethical commitments, and negotiation tactics wielded by individuals at the planning table may be used in a variety of ways in any or all of these settings (Cervero & Wilson, 2011).

Cervero and Wilson (1999, 2001, 2006) have individually, and collaboratively, written extensively on the subjects of adult education planning and the associated power dynamics at play among those at the planning table. They elect to describe the process of planning itself as less of a formal process, but rather a social activity where those in the planning role make decisions regarding the curriculum content and delivery modes of an educational program. Further, they expand the social component of the planning process by discerning the role of power, held by planning table participants, plays in the end product of the planning process. Cervero and Wilson (2011) believe “power relations are fundamentally important because they influence whose interests are represented at the planning table” (p. 85). While the importance of power and influence is certainly a primary focus of this work, the authors also delve into their description of planning as being a social activity, meaning the interactions between planning table members as being relatable to other social situations.

Players at the planning table discuss plans for their educational programs by negotiating personal, organizational, and political interests in contexts of socially prescribed markers of power, influence, and responsibility (Cervero & Wilson, 2011). The interests of those at the planning table act as the inspiration and purpose, which motivate them to behave in certain ways, or inject specific subjects into the conversation that would likely benefit the interests of themselves or others (Cervero & Wilson, 2011). Along the same premise, “people come to the planning table with a complex set of interests, which are predispositions, embracing goals, values, desires, and other orientations and inclinations that lead a person to act in one direction or another” (Morgan, 1997, p. 161). Consequently, individuals around the planning table should be

mindful of the goals and purposes for their work, the motivations and roles of others present, and the implications of the decisions they make not only on those they seek to serve, but also on those represented at the table.

State and local WIB members represent a wide variety of interests both personal and professional; however, they likely also share a mutual interest in serving their communities by leveraging their social networks and areas of expertise to the benefit of their region. As education planners, it is important to understand the role of education and what improving education programs and services could mean for their region's workforce. Livingstone (1983) suggested, "To act practically, planners need to understand how social life is organized, have a vision for how education should change the world, and have strategies for achieving this vision" (p. 26).

Conclusion

In sum, this review of the literature explored the major pieces of legislation pertaining to workforce development – specifically the Workforce Investment Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Literature pertaining to the WIA's merits, criticisms, and applications was explored, and previewed the forthcoming application changes with the implementation of the WIOA.

Next the review explored the regional nature of economic and workforce development by exploring the texts and articles from several authors, which brought forth compelling cases suggesting local, customized approaches to workforce and economic development have performed well in a number of cities and communities around the United States.

Lastly, this literature review explores Cervero and Wilson's text which examines the unique nature of board member demographics, motivations, and influences which can explain

why individuals on boards – particularly boards related to education programming, must be carefully selected and managed in order to achieve the positive outcomes for the populations they seek to serve.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Since 1998, the Workforce Investment Act has acted as the governing legislation for federal workforce programs (Gordon, 1998). Each state has the ability to implement the policies in the manners in which they deem fit provided the guidelines outlined in the legislation are followed (ACTE, 1998). As illustrated in Figure 1, one of the most varied ways in which states differ in their implementation lies in the number of local workforce investment boards found within each state. Chapter 2 of this study detailed literature pertaining to the various prevalent factors needed for successful workforce development programs and services under the auspices of the WIA and in more broad terms. The consensus among the literature determined local efforts and planning dedicated to the economic advancement of communities provides positive outcomes for youth, unemployed, and disabled workers (ACTE, 1998; Barnow & King, 2005; Lautman, 2011; O'Shea & King, 2000). Consequently, this study aims to better understand the perceptions of those volunteer board members who serve, or previously served, on the local and statewide workforce investment boards within Alabama under the Workforce Investment Act policy structure.

While much research has been done about the implementation and efficiencies of specific policies found within the WIA, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no research project has specifically sought to better understand the impressions and thoughts of individual WIB members with respect to efficiency and effectiveness within the context of board activity and structure. As Alabama considers significant reform to the workforce development and

investment system, ADECA's Workforce Development Division welcomed the opportunity to better understand the views and opinions of those they served as they seek to successfully transition into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act structure and the significant policy changes therein.

Research Questions

For the purposes of this study, the following research questions were used:

1. What are the perceptions of local WIB members regarding their organization's efficiency?
2. What relationship, if any, exists between the views of single county local WIB members and the members of the multiple county local WIB regarding their efficiency?
3. Should Alabama's local workforce investment boards be restructured?

Research Design

This study obtained permission to survey Alabama's local WIB members from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs Workforce Development Division, now under the Alabama Department of Commerce, the Jefferson County Economic and Community Development leadership, and the leader of Mobile Works. In sum, 97 individuals were invited to participate in the online survey via email. Forty-three individuals completed the survey. Eighteen were from the Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board, 12 were from Mobile Works, and the remaining 13 were from the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board. The final analysis consists of a quantitative study of the responses provided to the survey, which aimed to capture the perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness of the local WIBs from the perspective of the volunteer WIB members. With the goals of improving efficiency and effectiveness in mind, the approach of this study aimed to address the key areas of practice among volunteer WIB members at the local level.

The survey instrument was created by the researcher; however, thematic approaches and specific items were inspired by a survey created by a Missouri WIB non-scientific self-study instrument. Items were heavily modified to reflect the unique focus of this study and the specific differences related to Alabama's structure relative to those of Missouri. The survey consisted of 29 items: 26 Likert scale, text response, and multiple-choice items and three optional text entry items. The instrument was reviewed and approved by leaders within ADECA, Jefferson County's Economic and Community Development team, and Mobile Works.

In following policies and procedures set forth by Auburn University, the researcher obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board prior to administering the survey via Qualtrics, an online survey system utilized by Auburn University, via an exempt status request for approval. The approval was granted to the researcher on July 22, 2013. Invitation emails were sent three times to each board's contactable membership, via electronic mail, between July 23 and August 8. The researcher received 43 completed surveys, which represents a 44.33 percent response rate.

The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the research questions. SPSS version 22 was used on a Macintosh computer to conduct the various statistical analyses for this study. An initial factor analysis was performed to determine which items were impacted by an underlying factor found within the data. Next, an independent samples t-test was performed to compare the means of the Alabama Workforce Investment Area board and the combined population of the Jefferson County and Mobile Works WIBs.

For the purposes of this study, statistical significance was determined when the probability value of .05 or smaller was found. With respect to the determination and purpose of alpha, Ross and Shannon (2008) suggest alpha sets the degree to which a researcher is willing to

risk being inaccurate. Generally, a .05 level is accepted in social science fields; consequently, the researcher elected to set the alpha level at .05 (Ross and Shannon, 2008).

Sample

To collect the most relevant responses to the survey, all members of the Alabama Workforce Investment Board, the Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board, the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, and the Mobile Works Board, who were contactable by electronic mail, were invited to participate in the survey. With the transition to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act on July 1, 2015, the board members in this study were surveyed after the transition. Some members elected to serve again under the new system while others opted to step down. The framework of this study focused purely on their impressions of their work relative to the policies and procedures put forth by the Workforce Investment Act. Permission was obtained by the researcher to contact each of these individuals by the leaders of each of the respective boards.

The composition of the sample was the total number of members of Alabama's local workforce investment boards available to contact through active, correct electronic mail addresses. The Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board has 41 contactable members. The Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board has 21 contactable members, and the Mobile Works Board has 35 contactable members. In total, the sample contains 97 contactable individuals. The overall local WIB member population, including non-contactable members, is 101. Consequently, only four individuals were unsuccessfully contacted to participate in this study. Board chairpersons were approached by the researcher to make their members aware of the survey. Further, they were also asked to help send follow-up invitations to the survey should

they be necessary. Surveys were distributed by email directly to the addresses provided by those professionals tasked with providing technical and advisory support to their respective boards.

The researcher received a 44.33 percent response rate. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggest for populations under 100, the researcher would need to collect 80 responses to reach the 95 percent confidence interval. While this threshold was not met in this study, the researcher determined the perceptions and opinions shared by those participants are very valuable and provide a unique perspective to inform the research questions posed in this study.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used for this study was developed to more specifically address the research questions discussed previously. No survey instrument directly related to the desired topics of this study existed at the time this study was conducted; however, a survey instrument developed by the Northwest Workforce Investment Board provided a framework which served as a basis for the instrument used in this study (Northwest Workforce Investment Board, 2013).

The Northwest Workforce Investment Board, located in northwest Missouri, developed a survey instrument as a means to conduct a self-study among board members to ascertain areas of strength, weakness, opportunities for growth, and opportunities for further board training ((Northwest Workforce Investment Board, 2013). The Northwest Workforce Investment Board survey instrument structure and several survey items were replicated and either or customized to meet the needs of this study.

Research questions one and three are directly addressed by the instrument, and question two is addressed in the analysis of the responses collected. The instrument contained four sections. The first section contained biographical items discerning board membership ties and length of service to the board. The second section featured items gauging the participants

perceived knowledge base competencies among areas of interest in workforce development. Section three of the survey contains the majority of the items analyzed in this study. Four groups or domains each containing 4 items and one individual item totaling 17 items are found in this section. The domain section themes are board mission and regional workforce approach, board membership and meetings, workforce investment board staff, and workforce investment board training provider performance assessment. Section three also included a single item regarding workforce board size as well. Lastly, section four contained three qualitative items where respondents could more candidly express their perceptions regarding the efficiencies, concerns, or opportunities for ADECA and local board leaders to consider as they transition into a similar, but new, structure under WIOA. In total, the survey contained 27 items – 3 of which were optional. To review the survey in its entirety, please refer to Appendix 2.

