

Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators

October/November 2009 Newsletter

PACTA PSSA and NOCTI PIL Programs - On October 5th and 6th, PACTA hosted an initial session of two 30 hour Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) programs on improving CTE student achievement on the PSSA and NOCTI end of course assessments. Nearly 90 administrators and teachers attended both PIL programs. The PSSA PIL focused on strategies in using the Getting Results Document to establish priorities for instructional change in improving CTE student performance on the 11th grade math and reading PSSA. The NOCTI PIL focused on strategies for analyzing data from high, mid-range, and low performing CTE programs to high areas or gaps that need improvement. Each of the PILs is 30 hours in length and the two sessions were six hours each. Participants will have additional hours earned through job embedded assignments related to the PIL and additional face to face meetings during the year. The final culmination will be a report out session at the PACTA conference next July identifying changes made and changes in NOCTI achievement scores. The final culmination for the PSSA PIL will be a similar session.

PACTA Special Education PIL - The second two day session of the PACTA concluded on September 16th with approximately 65 educators attending the session at the Penn Stater Hotel. Participants learned about the legal aspects of special education from attorney Donna Weldon, Esq. who has over 30 years of legal and education experience involving CTE and special education. Additionally, former CTC special education supervisors Gae Bradley and Brenda Kauffman provided rich detailed scenarios on IEP development, instructional planning, and how to integrate the requirements of special education and CTE. In addition to the face to face sessions, participants will be required to work with a minimum of five IEPs over the current school year and post discussion responses on an online journaling bulletin board. The online discussion board component will be operational in December. 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.

PACTA Engagement - Currently, PACTA is involved in multiple training grant partnerships with the objective of securing federal funds and directing them to career and technical centers for training students and adults in green related and other industries. These grants are from the department of labor and with CTCs involved in this process, the role of CTCs in job and economic development will be enhanced. PACTA is involved with a Green Energy Grant, a Health Care Grant and the Allegheny Conference on Green Training.

PDE - The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection is inviting schools, universities, county conservation districts, nonprofit organizations and businesses to apply for 2010 Environmental Education Grants. The grants provide funding to create or develop projects that support environmental education about topics such as: sustainable energy sources and technologies, air quality, watersheds and wetlands, Chesapeake Bay watershed education and carbon capture and storage. Grants are awarded for up to \$7,500. The deadline to apply is December 18. For more information, visit www.dep.state.pa.us keyword: "EE Grants," or call 717-772-1828.

Technical Institutes - The Bureau of Career and Technical Education has finished the TI establishment guidelines and is in the process of editing proposed program approval forms and guidelines. Major sections of the Technical Institute Guidelines include Legal Basis, Funding, Authority, Voting Procedures, Articles of Agreement, Establishment, Operation Program Approval and Re-approval. The guidelines will be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval in early 2010.

Programs of Study - The development of statewide Programs of Study are underway and will continue through the duration of 2013 Perkins IV. Currently, 22 Programs of Study have been developed by the Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) and are available for access on the PDE website.

2009-2010 State Budget for CTE – The 2009-2010 state budget has been adopted and signed by Governor Rendell. The approved FY 2009-2010 budget for CTE is \$62 million or a one percent decrease from the actual expenditures for CTE in 2008-2009. Thanks to many PACTA members for all of their efforts in working with legislators and other government officials to maintain the \$62 million in CTE funding. While the 2008-2009 budget amount was right at \$64 million, the actual expenditures were approximately \$62 million. Interestingly, the total education budget is \$11.4 billion which is a .4% increase from last year. However, approximately \$750 million in federal stimulus funds were used in the \$11.3 billion. This means that the total state revenue towards education decreased from 11.2 billion in 2008-2009 to 10.6 billion in 2009-2010. In effect, the state has reduced its allocation of state revenue to education BUT increased overall education spending by .4%. Within higher education, the budget reduced funding for community colleges' operating support by 0.2% (to \$235.741 million) and uses a mix of state dollars and federal stimulus dollars to support this funding. Funding for community college capital projects was increased by 4.2% (to \$46.369 million), while support for regional community college services was maintained at last year's level.

