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TESTIMONY OF THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Howard D. Mettelman - District Superintendent of the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES
Jacklin G. Starks - District Superintendent of the Madison-Oneida BOCES
Mark Vivacqua - District Superintendent of the Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES
William Speck - District Superintendent of the Cayuga Onondaga BOCES

July 16, 2014

Good morning Chairwoman Nolan, Assemblyman Brindisi and other Members of the Assembly. We represent the District Superintendents. Today presenting will be,
Howard D. Mettelman - District Superintendent of the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES,
Jacklin G. Starks - District Superintendent of the Madison-Oneida BOCES
Mark Vivacqua - District Superintendent of the Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES.
William Speck - District Superintendent of the Cayuga Onondaga BOCES

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide some important information and observations regarding graduation pathways related to career and technical education and for your vision to examine and study new ways to better establish rigorous pathways for all students that incorporates career-focused education classes in order to produce more highly skilled workers for New York State.

Background:

We appreciate the focus given to CTE by the Assembly and support a comprehensive, multiple pathways approach as the preferred approach to address the College and Career Readiness needs of our students. We believe that this approach needs to be developed by the Board of Regents. Such pathways have already been discussed by the Board of Regents and include CTE, STEM and the Arts.

In the Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, February 2011. "Meeting the challenge of preparing young Americans for the 21st century", the authors clearly identify the need for, "Multiple pathways: A Broader Vision For School Reform." The report states, "It is long past time that we broaden the range of high-quality pathways that we offer to our young people, beginning in high school. The lessons from other countries strongly suggest that this might be the single most promising strategy for greatly increasing the percentage of young adults who are in a post secondary degree or credential that prepares them to embark on a meaningful career".

The Board of Regents assembled a CTE Advisory Panel to provide preliminary findings and recommendations around a pathway of instruction in CTE and integrated coursework. The CTE pathway and advisory panel update was presented in a Regents' item on November 29, 2012.

In the Regents' Item there is a section that delineates the "**Challenges to the Current CTE Learning Continuum**".

The report states,

"The statewide delivery of the CTE learning continuum is uneven; district capacity to offer meaningful CTE experiences is varied; and gaps in opportunity exist. The first formal introduction to CTE is through middle level family and consumer sciences (Home and Career Skills) and technology, but courses in these two CTE content areas do not encompass all that CTE has to offer. Requiring instruction in only two of six CTE content areas limits students' CTE experience. Further, schools may not offer foundational CTE courses to bridge middle school instruction with approved CTE programs.

For many, there is a gap in CTE courses available for grades 9 and 10. These are critical years for academic credit accumulation. Even in the most robust CTE programs, a gap exists in academic credit availability via CTE at these grade levels. Increasing the opportunities for earning graduation credits through CTE courses in grades 9 and 10 encourages student engagement and persistence to graduation.

Finally, approved CTE programs, those able to offer integrated academic credits for graduation, are concentrated at grades 11 and 12 and most frequently in CTE themed high schools or BOCES. Currently, not all students who could benefit from approved CTE programs have access."

The Panel submitted the following Belief Statements,

- "All students can benefit from a CTE experience and it must be made available as early in their education as practicable (no later than 5th or 6th grade).
- CTE should not be viewed as separate from academic instruction (a hybrid model must evolve)

- Career-focused integrated instruction in the broadest sense can be a strategy to engage more students and increase performance (especially in 9th and 10th grade).
- Integrated course work should be foundational, intentional, and contextualized that leads and connects the student to an area of interest
- STEM/Arts is an opportunity to integrate non-academic subject content into career-focused instruction
- Existing CDOS standards must be fully implemented and assessed with the Common Core and aligned with Career Clusters to make a meaningful change to the P-12 culture
- “Career Readiness” needs to be clearly and unambiguously defined
- To be viewed as a credible option for students, CTE needs to be held accountable to aspects of the Common Core State Standards (with its ties to career readiness) and subsequent assessments
- Business/Industry is willing to (and must) be engaged in more than an advisory capacity
- Business views CTE as a vehicle for innovation and experimentation
- Business/industry can advocate for educational change if given the direction with stated goals
- As in business, teachers must continuously reinvent themselves through professional development to stay current in their field “