Validity

Given the instrument was largely designed by the researcher, it is important to determine the instrument's validity to aid in strengthening the value of the information gathered and reported through this study. In an effort to better understand the construct validity of the instrument, the researcher elected to conduct a Q Sort technique to verify the organization of survey items was appropriate relative to the survey item content.

According to Gay (1980), “the Q Sort technique basically involves what it sounds like it involves – sorting. An individual is given a set of items or statements, usually on cards, and is asked to place them into specified categories so that each category contains some minimum number of cards” (p. 121).

For the purposes of conducting the Q sort technique to analyze the thematic organization of the survey instrument, the researcher selected five individuals who self-identified as having

limited knowledge of workforce development board activities. These individuals were asked to sort fifteen survey items into the three major thematic areas of the survey. Each thematic area contained five survey items. Once the test participant completed the task, they were asked to rate the difficulty of the exercise on a scale of one to five with one being difficult and five being easy. On average, participants correctly placed 13 of the 15 items in the correct thematic area. Scores ranged from 11 to 15 out of a possible fifteen in this area. In addition, participants collectively rated the difficulty of the exercise at 4 as an average. Scores ranged from three to five in this area. As a result of the Q-Sort outcomes, the researcher created a new domain, which directly addressed the concerns of the q-sort-test participants. Consequently, the survey instrument used in this study contains four domains each containing four items.

Data Collection

Upon receipt of approval from the Auburn University Institutional Review Board, the researcher began the administration and distribution of the online surveys. Approval had been granted to the researcher by the respective leaders of the WIBs to administer the survey. The Instrument was simply titled “Workforce Investment Board Survey”. The surveys were sent to the WIB members by their respective leaders approximately three times each between July 23 and August 8. Participants were made aware by the prompt provided by the invitation email, as well as the letter found in the survey itself, that their participation was entirely voluntary, they would not be compensated for completing the survey, confidentiality would be maintained, and no personally identifiable information would be intentionally collected. In the event any information was provided in the optional text entry items that could be used to identify the participant, the researcher redacted the content. Participants also were asked to complete a consent item in the survey as well, confirming their willingness to complete the survey.

The online survey system, Qualtrics, was used to administer and generate the link participants needed to access the survey. Once the survey was closed, the researcher retrieved the data through the Qualtrics system and exported the data into a Microsoft Excel file. Survey data was kept on two password protected laptops; and the researcher immediately deleted all IP addresses collected by the Qualtrics System.

Data Analysis

The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics to address the research questions. The first research question was addressed by reviewing the specific responses provided by the descriptive statistics. However, the descriptive statistics did not provide the depth of analysis into the significant factors and relationships found within the data and between the individual boards. Consequently, the researcher turned to inferential statistics to respond to research questions two and three.

Due to the nature of the survey instrument's structure, the researcher felt it appropriate to discern any factors, which resonated through the items, found within the domains of the survey. Consequently, the researcher opted to perform a factor analysis to take a deeper look at the construct validity of the data. According to Mertler and Vannatta (2013), "A factor analysis allows the researcher to explore the underlying structures of an instrument or a data set and is often used to develop and test a theory" (p.18). Upon the completion of the factor analysis, the researcher performed a reliability test to ensure the internal consistency of the items found within each factor. The reliability test used by the researcher was Cronbach's Alpha (Tavokol & Dennick, 2011).

Upon completion of the factor analysis and reliability tests, the researcher used an independent samples t-test to compare the means of the items found to be valid. The t-tests

examined the responses to the items by comparing the response means of the Alabama Workforce Investment Area board members and the combined population of the Jefferson County and Mobile Works WIB members. This test specifically addressed the second research question. According to Green and Salkind (2011), “The independent samples t-test evaluates the difference between the means of two independent groups... the t-test evaluates whether the mean value of the test variable for one group differs significantly from the mean value of the test variable for the second group” (p. 175). The t-test afforded the researcher the ability to combine the responses of the two smaller boards, or the JCWIB and MW boards, to compare against the test sample, which was the AWIA. It also provides the researcher the ability to test the assumption of equality of variance within the specific populations (Green & Salkind, 2011). In the event the assumption was violated, the researcher indicated the t value for unequal variances.

Lastly, the researcher reviewed the qualitative responses provided to the three optional items. These responses were used to help better understand the views of the participant, which could not be directly addressed by the earlier items.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to address the methods, research design, sample, instrumentation, validity, data collection, data analysis, generalizability, and assumptions used in the creation and execution of this study. The researcher addressed the procedural and statistical methods used to approach conducting this study in a way that seeks to best answer the research questions.

Alabama Governor Robert Bentley and the Alabama Workforce Council are actively exploring opportunities to modify Alabama’s workforce development system. In this effort, they hope to identify areas of inefficiency where work is being unnecessarily duplicated by multiple entities and where restructuring service providers or governing bodies can provide greater

efficiency and effectiveness. The Alabama Workforce Investment Board structure has been identified by the AWC as being one of the top areas needing to be evaluated more closely. This study will contribute significant data to assist those policymakers, legislators, and others working in this arena, better understand the perspectives of the volunteers serving on the WIBs as possible changes to the current structure and functionality of the workforce board structure in Alabama is reconsidered.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter details the purpose, research questions, population, survey results and analysis of data related to this study. In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the inner-workings of Alabama's local workforce investment boards, this study was initiated to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and experiences of those volunteers who serve on these boards. Alabama Governor Robert Bentley and the Alabama Workforce Council are actively exploring opportunities to modify Alabama's workforce development system. In this effort, they hope to identify areas of inefficiency where work is being unnecessarily duplicated by multiple entities and where restructuring service providers or governing bodies can provide greater efficiency and effectiveness. The Alabama Workforce Investment Board and Workforce Development Council structure has been identified by the AWC as being one of the top areas needing to be evaluated more closely. Given the new accountability measures placed on local WIBs through WIOA, coupled with the AWC's interest in delving into the operational and structural efficiencies of the WIBs, this study could provide valuable interest to any policymaker tasked with evaluating these boards (AWC, 2015).

Research Questions

For the purposes of this study, the following research questions were used:

1. What are the perceptions of local WIB members regarding their organization's efficiency?

2. What relationship, if any, exists between the views of single county local WIB members and the members of the multiple county local WIB regarding their efficiency?

3. Should Alabama's local workforce investment boards be restructured?

The first research question was addressed by the researcher by administering a survey covering a range of topics related to organizational effectiveness including but not limited to: board membership, local workforce development strategy, board operations, board assessments, and workforce board location scope. Permission to approach board members was granted by the governing bodies and support staffs responsible for coordinating their efforts on the state and local levels. Further, responses from the optional qualitative items will be incorporated into the analysis as well.

Similar to the first research question, the second research question will be answered through inferential statistical analyses of board member responses to the items. The mean scores of the responses from Alabama Workforce Investment Area (AWIA) board members will be compared to combined mean scores of the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board (JCWIB) and Mobile Works, the workforce investment board serving Mobile County by way of an independent samples t-test.

The last research question will be addressed by a pair of items found within the overall survey instrument. A combination approach incorporating an analysis of the descriptive and inferential statistics calculated, and the responses to the optional qualitative items, will be employed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed a factor analysis to discern any factors, which resonated through the items, found within the domains of the survey. A principle components analysis

with a Varimax rotation was used to examine the sixteen survey items. Once factors were identified, the researcher performed reliability tests with Cronbach's alpha to verify validity of the items.

Upon completion of the factor analysis, the researcher used an independent samples t-test to compare the means of the responses provided on the instrument's nine remaining items, identified as being part of a factor through the factor analysis, pertaining to a range of topics. The t-test was conducted by comparing the mean scores found among the responses of the Alabama Workforce Investment Area board members and the combined responses of the Jefferson County and Mobile Works WIB members. The t-tests afforded the researcher the ability to combine the responses of the two smaller boards, or the JCWIB and MW boards, to compare against the test sample, which was the AWIA. It also provides the researcher the ability to test the assumption of equality of variance within the specific populations (Green & Salkind, 2011). In the event the assumption was violated, the researcher indicated the t value for unequal variances. The researcher also included one additional, independent item from the survey in the series of t-tests due to the nature of the importance of the item relative to the research questions.

Lastly, the researcher reviewed the qualitative responses provided to the three optional items. These responses were used to help better understand the views of the participant, which could not be directly addressed by the earlier items.

For the purposes of this chapter, the data collected by the survey participants will be organized as follows. First, the descriptive statistics will be presented in tables arranged by responses provided by the total population. Subsequent tables will then be displayed illustrating the responses provided by specific board groups. Next, the inferential statistics will be

presented. The results from the factor analysis, followed by the results of the individual t-tests, will be displayed with the appropriate discussion per each item.

Descriptive Statistics

The responses provided by the local workforce investment board members were collected and organized into groups based upon their self-selected board identification. All mandatory questions were successfully answered by participants, and many of the optional questions were completed as well. To view the descriptive statistics for each of the survey items, please refer to Appendix C.

Inferential Statistics

Factor Analysis

The researcher employed a factor analysis to discern any factors, which resonated through the items, found within the domains of the survey. Sixteen items within the four targeted domains were examined through the factor analysis. Given the unique nature of the instrument's domains, the factor analysis provided a deeper perspective to any commonalities or underlying structures, which may exist below the surface of a data set or instrument.

The dimensionality of the 16 items from the workforce investment board survey was analyzed using principal components analysis with a Varimax rotation. The rotated solution yielded two interpretable factors: board structure and engagement and board autonomy. The first factor accounted for 56.93% of the variance, the second 13.95%. Combined, the factors accounted for 70.89% of the variance. Nine of the sixteen items analyzed loaded on to two of the identified factors.

