

Building Comprehensive Programs of Study through Progressive State Career Technical Education Legislation

National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc)

“As states move beyond the minimum POS requirements, Arizona and Georgia lead the way by crafting state policy and practice to implement effective POS aligned to the National Career Clusters™ Framework.”



In [Reflect, Transform, Lead: A Vision for Career Technical Education](#)ⁱ, the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) calls for rigorous, comprehensive programs of study (POS) as the delivery model for CTE. [This call to action raises the bar beyond what is required in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act \(Perkins IV\) legislation](#)ⁱⁱ.

Perkins requires local entities to implement a single POSⁱⁱⁱ, however the definition of a quality POS is broad and not clearly defined. In an effort to encourage consistency and quality across POS, NASDCTEc collaborated with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and other national organizations to clearly define a rigorous POS through a [10 Component Framework](#)^{iv}. POS aligned to this framework are considered Rigorous Programs of Study (RPOS). Already, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has used the framework to define high-quality CTE^v. NASDCTEc’s vision supports POS meeting OVAE’s definition of rigor.

RPOS are slated to play a more prominent role in future federal CTE legislation and possibly in other federal legislation focused on high schools. The concept of POS, sometimes called career pathways, is also used in several federal initiatives in adult education, community colleges and workforce [development](#)^{vi}. The Secretary of Education has challenged states to implement more RPOS that include statewide articulation agreements and are aligned to high-skill, high demand occupations.

As states move beyond the minimum POS requirements, Arizona and Georgia lead the way by crafting state policy and practice to implement effective POS aligned to the National Career Clusters™ Framework.

Arizona – CCTI & RPOS Grant:

In the early 2001 a teacher shortage in Arizona was projected to worsen over the subsequent five years. Education leaders in the state took action by analyzing local labor market data and determining how CTE might play

“A pathway called Education Professions was established to prepare secondary students for jobs or postsecondary studies in the field of education.”

a role in filling this gap. Districts and postsecondary institutions varied in their approaches to address the shortage, and the efforts were largely dissimilar and uncoordinated.

The National Center for Teacher Education (NCTE), housed at Maricopa Community College, launched a more cohesive attempt to handle the teacher shortage. NCTE sought to strengthen teacher recruitment, preparation and development and later received a federal grant through the College and Career Transitions Initiative (CCTI) to do so. The grant required NCTE to develop a career pathway in teacher education, including a sequence of rigorous courses to better align secondary and postsecondary teacher preparation programs.

One of the state’s strongest initiatives to improve the education of future teachers has been the development of the Associate of Arts in Elementary Education (AAEE) degree.

The AAEE prepares a student to become a teacher aide, and can also be transferred into a Bachelor of Elementary Education degree program at any of Arizona’s public, and some private, universities. The AAEE degree has been offered at most of Arizona’s community colleges since 2003.

At the secondary level, the Arizona Department of Education’s CTE division began to implement a high school CTE curriculum for future K-12 teachers. The secondary curriculum was designed to articulate with courses required for the AAEE degree. A pathway called Education Professions was established to prepare secondary students for jobs or postsecondary studies in the field of education. The program identifies cohorts of high school juniors and seniors who want to become teachers, and prepares them for employment or postsecondary studies in education.

The Education Professions curriculum requires instruction in areas such as education theory, pedagogy, learning styles, and methodology. Students gain classroom experience in different grade levels and subject areas, especially in high-need areas such as mathematics, science, and special education. The curriculum has four components: formal or technical instruction; experiential learning; supervised work-based learning; and participation in the student organization Future Educators of America.

A partnership was formed between Maricopa’s NCTE and the Arizona Department of Education’s Education Professions program to facilitate secondary to postsecondary transitions in the Education and Training Career Cluster. The education pathway, supported by the CCTI grant, integrates the secondary curriculum framework with requirements for the AAEE degree.

Hoping to produce a systemic change, the two entities created the [Arizona P-12 Teacher Education Career Model for replication throughout the state](#). Through the model, Education Professions students across the state can participate in dual and concurrent enrollment at community colleges.

Outcomes of the CCTI grant program at Maricopa include^{vii}:

- Decreased need for remediation at the postsecondary level
- Increased enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education
- Increased academic and skill achievement at secondary and post-secondary levels
- Increased attainment of postsecondary degrees, certificates, or other recognized credentials
- Increased entry into employment or further education

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Arizona's Department of Education a Promoting Rigorous Career Technical Education Programs of Study (RPOS) grant to improve and expand the state's successful model, and to assess the impact of students' participation in the program.

[Specifically, Arizona's grant is geared toward implementing and fine-tuning their RPOS in the Education and Training Career Cluster to create a replicable model.](#)

For a POS to be considered "rigorous," it must align with all aspects of the U.S. Department of Education's 10 Component Framework. Arizona must also produce other deliverables required by the grant. To meet the requirements, Arizona has dedicated a portion of its Perkins Reserve funds to supporting the development of RPOS.