District Superintendent Recommendations

College and Career Readiness for the 21st Century

In June of 2013 the District Superintendents made the following recommendations to implement a comprehensive, multiple Pathways approach leading to the attainment of a NYS Regents Diploma. These recommendations are based on the following “Statement of Purpose:”

Building a Comprehensive System That Supports Career Readiness

“Career readiness requires a comprehensive system of supports that delivers learning when it is needed, where it is needed, how it is needed and by a cadre of experts that includes teachers and career professionals. It includes both classroom and workplace experiences, high-quality standards and instructional materials to support learning, a portfolio of assessments that gauge progress using multiple measures along a continuum from being not at all career ready to fully career ready, and finally a policy and funding structure that is aligned across K-12, higher education and business and industry sectors”

Building Blocks for Change: What it Means to be Career Ready - Career Readiness Partner Council 2012

We submit for your consideration the following recommendations to be incorporated into legislation supporting the Board of Regents to adopt policy in support of Multiple Pathways to attainment of a Regents Diploma:

Recommendations:

I. Adopt a unified definition of College and Career Readiness aligned to the Career Readiness Partner Council definition of Career Readiness.

The following definition as provided by the Career Readiness Partner Council:

Academic and Technical Knowledge and Skills:

A career-ready person is proficient in the core academic subjects, as well as in technical topics. This foundational knowledge base includes competence in a broad range of academic subjects grounded in rigorous internationally benchmarked state standards – such as the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics. It also includes a level of technical –skill proficiency aligned to a chosen career field and pathway, and the ability to apply both academic and technical learning in the context of a career. Many careers also require deeper learning and mastery in specific academic or technical subjects.

Employability Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions:

A career-ready person has a good understanding of their interests, talents and weaknesses and a solid grasp of the skills and dispositions necessary for engaging in today’s fast-paced, global economy. Successful time management, persistence and problem solving are essential elements of career readiness.

These skills and dispositions include, but are not limited to:

- *Goal setting and planning;*
- *Managing transitions from school to work and back again, and from one occupation along a career pathway to another;*
- *Clear and effective communication skills;*
- *Critical thinking and problem solving;*
- *Working productively in teams and independently;*
- *Effective use of technology; and*
- *Ethical decision-making and social responsibility.*

II. Recognize rigorous technical studies, employability skills and technical assessments as a component of graduation for students participating in a CTE Pathway towards High School completion via the SED CTE Approval Process as adopted by the Board of Regents on February 6, 2001. Create Commissioner’s Regulations that provide flexibility for students to earn graduation credits while participating in a CTE Pathway toward high school completion.

Elements of the NYSED CTE Approval Process:

The New York State Education Department Program Approval Process ensures that:

- Curricula are designed to provide rigorous integrated academic and technical subject area content and provides the student with a coherent sequential program of study;
- Curricula has been aligned to state and national learning standards;
- Secondary curriculum is aligned with postsecondary education;
- Faculty is New York State certified with the appropriate academic and/or technical certification;
- SED approved technical assessments meets current industry standards;
- Articulation agreements are designed to connect students to “Early College” credit models while completing their high school diploma;
- CTE programs provide work-based learning opportunities for all students; and

- Data reporting infrastructures have been developed to report student performance in order to evaluate success on Regent’s examinations, approved alternatives, technical assessments, placements in postsecondary education, employment or the military.

Note: “College and Work Readiness Assessment”. This assessment is used at Tech Valley HS and measures career readiness. Typically used with beginning 9th graders and then as a post measure in the 12th grade

Note: To enhance the effectiveness of developing college and career ready students all administrators, teachers, school counselors and staff should seek to gain an understanding of the 21st Century workplace via direct short and long term interactions with business and industry.

