

**Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators
December 2008**

Technical Assistance Program for Career and Technical Education

PACTA is continuing to work with PDE to provide leadership to the Technical Assistance or TAP program. Participating career and technical centers are receiving extensive assistance focused on improving student achievement on the PSSA assessments and the end of course occupational assessments for CTE programs. Each participating CTC has agreed to develop an improvement plan for increasing student achievement, work with the Career and Technical Distinguished School Leader and participate in all professional development activities provided by BCTE. Each CTC has agreed to evidence levels of progress. Progress is defined as 13% increase over the baseline in students achieving proficiency on the end of program occupational assessment, 11% increase in students achieving proficiency on reading PSSA baseline and 13% increase in students achieving proficiency on math PSSA baseline.

PACTA is working with the three centers for career and technical personnel and professional development at Temple, Penn State, and IUP as part of the TAP program. PACTA is working with the centers to schedule the second session for the PSSA and OCA PIL programs. The sessions will be scheduled in January and/or February at least two locations in each Center Region. More information on the winter regional meetings will be forthcoming in subsequent newsletters and communications

Post-secondary Articulation and Programs of Study

The Bureau of Career and Technical Education at PDE is creating statewide articulation agreements that will ensure the transfer of credit linking secondary education and postsecondary education for career and technical education students. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 mandates a state-wide written commitment between a secondary institution and a postsecondary educational institution that links CTE program credit transfer agreements between the two institutions. BCTE has contracted with AcademyOne, a web destination and course clearinghouse site, designed to address student mobility across educational institutions. AcademyOne has designed an articulation process through which postsecondary institutions can examine the BCTE Programs of Study and indicate how that institution will articulate credit. In addition, the BCTE has drafted an informational letter notifying postsecondary institutions of the statewide articulation efforts.

Annual PACTA Symposium to be Held in February

The 2009 PACTA Symposium will be held February 11 and 12, 2009 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. The nineteenth annual symposium will begin at 12:30 p.m. on February 11, 2009 and will conclude at noon on February 12, 2009. This year's title for the PACTA Symposium is *Preparing Students for the Workforce of Tomorrow: An Education and Workforce Development Symposium*. The symposium will highlight initiatives and programs such as Industry Partnerships, Career Pathways, STEM, High Schools That Work, Middle College, dual enrollment, integration of academic and career and technical education, programs of study, Regional Career Education Partnerships,

Career Education and Work Standards, College and Career Success Initiatives and 2+2+2 Workforce Leadership Programs. Please point your browser to the following link for more information including how to register:

<http://www.pacareertech.org/calendar/symposium2009.html>

Career and Technical Education Week in February of 2009

The Career and Technical Education Month Celebration is to highlight the importance of career and technical education and its role in preparing a high skills Pennsylvania workforce. The theme for this year is: ***Career and Technical Education: The Torch to Light Your Way***. CTE Week begins with the CTE program displays at the State Capitol during February 10 - 11, 2009, for legislators, teachers, parents and students. The opening ceremony will occur at noon on the 10th and feature speakers from the House of Representatives and the Senate. There will be a student oriented dinner, featuring the officers of the Career and Technical Student Organizations. The final day will feature a recognition breakfast, where the accomplishments of schools, teachers and students will be recognized.

United States Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) this week issued **final regulations for the No Child Left Behind Act**. The regulations define a common measure for high school graduation rate to be used by all states, require timely notification to parents of school choice and tutoring options, and require states to include national comparative data when reporting their state math and reading test results. [Click here](#) for complete details on the final NCLB regulations.

Two Reports on High School Reform Recently Released

A new report from **Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children** found that young people who drop out of high school are twice as likely to live in poverty as peers who receive a high school diploma and three times as likely as their peers who attended some college or earned an associates degree. **[“Dropping Back In: Reengaging Out of School Youth”](#)** provides examples of successful strategies for reconnecting high school dropouts to education and makes policy recommendations for how Pennsylvania can re-engage students in the educational process and help them successfully transition to adulthood. In **[“Counting on Graduation”](#)**, **The Education Trust** calls on states to take immediate action to substantially improve high school graduation rates. The report says states need to support better data collection at the local level, set more rigorous goals and improve targets, and make improving high school graduation rates a high statewide priority. Click on the hyperlinks in blue text to access the reports.

State Revenues

The Pennsylvania Department of Revenue reported that the state collected \$1.6 billion in General Fund revenue in November which is 5.4 percent (\$93.1 million) less than expected. Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections total \$9 billion, down by 6.8 percent or \$657.9 million.

Governor Ed Rendell this week announced an additional \$128 million in budget cuts and other cost saving measures to help balance the state budget in light of the revenue shortfalls. Rendell said savings will come from freezing the salaries of non-unionized state employees and by reducing nearly 400 of the 500 state appropriations over which the Governor has jurisdiction. An itemized list of budgetary reductions was not made available.

