

The November 13, 2014, NSWG call began at 2:00 PM EST.

Welcome | Steve Klein

Facilitator Steve Klein reviewed the call agenda and reminded participants that all materials referenced on the call can be accessed on the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network (PCRN) website cte.ed.gov/newsandevents. Call topics identified by the NSWG planning team for the 2014-2015 program year also are posted.

OCTAE Updates | John Haigh

John Haigh provided the following updates:

- Consolidated Annual Reporting (CAR) is now open. Questions should be sent to Sharon Head (sharon.head@ed.gov).
 - The current CAR training is posted in the "Training Events" tab on the PCRN. You may access the materials at: <http://cte.ed.gov/accountability/reports.cfm>
 - There has been a change in the technical skill attainment reporting section. Before, states were asked to list all areas in which technical skill assessment occurred. States now are asked to describe their plan and timeframe for increasing the coverage of programs and students reported in the indicator, and enter the number of students assessed for technical skill attainment and the total number of secondary and postsecondary CTE concentrators reported for the program year. The percent of students assessed for technical skill attainment will be automatically calculated.

- The Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) project team recently asked for public comment on draft elements and definitions to be included in CEDS Version 5. States are encouraged to provide feedback on the items posted, particularly those relating to CTE.

What Happens Next? Tracking the Award of Dual Credit/Concurrent Enrollment Programs | Multiple States

Sandra Staklis, a member of the RTI team who helped evaluate the 2008 *Promoting Rigorous Programs of Study through Statewide Articulation Agreements* (a.k.a., RPOS1), provided a background on the project. RPOS1 was designed to support states in constructing a program of study model that included a statewide articulation agreement between secondary and postsecondary institutions. Six states were involved: Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and South Carolina.

The evaluators examined three outcome areas to determine whether students

1. Enrolled in and completed courses that offer college credit;
2. Qualified for and earned associated credits; and
3. Went on to use those credits at the postsecondary level.

States were able to examine data on student enrollment in college credit-bearing courses, but often had difficulty determining whether students earned postsecondary credits or applied earned credits at the postsecondary level.

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Florida study participants reported that their program encouraged students to pursue careers in biotechnology and that many of their students were working or planned to work in the field. They noted that sometimes students were not aware of the postsecondary credits they had earned in qualifying for their credential. This was discouraging given that efforts had been made to provide information and outreach to students. Some 65 percent of students surveyed saw value in the credential offered through the program, but 45 percent were unaware they had earned college credit.

It was observed that program participants started work at lower pay rates than 4-year degree holders (\$10-\$12/hour), but those who were credentialed were competitive in applying for jobs and had a high potential for advancement. The credential was thought to have opened doors for apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops.

South Carolina study participants reported that the state had linked its RPOS1 grant with its Project Lead the Way (PLTW) adoption. The state designed two pathways in Manufacturing & Engineering Technology and Mechatronics, with students able to crossover between the two. While the existing PLTW program had provided pathways for secondary students to transition to 4-year institutions, prior to the RPOS1 grant no mechanisms existed for students transferring to technical colleges.

Selected pathways in the state were reported to have 100 percent employment and placement since 1998. Pathways also have grown in popularity as industry opportunities have expanded and people have come to understand what the Mechatronics program offers. It was reported that students sometimes struggled to meet the algebra requirement for the engineering pathway. It was also noted that accrediting agencies automatically increased faculty credentialing to 4-year requirements when articulation agreements were signed. This presented challenges for technical college faculty who lacked the requisite training.

Assessing the Participation and Outcomes of Students Participating in CTE Programs of Study—State Data Collection Strategies and Experiences | Multiple States

Sandra Staklis introduced the *Promoting Rigorous Career and Technical Education Programs of Study* project (a.k.a., RPOS2), a federal competitive grant opportunity that started in 2010 and completed work in 2014. Six states were involved: Arizona, Kansas, Maryland, Montana, Utah, and Wisconsin.

In each state, the State Education Agency worked with at least three school districts to develop rigorous programs of study across sites. The evaluation examined students' high school completion, attainment of industry-recognized credentials and postsecondary credits, postsecondary enrollment and enrollment in related programs of study, and postsecondary completion. The evaluation also addressed employment outcomes, though in most states this information was not readily available. States noted a number of challenges while participating in the project. These included:

- *Consistency of terminology*—definitions of student populations and measures of programs of study varied across, and at times within states. Participants needed to take steps to ensure all sites were measuring similar populations of students.
- *Linking secondary and postsecondary data*—some project sites faced initial difficulties in determining whether students who earned postsecondary credits in high school were able to apply them at the postsecondary level.
- *Assessing developmental education placement*—information was not readily available on RPOS students' enrollment (or eligibility) for participation in developmental coursework at the postsecondary level following completion of their high school program.

- *Data quality*—some sites reported significant variation in year-to-year student participation rates. Data consistency largely depended on whether states had a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) in place, although issues were found for some indicators regardless of a state's SLDS implementation status.

Wisconsin project participants shared that the state offered multiple options for high school students to earn credit. For example, students were enrolled in combined math coursework and manufacturing labs, with credits applied in either CTE or mathematics subject areas, depending on the students' credit requirements. Professional development also was added to support programs. One way that Wisconsin did this was to develop a literacy initiative, wherein literacy coaches were provided to teach students how to read technical documents. Instructional videos were also created.

States participating in the RPOS2 initiative reported their project experiences helped them identify areas for improvement. One was the tracking of students into the workforce. One participant described assessing the potential for using students' LinkedIn accounts to track their post-program experiences, although it was noted that this may not be an efficient or sustainable way to conduct follow-ups if the project were to go to scale. Others described having a better understanding of the challenges associated with tracking student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education and, in particular, whether a student's postsecondary enrollment was in the same or a related CTE program.

During discussions, some participants commented that they would like to see funding for self-assessments included in the reauthorized federal legislation to support states in pinpointing where gaps existing in local programming and to assist providers in offering truly rigorous programs of study. Participants also highlighted the need to ensure that programs of study offered at the local level were of high quality.

John Haigh shared that OCTAE is interested in understanding the differences in outcomes that

may exist for students participating in rigorous programs of study versus those in other CTE programs. A representative from Maryland reported that the state had found slight differences in English and mathematics pass rates between students in RPOS and other, less rigorous CTE programs. RPOS students did, however, exhibit dramatically higher rates of technical skill attainment, pass rates for NATEF exams, and rates of dual completion.

Wrap-up | Steve Klein

Steve ended the call by summarizing some considerations that state staff may wish to consider given upcoming legislation. These included the need for ensuring that programs of study offered by states are of uniformly high quality, to ensure that efforts to measure the merits of these programs produce valid information.

Given the continuing attention being given to career pathways development, it is likely that states will need to continue to build out their capacity to track the outcomes of students participating in these programs. The experiences of participants in the RPOS1 and RPOS2 projects suggest that many states face challenges in collecting information on students as they transition from secondary to postsecondary education, and from both levels into the workforce.

Steve and John thanked everyone for their participation. The next call is scheduled for February 12, 2015.

NEXT CALL:

February 12, 2015