Statutory Changes Related to Education with Potential Impact on CTE – One change provides for the transition of employees of the Scranton School for the Deaf and Scotland School for Veterans' Children who are being suspended due to the schools' closings. For three years following suspension, school districts, vocational-technical schools and intermediate units in the vicinity of the Scranton School and Scotland School must offer employment to former Scranton or Scotland employees if a vacancy they are properly certified to fill becomes available, as long as no current employee of the school entity has a right to the vacancy. These school entities are prohibited from hiring new employees until the position has been offered, in order of seniority, to all properly certified members of the hiring pool in their geographic area. Employees hired from the pool, as well as former employees of the Scranton School and Scotland School who resigned within six months of the schools' closure and accepted a new job at a school district, I.U, or vo-tech school, will be credited for all sick leave and years of service for purposes of salary schedule, sabbatical leave, suspension and realignment rights, eligibility for retirement incentives or severance payments. A second change requires PA State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities to accept full transfer of an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree for full junior standing by December 31, 2011. This expands the state's current transfer and articulation law that required PASSHE universities and the state's 14 community colleges to identify at least 30 core education credits that could be seamlessly transferred among the institutions. HB 1614 also now requires state-related universities (Penn State, Pitt, Temple

and Lincoln) to participate in the state's transfer and articulation system by identifying at least 30 core education credits that can be transferred without loss of credit. Previously, state-related institutions could voluntarily participate in the transfer system, but were not required to do so

Technical Assistance Program(TAP) / CTDSL Program - A total of forty-three career and technical centers (CTCs) will be involved in the TAP project this year. The purpose of TAP is to significantly raise the academic and technical achievement of all students at CTCs. The Career and Technical Distinguished School Leaders (CTDSLs) received extensive training during a three day summer session in August. Additionally, they participated in the PACTA Special Education PIL, NOCTI PIL, and the PSSA PIL. CTDSLs are assigned to work with technical centers from between five and thirty-five days during the 2009-2010 school year.

Pennsylvania State Board of Education & Independent Regulatory Review Commission - In August, the State Board of Education gave its approval to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessment) final regulations which establish new high school graduation requirements. The new graduation requirements were recently reviewed by the Independent Review Board study to determine their legality and application to Pennsylvania educational requirements. In late October, the Independent Regulatory Review Commission voted 4-1 to send the new regulations to Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett for a review of their legality. Focused on better student preparation for college and the workforce, the Keystone Exams will replace the 11th grade PSSA in 2012-2013 upon approval of the US Department of Education.

2010-2011 Budget Index Cap Released by PDE - School districts will be able to increase local taxes by up to 2.9% next year without seeking voter approval under the index for FY 2010-2011 announced this week by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Districts with aid ratios greater than .4000 will be subject to an adjusted index that will be announced at a later date. Under Act 1 of 2006, school boards may not increase local revenues above an inflationary index, calculated annually by PDE, unless the increase is required for a limited number of excepted costs that are out of the district's control. [Click here](#) for an announcement about the new index in the September 19 edition of the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

United States Department of Education - Recently, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, speaking at an Education Stakeholders Forum in Washington D.C., shared his vision of what the next version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (renamed the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002) should look like. Secretary Duncan said that the NCLB law has significant flaws and that he looks forward to working with Congress to address the law's problems. He believes the law places too much emphasis on standardized tests, unfairly labels many schools as failures, and doesn't account for students' academic growth in its accountability system. The session was the first in a series of events where education stakeholders will offer input about the law's reauthorization. For more information on the events and to read the Secretary's remarks, [click here](#).

Common Core States Standards Initiative - **The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) have released the first official public draft of the college and career-readiness standards in English language arts and mathematics as part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative.** The initiative is a state-led effort to develop and adopt a core set of academic standards that define the knowledge and skills that all students should have to succeed in college and in workforce training programs. [Click](#)

[here](#) for more information. The standards were developed based on the following guiding considerations:

- **Fewer, clearer, higher:** It is critical that any standards document be translatable to and teachable in the classroom. As such, the standards must cover only those areas that are critical for student success.
- **Evidence:** Each document includes sources of evidence for the standards. Evidence informed what was included in the standards.
- **Internationally benchmarked:** These standards are informed by the content, rigor and organization of standards of high-performing countries and states.
- **Special populations:** In the development of these standards, the inclusion of all types of learners was a priority.
- **Assessment:** The standards will ultimately be the basis for a system of high-quality assessments.
- **Standards and curriculum:** Standards are not curriculum. The curriculum that follows will continue to be a local responsibility (or state-led, where appropriate).
- **21st century skills:** The draft English-language arts and mathematics standards have incorporated 21st century skills.

The NGA Center and the CCSSO accepted feedback on the standards through October. Now, the standards will be reviewed to ensure they are research- and evidence- based by an expert Validation Committee composed of national and international experts on academic standards.

Race to the Top: Accelerating College and Career Readiness in States – Passage of the stimulus package or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act lead to the creation of the Race to the Top Fund in early 2009. The purpose of Race to the Top is to provide innovative funding for states to accelerate their efforts to improve their Pre-kindergarten through college educational systems. For more information on Race to the Top, point your browser to: <http://www.achieve.org/Racetothetop>. Additionally, the Education Trust and Achieve have partnered to create Measures that Matter by bringing an advisory group of state and national experts to explore various approaches to high school assessment and accountability. For more information, point your browser to: <http://www.achieve.org/measuresthatmatter>

Upcoming Events

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