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# **SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

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## **Employment and Workplace Safety Subcommittee Hearing**

### **“Making the Connection: Creating Pathways to Career Success for the Next Generation of Workers”**

November 28, 2007

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Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Old Capitol Building, PO Box 47200  
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Honorable Chairman Senator Murray and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for inviting me to share examples of success, challenges, and opportunities of K-12 career and technical education (CTE) programs in Washington State.

Successful career and technical education programs include the following elements:

1. Strong business and industry partnerships
2. Programs aligned with the economic strategies of Washington State
3. Strong academic and technical application
4. Personalized, meaningful, connected to student, employer, and industry demand
5. Transition of students to post secondary training, apprenticeship, and workforce

#### **Strong business and Industry Partnerships**

The business and industry partners view strong program offerings as the “Talent Pool” for their future economic viability. One example is the Washington State Apprenticeship Council’s commitment to form partnerships with local school districts and construction trades programs across Washington. New Market Skills Center in Tumwater has established such a strong relationship with the local Joint Apprenticeship Training Councils that the students who meet certain criteria are directly offered and enrolled in apprenticeship training programs after

graduation. “High school diploma one day, and registered apprentice the next day.” These graduates are earning over \$19.00 per hour with benefits and retirement. By utilizing the In Demand Scholars program for required tool and safety equipment they are able to walk onto the job site ready for “the original four year degree.”

Another example of a strong partnership is the commitment the DigiPen Institute of Technology has to continuing growth and partnership support with schools in the State of Washington by providing computer science course offerings. DigiPen Institute of Technology has seen the direct benefits of partnering this last year as the first graduate of New Market Skills Center High School computer science program completed his Bachelors of Science degree in computer engineering this past spring. The individual received the first Presidential Scholarship from the DigiPen Institute of Technology and was one of the first graduates that had to make the tough decision of “Which company should I choose?” because he had multiple offers starting at over \$50,000 plus bonuses.

I could site multiple other examples of strong partnerships with health care, pre-engineering, veterinary sciences, emergency services, and power generation.

### **Programs Aligned with Economic Strategies of Washington State**

This past year Governor Gregoire, Washington State Legislature, and Superintendent Bergeson invested over \$100 million in career and technical education programs. The funding to build new skills centers and enhance comprehensive CTE programs needs to align with high demand and high wage occupations. The opportunity we have today to enhance programs and align opportunities for students does not happen often and we need to keep the “future economic engine of Washington State” moving forward.

### **Strong Academic and Technical Application**

The recognition of strong academic content imbedded with technical skill attainment allows programs to succeed and provide such success stories. The career and technical core curriculum can have many outcomes such as high school graduation requirements, college credit through Tech Prep, industry certification, and Advance Placement (AP) College Board testing. A few examples of multiple outcomes include Environmental Studies, Commercial Graphic Design, Professional Medical Careers, Clinical and Scientific Investigation (CSI), Pre Vet Technology, Emergency Medical Services, and Computer Science programs at New Market Skills Center. Currently, procedures are in place for students to earn Tech Prep credit, Advanced Placement and industry certifications while participating in CTE programs. The Washington State legislature has directed School Districts to adopt policy for academic recognition within CTE programs. The Legislature required a taskforce to make recommendations on models that districts could use for cross crediting. Procedures will be developed by the task force to help

individual departments, schools, and school districts to grant academic credit for imbedded content.

### **Personalized, Meaningful, and Connected to Student, Employer, and Industry Demand**

The “Rigor, Relevance, and Relationship” comes alive for students when they have investments in their future. Scott Bond, CEO of Providence Saint Peter Hospital in Olympia, stated to his Department Managers “We have an opportunity and an obligation” to help grow our future workforce. Over the past five years St. Peter Hospital has allowed students from the Professional Medical Careers program to observe 40 hours of clinical applications within the hospital departments. The students enter the program knowing of two careers, doctor or nurse, and not about the other 50 medical and patient care careers available. After the clinical rotations, students have observed open heart surgeries, emergency room, obstetrics, physical therapy, diagnostic imaging, administration, lab activities, acute care and other departments. When the students return to the classroom they re-organize their schedules to fit in more math and science courses before graduation. Most health care students do not have the opportunity to observe professionals, working in their careers, until the second or third year of their college program.

This example reinforces the need to ask all students three questions:

1. Who am I?
2. What can I be?
3. How do I get there?

These are the core questions within the Navigation 101 guidance plan. The examples are clear that when students connect the high school experience with real life examples they become engaged!

Career and technical education programs have strong impacts on dropout prevention, intervention, and retrieval programs. The dropout intervention program (DPI) pilot at New Market has retained and retrieved over 200 students in the past three years. The key to the program is personalized attention to assist the students to advocate for themselves. This has a direct financial impact to future employment opportunities. One student said it best, “I returned (to school) so I could learn the skills to earn a living.” He did take the CTE program of his choice and the additional academic requirements to earn his diploma last June.

### **Transition of Students to Post Secondary Training, Apprenticeship, and Workforce**

Career and technical education programs must continue alignment with post secondary and apprenticeship programs to decrease the “ten year” gap that now exists. The average age in Community and Technical Colleges is 27 years old. The individual and collective earning power is dramatically decreased with this gap in advanced training. The recent construction of the New

Market Life Sciences building included five construction apprentices. Two of these apprentices were recent graduates of the New Market construction trades program and the other three apprentices were 28, 34, and 52 years old. All five apprentices started within one month of each other and at the end of the construction project the 34 and 52 year old apprentices had quit.

The common theme all educators must be conveying is “are you college ready?” with college being defined as any education post high school. This would include technical certificate programs, two year, four year, and apprenticeship programs. New Market administered the Accuplacer™ community and technical college and apprenticeship placement test to all juniors and seniors allowing them to see if they were college ready. The results provided students the opportunity to refresh basic skills while still in high school and for others it built confidence that they were college material. South Puget Sound Community College agreed to accept the testing results for placement at the college. When Tech Prep college credit, Accuplacer™ scores, online unified community college application, 13<sup>th</sup> year plan, and scholarships are added together, many of the obstacles and excuses such as, “In a few years, I need to work, or I don’t know how to apply” are removed.

### **Future Opportunities**

- Align and provide incentives (start up funds) for high demand occupation programs
- Expand middle school CTE exploratory programs – integrated math, science, and technology
- In Demand Scholars Program
- In Demand CTE Instructor Certification Scholarships
- Integrated Academic Articulation – Statewide Cross Credit Guidance
- Assist CTE programs to become Advance Placement (AP) Course Approved
- Connecting K-12 CTE with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) Centers of Excellence
- Secondary Integrated Basic Education Skills Programs – ESL Populations
- Middle and Secondary CTE Summer School – Math, Science, and Technology using CTE as the delivery model
- Early Learning Linkages – State STARS Certification

Career and technical education programs can and will provide an instructional delivery model for high demand, high wage occupations. CTE program offerings are vital to students, business and industry, and the economic strength of Washington State.