

A Look Inside: A Synopsis of CTE Trends
A Four-Part Series Analyzing State CTE Data and Initiatives
Focus: Career Clusters
November 2010

Career Clusters

Part IV of this series highlights the adoption and use of the National Career Clusters framework. In 2000, the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) adopted Career Clusters as a model structure for the content and delivery of rigorous career technical education (CTE) programs that reflect the demands of the global economy. Each Career Cluster represents a grouping of major industries that share common requirements of their workforce. Career Clusters support the integrated delivery of academic and technical knowledge and skills within a coherent sequence of courses. By aligning secondary education to the full spectrum of postsecondary options and the workplace, Career Clusters offer students a path to college and career readiness and success.

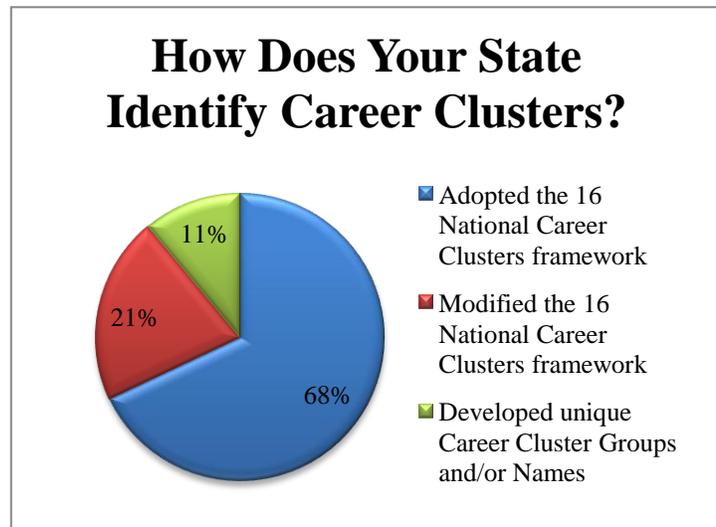
Key Findings

- 1) Eighty-nine (89) percent of the 2010 survey respondents (53 states and territories) have adopted and now use the 16 National Career Clusters framework or some adaptation of the framework.
- 2) Information Technology is the most implemented Career Cluster (94 percent) and the Government and Public Administration Cluster exists in the fewest states (59 percent).

Use of the National Career Clusters Framework

Since the 2008 survey, states have made great strides in their awareness and adoption of Career Clusters. According to the 2010 survey, the majority of states, 68 percent, have adopted the 16 National Career Clusters framework. Using the national model as the starting point, 21 percent of states have modified the National Career Clusters framework to reflect their state's economic, labor market and political needs. Eleven percent of states have a unique clustering approach.