Table 6

Factor Analysis Results

	Component	
	Board Culture	Board Autonomy
2.2: WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board's purview.	.297	.832
2.3: The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	.660	.386
2.4: Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.	.396	.705
3.2: The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	.782	.238
3.3: The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	.866	.122
3.4: The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.	.786	.228
4.4: WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.	.719	.513
5.2: The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	.232	.804
5.3: The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	.144	.869

Factor one was named Board Culture, and factor two was named Board Autonomy. Given the unique nature of the instrument's domains, the factor analysis provided a deeper perspective to any commonalities or underlying structures, which may exist below the surface of a data set or instrument. Upon identifying the items vetted through the factor analysis, a

reliability test was performed to more closely examine the validity of the items comprising each factor. According to the Cronbach's alpha results, both factors indicate the strong reliability of the survey instrument's items.

Table 7

Instrument Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Board Culture Factor	.869	5
Reliability Statistics		
Board Autonomy Reliability	.867	4
Statistics		

Independent Samples t-Test Results

Nine independent-samples t-tests were conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding a number of items. The information found in Table 8 provides a brief summary of the findings found in the nine independent-samples t-tests conducted in this study.

Table 8

Comprehensive t-Test Results Comparing Statewide Board Member Responses to those of the Combined Local Workforce Investment Board Member Responses

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
2.2	1	18	4.06	1.162	0.274	-0.664
	2	25	4.68	0.627	0.125	
2.3	1	18	3.33	1.534	0.362	-0.79
	2	25	4.36	0.995	0.199	
2.4	1	18	3.5	1.295	0.305	-0.7
	2	25	4.28	0.891	0.178	
3.2	1	18	4.22	1.166	0.275	-0.36
	2	25	4.56	0.651	0.13	
3.3	1	18	3.94	1.162	0.274	-0.64
	2	25	4.56	0.712	0.142	
3.4	1	18	4.28	1.227	0.289	-0.71
	2	25	4.92	0.277	0.055	
4.4	1	18	3.28	1.227	0.289	-0.15
	2	25	4.44	0.712	0.142	
5.2	1	18	3.67	1.085	0.256	-0.66
	2	25	4.36	0.995	0.199	
5.3	1	18	3.67	1.328	0.313	-0.85
	2	25	4.56	0.651	0.13	
6	1	18	2.56	0.511	0.511	1.107
	2	25	2	0.5	0.1	

1 =

AWIA

2 = Combined

Board

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their perceived ability to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs found under their respective board's purview. On the basis of the data found in Tables 9 and 10, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -6.24$, $p = .048$.

Table 9

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of Their Ability to Shape Board’s Mission and Direction – Means Comparison

Factor 2.2	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	4.06	1.162	0.274	-0.664
Combined Board	25	4.68	0.627	0.125	

Table 10

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of Their Ability to Shape Board’s Mission and Direction

		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
						p = .05			Lower	Upper
2.2	Equal variances assumed	3.881	.056	-2.273	41	.028	-.624	.275	-1.179	-.070
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.073	24.130	.048	-.624	.301	-1.246	-.003

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their views regarding the appropriateness of the number of localities/regions served by their respective boards. On the basis of the data in Tables 11 and 12, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -2.488$, $p = .019$.

Table 11

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Appropriateness of the Number of Localities/Regions Served by Their Board – Means Comparison

Factor 2.3	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	3.33	1.534	0.362	-0.79
Combined Board	25	4.36	0.995	0.199	

Table 12

84 *t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Appropriateness of the Number of Localities/Regions Served by Their Board*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval	
						p = .05			Lower	Upper
2.3	Equal variances assumed	8.060	.007	-2.663	41	.011	-1.027	.385	-1.805	-.248
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.488	27.099	.019	-1.027	.413	-1.873	-.180

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their views related to the degree to which their respective boards collaborate with the Workforce Development Councils. On the basis of the data in Tables 13 and 14, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -2.207, p = .033$.

Table 13

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Board Involvement with Workforce Development Councils – Means Comparison

Factor 2.4	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	3.5	1.295	0.305	-0.7
Combined Board	25	4.28	0.891	0.178	

Table 14

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Board Involvement with Workforce Development Councils

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)			95% Confidence Interval			
				t	df	p = .05	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
2.4	Equal variances assumed	4.984	.031	-2.343	41	.024	-.780	.333	-1.452	-.108
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.207	19.813	.033	-.780	.353	-1.504	-.046

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their perceptions of the adequacy of the education community's representation on the board. On the basis of the data in Tables 15 and 16, the researcher found there was not a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -1.111$, $p = .277$.

Table 15

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Education Community Members on the Board – Means Comparison

Factor 5.3	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	2.56	0.511	0.511	1.107
Combined Board	25	2	0.5	0.1	

Table 16

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Education Community Members on the Board

∞

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
3.2	Equal variances assumed	7.096	.011	-1.213	41	.232	-.338	.278	-.900	.225
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.111	24.602	.277	-.338	.304	-.965	.289

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their perceptions of the adequacy of the representation of the community's government officials on the board. On the basis of the data in Tables 17 and 18, the researcher found there was not a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -1.702$, $p = .103$.

Table 17

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Government Affiliated Members on the Board – Means Comparison

Factor 3.3	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	3.94	1.162	0.274	-0.64
Combined Board	25	4.56	0.712	0.142	

Table 18

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions of the Number of Government Affiliated Members on the Board

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
3.3	Equal variances assumed	6.027	.018	-2.152	41	.037	-.616	.286	-1.193	-.038
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.995	26.082	.057	-.616	.309	-1.250	.019

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their views as to whether or not board members believe they have the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance prior to decisions being made. On the basis of the data in Tables 19 and 20, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -2.180$, $p = .043$.

Table 19

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Discussion Promoted Prior to Decision-Making – Means Comparison

Factor 3.4	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	4.28	1.227	0.289	-0.71
Combined Board	25	4.92	0.277	0.055	

Table 20

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Discussion Promoted Prior to Decision-Making

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
3.4	Equal variances assumed	27.944	.000	-2.539	41	.015	-.642	.253	-1.153	-.131
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.180	18.251	.043	-.642	.295	-1.260	-.024

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their perceptions of the external engagement efforts to strengthen workforce development in their respective board's region. On the basis of the data in Tables 21 and 22, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -3.605, p = .001$.

Table 21

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Number of External Engagement Efforts Made by Board Staff – Means Comparison

Factor 4.4	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	3.28	1.227	0.289	-0.15
Combined Board	25	4.44	0.712	0.142	

Table 22

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Number of External Engagement Efforts Made by Board Staff

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
4.4	Equal variances assumed	4.808	.034	-3.917	41	.000	-1.162	.297	-1.761	-.563
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.605	25.184	.001	-1.162	.322	-1.826	-.498

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding the appropriateness of the number of service provider assessments conducted by the board. On the basis of the data in Tables 23 and 24, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -2.140$, $p = .039$.

Table 23

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of the Number of Service Provider Assessments Conducted by Board Members – Means Comparison

Factor 5.2	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	3.67	1.085	0.256	-0.66
Combined Board	25	4.36	0.995	0.199	

Table 24

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of the Number of Service Provider Assessments Conducted by Board Members

96

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						p = .05			Lower	Upper
5.2	Equal variances assumed	.141	.709	-2.171	41	.036	-.693	.319	-1.338	-.048
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.140	34.793	.038	-.793	.324	-1.351	-.035

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding the amount of time Board staff allocates to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines. On the basis of the data in Tables 25 and 26, the researcher found there was not a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -2.635$, $p = .015$.

Table 25

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Time Allowed to Assess Board Approved Service – Means Comparison

Factor 5.3	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	3.67	1.328	0.313	-0.85
Combined Board	25	4.56	0.651	0.13	

Table 26

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Amount of Time Allowed to Assess Board Approved Service Providers

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						p = .05			Lower	Upper
5.3	Equal variances assumed	9.768	.003	-2.920	41	.006	-.893	.306	-1.511	-.275
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.635	22.896	.015	-.893	.339	-1.595	-.192

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the perceptions of the AWIA board members and the combination group of the JCWIB and Mobile Works board members regarding their description of the size of the area/region their respective board serves. On the basis of the data in Table 17, the researcher found there was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of both groups, $t(41) = -3.548$, $p = .001$.

Table 27

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Size of the Area/Region Their Respective Board Serves – Means Comparison

Factor 5.3	t-Test for Equality of Means				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation (2-tailed)	Std. Error Mean	Cohen's D
AWIA	18	2.56	0.511	0.511	1.107
Combined Board	25	2	0.5	0.1	

Table 28

t-Test Results Comparing Board Member Perceptions Regarding the Size of the Area/Region Their Respective Board Serves

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
6.0	Equal variances assumed	5.990	.019	3.561	41	.001	.556	.156	.240	.871
	Equal variances not assumed			3.548	36.284	.001	.556	.157	.238	.873

Summary

In this chapter, the results of the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to address the research questions. The descriptive statistics illustrated the collective and independent voices of those participants in the study's sample. They highlighted the individual viewpoints of the individual boards; thus giving the researcher the ability to contextualize their responses in greater detail. With respect to the inferential statistical analyses, the survey instrument was created by the researcher; consequently, a factor analyses was performed to better understand any underlying structure which could help the researcher better understand the data. The researcher found there were two factors underlying the data that accounted for 70.89% of the total variance. Based upon the nature of the items loading on each of the various factors, the researcher believes the perceived factor themes of board culture and the board's autonomy for decision-making and partnership purposes well encompass the thematic nature of the combined item content.

