

CAREER ACADEMY CONVERSATION

National Career Academy Coalition Conference
Hyatt Regency, Crystal City, VA
Friday, October 24, 2014

Twenty-six people attended, representing 18 organizations. The agenda focused on how best to provide input to the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act; how to address the shortage of CTE teachers; and reports from attending organizations on new projects, reports, and tools of interest. The meeting followed one the previous day at which representatives from the Departments of Education, Labor, and Transportation, and the National Economic Council, reported on current federal initiatives. The luncheon speakers prior to the meeting were Roberto Rodriguez, Deputy Assistant to the President for Education (Domestic Policy Council); Portia Wu, Assistant Secretary of the Employment and Training Administration (DOL); and Johan Uvin, Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education (ED).

David Stern (Executive Director, CCASN) led off the discussion by raising the issue of the shortage of certified career-technical teachers, a serious and growing problem in many states. There are a number of reasons for this problem, among them:

- Salaries tend to be lower in teaching than in industry, especially in STEM fields.
- The number of CTE teacher preparation programs has seen a significant reduction.
- CTE teachers have a lower retention rate than other teachers because they often lack support systems, mentors, and adequate training in instructional practices for adolescents.
- The demand for NCLB “highly qualified” CTE teachers has increased with Common Core emphasis on College & Career and the development of more dual academic/CTE courses.
- The Social Security system penalizes people who go into teaching after working in industry by reducing their benefits through the Windfall Elimination Penalty.

A number of efforts were described to help overcome this problem, among them:

- Florida has online courses to help prepare CTE teachers coming from industry, a universal district licensing system, and a mentor program. It offers four courses required for a temporary license (see attachment: “FL Options for Education Courses...”). Palm Beach County offers a package of materials explaining options for CTE teacher certification (see attachment: “CTE Certification Application Package”). Florida law allows districts to give CTE teachers up to 5 years credit on the salary scale for industry experience.
- The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), working with the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, has established an alternative teacher certification training program and arranged agreements for its use in several states.
- Tennessee has established a part-time CTE teaching alternative, allowing those from industry to teach up to two classes under a “distinguished instructor” designation.
- Eight universities (most in California) have established a graduate teacher-training program (including an online option) that focuses on cross-curricular integration and provides a Linked Learning/ Career Academy certification.

Discussion then moved to the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act, considered relatively non-partisan and perhaps likely to be achieved in the next session. Related topics of discussion:

- How Perkins funds might be used to qualify more CTE teachers
- Including the Career Academies National Standards of Practice as a measure
- Replacing “course completers” with industry certifications as a measure
- Make the measure relating to secondary–postsecondary links “dual enrollment”
- Build accountability into the system for both college and career, not just career
- Kentucky’s Jefferson County’s system is a good model, giving high schools a bonus point if they can show their graduates are *both* college and career ready (see attachment “College and Career Readiness for All”).
- Hawaii gives CTE completers financial incentives, and includes academic courses.
- California is changing its school assessment system, which can no longer be based just on tests but must include other measures relating to college and career preparation.

The last half hour of the meeting was given over to updates from the organizations represented regarding recent reports or new tools of interest to others. Examples:

- Connie Scotchel-Gross, President of Florida’s Association for Career and Technical Education, reported that Florida provides funding to high schools and gives college credit to graduating students based on the achievement of industry certificates.
- Patricia Clark of CCASN described a number of new tools to help with cohort scheduling, including how to build communities of practice in this regard, now available free at CCASN’s website (ccasn.berkeley.edu).
- John Mergendoller, Executive Director of the Buck Institute for Education (BIE), which has lots of free PBL resources, is conducting a study of what the “gold standard” for PBL should be, and invited participants to chime into an online survey (at bie.org).
- Ilene Kantrov, Director of Pathways to College and Careers at the Education Development Center (EDC), has published two white papers and is conducting a national survey of CTE teachers. (Links: <http://ltd.edc.org/resource-library/CTEwhitepaper> and <http://ltd.edc.org/resource-library/WBLwhitepaper>).
- Cheryl Carrier, Program Director of Ford’s Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) and Next Generation Learning (<https://fordngl.com>), is working with EDC on a study of teacher externships, while Ford is giving academy graduates hiring edges to help build an employee pipeline. More information on NGL is available in an attachment.
- Kathy Harris, Director of Coaching at ConnectEd CA, described advances in their online “Studios” and an “Optic Tool” useful for assessment, as well as tools to support internal coaches and district capacity building (www.connectedcalifornia.org).
- Carol Malstron of Project Lead-the-Way described a new computer science 3-year curriculum with half-and full-year courses, now added to PLTW’s high school programs in engineering and biological sciences (pltw.org).
- Scott Warren noted that High Schools That Work (www.sreb.org) has added advanced careers in STEM to its academy models, now has eight different pathways, and that all of its curriculum will soon be available free online. He also provided a “Career-Ready Analysis Tree” as an example of how to assess career readiness (see attachment).

Next Career Academy Conversation

Educating for Careers Conference, March 1-3, 2015, Sacramento, CA