

Vol. 25, No. 2: *Strong Programs Producing Highly Qualified Graduates*

From the Director . . .

Debbie Mills, Director, NCPN



With this issue of *Connections*, we bring our readers articles on the excellent programs being implemented around the country. I hope you will find them as enlightening and inspiring as I do. This year's conference—themed ***Building Alliances: The Future Is Here!***—will be held in the beautiful Sheraton Dallas Hotel in downtown Dallas, Texas. The conference will be built around the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's (OCTAE)

10-Component Framework for Programs of Study and the Department of Labor Education and Training Administration's (DOLETA) Six Key Elements for Success in Career Pathways. In alignment with the conference theme, we are inviting representatives of three federal agencies (U.S. Departments of **Education**, **Labor**, and **Health and Human Services**) to come together on stage to present their collaborative work in Career Pathways.



Mark Greenberg

Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Johan E. Uvin

Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education
(scheduled to attend)



Gerri Fiala

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, U.S. Department of Labor
(invited to attend)

The conference will focus on Career Pathways implementation at both state and local levels. Over 1200 secondary and postsecondary educators, workforce development personnel, and employers will attend. The conference will highlight the work of the three invited federal agencies in Career Pathways, focusing on topics such as the April 2012 joint letter, DOLETA's Six

Key Elements, OCTAE's 10 Component Framework, the just-released report on the three agencies' April 2014 RFI on Career Pathways implementation, national dialogues, each agency's investments in Career Pathways, interagency collaboration, and alignment of current and forthcoming legislation.

Mark your calendar! You don't want to miss this professional development opportunity, which includes 150+ breakout sessions, a variety of preconference institutes, keynote speakers, networking opportunities, and an exhibit hall that showcases the latest products and services. *See you in Dallas!*

Are You Certified? Industry Certifications and Credentialing

Summary of a 2014 preconference institute



The 2014 NCPN conference in Orlando included a half-day preconference institute on industry certifications and credentialing. The presenters were **John Foster**, President and CEO of NOCTI; **Jeraline M. Johnson**, Lead Career Education Specialist, School District of Palm Beach County, Florida; and **Marilyn Barger**, Principal Investigator and Executive Director, Florida Advanced Technological Education Center of Excellence (a national center supported through the National Science Foundation's Advanced

Technological Education program).

The institute offered over 70 attendees an overview of the skills credential landscape across the country. Today's industry is very focused on identifying the best-qualified candidates for 21st-century jobs. To meet this need, industry professionals are exploring industry credentials as well as technical programs offered by secondary and postsecondary schools and private training organizations. Colleges and school districts across the country are joining the movement to include industry-validated credentials in CTE programs as evidence of skill attainment and competency. Current thinking appears to be that credentials are an effective method of displaying the technical competence that CTE programs deliver. However, as was discussed throughout the institute, there are many pros and cons to this strategy, and its implementation will differ from one institution or educational system to the next.

The workshop started with a "Credentialing 101" overview by John Foster. During this overview the connection between competence and credentials was explored. The group looked at definitions from the U.S. Department of Labor as well as the DOL Employment and Training Agency's competency modeling tool. Participants learned the importance of the "Sunday morning research paper" when determining the skills that employers really need. Throughout the process participants were encouraged to think about why they were implementing credentialing programs and about what they hoped to gain. The group reviewed types of credentials, including state licensure, apprenticeships, industry associations, and proprietary



industry certifications. Along the way it was stressed that all of these have different instruments and are different in terms of perceived credibility and what information they may provide for the institution, the program, the teacher, and the student. We were able to discuss criteria such as a credential's ability to align to a curriculum, as well as the value of

data reports that may be provided. Ultimately, with well over 1000 credentials available, due diligence as to each credential's fit for programs at each institution is critical.

The group also got a preview of cutting-edge work being done in the area of digital badging or micro-credentialing. The connection of this kind of program to the world of credentials was emphasized. We had a brief opportunity to highlight some of the work of the seven-department interagency working group, GEMEnA, and its progress in collecting credentialing information through the U.S. Census.