Additionally, Arizona implements pieces of state legislation that support RPOS expansion, including statutes that:

- Allow for the formation of the Joint Technical Education Districts (JTEDs) and allocate funding for specific career and technological education programs with requirements that closely align to the 10 Component Framework
- Define a "dual enrollment course"
- Mandate that colleges ensure dual enrollment courses be college-level
- Require public postsecondary institutions to cooperate in operating a statewide articulation and transfer system

Though Arizona had many of the pieces in place prior to receiving the RPOS grant, the state's biggest challenge has been changing the language used to describe aspects of RPOS or its implementation. For example, what is now called "programs of study" was previously called



“Coupled with two recent pieces of state legislation, Georgia’s shift to Career Clusters™ aims to substantially increase college and career readiness for all of Georgia’s students.”

“The mutual backing by the state legislators and Georgia’s Department of Education helps direct a cohesive effort for more impactful CTE implementation in the state.”

“Pathways Initiative” in Arizona. Despite this challenge, Arizona’s teacher education programs continue to thrive as they begin the expansion process through the RPOS grant.

Georgia’s Transition to Career Clusters™

Georgia’s Department of Education is actively increasing the role of CTE in preparing college and career ready students.

The Department is revising the current system of CTE delivery, Peach State Pathways, to follow the National Career Clusters Framework. Coupled with two recent pieces of state legislation, Georgia’s shift to Career Clusters™ aims to substantially increase college and career readiness for all of Georgia’s students.

Prior to the move towards Career Clusters™, Georgia implemented Peach State Pathways, a system that provided students with mostly occupational content and fewer career pathways. Recognizing the need for more comprehensive options, Georgia’s Department of Education decided to embed more academics into CTE courses and to provide more pathways through the Career Clusters Framework.

The changes follow recent legislation passed by Georgia’s state legislature requiring career counseling and career pathways for all students. First, H.B. 400, the BRIDGE Bill, was passed into law last year. The bill requires all eighth grade students to complete interest inventories, discuss future career plans, and complete individual graduation plans before entering ninth grade. This year, the state legislature passed and signed into law a second bill, **H.B. 186^{viii}**, requiring pathways for all students to be put in place by July of 2012. The mutual backing by the state legislators and Georgia’s Department of Education helps direct a cohesive effort for more impactful CTE implementation in the state.

Many steps are being taken to lay groundwork prior to the full implementation of the Career Clusters™. The state currently requires that high school students have a graduation and career plan, and students have the option of selecting a career pathway. Georgia is working to embed academics into as many pathways as possible so that students can take a required end-of-course test and earn credit in two areas (e.g., construction and geometry or healthcare and biology). Also, ten CTE pathway courses have been approved by the Georgia Board of Regents as the fourth science graduation requirement for high school students entering universities.

Georgia’s Department of Education is also identifying possible exit points for students depending on their career plans, including exit points for immediate workforce entry, technical college entry, and 4-year university entry.

With the new legislation backing the shift to Career Clusters™, Georgia's Department of Education continues to move forward with its plans. Next, the Department will revise and enhance the pathways that have already been embedded with academics. The pathways will be vetted by the technical college system and the Board of Regents. Work will also continue to shift the existing pathways under the proper Career Cluster and determine outcomes for Career and Technical Student Organizations. Lastly, public presentations and marketing materials will be developed to promote the Career Clusters™ and to inform parents, educators and students.

The shift will be ongoing, but students in Georgia will see pathways in place by the fall of 2012 as required by the new legislation.

Conclusion

Progressive CTE legislation and policies are imperative tools for transforming CTE programs into robust systems of RPOS that ensure all students are college and career ready. The two states highlighted in this brief are leading the way. To instill much greater consistency and confidence in the quality of CTE, NASDCTEc recently launched a CTE rebranding effort and is conducting an industry revalidation of the Knowledge and Skill statements. As a part of this process, the creation of a Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) is being developed to align and support the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts^{ix}. The most far-reaching effort to achieve concordance across all CTE programs, however, has been the National Career Clusters™ Framework. NASDCTEc maintains that building robust RPOS aligned to the National Career Clusters™ Framework is critical to rebuild and protect the nation's economic vitality, eliminate the skills gap and improve student achievement.

For more information, please contact Kara Herbertson, Education Policy Analyst, at the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium. 8484 Georgia Avenue Suite 320, Silver Spring, MD 20910 | 301-588-9630 |

www.careertech.org | kherbertson@careertech.org

i Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career Technical Education, available at:

<http://www.careertech.org/career-technical-education/cte-vision.html>

ii Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006, available at:

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_bills&docid=f:s250enr.txt.pdf

iii According to Perkins legislation, a comprehensive POS must: 1) Incorporate and align secondary and postsecondary education elements; 2) Include academic and CTE content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses; 3) Offer the opportunity, where appropriate, for secondary students to acquire postsecondary credits; 4) Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree. Available at:

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_bills&docid=f:s250enr.txt.pdf

iv The United States Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education's 10 Component Framework: http://cte.ed.gov/file/POS_Framework_Unpacking_1-20-10.pdf

v The United States Department of Education, The New CTE: Secretary Duncan's Remarks on Career and Technical Education, available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/new-cte-secretary-duncans-remarks-career-and-technical-education>

vi Literacy Information and Communication System, available at: <http://lincs.ed.gov/pd/careerpathways>

vii National Center for Teacher Education, available at: <http://www.teachered.maricopa.edu/CCTI.html>

viii Georgia House Bill 186, available at: http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/pdf/hb186.pdf

ix Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career Technical Education, available at:

<http://www.careertech.org/career-technical-education/cte-vision.html>