

Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators

December 2009-January 1010 Newsletter

PACTA Symposium - Increasing Student Achievement Leads to a Successful Workforce: An Education and Workforce Development Symposium will be held Tuesday February 16 and Wednesday 17, 2010 at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. The Symposium will begin at 12:30 p.m. on February 16, 2010 and will conclude at noon on February 17, 2010. National, state and local leaders will present their views on what steps Pennsylvania needs to take to increase student achievement that will lead to a successful workforce. 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 click on the following link for registration information: <http://www.pacareertech.org/calendar/symposium2010.html>. It's important to make your plans to attend now. The February PACTA general membership meeting will be held on the morning of February 16th at the Hershey Lodge so this represents a strong opportunity to attend the PACTA meeting and the Symposium in one trip. PACTA collaborates with other educational organizations in Pennsylvania to make this one of the premier workforce development and educational conferences of the year.

New PDE Website – The new Pennsylvania Department of Education website is now online and operational. The new Bureau of Career and Technical Education home page on the PDE website can be accessed here: http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/bureau_of_career_technical_education/7334

Career and Technical Education Week Celebration – This year, the annual Career and Technical Education Week Celebration will be held in the Capitol East Rotunda on Tuesday February 9th through Wednesday February 10th. Each year, stellar CTE programs from across the state will be promoted in the East Rotunda with on site displays and student representatives from each school. The week kicks off with an opening ceremony at noon on February 9th and also includes a breakfast for attending students and their instructors. Career and Technical Education Week Celebration activities are often well attended by legislators and department of education officials. It offers visitors and friends a unique opportunity to view our students and programs up close to understand the impact CTE has on the commonwealth.

Drop-out Re-Engagement – PACTA is teaming up with the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children and other education, workforce, and governmental organizations to emphasize the educational and economic need Pennsylvania has to get young people who have dropped out of school back into an educational institution. Studies have proven that those without high school diplomas do not contribute to society economically but often are a drain on the social services network provided by the state. Operation Restart: Getting Dropouts Back on Track is an attempt to mobilize gubernatorial and legislative forces in the upcoming election year to make drop-out

re-engagement a major priority for Pennsylvania. A research paper is being developed on the topic and will be available for public distribution in mid-to-late January. PACTA will remain active in the effort to re-engage youth in the educational system and work to position career and technical education as a logical option for possible state funding towards participating in Operation Restart: Getting Dropouts Back on Track.

Presentations at ACTE on TAP Program – Robert Clark and John Pulver represented PACTA at the Association for Career and Technical Education National Convention in Nashville, TN from Wednesday November 18th through Saturday November 21st. Robert and John delivered two presentations at ACTE on the Pennsylvania TAP program that focused on the eight components along with the rationale and organization of the program. The initial presentation was at the NOCTI Pre-Conference on Wednesday November 18th and the second presentation was during the NOCTI strand of the conference on Thursday November 19th. The presentations were very well received with career and technical educators from multiple states attending. Attendees were most impressed with the level of state commitment to the project along with the creating of the Career and Technical School Distinguished Leader program. The presentation will be given again via a NOCTI webinar event in January. For more information or a copy of the presentation, please contact Robert Clark at rclark02@gmail.com or John Pulver at jpulver@verizon.net.

Central Region Director's Academy in March at Penn State – The annual Central Region Director's Academy is being held at the Nittany Lion Inn on Monday March 22nd and Tuesday March 23rd. Additionally, the PACTA Central Region Meeting will be held during the morning of March 23rd. Participants are invited to arrive Sunday evening for an informal get together at the Inn to discuss CTE and to network. More information on program contents and registration will be forthcoming to Central Region PACTA members in early January 2010.

