

Summary of CTE Academic Integration Blueprint

Introduction:

The mission of the New York City Department of Education states that, “Every student in New York City deserves an opportunity to have the foundation of skills, knowledge, and approaches to learning needed to be ready for school and, ultimately, college and careers.”[1] For years, Career and Technical Education (CTE) has worked towards this goal by providing students with the learning experiences necessary to prepare them for entry-level occupations and entry to postsecondary education.

While career and technical education fulfills our fundamental obligation to prepare our young people with the technical skills necessary to lead productive and prosperous lives as adults, it does not consistently equip them to succeed in postsecondary education. The New York City Department of Education measures postsecondary readiness using the College Readiness Index (CRI), which is primarily based on student performance on New York State Mathematics exams, New York State English Language Arts exams, and City University of New York Proficiency Exams that assess math and ELA skills. Despite the lofty CTE graduation rate of 82%, only one-third of CTE graduates are college and career ready according to the citywide average CRI of only 33%. For these reasons, the CTE team has been charged to define and support the integration of academic and CTE coursework to improve both academic standards, as well as employment outcomes for CTE graduates.

Extensive feedback from industry partners, commissions, advisory committees, surveys and labor market metrics have enabled the CTE team to identify key academic deficiencies that have prevented CTE graduates from obtaining employment opportunities. Furthermore, the access to curriculum resources and industry support is not equal across schools and programs throughout the city. As such, the overarching goal of Academic Integration is to ensure that all CTE schools develop systems to align CTE content with college and career readiness benchmarks (Next Generation Learning Standards alignment, Academic Programming, Academic and Personal Behaviors, and College and Career Access).

Vision:

Our vision is to better equip teachers to deliver instruction that aligns literacy, numeracy, the sciences and career training necessary for college and career success. We also want every school to have equal access to resources to build their programs and partnerships that foster career alignment between learning outcomes and industry demand.

[1] New York City Department of Education Mission Statement – January 2016
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/EarlyChildhood/mission>

Framework: CTE Academic Integration Initiative

Many high school graduates lack the exposure to learning that links their studies in the classroom to future college and career pathways, especially in the critically important fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The Academic Integration Initiative aims to bridge the gap between the graduation rate and low college readiness by facilitating the integration of CTE and academic coursework in schools by training teachers to develop integrated curriculum and by promoting high quality project-based learning (PBL) practices in academic classes.

Methodology

With industry demands in mind, the Academic Integration team is working with both CTE and academic subject teachers to tailor their pedagogy and curriculum to align to industry demands, as well as equip students with the academic skills required to thrive in postsecondary education. The Academic Integration team supports schools in offering rigorous CTE programs with Next Generation Learning Standards aligned and integrated curricula. Part of that support is to provide exemplary curricular resources aligned to industry demand. The team collected and analyzed industry expectations to create high quality curricula which can be shared and utilized across programs. This team also works on developing meaningful workforce connections to post-secondary employment opportunities. This includes entry level jobs, apprenticeships, and additional training. The design and implementation of these opportunities are supported by the curricula alignment and visibility of program quality.

The following section defines the nature of this team's work and the types of support given to schools to achieve better integration and performance of academic and technical coursework.

Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Help Schools organize and map their curricula to align to academic, professional, and technical standards required for student and program success.

OBJECTIVE 2: Create a platform with feedback loops to align industry and post-secondary skills with program content via dynamic review and revision.

OBJECTIVE 3: Give schools resources and tools to align programs to high demand 21st Century Careers.

OBJECTIVE 4: Create mechanisms to support schools in collaboratively improving CTE instruction and student learning outcomes.

OBJECTIVE 5: Infuse sustainability principles throughout CTE and academic content curricula.