Overall, the responses to the survey items were interval in nature, and were grouped together in two groups to perform the independent samples t-tests. The first group consisted only of the participants who self-identified as being a part of the Alabama Workforce Investment Area – the board responsible for serving 65 of Alabama's 67 counties. This group accounted for 18 of the 43 cases. The second group contained the responses of board members from the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board and Mobile Works. Both boards serve one county each, and accounted for 25 of the 43 cases in this study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUMMARY

Introduction

This chapter serves as an overall summary of the study, and includes the conclusions made by the researcher about the perceptions of Alabama's local workforce investment board efficiency and effectiveness from the perspectives of many of the volunteer board members. The local WIB structure is viewed by some as being one of the key areas of focus in terms of restructuring the ways in which workforce development programs and services are arranged in Alabama (AWC, 2015). Consequently, this study sought to provide data from a variety of internal topics which could help shed further light as to how these volunteer board members view their work relative to the structural and operational mechanisms supporting their work.

As we look ahead to the implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, we must keep in mind how this new law changes the ways in which the federal government will require states to allocate federal resources and the requirements facing the administration of federal workforce programs. Like its predecessor, the WIOA places an additional degree of authority and autonomy to the governing bodies tasked with developing and implementing public workforce development strategies. The WIOA makes significant strides toward aligning public sector goals and targets by increasing accountability measures for programs, and by making more employment data available to the public. According to the Employment and Training Administration of the United States Department of Labor (DOLETA), the WIOA seeks to align

performance indicators for primary job programs and adds new ones related to services to employers and postsecondary credential attainment. Performance goals must take into consideration local and regional economic conditions and participant characteristics. It will also make available data on training providers' performance outcomes and requires third party evaluation of programs (DOLETA, 2015). The WIOA also promotes the development of more prevalent workforce services to job seekers, improves services available to individuals with disabilities, and makes it easier for WIBs to use public resources to provide workforce services by pooling funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services through American Job Centers (AJCs) (DOLETA, 2015). Further, it gives WIBs more opportunities to directly contract with service providers, and enables more service providers, such as community colleges, the ability to take on greater roles as training providers (DOLETA, 2015).

The WIOA also stipulates several mandatory functions of local and state WIBs. Among those functions are:

- Economic analyses of regional conditions;
- Establishing and directing efforts to engage businesses/possible employers;
- Leading efforts to develop, implement, and sustain viable career pathways;
- Identifying and educating other entities on proven and good practices;
- Establish committees to more effectively accomplish the work of the local boards;
- Advocating for consumer choice of participants among providers;
- Enhancing coordination with education service providers and partners. (DOLETA, 2015)

Like the WIA, the WIOA increased the responsibilities of the local WIBs significantly. The transition from WIA to WIOA for local WIBs will also include increased accountability measures – particularly as it relates to WIB expenditures of federal funds. The WIOA creates a common collective of performance indicators that must be met for funding to continue in future fiscal years. Consequently, WIOA language indicates an expectation that decisions of local WIBs regarding federal dollars spent on education and training programs and services will be driven by accurate data and evidence based (DOLETA, 2015). These performance indicators are indicative of a desire for these WIBs to work more closely in a regional context through closer coordination of planning among workforce development service providers and educational institutions within their respective areas (DOLETA, 2015).

With greater autonomy and funding resources comes greater accountability and expectations. WIBs will be successful under the WIOA model if they can structure their efforts behind a collaborative spirit, driven by evidence-based, data-driven approaches to addressing the specific workforce needs of their communities. This study aimed to better understand the strengths of the old WIB structure as state, regional, and local government officials seek information to help inform their decision-making processes pertaining to a new structure for the workforce investment boards.

Research Questions

For the purposes of this study, the following research questions were used:

1. What are the perceptions of local WIB members regarding their organization's efficiency?
2. What relationship, if any, exists between the views of single county local WIB members and the members of the multiple county local WIB regarding their efficiency?

3. Should Alabama's local workforce investment boards be restructured?

Summary

Upon receiving completed surveys from 43 of Alabama's local workforce investment board members, which represented a 44 percent response rate of those board members who were contactable through electronic mail, the researcher proceeded to use the data provided to respond to the aforementioned research questions.

The researcher employed a factor analysis to discern any factors, which resonated through the items, found within the domains of the survey. Sixteen items within the four targeted domains were examined through the factor analysis. The 16 items from the workforce investment board survey was analyzed using principal components analysis with a Varimax rotation. The rotated solution yielded two interpretable factors: board autonomy and staff support, board structure, and assessment. The first factor accounted for 56.93% of the variance and the second 13.95%. Combined, the two factors accounted for 70.89% of the variance.

Given the nature of the responses to the survey items and the overarching thematic questions regarding the workforce investment board structure and purpose, these factors seemed very appropriate. The factors clearly identified the heart of the matter, and helped shed light on the perspective brought forward by the results of the independent samples t-tests.

A series of independent samples of t-tests were performed on the survey data to compare the responses of those members of the 65 county Alabama Workforce Investment Area board to those of the two smaller boards, which included the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board and Mobile Works. Of the nine survey items addressing a variety of board operation-related topics, seven illustrated a significant difference between the mean scores of the smaller boards when compared to the mean scores of the larger board.

The first and second research questions pertained to understanding the perceptions of Board efficiency and any possible relationships, if any, exist between the views of single county local WIB members and the members of the multiple county local WIB regarding their efficiency. Survey items most related to these questions were arranged into four groups of four items related to the broader topics of workforce board activity.

The first group contained four items specifically addressing board member understanding of the organizational mission and the board's approach to regional workforce development. After the factor analysis, three of the four items remained in consideration. The mean scores for the remaining items pertaining to board staff's encouragement of board members shaping their mission and direction, their perceptions related to the number of localities and regions under the scope of the board, and their impression of the level of engagement they experienced with the regional workforce development councils (WDCs) illustrated a significant difference in viewpoints. As a whole, the responses indicated members of the smaller boards felt more able to shape their board's focus, their board's more local focus had a more appropriate geographic purview for their work, and saw themselves as being significantly more collaborative with their WDC peers than those who served on the larger board.

Responses to the optional questions provided interesting insight into more tangible examples of what board members are experiencing in first hand:

- “Unless you are willing to stand up and challenge the recommendations that are already made when we arrive, it feels like a ‘rubber stamp’ is expected on what is recommended. Businesses, the people that have the best view of what jobs and types of training are needed, are under-represented. The other two groups are over

represented.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD
Member

- “I think that some decisions have already been made before a vote is taken so the members are led in the direction to vote as ADECA wants. This may not be altogether bad, but providing information in advance of the meeting would be helpful so that everyone clearly understands what the appropriate direction is before the vote is taken.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Member
- “I really believe the Jefferson County Board and the Regional Council should be one entity since they are working in the same region. The current setup is illogical.”
– JCWIB Member
- “There should be regional Boards that align with Workforce Development Areas. The work previously should be transferred to the Workforce Development Councils after those Councils are evaluated to ensure they are properly staffed and managed to operate the WOIA programs.” – MW Member

Board members seem to appear eager to review tangible reports detailing workforce data and performance provider assessments to better prepare themselves for meetings. In some cases they feel marginalized; however, a number say they feel no changes are needed.

With respect to the scope and size of the boards, given the more significant collaborative nature of their experience, as evidenced by the results of the test reported in Chapter 4, the members of the smaller boards seem more attune to the similarities of the work being completed by the Workforce Development Councils. Policymakers could stand to learn more by engaging in joint meetings between WIB and WDC members to learn how they could more closely work together or to explore a scenario where the boards could be merged.

The second group of items explored the opinions of board members with respect to the various types of individuals who make up the composition of the board and the perceived level of a voice they had to raise matters of importance or to ask questions in the board meetings. Three of the four items in this section were loaded onto one of the two factors discussed earlier. The responses of those members representing the smaller boards indicated a significant level more of agreement with the items than the larger board members. There were no statistically significant differences between board perceptions of the representation of business and education community members; however, there was a statistically significant difference found between boards when asked about the ability to raise questions before decisions are made. Those on smaller boards felt they were in a better position to probe into the decision-making processes on business items than their larger board peers.

Some of the qualitative responses introduced previously echo the sentiments found here. In some instances, board members felt their ability to raise questions or concerns were diminished due to WIB staff implications that decisions merely needed to be approved rather than being more broadly considered and approved by the board. Some of those specific qualitative response items were listed in the previous section.

The third group of items looked at the perceived performance of WIB staff supporting their efforts. Only one item loaded onto one of the two factors delineated by the factor analysis. Once again, the smaller board members held a statistically significantly more positive view than those on the larger board. Members of the smaller boards generally felt more positively about how they viewed their staff engaging external entities to strengthen workforce activities in the communities they served.

