


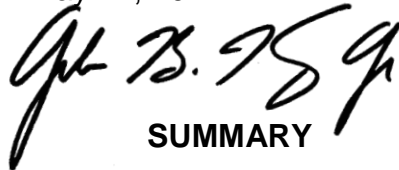


THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
**FROM:** Ken Slentz   
**SUBJECT:** Consideration and Expansion of CTE Technical Assessment Study

**DATE:** May 12, 2014

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

  
SUMMARY

### **Issue for Discussion**

The Technical Assessment Expert Advisory Panel provided preliminary findings and recommendations to the Chancellor's Blue Ribbon Commission around technical assessment comparability with Regents examinations. Should the P-12 Education Committee consider these findings as part of their deliberations on multiple pathways to graduation and expand the scope of work of the Panel to include additional technical assessments?

### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Review of Policy.

### **Proposed Handling**

This item will come before the P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the May 2014 meeting.

### **Procedural History**

At the October 2012 P-12 Education Committee meeting a study was commissioned with Stephen Hamilton at Cornell and William Symonds at Harvard to identify 10-25 assessment instruments designed to determine high school Career and Technical Education students' achievement that are of sufficient quality and rigor to serve in place of a NYS Regents examination.

In February 2013 an update was provided to the Board on the work of the Technical Assessment Review Panel, which was charged with developing a methodology for determining comparability of a select group of CTE technical assessments with Regents examinations. The panel used four criteria for determining comparability of technical assessments:

1. The assessment provides credible evidence that the student is college and career ready. Following are some sources of credibility:
  - (a) The assessment is recognized by employers in an industry sector. Ideally, a passing score provides a credential that will qualify the student for at least entry-level employment in the industry. Priority will be given to nationally-recognized credentials.
  - (b) If the assessment is normally completed at the postsecondary level, a cut score has been established for high school students that signifies the student is ready to take credit-bearing courses at the postsecondary level.
  - (c) The assessment is widely recognized by postsecondary institutions within New York, for admissions and/or credit.
  
2. The assessment includes academic as well as technical learning. The following factors are considered.
  - (a) The examination covers a broad range of learning. Narrow technical examinations are not by themselves sufficient. Breadth may be achieved by “bundling” multiple examinations.
  - (b) The examination measures some of the knowledge and skills that comprise the Common Core State Standards, such as reading of technical materials or application of mathematical principles.
  - (c) The rigor of the assessment is comparable to that of Regents examinations.
  
3. The assessment is for an occupation in a career cluster that is recognized by the State Education Department and is of clear economic value to the state of New York. The following factors are considered.
  - (a) The occupation is in high demand, meaning that a significant number of people are already employed in the occupation and/or that employment is increasing.
  - (b) The occupation generally pays experienced workers “a living wage.” At the very least, entry-level workers are paid above the minimum wage.
  - (c) The number of students eligible to take this assessment is large enough to warrant the Regents’ recognition.
  
4. The assessment meets the following technical requirements:
  - (a) The examination is aligned with existing knowledge and practice and updated regularly (every four years in most cases).
  - (b) The examination has acceptable psychometric properties. It is properly validated and free from ethnic or gender bias. A technical manual meeting testing industry standards is available for public inspection.

- (c) The examination questions are secure and administration oversight comparable to a Regents examination.
- (d) The organization responsible for the examination is considered credible by the State Education Department; e.g., makes standards publicly available, trains proctors, is affiliated with trade groups, provides data for instructional improvement, responds quickly to technical concerns and user questions.

These findings were delivered to the Chancellor’s Blue Ribbon Commission at a July 2, 2013 convening of the Commission. Members of the Commission strongly agreed with the report’s conclusion that recognizing high-quality CTE examinations would *raise the bar* for high school graduation. These examinations often require a higher level of academic proficiency than passing a Regents exam with a score of 65 percent. The research report goes on to say, “CTE examinations that tangibly demonstrate college readiness – in the sense that postsecondary institutions grant course credit, advanced standing or admission to students who pass the examination – should be recognized as holding students to a higher standard than Regents examinations using 65% as a passing score.” Recognizing CTE exams would also encourage students to earn certificates that demonstrate to industry employers that they are “career ready.” Unfortunately, the current Regents examinations do not provide a comprehensive measure of career readiness. For these reasons, the Blue Ribbon Commission unanimously endorsed the report with the Expert Advisory Board’s recommendations, as modified to represent the Commission’s discussions.

### **Background Information**

To determine the efficacy of recognizing these assessments as comparable to Regents exams, a review of the currently approved CTE programs was conducted to determine how wide spread they are used. The chart below illustrates the number of approved programs that end in one of the identified technical assessments.

<b>Technical Assessment</b>	<b># of Approved Programs using</b>	<b>BOCES</b>	<b>LEA<sup>1</sup></b>
Prostart National Certificate of Achievement	27	19	7
ASE Student Certification	43	21	4
A+ Certification	13	7	2
Network+ Certification	4	4	0
NIMS Skills Certification	2	2	0
PrintED	7	5	2
Student Electronics Technician	0	0	0
NCCER Carpentry Level 1 Certification	14	12	2
Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for Business	2	0	2

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<sup>1</sup> The number of programs reflects that school districts may have multiple high schools, each with their own approved program.

(ASK)			
NOCTI Advertising and Design	18	11	5
NOCTI Accounting Basic	21	0	19
NOCTI Agricultural Mechanics	3	1	2
NOCTI Hospitality Management-Food and Beverage	1	1	0
	155		

*Data from CTE office database December 2013*

While these programs offer students great opportunity, expansion to a wider range of assessments would facilitate more options for more students. Additionally school districts and BOCES working on program development could consider adopting already identified technical assessments driving improved program rigor or expansion. Note that the Department is also proposing to seek permission from USDE to allow students passing such assessments to receive full credit in the accountability system. This is outlined in an item this month before the P-12 Education Committee for consideration.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Department staff reinstitute the expert advisory panel to continue its work to identify additional technical assessments that can be recommended to the Blue Ribbon Commission and the Board of Regents for approval using the established methodology.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

Once an amended Memorandum of Agreement and funding are identified, work can commence. Since a protocol and much research have already been established it is anticipated that additional assessments can be identified within the 2014-15 school year.