

CAREER ACADEMY CONVERSATION

National Career Academy Coalition Conference

Austin Hyatt Regency Hotel

Monday, November 8, 2010

The National Career Academy Coalition hosted this Conversation. Thirty-eight people attended representing 21 organizations and school districts. The agenda was organized around the four topics that were determined at the November 2009 Conversation and were continued at the March and July 2010 Conversations.

◆ ACADEMY NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

The task force for this topic is:

- David Stern (CASN)
- Rob Ivry (MDRC)
- Gary Hoachlander (ConnectEd)
- Adjunct members: JD Hoye (NAF), Susan Katzman (NCAC), Betsy Brand (AYPF)
- Charlie Dayton (CASN)
- Kim Green (Natl. Assn. of State Directors of CTE)
- Stephen DeWitt (ACTE)

Charlie Dayton explained the rationale for this topic, the lack of awareness at the federal level of what has become a widespread high school reform approach in upwards of 10,000 high schools, spread largely through a grass roots movement, with unusually rigorous and positive research findings. Brad Stam, who recently came to ConnectEd California from the Oakland School District, summarized the status of a bill that has now been introduced by Congresswoman Judy Chu in the U.S. House of Representatives (HB6174), sponsored by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. This would provide up to \$100 million to low income school districts to support Linked Learning pathways, many of which might include career academies.

Assessing other federal support in this arena, Jan Bray of the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) felt there was little likelihood of new funding for education given the makeup of the new Congress, and that the reauthorization of ESEA was not high on the agenda given the many other pressing issues. In order to move academies forward data that is in alignment with federal goals must be developed and shared with the Secretary of Education, business partners, and the House and Senate leadership. Joe DiMartino of the Center for Secondary School Redesign noted that there would be no new rounds of Small Learning Community grants beyond those provided earlier this year.

The issue of linking career academies to college was raised. Ilene Kantrove reported that the NSF is looking for programs to link with community colleges using problem-based learning. Joe DiMartino noted that California's college entrance a-g requirements presented a problem in this regard; New Hampshire has eliminated Carnegie units. Charlie Dayton responded that CASN had studied this issue and created a website designed to help high schools in this regard in California and elsewhere: <http://collegetools.berkeley.edu>. It was also noted that dual enrollments provide a good avenue for connecting career academies and college. Connie Scotchel of the Palm Beach County School District noted that there were over 100 statewide dual enrollment connections in Florida.

◆ ACADEMY CURRICULA

The task force for this topic is:

- Penni Hudis (Co-Chair--ConnectEd)
- Ilene Kantrov (EDC)
- Cheryl Carrier (FordPAS)
- Erin Fender (Co-Chair--CASN)
- David Ross (Buck Institute)
- Andy Rothstein (NAF)

Penni Hudis reported on progress in this arena, including several task force conference calls, a template that lets curriculum be described consistently, an upload tool that has gone through several refinements, and funding for a ¾ time position within CASN between the James Irvine Foundation and the California Department of Education (CDE). Erin Fender, the task force co-chair, is leading this effort for CASN.

Erin provided a two-page handout summarizing this work in more detail (attached). This includes a list of several organizations whose curriculum has been reviewed, notes that the CASN website has been identified as a good repository for this database as it is already in place and functioning for “green” curriculum (<http://casn.berkeley.edu> for those wishing to take a look), and that the upload tool is ready for use.

Penni described the vetting process for curriculum to be included, which will be similar to that used by journals, with a three-member panel representing relevant organizations to review that deemed possibly appropriate after an initial screening by Erin. A vetting tool has been drafted and is being reviewed by the task force. Several initial career fields have been selected, in cooperation with CDE, including health, arts/media/entertainment, energy & utilities, engineering & design, finance & business, education/ child development & family services, and information technology. While it will take substantial time to complete this work, as much progress as possible will be made this year.

