

Cherry Creek School District

BACKGROUND

The Cherry Creek School District is using Perkins funds to implement a **three-pronged** five-year initiative to elevate Career and Technical Education (CTE) student performance and prevent the need for remediation upon college entrance. The effort is being led by a task force which is phasing in the elements of the initiative over a five-year period.

First, the taskforce is academically integrating the District's CTE and ACT college readiness standards.

Second, the taskforce is championing that the newly integrated standards be used to guide the creation of six-year Career and Academic Plans (a.k.a. plans of study) for students (9th grade through sophomore in college).

Third, the taskforce has built continuous improvement into the initiative by mandating that its quality and feasibility be self-assessed on an annual basis using a nine standard rubric.

KEY INNOVATION(S)

The District has gathered professional learning communities to reconcile and benchmark CTE standards with ACT College Readiness Standards so that students do not need remediation upon entering college.

The District will systemically map CTE classes with a high amount of academic content in math, science and language arts so that it can re-designate these classes as counting as core academic credit.

College readiness will be facilitated by enabling students to take Community College of Aurora, Arapahoe Community College and Pickens Tech courses for credit at each institution and toward high school graduation. Dual credit courses include English, Algebra, Accounting II and Marketing II.

Resources have been reallocated from the District's budget for technology needs so Perkins funds are not being absorbed by capital expenses but instead are being maximized for planning the future success of students.

The District will ensure the newly integrated standards are adopted across all CTE programs via resource pages posted on its website.

KEY FACTORS TO IMPLEMENTATION

High level district administrators are championing the plan across the district and to the Board and advocating for its accelerated implementation.

The district has prioritized achieving unity on which CTE standards to align with ACT College Readiness standards.

Carefully validating CTE coursework for academic integration and adequate rigor is crucial (the District “must go slowly to go fast”).

Use of existing teachers to aid with career and assessment is key in addition to bringing in industry speakers and holding career fairs.

Input from an executive advisory council comprised of business/industry practitioners to inform and guide the curriculum (e.g., advise of trends and appropriate technology) has been deemed pivotal. Also, annual evaluation via an upcoming nine-standard rubric will keep efforts focused on practices that work and away from those that do not.

RESULTS

The district is working with Naviance – its counseling tool - and school counselors to develop individual plans of study for each student by their sophomore year. The six-year Career and Academic Plans map the coursework to complete student goals developed through “Explore” assessment results in 8th grade and the student profile completed via Naviance. Students will be retested using Naviance during their sophomore year to confirm they are following the appropriate path.

A concerted effort is being made for cooperation with business and to ensure opportunities for special populations. Additionally, quality and feasibility is being assessed by a five school district consortium.

The District has selected Grandview and Cherokee Trail as its pilot schools. Smoky Hill and Eagle Crest are on board to phase in the new practices next and Cherry Creek and Overland have been strategically selected as last. This initiative is an example of Perkins funds laying the groundwork for improving student performance and to demonstrate that those in CTE courses will perform better than those who do not take them.