Marilyn Barger provided an overview of credentialing in the manufacturing industry sector with an emphasis on industry's support through initiatives of the Manufacturing Institute.

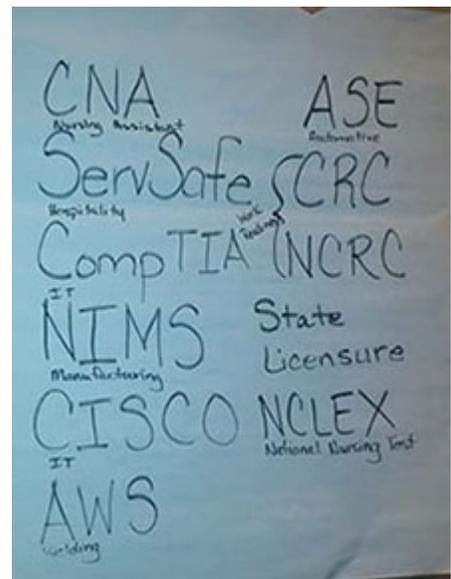
Setting the stage for the group SWOT analysis and action planning group activity, Jeraline Johnson tackled the issues involved in getting

started, where to find resources, logistics of testing and paying for tests, testing sites, and model programs in different areas. Participants were able to share best practices on how industry credentialing was being handled in their institutions as well as learn about new industry certifications for program areas that they were unaware of previously.

All in all, the institute was a huge success as measured by the enthusiasm of the participants, as well as the many positive comments that were shared via the session evaluations.

Here's what some had to say:

- "My school's Career and Technology Ed department is steering the school's conversation to credentialing. The resources and contacts here will aid that discussion."
- "The group activity was very positive and informative."



- "The Manufacturing Institute and NOCTI handouts were very helpful."
- "Being able to network with other participants helped give meaning to the presentations."
- "Great to hear national perspectives and meet people from around the nation who are doing what we are doing."

It CAN Be Done! One School's Freshman Transition Program

Chris Foster, Derby High School, Derby, Kansas



The following statistics speak for themselves: 7000 students drop out every school day, 1.2 million each year (<https://www.dosomething.org/facts/11-facts-about-high-school-dropout-rates>). For every 100 ninth graders, only 70% graduate from high school on time, 44% enroll in college right away, 30% remain enrolled a second year, and 21% graduate college within six years. Perhaps most frightening, 67% of dropouts make their decision to do

so **BEFORE** the winter break of their 9th grade year!

At Derby High School (Derby, Kansas), something had to change. The graduation rate was hovering around 89%. In 2010, the state changed the formula and it dropped to 75–77%. We were able to track down some students and plug the correct transfer codes into the formula, getting us back to around 85%, but the question remained: How do we address the fact that 15% of our students (or more) do not graduate? How do we increase our graduation rate to 95+? How do we make school relevant and rigorous, while establishing respectful relationships with our students, ensuring that they want to and do complete high school?

In 2011, new principal Tim Hamblin went to a one-day workshop and heard about the Freshman Transition Initiative (FTI), founded in 2004 by Dr. Rebecca Dedmond of George Washington University. What is an FTI program? Why should it matter? How do we keep our students in school and graduate students who are truly college and/or career ready?

Dr. Dedmond's program has three purposes: dropout **prevention**, college and career **readiness**, and financial **literacy**. A successful FTI program is a classroom-based, comprehensive guidance effort, in either the 8th or 9th grade, to stem the rising tide of dropouts (both high school and college). Derby High needed to try something different. Intrigued by the idea, Hamblin embarked upon implementing an FTI and brought it back to school, asking the faculty one simple question: "Who likes freshmen?" At a brief meeting after school, those who like freshmen watched a video showing one school's FTI and the success it was seeing. Hamblin asked me to be the lead teacher for our FTI.

