

CAREER ACADEMY CONVERSATION
National Career Academy Coalition Conference
Renaissance Nashville Hotel, Nashville, TN
Friday, November 9, 2012

This Conversation was held in association with the National Career Academy Coalition's annual conference. Thirty-two people attended, representing 22 organizations. The agenda focused around the four task forces for the Conversation, especially national developments.

◆ **ACADEMY RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT**

Ace Parsi (Alliance for Excellent Education) led off this discussion with a review of federal priorities and initiatives related to career academies. This included the Race-to-the-Top, the Perkins-related blueprint, and the Harkin-Enzi language in the Senate ESEA reauthorization bill, which features academies as a means to address low-performing high schools. He also touched on a trend toward more competitive funding (and away from formulas) and changes in key committees in Congress.

Rob Irvy (MDRC) provided an overview of what he sees to be the strengths (link of education and work/ college and career, durability/ growth over 25 years, employer partnerships, bipartisan appeal, evidence of effectiveness) and weaknesses (dilution effects with growth, lack of a suitable intermediary to compete for federal innovation funds, lack of links to DOL) of academies nationally. Mary Visser (MDRC) added insights from her contacts with the White House, which has sought information on the number and career fields of academies nationally, and related cost-benefit studies.

Cheryl Carrier (Ford PAS) discussed her meeting with Arne Duncan, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, along with Gary Hoachlander (ConnectEd CA). Issues touched on included academy matching requirements, employer partnerships, and workforce engagement. Pete Magnuson (ACTE) discussed the importance of business involvement, including as advocates for academies, and having good data to illustrate their effectiveness.

Several members discussed relevant state-level developments. John Davidson (Arkansas Department of Education) noted that Perkins leadership funds were being directed there toward upholding the Career Academy national Standards of Practice. Susan Tidyman (CASN) noted that there are now several examples of industry-sponsored academies in California, including by PG&E, the State Energy Commission, and in law & IT. Charlie Dayton (CASN) noted the competition underway by the CA Department of Education to spread the James Irving Foundation Linked Learning initiative, which draws heavily on academies. Michelle Swanson (Swanson-Cosgrave) noted that Oregon has established a P-20 system with a focus on two- and four-year college degrees, but *not* on academies.

At the district level, mention was made of the new EDC school change tool kit being used in Philadelphia and Nashville, the dramatic effect academies have had in Nashville on reducing youthful gang participation, and the effect of academies in Miami of fostering community links. Examples of recent visits to academies by federal representatives included a Duncan aide in Miami, and the head of OVAE in Los Angeles.

◆ **ACADEMY CURRICULA**

Erin Fender (CASN) provided an update of progress here. Eight CTE fields of career-themed curriculum are now posted on the CASN website: a) Energy & Utilities/ STEM; b) Health & Medical Technology/ Health Science; c) Engineering & Design/ STEM; d) Arts, Media & Entertainment/ Audio-Video Technology & Communication; e) Finance & Business/ Finance/Business Management & Administration; f) Education, Child Development & Family Services/ Education & Training/ Human Services; g) Information Technology; and h) Public Service/ Government & Public Administration/Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Safety.

In each field there are 60-100 pieces of curriculum ranging from individual lessons to full courses, about 600 in all. Eighty percent of these materials are free. A gold star system has been added to highlight the best 10% in each field. Additional fields to be added this year are Hospitality, Tourism & Recreation; and Marketing, Sales & Service. There are already some materials in all 16 Career Cluster fields as some materials lap across two or more fields.

Erin thanked the many collaborators in this work from a host of participating organizations. She urged us to spread the word about this database so that it fulfills its full potential (it's receiving about 1,000 hits/ month currently). And she recommended that we sunset this task force, because its purpose has been essentially accomplished.

◆ **WORKPLACE LEARNING**

Svetlana Darche (WestEd) provided a report on the work of this task force. She noted that the National Academy Foundation and ConnectEd CA have taken the lead in this work. The Institute for Evidence-Based Change (IEBC) is developing measures to evaluate WBL, both activities and outcomes.

Katherine Blasik (NAF) noted that it is engaged in similar work, examining ways to assess WBL implementation. It has focused in part on identifying the range of WBL options, from paid internships down. She noted that transportation often presents a barrier to students engaged in WBL. She shared a new *Guide for Internship Hosts* developed by NAF, along with a field review draft of *Linked Learning's Work-Based Learning in Linked Learning: Definitions, Outcomes, and Quality Criteria*.

◆ **ACADEMY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT**

Mary Visser (MDRC), co-chair of this task force, along with Katherine Blasik (NAF), provided a review of efforts here. She reviewed efforts to assess the range of instruments and efforts underway to assess career academies, noting that this is a moving target, making this difficult. She summarized her thoughts re. the gaps in our knowledge as being in three "buckets":

- a) Basic descriptive data, knowing what is happening nationally re. the number of academies, students enrolled, career fields, etc.;
- b) Identifying the keys to academy success at the district and state level; i.e. the policies that promote and/ or impede success, barriers, and promising practices;
- c) In terms of student outcomes, what components of academies are most important; i.e., the SLC structure? WBL? Modified curriculum and instruction?

A related issue is the arrival of national common core standards, which are having a broad effect on curriculum and instruction, and the need to adapt to them. It was noted that the National Association of State Directors of Career-Technical Education Consortium has issued a set of Common Career Technical Core standards (attached—the CCTCs), in an attempt to dovetail with the national common core standards now adopted by most states.

◆ **NEW TASK FORCE ON NATIONAL POLICY**

Susan Katzman (NCAC) raised the need for a new task force on national policy matters, related to the upcoming reauthorizations of several federal education bills (ESEA, WIA, Perkins, and Higher Ed.). Cheryl Carrier volunteered to chair this committee, and the following people volunteered to participate: Susan Katzman, Susan Tidyman, Ace Parsi, Brad Stam, Pete Magnuson, and Charlie Dayton. It was suggested others be invited to join as well (e.g., David Stern has agreed to). Cheryl will arrange an initial conference call to begin organizing its efforts.

NEXT CONVERSATION

- March 10-12, 2013 at the Educating for Careers/
Partnership Academy Conference, Sacramento, CA