

2023 Edwin Marsh Memorial Scholarship Essay

Analysis of HEA 1002

After researching HEA 1002, it is apparent that the Indiana General Assembly is working to establish a foundation for greater employment opportunities beyond the “traditional” path of attending a higher education institution. As a general baseline, HEA 1002 is one of the first of its kind– the bill allows students who traditionally don’t have a choice in the types of classes/courses they get to enroll in with the power to decide. High school students, more specifically students in grades 10-12, have an opportunity to use job experience from apprenticeships, internships, and coursework outside of their school corporation to count towards the overall graduation credit requirement of their public high school.

Additionally, the bill authorizes the Career Scholarship Account Program (“CSA program”) and several funds in order to sustain the creation of the CSA program. The CSA program and its corresponding fund, Connecting Students with Careers Fund, propose giving \$2,500 to \$5,000 for each student who chooses to participate in workforce training and technical education while simultaneously earning high school credits. Public schools would be required to hold at least one career fair per academic year to include both higher education institutions, trade programs, and other technical institutions.

One of the most crucial aspects of HEA 1002 is the change in Indiana’s 21st Century Scholar Program. This program, historically known as an early-college promise program designed to make college more affordable for students, allows eligible students who meet requirements to receive a two (2) or four (4) year scholarship that pays up to 100% tuition at an eligible Indiana college or university. HEA 1002, however, has proposed to allow qualifying

students to use their 21st Century Scholarship funds for postsecondary career training such as apprenticeships and technical courses.

If a high school student chooses to take advantage of one of the abovementioned opportunities, the Indiana Department of Education would be responsible for approving courses and tracks for the career scholarship accounts. To qualify for the fund payments from the state of Indiana, students would need to create a post-secondary plan agreed to by their school and employer about their technical training, labor organization apprenticeship/internship, or other work options. Students would also be required to have individual meetings with an intermediary, an employer, or a labor organization they seek to work with to discuss current and future career opportunities. These meetings lay a structured approach to the technical training and apprenticeships that a student seeks to participate in, while also keeping the Department of Education informed with a student's choice.

Implementation of Ideas

This particular piece of legislation, like mentioned above, is undoubtedly unique to the current system of public education and breaks barriers for students to avoid the traditional post-secondary education push for an institutional education via college or university. Indiana Building Trade Unions have a heightened ability to market their individual trade paths because of the doors HEA 1002 opens. To begin, Indiana Building Unions can utilize the inclusion of apprenticeship programs that count towards the overall high school graduation credit requirement. This can be done initially by attending the annual career fairs that public high schools will be required to host as the bill mandates. By attending career fairs, students will be able to speak with representatives of the Indiana Building Trade Unions to get a better

understanding and first-hand knowledge from those who have actually been through apprenticeship of a particular trade.

While networking at career fairs, union representatives or business agents can provide high school students with “mock” high school plans and post-secondary education plans. In these plans, prepared by the union representatives, students will be able to see the day-to-day schedule depending on whether they are still in high school needing part-time training or will be a graduating student that will funnel into a full-time apprenticeship schedule. In my opinion, giving students the “big picture” will help them make an informed decision about expectations of the Indiana Building Trade Unions and the overall time commitment of an apprenticeship program. Additionally, students will be able to see conceptually how they can accomplish some trade training in conjunction with earning their high school diploma. If a student determines that they do, indeed, want to participate in the apprenticeship program or part-time training then the mock plan can be tailored specifically to the student and then sent to the Department of Education for final approval. This flexible approach catered to each individual is what many students in high school need to accomplish their goal of graduating while also getting to decide what they put their time and energy into, like apprenticeship training.

Next, the Indiana Building Trade Unions can take advantage of the ability for students to use 21st Century Scholar Program funds towards post-secondary career training such as apprenticeships and technical courses. These funds, designated for graduating seniors, can be given to apprentices for either two (2) or four (4) years depending on the length of the apprenticeship/training program the student enrolls in. Therefore, students who qualify would be able to make an hourly apprentice scale (area dependent) in addition to the 21st century scholarship that they would receive concertedly. The key marketing point that could be

emphasized is that a student wouldn't be just earning a livable wage— the state is also paying them to gain an education through apprenticeship training at the same time. High school students who qualify for the 21st Century Scholar Program are, by definition, low-income Hoosiers and the additional funds that are accessible to them without having to go to a college institution would make the Indiana Building Trade Unions more heavily marketable.

Finally, the Indiana Building Trade Unions could participate in career centers by creating training programs catered to high school students looking to gain job training and experience as opposed to traditional classes in the public-school setting. For example, Area 31 (Ben Davis) or C- 9 (Greenwood) are career centers located in central Indiana that provide high school students with specialized training in a variety of career fields. If the Indiana Building Trade Unions could initiate a partnership with career centers across the state that would be a great introduction to apprenticeship programs and would be an additional way for students to earn high school credit and experience prior to graduation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, HEA 1002 creates a variety of unique opportunities for high school students and graduates to follow their own path rather than being pushed into attending a college or university. Students often don't know that there are plenty of other career options besides one that requires a college degree— this piece of legislation allows the exploration of careers like the ones that Indiana's Building Trade Unions offer. With the authorization of new funds and the fact that Indiana is bursting at the seams with new projects all over the state, the possibility of finding a perfect fit within Indiana's Building Trade Unions is abundant. If Indiana's Building Trade Unions utilize HEA 1002 to its fullest extent, I have no doubt that interest from high school

students/graduates will grow and ultimately lead to taking the next steps to get involved in such an appreciable organization.