Following the blueprint set forth in the standards and 10 steps to a successful FTI (<http://www.freshmantransition.org/10stepplan.php>), I began to research programs and

curricula. The AVID program, while very well known to show great results, is not for all students. We needed something that would work with **ALL** our students. Academies are wonderful, but at a school of over 2000, a change of that size would be difficult. We kept coming back to the Career Choices curriculum. This curriculum encompassed all three goals of Derby High's long-term strategic plan—prevention, readiness, and literacy.

Following the 10 steps outlined for a successful FTI, we took our time, did our research, asked many questions, and put together a team. We visited a school in our state that had used it for several years, observed a class, and discussed what we did and didn't like about the program. Engaging students in the first year of high school was paramount, as was enrolling them in career pathways of interest and addressing financial literacy. Our board of education approved our proposal and we piloted two sections in the spring of 2013.

Before beginning your FTI, consider the following: One of the most critical of the 10 steps in a successful FTI is recruiting great, passionate teachers. This is when you need to put together a team of champions. (We lovingly refer to ourselves as *nutjob* champions!) Our team agreed early on that one of our goals was to form solid relationships with our students. Freshmen can be challenging, so giving them to teachers as a "punishment" or because the teachers are "new kids" may ensure your program's demise. A common topic of debate is whether FTIs should be yearlong or only a semester. With budget cuts as they are, semester-long may be the best (or only) option for your district. We chose to make our class year-long, which brings its own challenges. We insisted on linking the classes so the important relationships between students and teachers, as well as among the students, were able to grow. We have also found that our students form small "family" units, which at our school is a great benefit. They are able to learn about their classmates, learn to get along with people they might not otherwise meet, grow together, and help each other during this extremely important time of growth in a young person's life. Another of the more intriguing main components of an FTI is a 10-year plan of study. In data-driven days like ours, this 10-year plan of study is most interesting. Each student at Derby High will have his or her own plan that will get him or her not only through high school (the traditional 4-year plan) but beyond, through secondary education, whether that be a 2- or 4-year degree, certification, or training. The plan of study is important because it puts the students' futures in **THEIR** hands, giving **THEM** control. One of the main reasons the Career Choices curriculum was chosen is its built-in 10-year plan—online and accessible 24-7, enabling students to receive the instant feedback they crave. These plans are accessible to each teacher, administrator, and counselor at Derby High, as well as each student's parents. This accessibility allows for greater, more meaningful discussions when issues arise. We are also utilizing follow-up modules so that students will continue to update their plans and other activities (college applications, résumés, letters of recommendation, and so on). Reading through these plans, one sees the sometimes huge disconnect between reality and student perceptions. The plans are often humorous. For example, I have one student who will need to make \$750,000 per

