

Indiana News

## New Indiana workforce cabinet champions nontraditional job paths

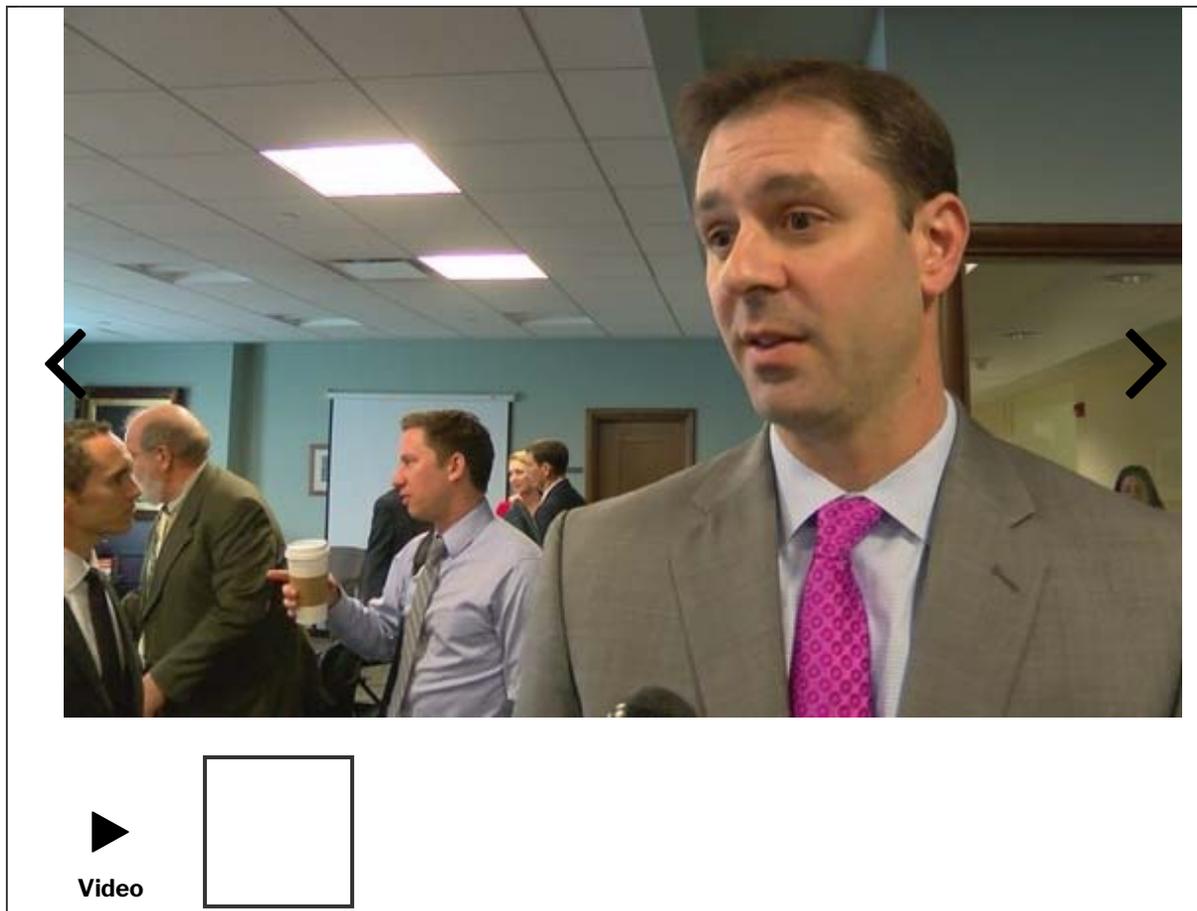
**Governor's Workforce Cabinet meets for first time**

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INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana workforce development leaders Tuesday championed nontraditional ways for Hoosiers to get a job after high school.

Leaders at the first meeting of the **Governor's Workforce Cabinet** said if young work seekers decide to take the career route less traveled, there's help for them.

Daniel Lopez, the cabinet's chairman, said he wants to make sure everyone who goes through the state system "has a plan in place for graduation, for career that's meaningful, not just something on paper."

Employers and state agency leaders on the cabinet also hammered home that it is OK to take a nontraditional career path.

Jená Bellezza of Crown Point is vice president of strategic partnerships and branding for the **Indiana Parenting Institute**. A member of the cabinet, she said, "So, we're thinking 'I gotta do this in order to be able to do that' as opposed to understanding that even the motive of education system should be preparing us to get a job."

Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana's president, Sue Ellspermann, is also a member of the cabinet. She said the college has programs in place to help people take the nontraditional path, but has a problem finding students who want to come to their campuses, sit down and take those classes.

"But, our students don't know they're there, whether they're in high school or whether they're incumbent workers or those that are underemployed," said Ellspermann, a Republican who is a former lieutenant governor of Indiana.

The Ivy Tech president said getting the word out about nontraditional programs and jobs is critical, which dovetails into what Maurice Coates sees at his Evansville sheet metal company. The president of **CK United** said he sees little interest in open jobs at his business.

"There is a need for more young people to join the workforce. They seem to not be energized to the factor of going to work. With us, we need skilled people."

Beyond promoting the nontraditional paths to work in Indiana, the new cabinet also has other goals.

Lopez, who will be **replaced May 7 as Holcomb's deputy chief of staff**, joins **several people on Holcomb's cabinet**, which was created in the 2018 legislative session. The cabinet has several goals.

"Alignment with program funding is one," said Fred Payne, commissioner of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. "Alignment on career coaching and counseling is another."

Lopez said, "What we understand is we're doing a lot of things really well and we're doing other things we probably should look at for efficacy."

The new cabinet has assigned action teams. Lopez said as the cabinet could make some policy decisions and decide to present items to the legislature.

The cabinet plans to meet once every two months.

Also on Tuesday, cabinet members noted Indiana's low unemployment rate. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development said in April that the state's unemployment rate for March was 3.2 percent, below the national rate of 4.1 percent.

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