There were many qualitative responses to the optional item addressing improvements WIB staff can make to improve the level of informational support they provide board members that related to the totality of the items found in this section prior to the factor analysis. Some of those comments include:

- “Provide better program training and education to board members and then involve them more in the strategic phase of planning.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “More info, background on decision or action items. Encourage members to introduce new concepts, approaches, pulling from their experience. Actively encourage members to share more about their workforce needs and experiences.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board member
- “I personally feel they do an outstanding job supporting volunteer board members. They are always well informed about their jobs and pleasant to deal with.” – MW Board Member
- “Have a training session on the role and importance of membership on the board.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “Create a list serve to share information.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “I would like the staff to have the authority to actually make recommendations on provider selection, in addition to providing the information about potential providers.” – JCWIB Member

- “WIB staff have a tremendous workload due to the large service area. Accessibility to them may be limited or not as welcomed (just an overall feeling, not an occurrence as a result).” – JCWIB Board Member
- “[Hold a] strategic planning retreat at the beginning of each new year. Conduct webinars to continue to keep members informed of key issues pertinent to the operation of the board. Continue to provide guidance and information on WIOA and the requirements related to the board. Better understanding of the role of the WIB and the Regional Workforce Councils. Continue to explore ways to ensure WIBs and Workforce Councils support one another to grow the economic vitality of our state.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “Continued education. It took me some time to fully understand the language and terms. But that’s the case with any board. Annual re-orientation would be good for all members.” – JCWIB Board Member
- “Training on the program and their duties, responsibilities.” – JCWIB Board Member
- “The WIB staff does a great job supporting our board and are very considerate of our time constraints.” – JCWIB Board Member

Overall, board members are seeking more information and training. They do not necessarily suggest they are not receiving any information, but do like the notion of receiving more training to advance their knowledge so they can, in turn, be more effective board members. They would like to communicate more, and in some cases, want additional access to the WIB staff members supporting them.

Lastly, the fourth group of items introduced items discussing the assessment of training providers selected by the large and smaller boards. Two of the four items in this section were

loaded onto one of the two factors discussed previously. In this section, members of the smaller boards felt more positively about the number of service provider assessments they conducted within the year, as well as the amount of time provided to assess the service providers. These comparisons yielded statistically significant differences in both cases.

The qualitative responses to some of the optional questions yielded interesting discussion surrounding the two items discussed above and the two which were removed pertaining to assessment, information provided, and others.

- “[Provide] more data on the effectiveness of programs. Due to both limited assessments by the staff and pressure to keep programs going, the board itself is limited in what it can do.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “More bench marketing between other boards to identify and implement best practices.” – JCWIB Board Member
- “Quarterly updates on programs' progress.” – MW Board Member
- “Agendas sent out before meetings allow us to review actions to be taken.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “[Would like to see more] feedback on how the funds have been spent successfully in the past.” – ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member
- “[Would like to] receive reading materials in advance of meetings.” – JCWIB Member
- “[Would like to review] ranked and graded proposals.” – Alabama Workforce Area Board Member

- “Early notification of meetings so I can plan my schedule.” – ALABAMA

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD Board Member

WIB members appear to want to be more engaged in the assessment and evaluation process of workforce development and education service providers. They appreciate receiving any information they believe will aid them in their efforts to be as engaged and prepared as possible prior to and during board meetings. As discussed earlier, they want to play an active role in the decision-making processes on these subjects. While it is difficult to ascertain whether or not board member behaviors presented to the staffs supporting these boards has been displayed, or these requests have been articulated to board members directly, board members appear to want to be more engaged. The researcher does recognize this; however, one could argue of the 97 individuals contacted to take the survey, the 43 who chose to respond could be described as more active than their peers who elected not to participate in the survey.

Conclusions

In light of these results, we can reasonably answer the first two research questions with the following. Board members are generally positive about their experiences serving on these boards; however, those on the smaller boards perceive themselves as, or more, willing to be more engaged than their peers on the larger boards. The researcher could reasonably argue there may be an intrinsic inclination to prefer a smaller board environment where your interaction levels are higher with board staff due to sheer numbers and the communities you are actively serving are more often directly connected to your personal and professional interests. The larger board’s purview spans 65 counties compared to each of the smaller boards representing one county each. The smaller board members may likely see their role as having more of a direct impact in their communities compared to the larger board members who are making decisions for not only their

community but communities near and far away. Consequently, policymakers should take these views into consideration as they consider the regional scope and staff support structures for the new structure to be implemented under WIOA.

The third research question addressed what many leaders on the Alabama Workforce Council perceive as being the main topic of interest in this conversation which is: Should the local workforce investment boards be restructured? The last item of the survey instrument directly asks all board members to select one of three prompted responses to the question: How would you describe the size of the area/region your board serves? They were prompted with the response choices too small, appropriately sized, and too large. In this scenario, a response of too small would receive a score as 1, appropriately sized would receive a score of 2, and too large would receive a score of 3.

For this item, the members of the larger board submitted responses with an average mean score of 2.56 compared to the smaller board member population submitting responses with an average mean score of 2.00. The independent samples t-test suggests these mean scores are significantly different. The researcher gleaned two important points from these responses. First, the membership of the larger board felt the purview of their board was too large. Second, the membership of the smaller boards felt the purview of their board was appropriate. Consequently, the smaller board memberships may not be as excited about expanding the scope of their work, while some members of the larger board would not mind adopting a more regional approach to their role.

As discussed previously, a regional approach to workforce development affords communities to work together to develop strategies that can directly align educational, governmental, and business and industry interests across a broader geographic region.

Approaching economic development in a cluster specific manner, as discussed in the Chicago and Richardson examples found in the literature view, can be a very successful approach if implemented correctly. Alabama communities may stand to benefit greatly from a more holistic, regional approach; however, a central hub found within a state agency tasked with interpreting and assisting local leaders administer the federal policy could be a tremendous asset.

Implications

Alabama's government, private sector, and educational leaders have taken positive steps to realign human and programmatic resources to strengthen and more effectively address workforce development needs across our state. As more decisions are being made regarding the realignment of the workforce investment boards, and potentially the workforce development councils, it is critical for state leaders to understand the value of the local and regional approach to addressing our workforce needs. Their plan to review the workforce investment board structure should include leveraging the combined strengths and resources of the WIBs with the regional influence welded by members of the Workforce Development Councils.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following are recommendations for further research to build upon this study of the perceptions of workforce investment board efficiency and effectiveness. As the WIOA law begins to shape a new era of federal workforce development policy, it is important for policymakers and policy scholars alike to have a deep understanding of how the structure of these volunteer boards best fulfill the mission and purpose of the programs and services the legislation seeks to accomplish, particularly as accountability measures appear to strengthen and more regionally focused approaches are becoming more of an expectation.

1. Major components of this study should be considered for use in other U.S. states.

The researcher's understanding of the law suggests each state is given leeway as to how they best see themselves implementing certain components of the WIA and WIOA; consequently, the perspectives provided by the members of WIBs from other states could provide valuable insights into possible best practices that could be adopted by other U.S. states. The survey instrument developed for the purposes of this study could be modified and utilized in similar studies.

2. This study should be modified to research the perceptions of the members of Alabama's ten workforce development councils. The researcher believes their insights could shed light on areas for improvement with respect to their organization and structure relative to the WIBs. Further, it would be interesting to learn their attitudes toward possibly merging with the WIBs in a more regional approach.

Summary

In sum, creating and sustaining a well-trained, sustainable workforce that successfully meets the need of our national and global economies is essential to our long-term viability as a global economic power. Our workforce is easily one of our nation's greatest assets; thus investments made to strengthen the skills base of our workers, will only serve as an economic driver for innovation and regional stability for workers of all types.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has taken the place of the Workforce Investment Act in terms of legislating state and local workforce development activity. Like its predecessor, the emphasis on youth programs, One-Stop Career Centers, partnerships, and a streamlined approach to organizing workforce delivery systems remains the same; however, a greater emphasis will be placed on program accountability and effectiveness

(NAWB, 2014). As a result, state governmental entities are exploring statewide, regional, and local approaches to best meet the new accountability measures, and overall effectiveness, of their current programs. Overall, these pieces of legislation and their subsequent amendments have made a lasting impact on workforce development in the United States. While bureaucratic approaches to public programs and services may not always be as effective as the public would like, these bills engage many of the stakeholders needed to make these programs as meaningful as possible for the populations they aim to serve.

The researcher applauds Alabama's government, education, and business communities on their continuing efforts to make lasting, positive changes in the ways in which we approach workforce development in our state. At this critical time, we must capitalize on the momentum created by this collaborative effort, and approach any and all possible opportunities for greater efficiency and effectiveness with an open mind. The ability for this researcher to delve as deeply into this subject is a tremendous testament to the willingness of those most closely working in this area to explore these possibilities. It is the researcher's sincere hope this study will provide valuable information with which exciting conversations can emerge with the potential to reshape Alabama's workforce development policy on the statewide, local, and regional levels for the better.

REFERENCES

- Aaron, K., & Watson, D. (2008). *Building the local economy: Cases in economic development*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Alabama Community College System (2015). Workforce development councils.
<https://www.accs.cc/index.cfm/workforce-development/workforce-councils/> Accessed 8/18.
- Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs. (2012). By-laws of the Alabama workforce investment area (ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD) local board. Retrieved from
<http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/wdd/Documents/LWIB%20Bylaws.pdf>
- Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs. (2014). State of Alabama workforce investment act, Title IX program year 2013 annual report. Retrieved from
<http://www.adeca.alabama.gov/Divisions/wdd/Documents/WIA%20PY%202013%20Annual%20Report.pdf>
- Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs. (2015). Mission. Retrieved from
<http://adeca.alabama.gov/about/Pages/Mission.aspx>
- Alabama Workforce Council. (2015). 2014–2015 Council recommendations to Governor Robert Bentley. Montgomery, AL.
- Association for Career and Technical Education. (1998). *User's guide to the workforce investment act of 1998*. Washington, DC: Association for Career & Technical Education.