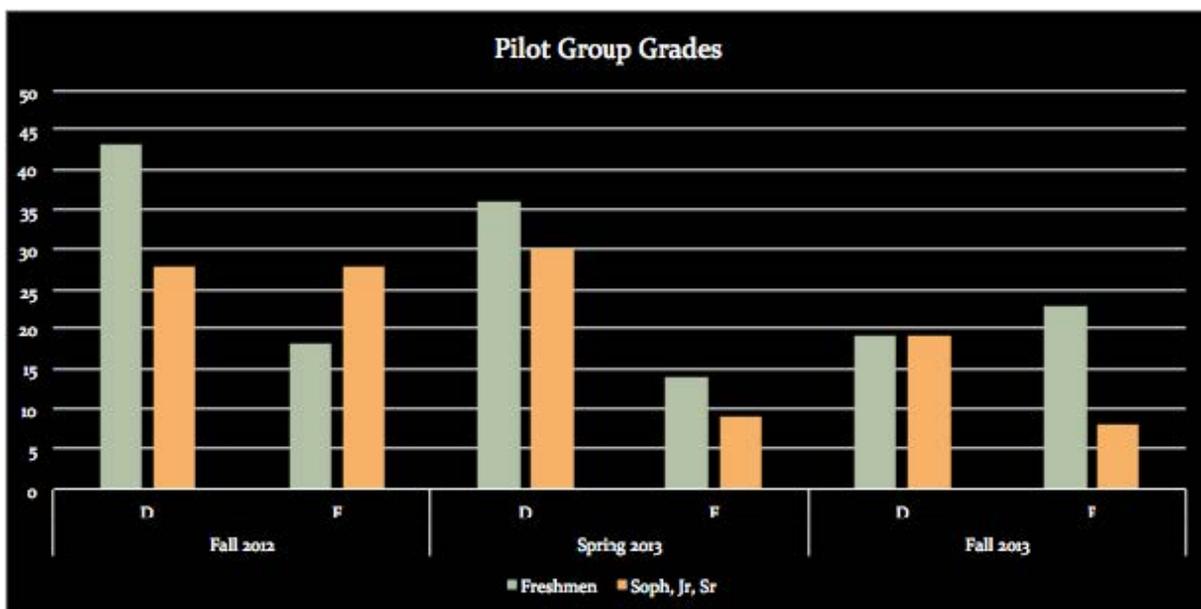
month to live the lifestyle he would love to lead. He quickly realized that he would need to reevaluate!

Freshmen can be overwhelming, so having too many activities is better than not having enough. We have incorporated several activities that are easily done. We utilize our Communities in Schools program, Reality U, to make an impact. This real-life simulation of what students would make, given their choices in life and their grades from first semester, brings to life the importance of working hard in school. Followed up with tax forms and learning about keeping a bank ledger, this activity is one of the more memorable. Speakers are probably the students' favorite activity, even though they must write each one a thank you note.

Does it work? While data is still being gathered on our full implementation students (2013–2014 was our first full year), student engagement and work ethic are improving, students ask for help, class discussions are more relevant and on topic, students take ownership of their futures, and relationships and connections are being made. Student behaviors are improving; our freshmen are less disruptive. By working closely with CIS/counselors, students are getting the help they need.

The grades of the pilot students, as shown on the graph at the end of this article, improved in just one semester. Relationships (again, experienced teachers who love freshmen) are key! Students who have maintained relationships with me, by taking subsequent classes or answering my emails, are still doing well. The graduation rate (taking into consideration both the older students who have already graduated and the students who are scheduled to graduate in May 2015) is 91%. Equally exciting, of the 20 students who have graduated, six graduated with certifications in hand (CNA, IT, welding) and nine with college credits.

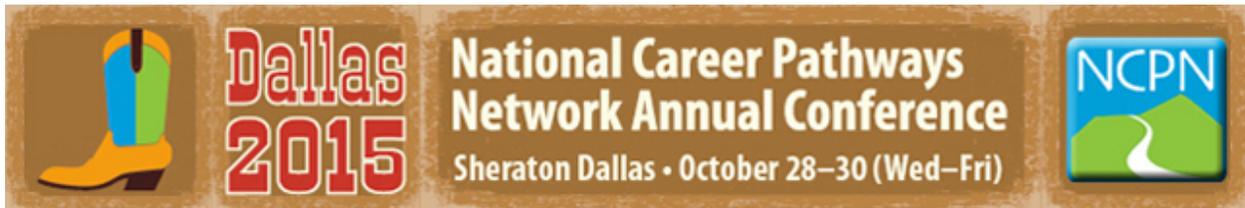
In conclusion, by addressing prevention, readiness, and literacy head-on with our FTI, we are seeing astounding success in Success 101 (what we call our FTI). Life is exciting at Derby High!



Resources to check out:

- www.freshmantransition.org/about.php
- www.dropoutprevention.org
- http://www.freshmantransition.org/NASSP_Article_1105.pdf
- <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies>

Contact the author at cfoster@usd260.com.



