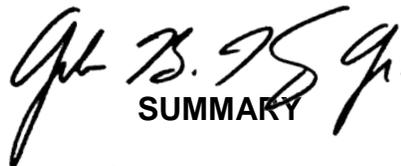




TO: P-12 Education Committee
FROM: Ken Slentz 
SUBJECT: Review of Regents Career and Technical Education (CTE) Policy to Enhance Student Credit Options for Graduating College and Career Ready
DATE: September 9, 2013

AUTHORIZATION(S):


SUMMARY

Issue for Decision

Should the Board of Regents provide additional career and technical education (CTE) options for students to graduate college and career ready?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Review of Policy.

Proposed Handling

This issue will come before the Regents P-12 Education Committee for discussion at the September 2013 meeting.

Procedural History

On previous occasions, the Board of Regents discussed various components of the CTE policy pertaining to the CTE Program Approval process (Integrated/ specialized credits – March - May 2011, College and Career Readiness measures – February 2012 and 2013). Over the past two years, panels and advisory groups authorized by the Board have developed recommendations that would provide greater opportunities for students to participate in CTE courses and programs thereby supporting increased achievement and high school graduation rates.

Background Information

In December 2013, the P-12 Education Committee was presented with the recommendations of the CTE Content Advisory Committee and in February 2013 an update was provided 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. These findings were delivered to the Blue Ribbon Commission at a July 2, 2013 convening of the Commission. Other interested groups (CTE teacher professional organizations and BOCES District Superintendents) developed their own recommendations.

Among the many recommendations, the various groups discussed increasing options for integrated academic credit as an expeditious way to advance student CTE course-taking while accumulating credits for graduation. Current regulations limit acquiring academic credits to four through CTE Approved Programs. Significant numbers of students in 9th and 10th grade struggle through academic course work and many fall behind in credit accumulation. By using more applied content instructional techniques, students will become more engaged in their education. Some suggested strategies for increasing student access to integrated credit include:

- A more structured, integrated approach to career awareness/exploration in elementary and middle school will reinforce CTE and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) opportunities in high school and BOCES through 8th grade acceleration. Current regulations require that public school students in grade eight have the opportunity to take high school courses in math and at least one other subject area (one of which could be CTE). One option to accomplish this strategy would be through the proposal of a regulatory amendment that would require districts that elect to offer CTE courses as a grade eight acceleration option to do so through an integrated CTE course (CTE/STEM). An integrated CTE course in 8th grade would provide many students with a head start on high school coursework and exploration of possible career interests. CTE and STEM instruction should occur as early as possible in a student's education. Existing requirements in middle school would remain.
- Increase the number of integrated course credits allowed in an academic area from one to two course credits. Current regulations require that students pursuing a Regents diploma or a Regents diploma with advanced designation, or such diploma with a technical endorsement, by completing an approved CTE program must successfully complete 22 units of credit; one unit each of required credit in English, science, and mathematics, and the combined unit of economics and government may be fulfilled through other means, including integrated CTE courses or a combination of specialized and integrated CTE courses (8 NYCRR §100.5[d][6][ii][a][2]). The Department could propose regulatory amendments permitting up to two units of credit to be earned for a particular subject area, with the total number of integrated course credits remaining at four. Increasing the number of integrated credits in a specific academic subject would recognize that many technical areas have significant academic content. For example, mathematics is deeply

embedded in Electricity/Electronics and other STEM programs. In addition, where appropriate and verified, the Department could explore ways to allow approved programs flexibility in the use of integrated or specialized credits to meet program requirements. These actions would allow greater opportunities for students to take electives and take advantage of work-based learning opportunities.

- Permit school districts to identify and/or develop .25 and .50 unit of study (10 and 20 weeks) integrated credit opportunities for students in grades 8, 9, and 10. Students would progress at their own pace utilizing online/blended/alternative course models, project-based learning (PBL), work-based experiences, internships, and independent study opportunities that combine academic and technical content. Accumulated credits earned would serve as prerequisites towards completing an approved program in high school or BOCES while satisfying graduation requirement credit accumulation. In addition, these mini-CTE courses would provide earlier exposure to CTE and STEM programs.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Regents direct Department staff to draft proposed regulatory amendments that would permit students to earn up to two integrated CTE credits in any one academic subject area (not to exceed four in total) pursuant to 8 NYCRR §100.5(d)(6)(ii)(a)(2) and to require that districts that elect to offer CTE as a grade eight acceleration option pursuant to 8 NYCRR §100.4(d) to do so through an integrated CTE course (CTE/STEM).

Timetable for Implementation

If the Regents so direct staff, proposed regulatory amendments and strategies for implementation will be presented to the P-12 Education Committee at their October 2013 meeting.

Next Steps

Because of the positive impact career and technical education can have on student graduation and future career decisions, staff recommends that a symposium convened by the Board of Regents take place in the fall of 2013 to discuss additional changes that could be implemented to provide greater access and opportunity.