

THE ROLE OF GOVERNANCE IN SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY PARTNERSHIPS

By: Kimberly Green, Executive Director, NASDCTEc and
Katie Ruffing, Research and Government Relations Assistant, NASDCTEc

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Competition Driving Collaboration: Global economic pressures have highlighted the reality that America's competitiveness relies on the quality and skill of its workforce. As technology equalizes the playing field, we must review, adjust and respond to new challenges and compete with new competitors.ⁱ Government at all levels - federal, state and local - as well as policy groups have been looking at education governance and the role that it plays in ensuring student success necessary for our nation's continued economic prosperity and vitality.

While global competition has changed the education landscape, so too has the emergence of the accountability era that was shepherded in with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. In the mid-to-late 1990s, some states and many policy groups began to look at state education governance in light of more stringent accountability requirements. This review reinforced what many had expected - secondary and postsecondary education operate in very different universes and in policy isolation from one another. This is further compounded by complex and often competitive governance models where entities and agencies protect turf rather than collaborate for shared success and improvement. Many federal and state policies actually further promote the isolation of systems by creating separate accountability measures and definitions.

As our nation works hard to keep up with its economic and workforce demands, gaps in student performance draw much attention and criticism. Of particular note is how many youth and adults are lost during important transition points in their learning continuum (e.g. between middle and high school or between high school and postsecondary education). One response to this challenge is P – 16 or P – 20. The goal of this movement is to improve collaboration in the pursuit of seamless transitions among all the learner levels and educational institutions. As states consider how to improve student achievement, P – 16 is driving a lot of the conversation about alignment of education programs, policies and governance. How do we create a seamless educational experience out of the current quagmire of policies, programs and governance models? While this question may seem to have an unattainable answer, perhaps if we begin by looking at greater coordination within our own system, career technical education (CTE), we can become better partners in the pursuit of a systemic solution. This brief examines CTE's governance, highlights innovative policies that states have tried and others have suggested, and shares three state governance structure that have resulted in improved secondary-postsecondary collaboration.

Governance ... establishes the framework through which state education systems interact

Why Focus On Governance? The Governance Divideⁱⁱ concludes that considering governance is essential when creating a systemic state approach to improve student achievement and success. "*Governance ... establishes the framework through which state education systems – including elected officials, policy leaders and system leaders – interact with each other.*"ⁱⁱⁱ Put another way, governance sets the parameters or rules through which policy is established and programs are administered.

Current Governance Structure: The governance of education in the United States is extremely complex and political and as such varies significantly from state to state. CTE's governance is no exception. Adding to its complexity is the very essence of what CTE is. As the mission statement of the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium's notes, CTE connects to education, workforce preparation and economic development.^{iv} CTE is broad, diverse and serves myriad populations. This diversity has resulted in complicated and very different governance models across the country.

Governance is the act, process or power of governing.

In keeping with the true spirit our country's belief in a decentralized system of education, there is absolutely no consistent CTE governance structure among states. While it is true that the Perkins eligible agency in the majority of states is the State Department of Education, receipt of the funding is only one part of governance. Governance is defined as the "act, process or power of governing."^v And so we need to look beyond what agency receives funds to the agency or agencies that actually govern the use of these funds.

With the exception of a handful of states, a single agency does not govern CTE. And even in these states, the extent and reach of CTE extends beyond that agency's borders. Instead, most states split governance between secondary and postsecondary agencies. In a few states, the governance is even more diffuse. Secondary CTE governance has much more consistency as the majority of the states govern CTE in the Department of Education and through the State Board of Education. Postsecondary CTE governance is far more varied. While many states have a State Board for Community Colleges, depending on the state, postsecondary CTE governance might reside with the State Board of Education, a Board of Regents, or a Workforce Board.^{vi} Although the overall CTE system is fairly successful, uncoordinated governance does little to support collaboration, program alignment and shared responsibility for student success. To be clear, it is not our intention to promote collapsing governance structures; instead our goal is to encourage thoughtful consideration of better alignment and partnership across agencies, resulting in improved secondary and postsecondary collaboration. The end result may be a new governing model for CTE in your state. What form that takes has many possibilities.

Career clusters support improved secondary and postsecondary collaboration

Current Trends, Policies and Legislation: Within a governance model, states have many policy levers available to help improve collaboration - alignment of courses and assessments, finances, data systems and accountability.^{vii} Conversations about secondary-postsecondary collaboration have intensified as states consider P-16 alignment,^{viii} career clusters and/or dual and concurrent enrollment. Each of these reform strategies hopes to improve access to postsecondary education and increase student success. Career clusters align standards across the educational

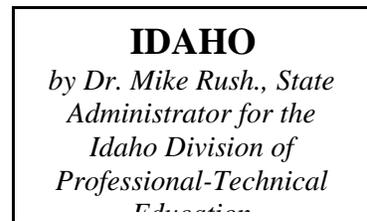
spectrum^{ix} and create multiple, flexible pathways to a career. These pathways provide clear standards, expectations and routes for students through all levels of their education.^x Dual and concurrent enrollment options create a similar set of options for students. To implement these reforms, state education governance must shift focus from single sector issues to education as a whole, meanwhile, initiatives and funding need to move toward a cross-institutional focus. This of course, creates the challenge of balancing the interests of the state and public education with the needs of colleges and universities^{xi}.

