Tips for Fostering Effective CTE Advisory Committees & Business/Industry Partnerships

CTE administrators should place a high priority on developing and maintaining strong business and community partnerships. Effective utilization of advisory committees is a key element to the success of any CTE program. They are indispensable to maintaining state-of-the-art, community-linked career and technical education (CTE) programs. These groups of employers and community representatives provide workplace knowledge and resources to help ensure that all aspects of a CTE program reflect current workplace needs and conditions. Their points of view are crucial to the design, implementation, evaluation, and revision of successful career and technical education programs.

Laws and Rules Calling for Business and Community Partnerships

- Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 28, Subchapter A; Chapter 29, Subchapter F; Chapter 42, Subchapter C; Section 42.154
- Part II, Title 19, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapters 74 and 75
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006
- Title I, Part C. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

Types of Advisory Committees

- **District CTE Advisory Committee** - provides guidance and support to the district’s career and technical education program as a whole. District advisory committees assist the school/district in developing long range plans/goals for the overall CTE program design. Members should be representative of the business/industry present in the community and CTE programs in the district. They help maintain quality and relevance of career and technical education and help strengthen support from the community.

- **Program-specific Advisory Committee** - works with an individual program of study, career cluster or discipline level and is concerned with matters such as curriculum content, equipment, facilities and placement of graduates. Members should represent the occupational area that is served by the program. A CTE program advisory committee may be formed at the district-level to serve the same type of program on multiple campuses or it can be formed at the campus-level. Program advisory committees should have representation or a reporting mechanism to the district advisory committee.

CTE Advisory Committee Functions

Business partnerships and advisory committees can perform a wide variety of functions. Partners serve without pay and have no legal status to change or implement policy. CTE administrators should work with the partners to determine appropriate roles and direction on an annual basis. The following list includes possible ways business partnerships and advisory committees can help improve CTE programs.

- Develop and carry out a yearly plan of action/program of work
- Articulate long-term and short-term goals and objectives
- Regularly review curricula to determine if they are meeting the needs of the students and the projected employment needs of business and industry
- Provide or obtain work-based learning opportunities for students
- Assist with CTE student organization activities and events
- Provide CTE instructors with retraining and technical upgrading opportunities
- Promote and publicize the program
- Review yearly outcome data from the program
- Assess impact of recommendations yearly
CTE Advisory Committee Members

Members of advisory committees should represent the community as a whole and have knowledge of the community's workforce needs. They should represent a cross-section of the community in terms of gender, race, occupation and socio-economic status. Three other important factors to consider when nominating individuals for the committee are: (1) their capability, (2) available time, and (3) level of interest. An effort should be made to select advisory committee members who have some direct relationship to career and technical education. Possible groups from which to recruit members include:

- Business and industry (business owners, Human Resource Directors, employees, employee supervisors, management)
- Academic and CTE teachers
- Career and academic counselors
- Chamber of Commerce
- Communities in Schools
- CTE directors
- Economic development organizations
- Local colleges and universities
- Parents of students
- School and district administrators
- Special populations
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Workforce development boards

Advisory Committee Structure & Procedures

- **Size:** Optimal size depends on number of employers and diversity of job offerings in the local community. In most cases, between 5 and 15 members works best.

- **Terms of Service:** Either two-year or three-year terms are recommended with rotation of new members each year.

- **Procedures:** Operates under published, reviewed policies and procedures regarding terms of service, responsibilities, sub-committees, establishing Program of Work, guidelines for meetings (length, number).

- **Meetings:** Held often enough to establish working relationships and accomplish work plan; minimum of twice a year. Meetings should be well-attended with a clear purpose and agenda.

- **Agenda and Minutes:** Agenda should be mailed in advance; minutes mailed after meeting

Advisory Committee Recognition & Appreciation

When individuals volunteer their time, appropriate recognition can let business partners/advisory committee members know that their investment of knowledge and time is worthwhile and appreciated. Most members are willing to attend regularly and work hard as long as their expertise and talents are used, their recommendations are seriously considered and they are given feedback concerning their efforts. Recognition also may take the form of letters of appreciation, plaques at conclusion of their service, recognition dinners each year to say thank you, or announcements in the local media. The most important way is letting members know how their service contributed to improving CTE in your district.