PACTA PSSA and NOCTI PIL Programs – Members who are participating in the PSSA & NOCTI End of Course Assessment PIL programs are encouraged to continue utilizing the strategies addressed in both PIL sessions back in October. According to reported data received from CTCs at the summer PACTA conference, many of these strategies have resulted in significant gains in the student achievement on the NOCTI exam.

www.pactatopics.org – This is the URL for the new PACTA online journaling / discussion website. An online journal is required for the Special Education PIL which is described below. There are also additional optional discussion boards for the PACTA NOCTI & PSSA PILs that may be used by members to exchange thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and potential strategies related to the PILs. The online boards are set up to be expanded into other topics as they arise. For example, discussion boards can be set up for strategic planning, legislative planning, Perkins discussions, budgeting, etc. To register, go to www.pactatopics.org and follow the directions. The website is simple and easy to use.

PACTA Special Education PIL – The online journaling website for the PACTA Special Education PIL is now active. All participants in the Special Education PIL are required to register

for the online journaling website. To do this, visit www.pactatopics.org and follow the directions to register. Once registered, you will be able to make online journaling posts that will be readable by other Special Education PIL participants and the instructors of the PIL program. Online journaling entries are required and will be assessed using the journaling rubric distributed in the PIL sessions. In addition to the face to face sessions and online journaling requirements, participants will be required to work with a minimum of five IEPs over the current school year. The concluding component of the PACTA Special Education PIL (required to earn the 45 credits), will be a conference with one of the presenters to discuss the work completed related to the PIL program and to determine progress that was made over the school year. A mid-year meeting of interested Special Education PIL participants will be held with Gae Bradley & Brenda Kauffman at a time to be determined at the PACTA Symposium scheduled for February in Hershey.

Stimulus Funds - Secretary Gerald Zahorchak appeared before the Pennsylvania Stimulus Oversight Commission recently to provide a status update on federal stimulus funding for education in Pennsylvania. PDE's status report describes the education funding streams and competitive grant programs provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), how much has been awarded to and expended by Pennsylvania, and the Commonwealth's next steps for continuing to disburse ARRA dollars and submit applications. For more information on the Pennsylvania Stimulus Oversight Commission, click on http://www.recovery.pa.gov/portal/server.pt/community/recovery_pa_gov/5994

Technical Assistance Program (TAP) – The TAP program to improve CTE student achievement in math, reading, and end of course occupational assessments continues to provide assistance to 42 participating career and technical centers for the 2009-2010 school year. CTDSLs are visiting with technical centers to provide expertise. Additionally, TAP schools are receiving assistance from the Education Trust, MAX Teaching, SREB, and the three centers. A review of year one of the TAP program revealed a high level of satisfaction with the program among TAP school directors. The CTCs involved in TAP last year, 2008-2009, evidenced a 13.8% increase in student achievement on the end-of-program occupational assessment. Congratulations to Dr. Burket for providing the leadership to the initiative and for representing the interests of career and technical education students at the state level.

Adult Education Accreditation - The BCTE is continuing work on the State Board for Vocational Education accreditation petition. The petition will be submitted to the US Department of Education for consideration to renew the accreditation authority of the State Board for Vocational Education. The final draft petition will be reviewed by the Institutional Accreditation Advisory Group (IAAG) in November. It will then go out for public comment for 30 days. It will be presented in its final draft form to the Pennsylvania State Board for Vocational Education at the January board meeting for their review and input. Pending any questions or concerns from the board, we will ask for an approval during the March board meeting. The petition is due June 2010 with a hearing date set for December 2010.

Special Education - The Bureau of Career and Technical Education has formed a select committee to work in cooperation with the Bureau of Special Education and PaTTAN to develop and maintain ongoing professional development, technical assistance and the dissemination of strategies to improve academic achievement. Statewide data evidences that students enrolled in career and technical education do not perform as well as the students in their class. This is true of the special education students enrolled in career and technical education programs.