"Where Do I Sign Up?" Free College, Guaranteed Job

Success through competency-based education and on-the-job work experience



Students in an associate degree program at Oakland Community College go to school for free (and even receive a stipend), get a paid apprenticeship to hone their newly learned skills while in the program, and have a guaranteed position waiting for them at a local company when they graduate.

"It really is a great opportunity," says Janene Erne, who not only manages the Michigan Advanced Technician Training Program (MAT²) at OCC, but also has a personal investment in the three-year program: Her daughter Kelsey (photo below) is one of its students. Kelsey and her classmates are in what will be the first MAT² graduating class in 2016.

Two program options are available at OCC:

- Mechatronics technician, which combines mechanical, electrical, and electronics skills
- IT technician, which has several tracks that allow students to specialize in software development, infrastructure, or IT security



Using What You Learn

Initiated by Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), MAT² receives the majority of its funding from local companies. Each company sponsors one or more students, paying for tuition and books, a \$200 stipend while the student is attending classes, and an hourly wage (progressing from \$9 to \$12) for on-the-job apprenticeships. Upon graduating, the student begins a two-year position as a full employee of the sponsoring company.

Students go through an initial application and interview process. Upon selection by a participating company, each student spends the next three years alternating between eight-week periods in the classroom and lab at OCC, and eight-week periods in on-the-job apprenticeships at his or her sponsoring company.

The MAT² curriculum is competency-based, meaning that students cannot progress to the next course until they have mastered the subject, Erne says. "We also talk directly with industry about the apprenticeships, so that the students' job assignments are related to the school period that they just finished," she explains.

The benefits to the students are obvious, but the companies have just as much to gain. "There's definitely a demand for this program," Erne says. "Companies need mid-level technicians. Right now, they're resorting to having their shop-floor managers and engineers do this technician work, because there just aren't enough young kids going into these fields." Through MAT², these companies are investing in their own future, as well as that of the students.

Teaming With industry

OCC first became involved in MAT² in 2012 when Erne got a call about launching the program using a competency-based approach. "A competency-based curriculum is a big change for education because typically classes are time-based, where students have a 15-week semester



to learn the subject, and if they learn some of it, they can get a C and move on," she says. "In a competency-based program, the students must prove they have mastered the specific competency-based outcomes and performance-based objectives of each course through a hands-on final, that in the MAT² program is called a 'mechapracticum.'"

Erne and others at OCC thought the idea had merit, and recommended that the MEDC might also want to approach Henry Ford Community

College as a partner in developing the first MAT² curriculum, which was the mechatronics technician option. The two colleges went to work. "We got together with the industry people—not the CEOs and human resources staff, but the technicians who are on the shop floors—and

determined and ranked all of the tasks they perform on the job," Erne says. "Based on that lengthy process, we wrote a very specific, industry-driven curriculum that has a core of common knowledge and abilities that these students need." OCC and industry experts have continued to meet ever since.

The initial MAT² mechatronics class began in fall 2013. Since then, other community colleges have begun to participate, offering courses that also encompass:

- Technical product design, or "art-to-part," as Erne describes it. "It's taking a project from design right through to the build."
- CNC manufacturing technician (starting fall 2015), which trains students to set up and operate the computer numerically controlled (CNC) machine tools used in today's high-tech manufacturing facilities.

Colleges participating in MAT² include Lansing Community College, Macomb Community College, Mott Community College, Delta College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, North Central Michigan College, and Baker College (Cadillac and Charlevoix locations).

"Regardless of which college is offering the program and whether the students are taking mechatronics, IT, CNC, or technical product design, the big-picture idea of MAT² is the same. It is competency-based education tied with on-the-job work experience," Erne says. "The industry and the students are excited about it. And the parents? Every parent who comes to an information session about the program says, 'Where do I sign up?' Yes, it's a really cool program."

More information about MAT² at OCC and other Michigan colleges is available at <http://www.mitalent.org/mat2/>.

