

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL ENHANCEMENT AND INTERNAL OPERATIONS
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
February 17-18, 2011

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

08. Report on recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education in Mississippi

No Action: Discussion Only

Back-up material attached

**Mississippi's Plan
for
Career and Technical Education**



February 2011

Strategic Plan for Mississippi Career and Technical Education

Introduction

Career and Technical Education in Mississippi began in the early 20th century with the establishment of agricultural high schools. By 1911, federal legislation provided funding to begin agricultural and home economics education in public schools. During the following years legislation was revised and new programs were added resulting in career and technical programs operating under federal, state and local partnerships. After nearly 100 years, the state of career and technical education is a collection of diverse programs, functioning in varied formats on campuses from secondary schools to community colleges. With all of the diversity found in these programs, wide ranges exist in the mission, effectiveness, and productivity of the programs.

Background

In August 2010, Dr. Tom Burnham appointed a committee of 26 education and industry leaders to evaluate the current status of career and technical education in Mississippi. Additionally, the committee was charged with the task of developing a strategic plan to guide the Department of Education as it oversees the operation of the programs during the 2010-2015 period.

The committee convened at the Mississippi FFA Center on August 13, 2010, to begin its work. The initial work of the committee was to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the current programs. The committee thoroughly examined the functional successes and limitations of the system. The major benefits of the current programs were identified as:

- Education with a pragmatic relevance
- Ability to serve students of varied abilities without prior learning
- Development of skilled workers for business and industry

While the committee identified many strengths and successes of programs over time, obvious problems were identified which are associated with the operation of the current programs and included:

- Geographical and administrative barriers which prevent students from participating to the extent necessary.
- Fragmented administrative control of the programs which prevents the programs from operating in a coordinated and effective manner.

- Evaluation and assessment procedures and programs not appropriate for career and technical education.
- Poor coordination and integration of general education and career/technical programs.
- Inadequate and irregular funding patterns that prevent the programs from having modern equipment and facilities.
- Individual program enrollments that are unsustainable while students who need application skills, either do not have access or choose not to participate because of separated tracks.

With these strengths and weaknesses identified in the first day, a second meeting was held on September 24th to discuss action plans which build on existing strengths and correct the identified needs. From this discussion, the committee accepted a guiding philosophy for the development of final recommendations. The committee suggests that future revision efforts concentrate on designing a “complete” educational experience for all public school students. Students who graduate from high school, with only the college prep or general studies curriculum possess only a portion of the skills needed to prepare for a career. Conversely, students who graduate with only a career diploma do not have the social and cultural skills needed for a functional life. A complete educational experience should position students for future studies that allow graduates to be proficient in workforce and life skills (cultural and social). The task then is to craft a new model of education where career/technical education and general education are both essential components of a child’s education. The result is a maximum range of career options available to each graduate.

The desirable outcomes of such model are for students/graduates to:

- develop a desire and understanding of the need for continued post-secondary studies.
- a knowledge of how to apply multiple skills to life and career challenges.
- an understanding that education is preparatory for life experiences, whether these are work, cultural or social engagement.

With these positive outcomes, the committee recommends the following actions:

Objectives

1. Design a secondary curriculum that is internationally competitive, is multi-faceted, and offers students optional exit points to the next level. The next level may be early college, community college, university, work, or military service.

- **Integrate CTE and general education using the Common Core as the standard.**
- **Eliminate access to options based on geographic boundaries or other boundaries such as district lines in secondary and post-secondary.**
- **Create a funding mechanism that allows for options and in essence creates a K-14 funded opportunity for Mississippi students.**
- **Require coordination between secondary and post-secondary.**
- **Ensure that teachers are teaching the curriculum and integrating real-world applications to create relevancy.**
- **Revise accountability model to address the options available to students. The accountability model should not be based on a single test.**
- **Assessment should be based on a national standard and nationally available assessments.**
- **Redefine the high school diploma to support the common core and various exit options.**
- **Allow pilots to begin next year.**

2. Require all students to have a graduation plan or individualized education plan based on a program of study by end of 6th grade. Early exploration of careers should begin by 4th grade.

- **Base programs of study options on the 16 nationally recognized clusters**
- **Programs of study for individual students should provide direction in the courses of study but not restrict student learning in other areas or prohibit changing direction along the way.**
- **Implement a program of study for counselors and teachers that supports implementation of this requirement.**
- **Programs of study should offer students opportunities to build credentials, certifications, degrees, and diplomas along the way.**
- **Use assessments to help kids make decisions on pathways. For example, require the Explore test in 7th grade, the Plan test by 9th grade, and the ACT as a standard.**
- **Design a single set of objectives and training for all guidance counselors, general education and CTE. And setup the system so counselors do counseling instead of acting as testing coordinators, assistant principals, etc.**

3. Establish comprehensive professional development system that requires certain standards for recertification.

- **Specify the courses for licensure and recertification by content area that build skills necessary to support student learning and the needs of the school.**
- **Ensure integrated professional development that bring general education teachers and career technical teachers together.**
- **Develop a career development plan for each teacher.**
- **Require training in mentoring and guidance of students.**

4. Implement early college programs for all students.

- **Provide funding.**
- **Allow for a prorated funding mechanism to support shared responsibility between secondary and post-secondary.**
- **Early college targets the mid-level academic student and not necessarily the academically talented students.**
- **Continue articulation efforts to develop seamless transitions.**