Fiscal Problems Could Last Into 2011

School districts across the state and nationally are making preparations to face difficult financial conditions in the months and years ahead. With the economy in recession and consumer debt at record levels, spending has slowed to a crawl and tax revenues have fallen to way below projected levels. For some specific information on what schools are doing throughout the state, click on this link:

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/1124/p03s04-usgn.html>

Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment for Science

The State Board of Education recently approved the **Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) for Science content standards, descriptors and cut scores** for grades 4, 8 and 11. The PASA uses performance tasks to measure the academic knowledge and life skills of students with significant cognitive disabilities. In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act, all students must take one of three assessments in Pennsylvania (PSSA, PSSA with accommodations, or the PASA). A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines which assessment the student will take. Student scores on the PASA are classified in four performance levels: emerging, novice, proficient and advanced. In Pennsylvania, approximately one percent of students take the alternate assessment. [Click here](#) to access the PASA Science performance level descriptors and cut scores. Career and technical administrators at comprehensive technical centers will need to become familiar with the new PASA science assessment and be sure all appropriate guidelines are followed and test administration requirements are met.

Reports from the Department of Labor

The **Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry (L&I)** has released two new reports that look at the negative consequences of dropping out of high school. [“The Long-Term Labor Market Consequences of Dropping Out of High School in Pennsylvania”](#) found that dropouts in Pennsylvania experience lower access to jobs, reduced access to hours of work, and lower hourly rates of pay. L&I also released information on [“The Tax and Transfer Fiscal Impacts of Dropping Out of High School in Pennsylvania”](#). The report looks at the cost of dropping out borne by communities and the state in terms of lower tax contributions, costs associated with incarceration, home ownership rates, and more.

Industry Certifications – PDE

The *Industry Certifications Resource Guide* has been revised to reflect updates and additions made during the summer and early fall, 2008. Research continues on ways to increase the number of students earning certifications. Letters have been developed to

contact the CTCs and comprehensive high schools that have approved career and technical education programs that did not report any certifications. The letter highlights available industry certifications and encourages these schools to offer applicable certifications to their students. To learn more and access the resource guide, point your browser to: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/career_edu/cwp/view.asp?A=122&Q=114061.

Two PACTA PIL Program Proposals Submitted to PDE

In November, PACTA submitted two additional PIL proposals to PDE for consideration in the organization's capacity to provide professional development to its membership. One PIL program focused on the New Director's Academy and the other PIL program focused on Special Education. As with other PIL programs, these are projected to be a combination of instruction, in-class activities, and independent work, along with a concluding meeting on information sharing and exchange. PIL programs are state approved for Act 48 credits for administrative directors and other administrative staff at career and technical centers.

Environmental Education Grants

The **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** is now accepting applications for **2009 environmental education grants**. DEP encourages schools, universities, intermediate units, non-profit groups and community conservation districts to apply for the funds to support programs and projects that increase environmental awareness and understanding. [Click here](#) for more information.

Industry Activities & Events

The Associated Pennsylvania Constructors Organization will be assisting with three Pennsylvanian Construction Career Day/Job Fair Events for secondary CTE students. These three events occur in selected locations across the western, central and eastern regions of the state. CTE students who attend these events explore career opportunities in highway design, construction, and maintenance. The students gain information about the highway, bridge design, construction, and maintenance programs, apprenticeship programs, and University Level Construction and Engineering Programs in addition to the hands-on activities. Planned hands-on activities include operating heavy equipment, testing materials, surveying, welding, designing a bridge, use of safety equipment, concrete finishing, drilling, rebar tying, estimating a job, use of GPS/GIS information technology, and much more. The events this year will occur at Western Area Career and Technical Center in Canonsburg on December 9th. Two spring 2009 events are being planned including a Pennsylvanian Construction Career Day/ Job Fair Event at the York Expo Center and a similar event in the Lehigh Valley at a site yet to be determined.

The PA Automotive Association/AYES held a meeting was on October 7th to plan for the yearly secondary school's AYES Automotive Technology Competition Event. This year's competition will be at the Radisson Penn Harris Convention Center on March 4, 2009.

Technical Institutes Update

The Bureau of Career and Technical Education at PDE is working on the development of the Guidelines for Technical Institutes. These guidelines will be presented to the State Board of Education in January 2009 for their review. In conjunction with the guidelines, the program approval process necessary for the operation of the Technical Institutes is also being discussed and developed. Several PACTA members are on the statewide Technical Institutes Steering Committee which met on November 5, 2008.

PA STEM Initiative

On November 7, 2008 PACTA attended an Information Session held by PA STEM. The session was held on the Pennsylvania State University – Harrisburg Campus. The session focused on the joint work between PA STEM and National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP). The NGCP brings together organizations committed to informing and encouraging girls to pursue careers in STEM.

For more information on the work between PA STEM and NGCP please contact your regional PA STEM Coordinator or visit the following websites:

www.pasteminitiative.org and www.ngcproject.org

Upcoming Events

February 10 & 11	Career and Technical Education Week Celebration Capitol East Rotunda Harrisburg
February 10, 2009	PACTA Executive Committee Meeting Hershey Lodge & Convention Center
February 11, 2009	PACTA General Membership Meeting Hershey Lodge & Convention Center
February 11 & 12	PACTA Symposium Hershey Lodge & Convention Center
March 9 – 11	ACTE Policy Seminar Crystal Gateway Marriott Arlington, VA