

Title I, Part C, Carl D. Perkins Grant: 2007-08

At a Glance

The Dallas Independent School District's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department's purpose is to enable students to gain entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job and/or to continue their education.

The CTE Department was awarded a \$2,863,771 supplementary grant by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) authorized under Title I, Part C, of the *Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998*. The Title I, Part C, Carl D. Perkins Grant runs from July 1, 2007 through August 15, 2008.

The *Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998* defines vocational and technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society.

Evaluation Methodology

The 2007-2008 evaluation's focus was to survey CTE teachers about the CTE program, examine the program's strengths and weaknesses, and recommend improvements. The evaluator analyzed and reported survey data.

CTE Teacher Survey

The CTE Teacher Survey, developed through collaboration with the CTE staff and staff from the Evaluation and Accountability Department, collected self-reported data from participants regarding the following three areas:

- Relevance of professional development activities
- Quality of CTE facilities and equipment
- Adherence to CTE program policy

Four hundred CTE teachers received directives from the Director of Career and Education and Workforce Partnerships to participate in an anonymous online survey via the Dallas Independent School District's website. One hundred and forty-six of 400 CTE teachers completed the survey yielding a 37 percent response rate.

Survey Findings

Relevance of Professional Development Activities. Eighty percent of respondents reported that the district provided often or occasional professional development opportunities that were directly related to CTE career fields and pathways, while only 8 percent of respondents reported that the district never provided relevant professional development opportunities for CTE teachers.

Respondents reported varied professional development activities attended during the 2007-2008 school year such as, but not limited to: My Data Portal, Career Cruising, Covey Training, Career Pathways, Developing Career Clusters and Pathways, Grade Speed, and Serving LEP Students through Career Technology. However, it was reported that industry-specific professional development activities such as online career planning, industry-based externships, developing problem-based learning projects, CTE tailored principles of learning, and occupational safety certification would be beneficial in improving student achievement in their CTE course(s). Respondents also reported that they needed more professional development activities that were focused on understanding how to utilize student data/assessments in line with CTE curriculum and developing CTE-driven lesson plans. Other respondents noted the importance of district-sponsored continuing education such as industry-specific certification, licensure, or college credits to ensure that CTE teachers remained up-to-date in their knowledge of current industry standards.

Quality of CTE Facilities and Equipment. Fifty-four percent of respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that CTE laboratory or classroom areas were adequate for CTE instructional purposes. Forty-seven percent of respondents

strongly agreed or agreed that adequate storage space was provided in classrooms for CTE related equipment and materials. Forty-four percent of respondents reported that they strongly disagreed or disagreed, that their campus had tools or equipment in their CTE classrooms that were representative of those found in business and industry. Seventy of 146 (48%) respondents reported that they agreed or strongly agreed, while 27 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, that their campus provided adequate amounts of safety supplies and/or equipment. Varied recommendations were given by participants in regards to program improvement regarding CTE facilities and equipment including, but not limited to: updated technology and equipment in classrooms, more locked and unlocked storage areas, and the addition of Spanish-translated CTE classroom materials.

Adherence to CTE Program Policy. In line with CTE's goal of providing students with organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations, 50 percent of respondents reported that they occasionally or often encouraged CTE students to complete the sequence of CTE courses that will lead to an industry based license, certification, and/or college credit hours. Only 47 percent reported that they always provided this type of encouragement to their CTE students. Only 3 percent of respondents reported that they never encouraged their CTE students to complete the required sequence of CTE courses in order to gain the appropriate license, certification, or college credit hours for their specific career pathway.

CTE teachers are required to meet with a designated advisory council made up of business and industry advisors from companies in fields related to specific CTE content at least twice a year to identify program needs and develop a yearly plan for program improvement. Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported that they did not participate in advisory council meetings at least twice a year while 43 percent reported that they did participate in advisory council meetings as required by CTE program policy. In addition 47 percent of respondents reported that they implemented the program improvements found in the yearly plan into their CTE course(s) while 36 percent reported that they did not implement the yearly plan program improvements into their CTE course(s).

Per CTE program policy, CTE advisors that are assigned to CTE student organizations must routinely meet with this organization during the school year to plan the organization's yearly activities. Forty-six percent of respondents reported

that advisors met with CTE student organizations for this purpose, which includes 10 percent of respondents that reported that these meetings always happen, 11 percent that reported that these meetings happen often, and 25 percent that reported that these meetings happen occasionally. Forty-one percent of respondents reported that advisors did not meet with CTE student organizations.

Per CTE program policy, CTE teachers that teach a course(s) that require laboratory tasks or activities must give these students a written safety test. Fifty-one percent of CTE teachers reported that they gave their CTE laboratory students written safety tests while 24 percent reported that they have never given their laboratory students a written safety test.

CTE program policy requires that Career Preparation students must be visited at their workplace by their Career Preparation teachers at least once during each six weeks period. Survey results determined that 51 percent of Career Preparation teachers visited their students at least once each six weeks period; however 34 percent reported that they never visited their Career Preparation students at their assigned workplace.

Summary

The main findings of the survey were (1) professional development activities were relevant yet CTE teachers reported that they were in need of activities that were more CTE or industry specific, (2) although CTE teachers reported that CTE facilities or equipment were adequate, CTE facilities or equipment were not updated or representative of the current CTE industry, and (3) CTE teachers were not in full compliance with CTE program policies and procedures.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the following CTE program improvements be implemented: (1) provide CTE teachers and staff with professional development opportunities which are industry specific and provide current knowledge of industry specific expectations and standards (2) update CTE classroom technology and equipment or tools to ensure that they are representative of those currently being utilized in the prospective industry or business, and (3) CTE program administrators should review and discuss written CTE Department policies and procedures with CTE teachers in order to ensure CTE teacher awareness of applicable policies and procedures and allow CTE teachers an opportunity to discuss barriers that may need to be addressed in order to ensure CTE teacher compliance with CTE program policies and procedures.

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