College Tech Prep: Still Alive and Well in Ohio

Carrie Scheiderer, Central Region Tech Prep Consultant, NCPN Leadership Development Academy Member



Since 1991 Ohio has had an effective Tech Prep network serving all of Ohio's public secondary and postsecondary partners. With the elimination of Perkins funding for Tech Prep in 2011, it looked like Tech Prep might disappear for good. Ohio saw value in this program and decided to provide state funding to keep Tech Prep by restructuring from 23 consortia to six broad regions. Ohio College Tech Prep Centers support multiple goals including program of study development, alignment of curricula, better articulation between education levels, and reducing the need for remediation at the college level.

At the Central Region Tech Prep Center, our mission and vision drive our daily work. This year we have been assisting the Ohio Department of Education by hosting regional workshops

designed to assist targeted career-technical pathways with their conversion from a broad-based curriculum to focused coursework. Ohio's career-technical programs are transitioning to a course structure. This also allows for better alignment with the postsecondary partners in the region. As secondary and postsecondary teachers and faculty work together, this allows for seamless, nonduplicative programs of study for Ohio's students.

Another new initiative driving career-technical education in Ohio is moving career-technical coursework down into the middle grades. Beginning next year, all school districts will be required to provide middle school pathway opportunities for students. As Tech Prep consultants, we have been working directly with our local high schools and career centers to set up these pathways by providing support with program of study development.

Statewide articulation initiatives are also a primary goal in Ohio. Tech Prep centers work alongside the Ohio Board of Regents to support the Career-Technical Credit Transfer work in the state. The initiative, known as CT2, builds a comprehensive credit transfer system. One of our priorities this summer will be hosting workshops for secondary and postsecondary faculty to better align these CT2 opportunities for students. The Central Region will focus on information technology and engineering and manufacturing alignment. These "Closing the Gap" workshops will enable secondary and postsecondary faculty to share lessons, materials, assignments, and projects that support student learning in the content area and facilitate discussion with business and industry partners.



One reason why Ohio College Tech Prep is so important and valuable is that it supports secondary-postsecondary partnerships. Tech Prep center consultants are the crucial link between local career center administrators and teachers and postsecondary deans and faculty. Communication is the key, and when both sides work together, more opportunities are created for students.

As the six regions move towards the end of their fourth year with state funding, many best practices and partnerships continue to be established for the benefit of Ohio's career-technical students and graduates. Tech Prep has become even more valuable to the state and Governor Kasich's goals of collaboration, cost

savings, college access, and college completion, all of which contribute to Ohio's economy by providing the workforce the state needs to be competitive in today's economy.

Contact the author at cscheide@cotc.edu.

ABE College Day Event Promotes Career Pathways

Terri Clark, Adult Education Counselor, Pearl River Community College



Numerous educational opportunities are on the horizon for adult learners enrolled in Adult Basic Education (ABE) at Pearl River Community College (PRCC). Participants can "JumpStart to a Career Pathway" by enrolling in workforce training or career technical education (CTE) courses while completing their high school equivalency diplomas. Anyone 17 years of age or older who is interested in the JumpStart to a Career Pathway program can enter through the Adult Education Intake Process. Adult learners are given the TABE assessment when they enter the ABE program. After obtaining their scores, these individuals meet with a student navigator or counselor to discuss Career Pathway programs, which include workforce training, CTE courses, and ABE completion.

Annually, the Office of Adult Education hosts a Career Technical College Tour Day to provide hands-on learning activities and an overview of the Career Pathways that PRCC has to offer. This event gives more than 300 enrolled ABE students throughout the six-county district an opportunity to tour the Poplarville campus and meet with CTE instructors and workforce trainers. Participants receive one-on-one admissions and financial counseling from college personnel and visit classrooms and labs associated with Career Pathways. Some of the students' favorite areas are the welding lab, block and brick masonry shop, commercial truck driving course, and the Smart Labs within the Business Office Technology program.