- Barnow, B., & Gubits, D. (2003). Review of recent pilot, demonstration, research, and evaluation initiatives to assist in the implementation of programs under the workforce investment act. Employment and Training Administration Occasional Paper 2003-10.
- Barnow, B., & King, C. (2005). The workforce investment act in eight states.
- Cervero, R., & Wilson, A. (1999). Beyond learner-center practice: Adult education, power, and society. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 13(2), 27–38.
- Cervero, R., & Wilson, A. (2001). *Power in practice: Adult education and the struggle for knowledge and power in society*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cervero, R., & Wilson, A. (2006). *Working the planning table. Negotiating democratically for adult, continuing, and workplace education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Council, I. (2011). Introduction to economic development. Washington, DC.
- Decker, P. (2010). Ten years of the workforce investment act (WIA): Interpreting the research on WIA and related programs.
- Dunham, K., Salzman, J., & Koller, V. (2004). Business as partner and customer under WIA: A study of innovative practices. Oakland, CA: Social Policy Research Associates.
- Eberts, R., & Erickcek, G. (2002). The role of partnerships in economic development and labor markets in the United States. Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.
- Ellis, N. (2001) Individual training accounts under the workforce investment act of 1998: Is choice a good thing? Washington, DC: Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy.
- Goldsmith, S., & Eggers, W. (2004). *Governing by network: The new shape of the public sector*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

- Gordon, H. (2008). *The history and growth of career and technical education in America*. Long Grove, IL: Wave Press, Inc.
- Green, S., & Salkind, N. (2011). *Using SPSS for windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and understanding data*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Heinrich, C., Mueser, P., & Troske, K., (2008). *Workforce investment act non-experimental net impact evaluation*. Report to U.S. Department of Labor. Columbia, MD: IMPAQ International.
- Hollenbeck, K. (2009). *Workforce investment act (WIA) net impact estimates and rates of return*. Presentation at European Commission sponsored meeting. Washington, D.C.
- Hollenbeck, K. (2009, November 6). *Does the workforce investment act work?* Presentation at the 31st Annual Research Conference of the Association of Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), Washington, DC.
- Hollenbeck, K., Schroeder, D., King, C., & Huang, W. (2005). *Net impact estimates for services provided through the workforce investment act*. Employment and Training Administration Occasional Paper 2005-06. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.
- Hopkins, J., Monaghan, C., & Hansman, C. (2009). *Conflict and collaboration: Providers and planners implementing the workforce investment act (WIA)*. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 59(3).
- Houle, C. (1972). *The design of education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Koven, S., & Lyons, T. (2003). *Economic development strategies for state and local practice*. Washington, DC: International City/County Management Association.
- Lautner, M. (2011). *When the boomers bail*. Albuquerque, NM: Logan Square Press.

- Leigh, N., & Blakely, E. (2013). *Planning local economic development. Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Livingstone, D. (1983). *Class ideologies and educational futures*. London: Falmer.
- Macro, B., Almandsmith, S., & Hague, M. (2003). *Creating partnerships for workforce investment: How services are provided under WIA*. Oakland, CA: Berkeley Policy Associates.
- Morgan, G. (1997). The concept of educational need: An analysis of selected literature. *Adult Education, 27*, 116-127.
- National Association of Workforce Boards. (2014). *The workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA)*. Washington, DC.
- Northwest Missouri Workforce Investment Board. (2015). Board self-assessment and development survey. <http://www.nwwib.org/Agenda%20Item%20C.1%20-%20Board%20Self%20Assessment%20and%20Development%20Survey%20Responses.pdf>
- O'Shea, D., & King, C. (2000). *The workforce investment act of 1998: Restructuring workforce development initiatives in states and localities*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Ross, M. E., & Shannon, D. M. (2008). *Applied quantitative methods in education*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Smith, J. (2004). *Evaluating local economic development policies: Theory and practice*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland Press.
- Southern Growth Policies Board. (2013). *Re-imagining workforce development*. Research Triangle Park, NC: Author.

Tavokol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53–55.

Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

United States Department of Labor. (2015). FAQs workforce innovation and opportunity act. Accessed 12/18. <http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/>

Zakaria, F. (2011). A flight plan for the American economy. *Time Magazine*, 4. <http://content.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,2072632,00.html>

APPENDIX B

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Workforce Investment Board Survey

Thank you for your willingness to take this brief survey. The purpose of this survey is to gather information to identify the of strengths and opportunities for improvement among Alabama's Statewide and Local Workforce Investment Boards. The survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete. To protect your anonymity, please craft your comments carefully should you elect to respond to any items that provide space for you to supply comments. Should you have any questions or experience complications while taking the survey, please contact me at (251) 656-1835 or ulmermj@auburn.edu.

Many thanks,

Matt

Please select the response(s) that BEST describes your role in Alabama's Workforce Development System. NOTE: Should you serve on the Alabama Workforce Investment Board (Statewide Board) and a local board, please choose to complete the survey from the perspective of your local board.

- Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board
- Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board
- Mobile Works

How many years have you served as a member of your current local Workforce Investment Board?

How would you rate your understanding of the following concept areas of workforce development and education?

	Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Not Knowledgeable
Workforce Education/Education Providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workforce Education/Training Program Funding Sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Board Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board's purview.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Board Membership & Meetings					
	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Workforce Investment Board Staff

(NOTE: WIB Staff refers broadly to the individuals responsible for supporting your Board's activity. For the Alabama Workforce Investment Board (State Board) and the Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board members, these items respond directly to your work with ADECA staff. For those serving on the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, these items directly refer to the Jefferson County Community & Economic Development Department team. For those serving on the Mobile Works Board, these items refer to your work with the Mobile Works team.)

	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Workforce Investment Board Training Provider Performance Assessment					
	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree
Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

OPTIONAL: What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from WIB staff?

OPTIONAL: What improvements, if any, would you recommend WIB staff make to improve support to volunteer board members in the future?

OPTIONAL: Please share any information or experiences related to your work on the Workforce Investment Board which could help us better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Alabama's volunteer board approach going forward.

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your responses are greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Matt Ulmer at ulmermj@auburn.edu or by phone at (251) 656-1835.

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL TABLES

Table C1

All Survey Participant Board Membership Data

2. Please select the response that BEST describes your role in Alabama’s Workforce Development System.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board	18	42%
2	Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board	12	28%
3	Mobile Works	13	30%
	Total	43	100%

3. How many years have you served as a member of your current local Workforce Investment Board?

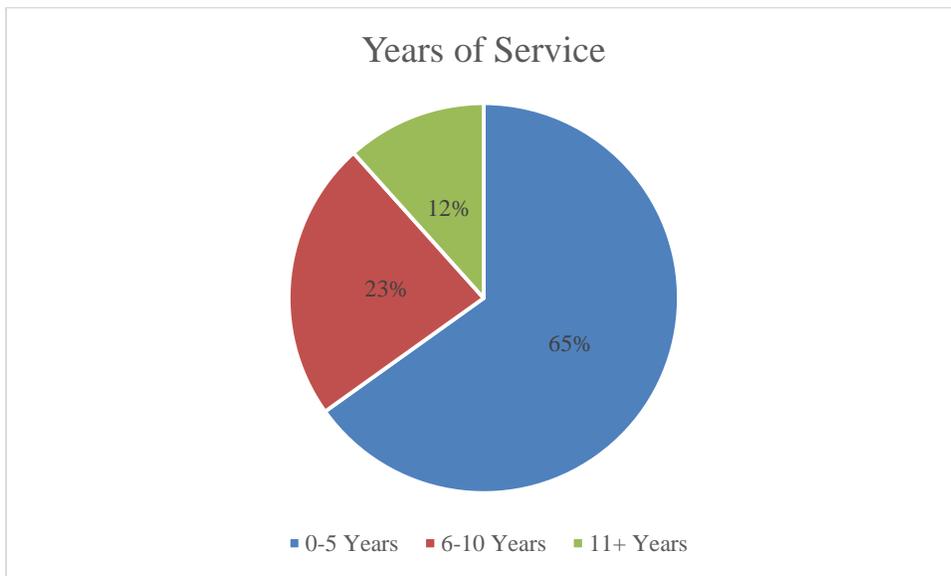


Table C2

Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – All Respondents

4. How would you rate your understanding of the following concept areas of workforce development and education?

#	Question	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Total Responses	Mean
1	Workforce Education/ Education Providers	0	10	33	43	2.77
2	Workforce Education/ Training Program Funding Sources	1	10	32	43	2.72
3	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	1	14	28	43	2.63
4	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board	0	13	30	43	2.7

Statistic	Workforce Education/Education Providers	Workforce Education/Training Program Funding Sources	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board
Min Value	2	1	1	2
Max Value	3	3	3	3
Mean	2.77	2.72	2.63	2.7
Variance	0.18	0.25	0.29	0.22
Standard Deviation	0.43	0.5	0.54	0.46
Total Responses	43	43	43	43

Understanding of Concept Areas

Table C3

Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board Members

4. How would you rate your understanding of the following concept areas of workforce development and education?

#	Question	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Total Responses	Mean
1	Workforce Education/ Education Providers	0	5	13	18	2.72
2	Workforce Education/ Training Program Funding Sources	1	3	14	18	2.72
3	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	1	7	10	18	2.5
4	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board	0	6	12	18	2.67

Statistic	Workforce Education/Education Providers	Workforce Education/Training Program Funding Sources	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board
Min Value	2	1	1	2
Max Value	3	3	3	3
Mean	2.72	2.72	2.5	2.67
Variance	0.21	0.33	0.38	0.24
Standard Deviation	0.46	0.57	0.62	0.49
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

Table C4

*Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – Jefferson County
Workforce Investment Board Members*

4. How would you rate your understanding of the following concept areas of workforce development and education?

#	Question	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Total Responses	Mean
1	Workforce Education/ Education Providers	0	1	11	12	2.92
2	Workforce Education/ Training Program Funding Sources	0	3	9	12	2.75
3	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	0	2	10	12	2.83
4	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board	0	3	9	12	2.75