Here are a few policies states have adopted to improve secondary and postsecondary collaboration:

- Washington passed a bill that requires all public high schools to provide programs, directly or in cooperation with a community college, that allow students to begin working on their postsecondary credits.
- Vermont allows technical center regions to establish alternative governance structures so they can better meet the needs of their region’s students, ensure equality of access to postsecondary schools, and prepare students more thoroughly.
- Michigan requires the development of three year regional career prep plans aligned with state workforce development standards.
- Wisconsin provides for payments to higher educational institutions that provided technical courses for secondary students.^{xii}

Change has already begun. These policies and ideas represent states’ gradual move toward increasing collaboration between secondary and postsecondary CTE. Other states have gone even further and actually combined or more aggressively aligned their governance models.

Idaho’s Educational Structure: Idaho has a streamlined educational structure with a single State Board of Education. That Board is responsible for elementary and secondary, professional-technical, and higher education, as well as several related operations (public broadcasting, vocational rehabilitation, a state library system, a state historical society and a school for the deaf and blind). This structure is defined by state law and gives the governing board a broad policy perspective.



Under the Board (also known as the Board for Professional-Technical Education), the Division of Professional-Technical Education (SDPTE) operates as a separate state agency. It is the primary advocate for professional-technical education and administers the statewide system that helps people prepare for and sustain their life’s work. The Division is responsible for professional-technical programs and services (secondary, postsecondary and adult) delivered through Idaho’s public school districts and the six technical colleges.

In Idaho, there are only 11 shared secondary Professional-Technical Schools and one stand-alone technical college. The rest of the secondary programs are offered in comprehensive high schools and the other five technical colleges are part of comprehensive colleges or universities. This structure results in professional-technical education being integrated into a larger, academic institutional structure. The Division insures that the total enterprise of technical education at all levels obtains the resources and technical support necessary to achieve the highest state, federal and industry standards.

Coordinated Statewide Funding: Because Idaho coordinates the entire professional-technical education system through a single entity, it can provide statewide flexibility in funding and CTE allocations. Also, because the Division is not just a federal grant administering agency there is incentive to coordinate state and federal monies. Combining high school and college funding and

advocacy also results in significant coordination advantages including shared technical assistance; joint planning for tech prep and other high school/college articulation; joint statewide curriculum development; and shared projects implementation such as clusters. The biggest challenge for this unified system is providing each function enough attention – particularly at the Board level. Having an agency with direct funding and policy making authority becomes critical to provide the needed advocacy in this environment.

IOWA

by Janice Nahra Friedel,

Ph.D.

*State Director for Career &
Technical Education*

Division of Community

Iowa's public policy and practice have provided a history of financial incentives that have encouraged the linkage of secondary CTE to community college programs and the enrollment of high school students in college credit classes.

In 2003, 17,833 unduplicated high school students were enrolled in Iowa's 15 community colleges. In 2003, approximately 16 percent of the total community college headcount enrollments were high school students. These high school students earned an average of seven credit hours during FY03. About 12 percent of all 11th and 12th graders in the state are enrolled in a community college course.

The significance of the above statistics becomes apparent when viewed in the context of the rural nature of Iowa. In 2000, Iowa's population totaled approximately 2.8 million, about equal to the state's population of 1980. The fastest growing segment of the state's population is the over 65-age group; the number of high school graduates is projected to continue to decline. The vast majority of high schools are in rural communities; there are only eight urban school districts. The school districts are locally governed by an elected board; the local board determines the curriculum to be offered and sets the high school graduation requirements; school accreditation standards are set in the Iowa Code and include vocational education program standards.

The enabling legislation for Iowa's system of comprehensive community colleges was passed in 1965. The legislation created educational systems that are non-duplicative in nature (there are no vocational area schools, or vocational high schools or institutes); cover all regions of the state; and are responsive to local community, business and student needs.

High schools in rural states struggle with declining student enrollments and a small student population, which narrows the curriculum. Many of these small schools do not have the facilities, equipment, and technology, or faculty expertise to offer quality, rigorous, and relevant CTE programs on their own. "Supplemental weighting" presents an opportunity for increased access to post-secondary CTE and quality coursework outside of our high schools. Supplemental weighting provides additional funding to the local education agencies for classes offered by other school districts or classes in a community college. The community colleges offer courses for college credit and a college transcript is created at the time of course registration. Since, the local high school must make the decision of accepting the college credit for high school credit and whether it meets high school graduation requirements, there is no Iowa Code recognition of "dual credit."