Giving these adult learners the opportunity to see firsthand what PRCC has to offer not only reenergizes them to complete the GED, but also provides a Career Pathway plan as well as a point of contact at the school. The counseling component, or CTE contact person, is essential in an effective Career Pathway program. The counseling and advising of students fall into the hands of not only the counselor and CTE instructor, but also the student navigator and, of course, the students themselves. Students need to learn about the process and how to take control of their own academic progress within this new learning environment. By sharing the responsibility of counseling and advisement, the counselor, CTE instructor, and student navigator triple the likelihood of a successful outcome. Often times, this interweaved advisement begins within the student's college day tour experience.

The purpose of JumpStart to Career Pathways and recruitment events such as Adult Education College Day is to ensure that PRCC is providing program participants with all available resources throughout our institution. PRCC relies heavily on braided funding to create a strong foundational-to-mastery program based on individual student needs. Our Career Pathways team considers ABE the foundational source of basic skills, as well as CTE or workforce program promotion, screening, and recruiting. However, the success of Career Pathways programs also requires intensive planning, collaborating, and braided funding within ABE, CTE, and workforce development. To be successful, ongoing and extensive communication and program alignment among adult education, workforce, and CTE are essential to create successful transitions for adult learners. In addition to continuous collaboration, pathway programs must utilize existing business and economic partnerships to ensure PRCC produces well trained, work-ready participants to support area industry needs. However, complete alignment does not occur easily. Often times, implementation of Career Pathways necessitate changes in policies, procedures, and funding requirements.

Career pathway programs offer a brighter future for adult learners at PRCC. Pathway programs contribute to the overall well-being of individuals. Educational gains and career-readiness training will impact the economic security of participants. Career Pathways, if implemented effectively, don't just build the workforce. They change lives. Our team at PRCC is excited to play a part in this life-changing educational opportunity.

Contact the author at tclark@prcc.edu.

Career Planning Saves Time and Money

Suzette Fletcher, Billings Adult Education



Too many times, career pathways are promoted to the point of pushing them on students without discovering whether those pathways align with students' personality, interests, skills, and values. Placing students in career training programs because jobs are not being filled or because money is available to pay for the training is only beneficial when the careers make sense for the students and align with the students' goals.

For example, some years ago, a grant was awarded to an agency to provide welding instruction, partially because there was a need in the area for experienced welders. Students were recruited and placed in this training because the training was provided "free" of charge. Unfortunately, no career planning assessments or other inquiries were made as to whether welding was a good fit for and/or interest of the students. So students were placed in a training class. Some lost interest right away and never completed the course. Of those who completed the training, many never worked in the welding field. Many who did work as welders lost interest and sought different career pathways after a short time, probably needing different

training and funding to pay for their training. Based on this and other experiences in the real world, wouldn't it make sense to begin all career pathway endeavors with good career planning?

At Billings Adult Education, we partner with our local TRiO Counselor to administer the Meyers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality assessment during the first Personal Employment Plan (PEP) class. Students are given feedback on their personality types that includes how they make decisions, react to situations, and pursue goals. Of course, they also receive information about careers to explore, based on their assessment results. Students are encouraged to research their personality types and learn as much as they can about themselves. When students know and understand themselves better, they are able to make better decisions today and for their future. As a bonus, these students also learn to understand, accept, and get along with others who have different personality types—a needed soft skill that will ultimately help students fit in and keep their jobs.

The second PEP class incorporates the SKILLS career assessment on our Montana Career Information System (MCIS). MCIS is paid for by the Montana Department of Labor. It is tied into a national career system and provides wage and training information specific to Montana. The SKILLS assessment asks students to choose which skills are satisfying for them and then matches student answers with Holland Codes to provide a list entitled "Top 30 Occupations." Students can then explore various occupations and career clusters using the online MCIS system.