Statistic	Workforce Education/Education Providers	Workforce Education/Training Program Funding Sources	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board
Min Value	2	2	2	2
Max Value	3	3	3	3
Mean	2.92	2.75	2.83	2.75
Variance	0.08	0.2	0.15	0.2
Standard Deviation	0.29	0.45	0.39	0.45
Total Responses	12	12	12	12

Table C5

Self-Described Understanding Rating of Workforce Concept Areas – Mobile Works

4. How would you rate your understanding of the following concept areas of workforce development and education?

#	Question	Not Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Total Responses	Mean
1	Workforce Education/ Education Providers	0	4	9	13	2.69
2	Workforce Education/ Training Program Funding Sources	0	4	9	13	2.69
3	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	0	5	8	13	2.62
4	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board	0	4	9	13	2.69

Statistic	Workforce Education/Education Providers	Workforce Education/Training Program Funding Sources	Recruiting & Retaining Skilled Workers	The workforce needs of business and industry in the service area or areas of your board
Min Value	2	2	2	2
Max Value	3	3	3	3
Mean	2.69	2.69	2.62	2.69
Variance	0.23	0.23	0.26	0.23
Standard Deviation	0.48	0.48	0.51	0.48
Total Responses	13	13	13	13

Table C6

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – All Participants

5. Board Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	0	1	0	10	32	43	4.7
2	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board's purview.	1	1	4	10	27	43	4.42
3	The number of localities/ regions served by my Board is appropriate.	4	3	6	9	21	43	3.93
4	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.	1	5	7	12	18	43	3.95

Statistic	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board's purview.	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.
Min Value	2	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.7	4.42	3.93	3.95
Variance	0.36	0.87	1.78	1.28
Standard Deviation	0.6	0.93	1.33	1.13
Total Responses	43	43	43	43

Table C7

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board Members

5. Board Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	0	1	0	6	11	18	4.5
2	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board's purview.	1	1	2	6	8	18	4.06
3	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	3	3	3	3	6	18	3.33
4	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.	1	4	3	5	5	18	3.5

Statistic	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board's purview.	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.
Min Value	2	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.5	4.06	3.33	3.5
Variance	0.62	1.35	2.35	1.68
Standard Deviation	0.79	1.16	1.53	1.29
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

Table C8

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board Members

5. Board Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	0	0	0	1	11	12	4.92
2	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/ services found in the area/areas under their Board’s purview.	0	0	2	1	9	12	4.58
3	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	0	0	2	3	7	12	4.42
4	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.	0	0	3	4	5	12	4.17

135

Statistic	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board’s purview.	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.
Min Value	4	3	3	3
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.92	4.58	4.42	4.17
Variance	0.08	0.63	0.63	0.7
Standard Deviation	0.29	0.79	0.79	0.83
Total Responses	12	12	12	12

Table C9

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach Survey Items – Mobile Works

5. Board Mission & Regional Workforce Development Approach

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	0	0	0	3	10	13	4.77
2	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/ services found in the area/areas under their Board’s purview.	0	0	0	3	10	13	4.77
3	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	1	0	1	3	8	13	4.31
4	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.	0	1	1	3	8	13	4.38

136

Statistic	The Board is familiar with the mission and purpose of their organization.	WIB staff members encourage Board members to shape the mission and direction of the workforce programs/services found in the area/areas under their Board’s purview.	The number of localities/regions served by my Board is appropriate.	Board members collaborate with their Regional Workforce Development Council counterpart(s) on workforce development strategic planning and program development.
Min Value	4	4	1	2
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.77	4.77	4.31	4.38
Variance	0.19	0.19	1.4	0.92
Standard Deviation	0.44	0.44	1.18	0.96
Total Responses	13	13	13	13

Board Membership & Meetings

Table C10

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – All Respondents

6. Board Membership & Meetings

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The composition of the Board’s membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	1	3	3	9	27	43	4.35
2	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	3	3	10	27	43	4.42
3	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	3	6	9	25	43	4.3
4	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.	1	1	2	4	35	43	4.65

Statistic	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.
Min Value	1	2	2	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.35	4.42	4.3	4.65
Variance	1.09	0.82	0.93	0.76
Standard Deviation	1.04	0.91	0.96	0.87
Total Responses	43	43	43	43

Table C11

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board

6. Board Membership & Meetings

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	1	3	3	1	10	18	3.89
2	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	3	1	3	11	18	4.22
3	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	3	3	4	8	18	3.94
4	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.	1	1	2	2	12	18	4.28

Statistic	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.
Min Value	1	2	2	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	3.89	4.22	3.94	4.28
Variance	1.99	1.36	1.35	1.51
Standard Deviation	1.41	1.17	1.16	1.23
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

Table C12

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

6. Board Membership & Meetings

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	0	0	4	8	12	4.67
2	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	0	0	4	8	12	4.67
3	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	0	2	2	8	12	4.5
4	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.	0	0	0	1	11	12	4.92

Statistic	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.
Min Value	4	4	3	4
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.67	4.67	4.5	4.92
Variance	0.24	0.24	0.64	0.08
Standard Deviation	0.49	0.49	0.8	0.29
Total Responses	12	12	12	12

Table C13

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Membership & Meetings Survey Items – Mobile Works

6. Board Membership Meetings

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	0	0	4	9	13	4.69
2	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	0	2	3	8	13	4.46
3	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	0	0	1	3	9	13	4.62
4	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.	0	0	0	1	12	13	4.92

Statistic	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the business community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the education community within the jurisdiction of the board.	The composition of the Board's membership adequately represents the government leaders within the jurisdiction of the board.	The Board has the opportunity to discuss matters and ask questions of critical importance, during board meetings, before decisions are made.
Min Value	4	3	3	4
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.69	4.46	4.62	4.92
Variance	0.23	0.6	0.42	0.08
Standard Deviation	0.48	0.78	0.65	0.28
Total Responses	13	13	13	13

7. WIB STAFF

Table C14

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – All Respondents

7. Workforce Investment Board Staff

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	0	3	3	12	25	43	4.37
2	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	2	6	4	10	21	43	3.98
3	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	1	3	1	10	28	43	4.42
4	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.	2	2	9	13	17	43	3.95

Statistic	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.
Min Value	2	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.37	3.98	4.42	3.95
Variance	0.81	1.59	1.01	1.24
Standard Deviation	0.9	1.26	1.01	1.11
Total Responses	43	43	43	43

NOTE: WIB Staff refers broadly to the individuals responsible for supporting your Board's activity. For the Alabama Workforce Investment Board (State Board) and the Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board members, these items respond directly to your work with ADECA staff. For those serving on the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, these items directly refer to the Jefferson County Community & Economic Development Department team. For those serving on the Mobile Works Board, these items refer to your work with the Mobile Works team.

Table C15

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board

7. Workforce Investment Board Staff

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	0	3	2	5	8	18	4
2	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	1	5	3	4	5	18	3.39
3	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	1	3	1	3	10	18	4
4	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.	2	2	6	5	3	18	3.28

Statistic	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.
Min Value	2	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4	3.39	4	3.28
Variance	1.29	1.78	1.88	1.51
Standard Deviation	1.14	1.33	1.37	1.23
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

NOTE: WIB Staff refers broadly to the individuals responsible for supporting your Board's activity. For the Alabama Workforce Investment Board (State Board) and the Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board members, these items respond directly to your work with ADECA staff. For those serving on the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, these items directly refer to the Jefferson County Community & Economic Development Department team. For those serving on the Mobile Works Board, these items refer to your work with the Mobile Works team.

Table C16

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

7. Workforce Investment Board Staff

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	0	3	2	5	8	18	4
2	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	1	5	3	4	5	18	3.39
3	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	1	3	1	3	10	18	4
4	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.	2	2	6	5	3	18	3.28

Statistic	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.
Min Value	2	1	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4	3.39	4	3.28
Variance	1.29	1.78	1.88	1.51
Standard Deviation	1.14	1.33	1.37	1.23
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

NOTE: WIB Staff refers broadly to the individuals responsible for supporting your Board's activity. For the Alabama Workforce Investment Board (State Board) and the Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board members, these items respond directly to your work with ADECA staff. For those serving on the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, these items directly refer to the Jefferson County Community & Economic Development Department team. For those serving on the Mobile Works Board, these items refer to your work with the Mobile Works team.

Table C17

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Staff Survey Items – Mobile Works

7. Workforce Investment Board Staff

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	0	0	0	5	8	13	4.62
2	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	1	0	1	3	8	13	4.31
3	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	0	0	0	5	8	13	4.62
4	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.	0	0	1	5	7	13	4.46

Statistic	Communication between WIB staff and Board members is effective.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient training related to their role.	WIB staff provide Board members with sufficient information from which they are to make decisions.	WIB staff actively engage external audiences to explore opportunities to strengthen workforce development in the area/areas under the Board's purview.
Min Value	4	1	4	3
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.62	4.31	4.62	4.46
Variance	0.26	1.4	0.26	0.44
Standard Deviation	0.51	1.18	0.51	0.66
Total Responses	13	13	13	13

NOTE: WIB Staff refers broadly to the individuals responsible for supporting your Board's activity. For the Alabama Workforce Investment Board (State Board) and the Alabama Workforce Area Investment Board members, these items respond directly to your work with ADECA staff. For those serving on the Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board, these items directly refer to the Jefferson County Community & Economic Development Department team. For those serving on the Mobile Works Board, these items refer to your work with the Mobile Works team.