III. Create a new sequential 21st Century Learning CTE pathway for all students with CTE integrated learning opportunities beginning in the 7th grade and continuing with increased technical knowledge acquired through the 12th grade. As part of this pathway, all CTE programs will allow students to earn postsecondary credit before high school graduation.

Changes to the Part 100 Regulations for Middle Level Education (Grades 7 & 8) should be implemented that enables students to participate in applied career and technical education curriculum connected to inquiry based learning. Flexibility at the high school level, connected to articulation with business and industry, will assist students as they gain career knowledge based on real world standards and supervised work experiences:

- Beginning in the middle school, Commissioner’s Regulations should support necessary flexibility to allow for opportunities for CTE integrated instructional models;
- The opportunity for students to achieve high school units of credit in grade eight should be maintained;
- Commissioner’s Regulations should support adding career readiness measures to student report cards starting in middle level grades based on state developed criteria;
- Middle level programs should reflect the best features of successful structures that ensure that CTE knowledge is connected and applied across subject areas;

- A defined CTE pathway design should take into account the need for students to be engaged in active inquiry and problem solving;
- Ninth, tenth and eleventh grades should consist of integrated academics in conjunction with approved CTE programs;
- Twelfth grade learning experiences should allow for high quality 21st Century industry based internship/apprenticeship experiences;
- Expand postsecondary articulations to provide students with opportunities for earning CTE college credit while in high school. Early college high school program models should be made available to all students participating in CTE programs.

IV. Mandate local school districts to award core academic and CTE credit for satisfactory completion of SED Approved BOCES CTE programs.

Commissioners Regulation that currently allows CTE and integrated credits for approval:

- Students enrolled in an approved CTE program in a school district or BOCES may earn a maximum of one unit of credit each in English, social studies, mathematics and science through CTE specialized courses, CTE integrated courses, or a combination of such courses, in addition to the approved CTE sequence credits.
- Under Section 100.2(w) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, each board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) shall determine the number of units of credit that will be earned by students successfully completing units of study in each of the instructional programs of the BOCES. After consultation with component schools, the BOCES determines the number and allocation of units of credit that may be earned for each CTE approved program. Under the CTE policy, all students who participate in an approved CTE program at BOCES must receive equal credit for each course completed in the program. Such credits are awarded toward a Regents diploma for students who successfully complete CTE approved program/courses.

V. Seek to maximize return on investment for a CTE Pathway by:

- Establishing a Regional CTE Space Planning Committee to review and advise SED regarding CTE related capital projects in an effort to maximize the efficiency of CTE space offerings within a region;
- Support all efforts in advancing BOCES Regional full day CTE High School models throughout New York State;
- Supporting an aid category that will incentivize the Big 5 Cities to participate in BOCES CTE programs;
- Standardizing the articulation agreement process with all post-secondary institutions through pathways in CTE so they are available to students across the state;
- Removing the \$30,000 cap on CTE staff salaries for generating BOCES aid;
- Providing for same year receipt of BOCES aid to districts for CTE tuitions; eliminating the one year delay in aid;
- Excluding the costs for CTE programs and construction of CTE BOCES facilities from the Tax Cap calculation. Allow increases in TRS and ERS costs associated with CTE employees to be exempt from the tax cap formula;
- Incentivizing BOCES aid to school districts for those schools that achieve a certain percentage of graduates earning a CTE credential and technical endorsements on their high school diplomas from a NYS CTE Approved Program.

Attached to our testimony today, is the “CTE 21”, College and Career Ready documents and research for your review. The District Superintendents are keenly aware of the role that our educational system plays as part of the economic development engine in our communities. We stand ready to work with the Education Committee of the Assembly in order to craft dynamic legislation in support of the Board of Regents’ efforts to implement a comprehensive pathways model. We thank you for the opportunity to be here today on behalf of our students, our communities and our future.

Thank you.