The governance structure of Iowa's local education agencies and community colleges is one that emphasizes local control and creativity; through policy and the supplemental weighting plan, high

schools and community colleges are empowered to work cooperatively in the design and delivery of quality and relevant programs.

The Colorado Community College State System's (CCCSS) mission statement reads as follows:

COLORADO
by Sherrie Schneider, Ph.D.
Director of Curriculum &
Instruction
Colorado Community College

"...The objects of the community and technical colleges shall be to provide educational programs to fill the occupational needs of youth and adults in technical and vocational fields, to provide two-year transfer educational programs to qualify students for admission to the junior year at other colleges and universities, and to provide a broad range of programs of personal and vocational education for adults."

Specific Responsibilities of the Colorado SBCCOE: The CCCSS is run by a governing board called the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE). This board has under its governance thirteen state system community and junior colleges and four area vocational schools. The SBCCOE duties include appointing an executive officer, a director of community colleges and a director of CTE education; governing the state system community colleges; and acting as the sole state agency for CTE education. In addition, SBCCOE, administers and distributes federal vocational education funds under the Carl D. Perkins Act. SBCCOE is charged with adopting a State Plan for administration of the grant funds; determining the secondary/postsecondary split of the basic grant; distributing special program awards to school districts, community colleges and area vocational schools. It is also responsible for monitoring recipients' compliance with federal law, regulations and the local plan.

Improved Collaboration Between Secondary/Postsecondary Education: The governance structure includes curriculum approval, program approval, and funding authority for all system educational programs, including all CTE programs. It is this design that promotes a close collaboration between secondary and postsecondary levels of CTE programs and faculty. State program staff and local secondary/postsecondary administrators work collaboratively to design, implement, and monitor high quality CTE programs, statewide. The ongoing collaboration and communication assists students in transferring from one educational program/setting to another without having to repeat courses or programs.

Currently the CCCSS is implementing the following initiatives designed to promote ease of transition from secondary to postsecondary levels of learning:

- **Escrow Credit Project:** A program designed to allow secondary CTE students to "bank" high school CTE course credit for use in articulation/direct transfer to local community college, statewide.

- **Common Course Number System:** A common course number database implemented throughout the CCCSS to ease transition from one college to another and to provide for articulation/direct transfer with secondary schools, statewide.
- **GT Pathways (General Education Transfer Courses)** A collaborative project that provides and ensures direct transfer of “core” general education courses to all Colorado State 4-year universities and colleges statewide.

Since the formation of the CCCSS, the role and mission has provided guidance for both governance and operational decisions around the educational programs that ensure that all students will have an opportunity to pursue the dream of earning an education.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Collaboration is hard work. Idaho, Iowa and Colorado have found governance models that work for them. What about your state? The new federal legislation supporting career technical education will create the opportunity to begin a discussion among your partners. At a minimum your state will have to reaffirm or select a new Perkins eligible agency. But the discussions should go beyond that. Consider a cross-agency team to work on developing a common vision for CTE, with clearly distinguished and valued roles for secondary and postsecondary CTE. Explore how your systems can work together to improve student success and transition. Consider common performance measures and shared accountability. ^{xiii} Remember there is strength in unity! And if that fails to be enough motivation, remember what Jack Welch said, “Change before you have to.”

- ⁱ Friedman, Thomas. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty – First Century*. New York. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. 2005.
- ⁱⁱ Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst, and Usdan. "The Governance Divide: A Report on a Four-State Study On Improving College Readiness and Success." *Institute for Educational Leadership, the National Public Policy and Higher Education and Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research*. 2005. <http://www.highereducation.org/reports/governance_divide/index.shtml>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, page 38.
- ^{iv} Approved by NASDCTEc Board of Directors, August 23, 2005. <www.careertech.org>
- ^v *The American heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2000. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=governance>>
- ^{vi} NASDCTEc State Profile Survey 2002, <www.careertech.org>
- ^{vii} Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst, and Usdan. pp ix and x.
- ^{viii} Haycock, Kati. "Why is K-16 Collaboration Essential to Educational Equity?." 1998. *Education Trust*. July 2005. <http://www.highereducation.org/reports/g_momentum/gmomentum8.shtml>
- ^{ix} Krueger, Carl. "Economic/Workforce Development: Career and Technical Education." 2004. *Education Commission of the States*. September 2005. <<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/55/56/5556.htm>>
- ^x Collan, Patrick M. and Joni E. Finney. "Multiple Pathways and State Policy: Toward Education and Training Beyond High School." *The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education*. June 2003. <<http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ehighereducation%2Eorg%2Freports%2Fmultipath%2Fmultipathstate%2Epdf>>
- ^{xi} ibid
- ^{xii} Krueger, Carl. "Economic/Workforce Development: Career and Technical Education." 2004. *Education Commission of the States*. July 2005. <<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/55/56/5556.htm>>
- ^{xiii} NASDCTEc. "The Whole is Greater than the Sum of Its Parts, How Shared Accountability Can Foster Improved Secondary-Postsecondary Collaboration." April 2005. <www.careertech.org>