Figure 1

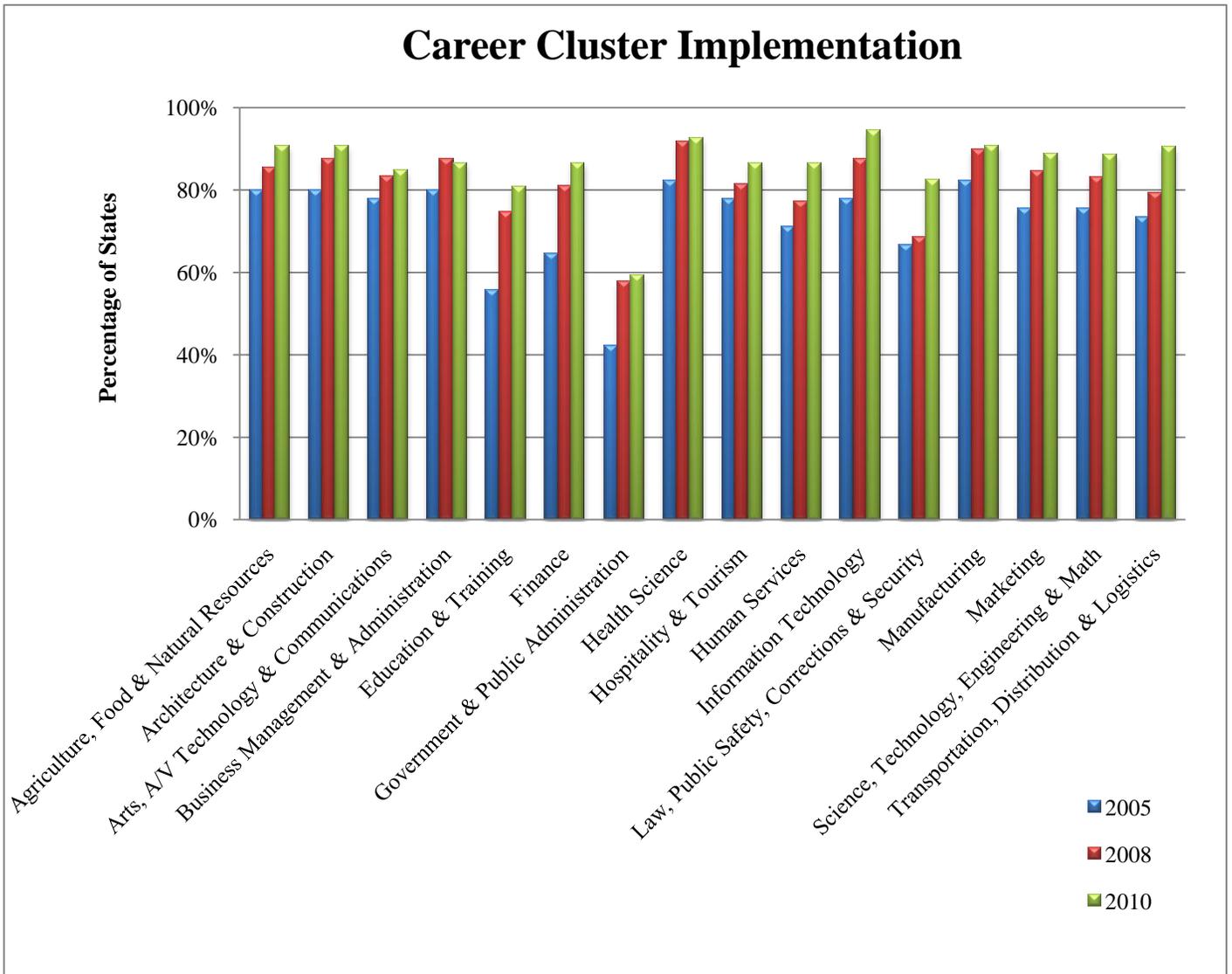


Career Cluster Implementation

Information Technology is the most implemented Career Cluster throughout the states, followed by Health Sciences; Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Architecture & Construction and Manufacturing. The three Career Clusters experiencing the greatest growth since 2005 include Education & Training; Finance; and Information Technology. Government and Public Administration Cluster is implemented the least (59 percent), although growth has occurred since 2005 and is projected to be implemented in 18 percent of the states with the next 12 months.

Overall, Career Cluster implementation has consistently expanded since 2005. Figure 2 shows the implementation level, identified by states, of the National Career Clusters model over the past 5 years. According to the survey responses, nearly all Career Clusters have seen an increase in each of the last survey years.

Figure 2



Example State Level Career Clusters Implementation

The web resource links below highlight different approaches that several different states have used to implement the National Career Clusters framework. The organizing approaches used by states vary and include adaptations that create broad field organizers for the Career Clusters, may include adjustments of clusters to reflect specific state economic development priorities, or represent adaptations that support a reasonable implementation within the state.

