

CAREER ACADEMY CONVERSATION
National Career Academy Coalition Conference
Sacramento Sheraton Hotel
Tuesday, February 14, 2012

Thirty-two people attended this Conversation, representing eighteen organizations. The agenda was organized around the four topics for which task forces have been established, reported on below. It also allowed time for some of the organizations represented to update their recent work.

◆ ACADEMY RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

This discussion focused initially on California. Christopher Cabaldon, Director of the Linked Learning Alliance, summarized developments regarding several bills currently in the California legislature. Both SB-70 and AB-519 are scheduled to sunset in June; these provide funds for ~200 of the ~500 California Partnership Academies (CPAs). The remaining ~300 CPAs are supported through Prop-98 funds, and are proposed to be “flexed” by the Governor, meaning districts could use these funds for other purposes. These events would in effect mean the end of the CPAs as a statewide program.

One attempt to address this is re-authorization of SB-70, led by Senate Leader Darrell Steinberg. Some quite limited funds have been found to continue supporting a small proportion of the green academies. The flexing of the Prop-98 funded CPAs may occur over several years, easing this impact and efforts are underway to head this off altogether. Meanwhile, SB 790 supports the replication of the Linked Learning approach, including providing state level guidance, but without associated funds.

Angie Grasberger, President of the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC), reported on developments in Florida, which provides funds for each student who earns an industry recognized certificate, @ ~\$1,000/ certification. As an example, last year about 350 students were so certified in the Manatee County districts where she works, bringing ~\$350,000 to the district.

At the federal level, the President has included \$1 billion in his proposed 2013 fiscal year budget to begin 3,000 career academies over the next three years. While this has only a slim chance of happening, since the House would have to approve the appropriation, it is a signal that the administration supports this approach. Two education bills passed by the House include language supportive of the principles underlying career academies and Linked Learning.

The Senate ESEA reauthorization language (Harkin-Enzi) focuses on career academies as a strategy for low performing high schools, detailing many of their principles such as personalization, work-based learning, and links to post-secondary institutions. It probably won’t be taken up this year, and will have to be reconciled with the House version when it is.

◆ ACADEMY CURRICULA

Erin Fender (CASN) provided an update of progress here. Four CTE fields of integrated curriculum are now posted on the CASN website: Energy & Utilities/ STEM; Health & Medical Technology/ Health Science; Engineering & Design/ STEM; and Arts, Media & Entertainment/ Audio-Video Technology & Communication. Two more will be posted by the end of March: Finance & Business/ Management & Administration; and Education, Child Development & Family Services/ Education & Training/ Human Services. Finally, the last two under CASN’s current project will be posted by the end of June: Information Technology; and Public Service, Government & Public Administration, and Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Safety.

Erin noted that CASN has been working to identify “gold star” curriculum in each field that can be highlighted on the ConnectEd Studios website to assist teachers in integrating curriculum using the electronic planning tool available there. She also thanked those from other involved organizations for their strong collaboration, including ConnectEd, the Education Development Center, the National Career Academy Coalition, the Buck Institute for Education, Ford PAS, and the National Academy Foundation.

◆ WORKPLACE LEARNING

Deanna Hanson (NAF) has assumed co-leadership of this task force, along with Rob Atterbury (ConnectEd CA). Deanna shared the latest version of the Linked Learning Alliance's *Career Practicum: A Work-Based Learning Strategy*, and discussed the collaboration underway with West Ed, in particular Svetlana Darche, who has developed a conceptual document called the College and Career Frameworks, and is working on measures for assessing WBL, along with Michael Straight from NAF and others.

NAF has been a leader for some time in this realm, with its strong employer involvement and emphasis on internships and other forms of work-based learning. The objectives of this effort are to measure how much WBL is taking place, and to examine both internal benchmarks and external outcomes. This task force has agreed that such assessment needs to involve workplace supervisors.

◆ ACADEMY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

Mary Visher (MDRC), co-chair of this task force, along with Katherine Blasik (NAF), provided a review of efforts here. She noted that two meetings of this group have taken place since the last Conversation, and reiterated the goals of this effort.

There are several agencies working on aspects of this task, among them West Ed, ConnectEd CA, the California Department of education (CDE), and the Envision Schools. Svetlana Darche (WestEd) is examining how to measure WBL and its relationship to college and career preparation. ConnectEd is working on a "dash board" system for the districts in its initiative, defining the data that needs to be uploaded and standards to be met for various levels of Linked Learning credentialing. CDE is looking at ways to incorporate online tools to aggregate and display secondary and post-secondary data via CALPASS. The Envision Schools have developed a seven-dimension system for measuring college and career readiness that is being considered for broader use. In addition, David Stern of CASN has drafted a letter for use in requesting states to flag students in academies and pathways in their MIS systems, so their performance can be examined and compared with others.

◆ ORGANIZATION UPDATES

- David Moore noted that NAF has established a goal of having 100,000 college and career ready graduates by 2020. He also explained that 81% of NAF graduates plan to attend college, compared with a national average of 57%; that NAF is increasingly taking a district-wide approach; and that its IT Academies are being renamed Academies of Media Studies.

- Robin Mencher of KQED noted the wealth of curricular materials available via PBS Learning Media, including three STEM-related CTE fields: biotech, health, and green industries.

- Sandy Mittlesteadt reported on the 350 students and teachers from CPAs who attended the "Academies at the Capital" day February 7th in Sacramento, meeting with their respective legislators.

- Nancy Farnan of CSU San Diego reported on the nine California teacher preparation institutions now involved in providing integrated curriculum degrees and certificates.

- Brad Stam of ConnectEd reported on several ConnectEd projects, including an examination of teacher collaboration (with the Teacher Collaboration Center); how common core literary standards find expression via the CTE lens (supported by the Gates Foundation); and construction of a national network of schools to look at measuring student performance via technology (with Hewlett Foundation support).

- Roman Stearns of Connect Ed reported on a project being conducted with EdTrust West on equity access and choice, with goals to define this, establish related metrics, and foster improvement.

NEXT CONVERSATIONS

- NAF Leadership Summit & Institute, Washington, D.C., July 16-19
- NCAC Annual Conference, Nashville, TN, November 7-10