Table C18

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – All Respondents

8. WIB ASSESSMENT

8. Workforce Investment Board Training Provider Performance Assessment

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	0	2	2	8	31	43	4.58
2	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	0	4	11	6	22	43	4.07
3	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	2	1	6	12	22	43	4.19
4	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.	2	3	1	13	24	43	4.26

146

Statistic	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.
Min Value	2	2	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.58	4.07	4.19	4.26
Variance	0.63	1.16	1.16	1.24
Standard Deviation	0.79	1.08	1.07	1.11
Total Responses	43	43	43	43

Table C19

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board

8. Workforce Investment Board Training Provider Performance Assessment

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	0	1	2	3	12	18	4.44
2	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	0	3	5	5	5	18	3.67
3	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	2	1	4	5	6	18	3.67
4	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.	2	3	1	3	9	18	3.78

147

Statistic	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.
Min Value	2	2	1	1
Max Value	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.44	3.67	3.67	3.78
Variance	0.85	1.18	1.76	2.3
Standard Deviation	0.92	1.08	1.33	1.52
Total Responses	18	18	18	18

Table C20

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

8. Workforce Investment Board Training Provider Performance Assessment

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	0	1	0	2	9	12	4.58
2	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	0	1	2	1	8	12	4.33
3	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	0	0	1	2	9	12	4.67
4	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.	0	0	0	3	9	12	4.75
Statistic	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.		The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.		Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.		
Min Value	2	2	3	4				
Max Value	5	5	5	5				
Mean	4.58	4.33	4.67	4.75				
Variance	0.81	1.15	0.42	0.2				
Standard Deviation	0.9	1.07	0.65	0.45				
Total Responses	12	12	12	12				

Table C21

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding WIB Training Provider Performance Assessment Survey Items – Mobile Works

8. Workforce Investment Board Training Provider Performance Assessment

#	Question	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	0	0	0	3	10	13	4.77
2	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	0	0	4	0	9	13	4.38
3	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	0	0	1	5	7	13	4.46
4	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.	0	0	0	7	6	13	4.46
Statistic	Board staff clearly articulate the performance assessment metrics for Board-contracted workforce development service providers.	The number of workforce service provider performance assessments conducted by the Board is appropriate.	The Board has sufficient time to evaluate the performance of workforce education service program providers within Board staff/federal government timelines.	Board members feel empowered to terminate contractual relationships among providers who do not meet assessment goals set forth by the Board.				
Min Value	4	3	3	4				
Max Value	5	5	5	5				
Mean	4.77	4.38	4.46	4.46				
Variance	0.19	0.92	0.44	0.27				
Standard Deviation	0.44	0.96	0.66	0.52				
Total Responses	13	13	13	13				

BOARD SIZE

Table C22

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – All Respondents

9. How would you describe the size of the area/region your board serves?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Too small	3	7%
2	Appropriately sized	27	63%
3	Too large	13	30%
	Total	43	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	2.23
Variance	0.33
Standard Deviation	0.57
Total Responses	43

Table C23

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board

9. How would you describe the size of the area/region your board serves?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Too small	0	0%
2	Appropriately sized	8	44%
3	Too large	10	56%
	Total	18	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	3
Mean	2.56
Variance	0.26
Standard Deviation	0.51
Total Responses	18

Table C24

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

9. How would you describe the size of the area/region your board serves?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Too small	0	0%
2	Appropriately sized	11	92%
3	Too large	1	8%
Total		12	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	3
Mean	2.08
Variance	0.08
Standard Deviation	0.29
Total Responses	12

Table C25

Self-Described Perceptions Regarding Size of Area/Region of Board Purview – Mobile Works

9. How would you describe the size of the area/region your board serves?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Too small	3	23%
2	Appropriately sized	8	62%
3	Too large	2	15%
Total		13	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	3
Mean	1.92
Variance	0.41
Standard Deviation	0.64
Total Responses	13

ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD

10. OPTIONAL: What improvements, if any, would you recommend WIB staff make to improve support to volunteer board members in the future?

Text Response

- None
- More data on the effectiveness of programs. Due to both limited assessments by the staff and pressure to keep programs going, the board itself is limited in what it can do.
- Provide better program training and education to board members and then involve them more in the strategic phase of planning.
- More info, background on decision or action items. Encourage members to introduce new concepts, approaches, pulling from their experience. Actively encourage members to share more about their workforce needs and experiences.
- Have a training session on the role and importance of membership n the board.
- Create a list serve to share information
- Strategic Planning retreat at the beginning of each new year. Conduct webinars to continue to keep members informed of key issues pertinent to the operation of the board. Continue to provide guidance and information on WIOA and the requirements related to the board. Better understanding of the role of the WIB and the Regional Workforce Councils. Continue to explore ways to ensure WIBs and Workforce Councils support one another to grow the economic vitality of our state.
- Training
- Training on the program and their duties, responsibilities.
- have meetings in Gadsden and or Anniston or north Alabama

Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

10. OPTIONAL: What improvements, if any, would you recommend WIB staff make to improve support to volunteer board members in the future?

Text Response

- None
- I would like the staff to have the authority to actually makes recommendations on provider selection, in addition to providing the information about potential providers
- WIB staff have a tremendous workload due to the large service area. Accessibility to them may be limited or not as welcomed (just an overall feeling, not an occurrence) as a result.
- NA
- With on-going changes under the WOIA more email communications in areas such as interaction with DOL staff
- Continued education. It took me some time to full understand the language and terms. But that's the case with any board. Annual re-orientation would be good for all members.
- None
- Annual Orientation
- The WIB staff does a great job supporting our board, and are very considerate of our time constraints.

Mobile Works

10. OPTIONAL: What improvements, if any, would you recommend WIB staff make to improve support to volunteer board members in the future?

Text Response

- I personally feel they do an outstanding job supporting volunteer board members. They are always well informed about their jobs and pleasant to deal with.
- none
- N/A
- No changes are recommended

OPTIONAL 2

ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA BOARD

11. OPTIONAL: What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from WIB staff?

- reading materials in advance of meetings
- Ranked and graded proposals
- Early notification of meetings so I can plan my schedule.
- Annual program year budget data, however budgeted amounts seem somewhat predetermined
- Agendas sent out before meetings allow us to review actions to be taken.
- Feedback on how the funds have been spent successfully in the past.
- Updates and reports

- Labor Market Information, Performance reports, Expenditure reports, Employment data, Demographic information
- none
- General Overview information
- LMI and Performance information
- the overall workforce talent availability

Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

11. OPTIONAL: What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from WIB staff?

- Workforce information/data
- The performance reports on the providers
- They keep us informed of provider needs, progress, down falls etc. We're offered training opportunities and encouraged to attend conferences to increase our knowledge base.
- Detailed reports in advance of Executive Committee or full Board meeting
- Reports in advance. At times it feels like too much info. A summary would be nice every now and then.
- WIB staff is always knowledgeable and provides support to board members as required. They go out of their way to train board members to their roles and responsibilities and always value the feedback of board members. I have also observed the WIB employees holding providers to rules and regulations provided by the state. As a community leader I value the Jefferson County WIB
- Training
- Collaboration among board members

- Opportunities for conferences outside our area to find out what other WIB are implementing.

Mobile Works

11. OPTIONAL: What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from WIB staff?

- Financial information showing the activity of Mobile Works in workforce development.
- Information through the staff
- Quarterly updates on programs' progress
- Regular reports on staff activity and results achieved
- I have too little experience to comment.

OPTIONAL 3

Alabama Workforce Investment Area Board

12. OPTIONAL: Please share any information or experiences related to your work on the Workforce Investment Board which could help us better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Alabama's volunteer board approach going forward.

Text Response

- The level of knowledge among members varies widely
- Unless you are willing to stand up and challenge the recommendations that are already made when we arrive, it feels like a 'rubber stamp' is expected on what is recommended. Businesses, the people that have the best view of what jobs and types of training are needed, are under represented. The other two groups are over represented.
- I think that some decisions have already been made before a vote is taken so the members are led in the direction to vote as ADECA wants. This may not be altogether bad, but providing information in advance of the meeting would be helpful so that everyone clearly understands what is the appropriate direction before the vote is taken.
- I think it works well

Jefferson County Workforce Investment Board

12. OPTIONAL: Please share any information or experiences related to your work on the Workforce Investment Board which could & help us better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Alabama's volunteer board approach going forward.

Text Response

- I am employed by a municipal economic development agency
- I really believe the Jefferson County Board and the Regional Council should be one entity since they are working in the same region. The current setup is illogical.
- The Board works hard to cover all areas and encourages more active and deepened participation. Although 'trainings' are offered, more of same, even if duplicated, would be beneficial.
- With State of Alabama Workforce Development being shifted to the Department of Commerce more education on changes in our interaction
- More bench marketing between other boards to identify and implement best practices.
- How to work more effectively with person with disabilities

Mobile Works

12. OPTIONAL: Please share any information or experiences related to your work on the Workforce Investment Board which could help us better understand the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Alabama's volunteer board approach going forward.

Text Response

- Mobile Works has assisted me in recruiting and training two auto body repairs men. One is now on commission, and the other is on salary during his training. It is difficult recruiting men to do this type of repair work. We have been able to recruit these two men because of the financial assistance of Mobile Works.
- Open communication(s) with the local administration
- Mobile Works provides sufficient information to allow board members to make educated decisions
- Mobile Works is well organized and efficiently managed.
- There should be regional Boards that align with Workforce Development Areas. The work previously should be transferred to the Workforce Development Councils after those Councils are evaluated to ensure they are properly staffed and managed to operate the WOIA programs.