Buffalo Area Students Choose High-Demand Pathways

Katherine M. Heinle, Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Division, Director of Career and Technical Education, Buffalo Public Schools



The Buffalo City Schools' Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department was awarded one of the 24 U.S. Department of Labor Youth Career Connect grants. Competition was stiff, with over 300 applications, but in the end the Buffalo CTE department won by focusing on the health and life science field within the newly established Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Corridor, which was created through New York State Governor Cuomo's Buffalo Billion Initiative. The medical career pathway holds 17 of the 26 fastest growing occupations through 2020.

With 28 area hospitals, there is significant need for highly qualified employees with multiple credentials, degrees, and skills. The hospitals not only need patient care personnel but also lab and facilities staff to ensure the stability and the growth of the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Corridor. The grant aims to fulfill the needs of multiple careers areas within the health career pathway and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (BNMC), a consortium of the region's premier health care, life sciences research, and medical education institutions, all co-located on

120 acres in downtown Buffalo, New York. The BNMC is dedicated to the cultivation of a world-class medical campus for clinical care, research, education, and entrepreneurship.

Under the grant, students in grades 9–12 will choose from three career options within the medical career pathways: Medical Assisting/Laboratory Technology, Health Information Technology, and Environmental Facility Management. Programs were designed to address students with multiple interests from patient care to construction, but all are centered on the needs of the medical campus.



The program design integrates an academic approach to career pathways and includes New York State Common Core and Career Development Occupational Standards and infuses industry standards into the three programs. Students have the opportunity to earn industry credentials each year along with college credit through Erie Community College. All of this is designed to make the students highly employable in the medical field and provide career pathways to higher education.

The key to the program's success will be employer engagement with multiple partners, including the local workforce investment board, Roswell Cancer Institute, McGuire Group, Buffalo Niagara Partnership, and Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Partners have signed on to offer career guidance, work-based activities, summer internships, community service, career fairs, and industry certifications like CPR.

Additionally, career counseling and mentoring will be a focus, ensuring a counselor-to-student ratio of no more than 1/200, multiple work-based coordinators who will help design a mentoring program with partners that will include face-to-face mentoring, a brown bag lunch series, and career-specific group mentoring.

The success of this program will require a strong recruitment component that will include a high school showcase offered on Saturdays to parents and students, career fairs for the districts' 7th and 8th graders during the school day, reinforcements through middle school CTE – Family and Consumer Science and Technology, development of career plans, school open houses, shadow days, and a new proactive public relations campaign.

A strong staff development plan will include weeklong institutes offering professional development for the entire building staff for the first two years of the program. Monthly staff meetings, common planning times, and full days of staff development will support the small learning community model.

CTE teachers will be encouraged to maintain and attain industry certifications as well as become adjunct faculty at Erie Community College to create a seamless transition between high school and postsecondary programs.

To track and document the program success, the CTE department will use current data collection systems through the New York State Education Department that report on academic attainment, CTE-specific data such as industry and college credit earned, and social economic demographics. Our partners will work with work-based coordinators to collect student data on all industry and mentoring experiences. Our postsecondary partner ECC will report on all students' transition between secondary and postsecondary career pathways.

Contact the author at kheinle@buffaloschools.org.

Summary of Responses to Career Pathways RFI Available

A diverse group of 141 respondents from across the nation responded.



The departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor issued a joint Request for Information (RFI) in April 2014 for information and recommendations about career pathways from stakeholders in the public and private sectors. Go to http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CP_RFI.pdf for the Summary Report. The information obtained through the RFI will be used to inform technical assistance efforts, funding opportunities, policy discussions, and other activities to support the development of career pathways systems.

NCPN Members—Don't forget all the free resources available to NCPN members at www.ncpn.info.

Connections is published by the National Career Pathways Network, an organization of educators and employers dedicated to the advancement of Career Pathways, and other CTE initiatives. Founded by CORD, NCPN assists its members in planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving workforce education programs.

Questions about *Connections*? Contact: Mark Whitney, NCPN, P.O. Box 21689, Waco, TX 76702-1689; 254-741-8315; or mwhitney@cord.org. Visit NCPN on the web at www.ncpn.info.