• Alabama	https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/54/3-CTE%20Clusters%20Pathways%20and%20Courses%20Pathway.pdf
• Alaska	http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/CTE/clusters.html
• Colorado	http://www2.collegeincolorado.org/Plan/Career/Colorado_Career_Clusters/_default.aspx
• Connecticut	http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320802
• Delaware	http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/staff/ci/content_areas/files/wl/Career%20Pathways%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%20Combined.doc
• Georgia	http://www.gcic.edu/GA_Fed_Career_Clusters.pdf
• Hawaii	http://www.hawaii.edu/cte/pathways/index.html
• Idaho	http://www.pte.idaho.gov/Career_Guidance/Program_of_Study_Curriculum/Career_Clusters.html
• Indiana	http://www.doe.in.gov/pathways/
• Iowa	http://iwin.iwd.state.ia.us/iowa/ArticleReader?itemid=00003933
• Kansas	http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3178
• Kentucky	http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Career+and+Technical+Education/Career+Clusters/
• Maryland	http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/F8A34712-B21E-4DC2-A186-9144565375F2/16366/CareerClustersLOWRES.pdf
• Michigan	http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_2629_53968---,00.html
• Minnesota	http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/Framework.pdf
• Missouri	http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/career_clusters.htm
• Montana	http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/CTE/09MTCareer_Clusters.pdf

• Nebraska	http://www.education.ne.gov/NCE/
• New Hampshire	http://www.education.nh.gov/career/career/career_pathways.htm
• New Mexico	http://www.ped.state.nm.us/CTWEB/clusters.html
• North Carolina	http://www.ncpublicschools.org/cte/support/clusters/
• North Dakota	http://www.nd.gov/cte/services/career-clusters/
• Oklahoma	http://www.okcareertech.org/okcareerclusters/index.htm
• Pennsylvania	http://www.pacareerstandards.com/clusters.php
• Rhode Island	http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/pdf/ccbrochure.pdf
• South Carolina	http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Career-and-Technology-Education/CATECareerClusterGuides.html
• South Dakota	http://doe.sd.gov/octe/careerclusters.asp
• Tennessee	http://tcids.tbr.edu/display_clusters.php
• Texas	http://www.achievetexas.org/POS_Covers.htm
• Utah	http://schools.utah.gov/cte/pathways.html
• Virginia	http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_clusters/index.shtml
• Washington	http://www.k12.wa.us/CareerTechEd/Clusters/default.aspx
• West Virginia	http://wvclear.wvstateu.edu/clusters.html
• Wisconsin	http://dpi.wi.gov/cte/careerclustershome.html
• Wyoming	http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/resources/links_career.aspx

Conclusion

Remaining globally competitive requires the United States to provide rigorous, adaptable and modern programs that ensure a strong workforce. How will we achieve this? The trends are clear. Since 2008 more states are using the National Career Clusters’ framework as a means to organize their CTE programs and guide content.

The fourth principle in *Reflect, Transform, Lead: A Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education*ⁱ states that “CTE is delivered through comprehensive programs of study aligned to the

National Career Clusters framework.” This principle provides additional criteria for how we implement these high quality CTE programs. NASDCTEc believes that CTE, organized by Career Clusters and delivered through a rigorous program of study by qualified teachers and faculty, is critical to ensuring our nation’s competitiveness in the global economy. The 2010 survey results show us that states are making good progress in the implementation of this principle.

Throughout this series we have analyzed the responses submitted by 53 state and territories to a survey on key issues that are critical to the foundations of CTE and compared these responses to prior surveys given in 2003, 2005 and 2008. The 2010 survey responses tell a mixed story of both challenge and opportunity. The interest in CTE is unprecedented. CTE is helping to close the achievement and skills gaps necessary to ensure the United States’ economic competitiveness. However, the issues of funding and teacher/faculty shortage must be addressed if we are to continue to expand the implementation of Career Clusters and provide the leadership necessary to ensure that all students are college and career ready.

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¹ NASDCTEc, *Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career Technical Education*, March 2010.
http://www.careertech.org/uploaded_files/Vision_Paper_PDF_to_Download_0d.pdf