In related work, Mike Henson noted that NAF has an MOU to work with International Baccalaureate to develop a new certificate in 2011 for the four NAF fields/courses, and that they are looking for pilot sites to test these. Scott Warren of SREB mentioned that his organization is working with a twelve-state consortium to develop curriculum in twelve career fields, along with assessments, instructional materials, and teacher/counselor training for each. He provided a list of these (attached).

◆ WORKPLACE LEARNING

The task force for this topic is:

- Rob Atterbury (Chair--ConnectEd)
- Svetlana Darsche (WestEd)
- Michelle Swanson (Swanson and Cosgrave)
- Chris Force (Duval, FL Schools)
- Wendy Sebranek (Philadelphia Academies)
- Deanna Hanson (NAF)

In the absence of the committee chair, Penni Hudis of ConnectEd CA led this discussion, noting that this task force has been merged with one in existence at ConnectEd. It is examining the direction of work-based learning, including whether internships should be paid or not given the economic climate, and what sequence of activities in this arena works best. The focus is on three work-based learning alternatives: traditional, technology-based, and school – community based.

Steve Casa of NAF noted that their service delivery model has been revised, and that NAF has specialists in each region related to their four core principles, one of which is meeting their Gold Standards for Internships (available at <http://www.naf.org>). NAF now requires some form of “compensation” for internships where pay is untenable, such as course credit, a school stipend, scholarship, or contributions to a college fund. Mike Hensen, the new NAF California director, noted that NAF now has a two-year grant from the James Irvine Foundation to merge their efforts with Linked Learning in CA and eliminate duplication. NCAC is establishing a group led by Steve Casa to design the Ten Gold Standards for workbased learning.

David Stern of CASN raised the question of how to assess career readiness, called for in the national goal to have all students ready for “college and career”. Svetlana Darche of WestEd is beginning work on a tool that will include 12-13 key skills in this arena. It would allow a supervisor to rate a student as proficient or not, with the need to include some form of evidence. Connie Scotchel noted that Florida uses a version of Work Keys with “ready-to-work” standards, and Chris Force of the Duval County Schools pointed out that Florida legislation has student assessment based on Work Keys. Mary Visher of MDRC noted that there is an international effort underway in this arena, with a white paper available from John Eastern of the Institute of Educational Sciences at the University of Melbourne.

◆ ACADEMY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

The task force for this topic is:

- Mary Visher (Chair—MDRC)
- Arlene LaPlante (ConnectEd)
- Louis Simmons (Duval, FL Schools)
- Angie Grasberger (NCAC)
- David Stern (CASN)
- Charlie Dayton (CASN)
- Chris Force (Duval, FL Schools)
- To be added: Philadelphia Academies & NAF

Mary Visher reported on the work of this task force, beginning with the definition of three goals: a) short term: to collect and share information regarding current efforts to set standards for academies, and create a related database (she shared an initial matrix); b) mid-term: to assess the degree of alignment among these systems; and c) long term: to explore ways to develop a better aligned and more cohesive system. Kathy Harris of ConnectEd CA noted that they have been working on such a system for Linked Learning pathways, in cooperation with several other organizations, including CDE. They have also met with Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) representatives to explore integrating these with high schools' accreditation process. Mike Hensen noted that NAF's new assessment system is available at their website (<http://www.naf.org>), and may be merged with Linked Learning's for CA. Brad Stam reported that SRI is doing a longitudinal study, following students both in and not in Linked Learning Pathways.

Susan Katzman noted that NCAC has had a rubric for assessing career academies based on the Career Academy National Standards of Practice in use for some time, that this has been employed in several states, and expressed the feeling that since most of the organizations associated with career academies signed on to these national standards in 2004, they should comprise the basis for an assessment system for academies, as the NCAC rubric does. No clear conclusion was reached in this regard, but this task force was asked to incorporate this question its deliberations.

NEXT CONVERSATION

➤ *March 3-5, 2011: California Partnership Academy Conference, Sacramento*