Career and Technical Education Coaching Clinic – On November 13th, representatives from 17 TAP CTC's met at the Bethlehem Career and Technology Center to participate in a CTE Coaching Clinic. The coaching clinic was designed to assist CTCs with coaching strategies for teachers that were oriented towards student success in math, reading, and NOCTI. The event was organized by CDTSL Dr. Mike Curley who addressed the role of coaching in CTE and improving academic instruction. Areas of focus included coaching strategies, assessment, data analysis, intervention strategies, and support networks. Tools for using local data were reviewed which included PLATO, STAR Reading, and RAPS360. Participants were also involved in interactive discussions that involved how CTCs have organized around the coaching model for improved student achievement. In the afternoon, the group shared best practices and learned about specific math and reading interventions designed for struggling or lower performing students. Many thanks go to Mike Curley for organizing the Coaching Clinic and to the staff at Bethlehem CTC for hosting the TAP Center participants. Similar Coaching Clinics are being organized for the Central and Western Regions. More information and registration materials for those clinics will be coming out shortly.

Gates Foundation Grant - It was recently announced that the Pittsburgh Public Schools **will receive a \$40 million grant** from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation **to support initiatives** aimed at improving student achievement and graduation rates. [Click here](#) for more information.

Occupational Competency Assessment - The BCTE is reviewing the upcoming CIP changes as set forth by the US Department of Education to be implemented in the 2010-2011 reporting year. Changes will include: CIP title changes, CIP number changes, CIP description changes and the addition/deletion of CIPS. There are approximately 10 Pennsylvania CIPs which will be affected by these changes.

Intermediate Unit Services – In November, the Senate Education Committee held a hearing on Intermediate Unit (I.U.) services and programs as an extension of its deliberations on school district consolidation. During those previous deliberations, members questioned whether I.U.s can be used more strategically to foster efficiencies and cost savings as an alternative to district consolidation. Committee members have expressed a desire to make changes to existing state policies that would compel school districts to consider and take advantage of the cost-saving services offered by the state's 29 Intermediate Units. Consolidating school services at the I.U. level reduces redundancy and maximizes efficiency, allowing services to be offered at a reduced

cost. In Pennsylvania, school districts and area career and technical centers can take advantage of the cooperative programs offered at Intermediate Units.

The Achievement Gap In Pennsylvania – In November, the House Education Committee held a public hearing on closing the achievement gap in Pennsylvania. The achievement gap refers to the different levels of academic performance of students from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. State Secretary of Education Jerry Zahorchak, presented an overview of Pennsylvania’s achievement gains as reported by NAEP and the Center for Education Policy. The testimony also included examples of targeted investments that have transformed education in Pennsylvania. Accordingly, Pennsylvania’s track record over the past six years has placed the state in the best position to compete for those federal “Race to the Top” funding. The Committee also heard from Richard Coley, Director of the Policy Information Center at the Educational Testing Service (ETS), regarding research about “correlates of achievement” – those life and school conditions and experiences that are related to school achievement. According to Coley, factors such as curriculum rigor, teacher quality, class size, fear and safety at school, parent involvement and other correlates need to be tracked as key indicators of progress in closing the achievement gap.

Program of Study Assessment Steps (State Board Item from Dr. Burket) - The Bureau of Career and Technical Education is developing appropriate end-of-program assessments for several of the Programs of Study (POS). To fulfill Perkins end-of-program assessment requirements, BCTE must identify end-of-program assessments that will evaluate the competency of students completing the Program of Study in a valid and reliable manner.

Upcoming Events

February 9-10	Career and Technical Education Week
February 15	PACTA Executive Committee Meeting – Hershey, PA
February 16	PACTA General Membership Meeting – Hershey, PA
February 16-17	PACTA Symposium – Hershey, PA
March 8-10	ACTE National Policy Seminar – Arlington, VA
March 22 -23	Central Region Director’s Academy – Nittany Lion Inn, State College, PA
March 23	Central Region PACTA Meeting – Nittany Lion Inn, State College, PA