



February 6, 2008

Dear Colorado CTE Colleagues:

I thank you for your work to provide Colorado with a strong, well-educated workforce. Further, I congratulate you for the role your CTE programs have had in fostering productivity in business and industry and contributing to Colorado's competitiveness in the global marketplace. Because of your efforts, there is much excitement across the state about the emergence of a new operational model for Colorado CTE. The catalyst for this has been Governor Ritter's vision for Colorado education, the reauthorization of the Perkins Act, and the collaborative efforts of educators like yourself. As you know, this new model focuses on:

- A student-centered approach to career success;
- Stronger academic and technical integration;
- Curriculum alignment between high schools and higher education providers;
- Collaboration with business and industry to ensure specific workforce needs are met;
- Increased coordination among providers; and
- Greater accountability for results and program improvement.

Additionally, Colorado CTE is ready to be an integral partner in helping to accomplish Governor Ritter's goals of reducing the high school dropout rate while increasing the number of postsecondary certificates and degrees that are awarded. Likewise, our CTE programs of the next decade will be more intentional about helping students move into the high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers of the 21st century.

With the initiatives you are helping to implement, we are well on the way to helping achieve major components of Governor Ritter's recently announced Colorado Achievement Plan. The plan calls for a skills-oriented seamless pathway between secondary schools and higher education that leads to career readiness and a high-wage, high-skill or high-demand career. Together, we've been charged to create a Colorado in which employers across the state have the option to hire qualified Coloradans to fill their high-skill positions instead of having to recruit workers from other states.

To help you advance your CTE program, adapt it to emerging federal and state expectations, and communicate the successes and importance of CTE to others, we have assembled this **"Bridges to Opportunity" Marketing Kit**. The kit provides you with a brochure describing the "Bridges" initiative, a "Career Cluster" model, and a "Plan of Study" template and a summary of the new Colorado CTE State Plan. It also includes a video and a collection of perspectives from stakeholders (e.g., business, citizens and the media) that discuss the emerging expectation of the public that today's CTE serve the needs of students and employers even better. Specifically, the right side of this marketing kit includes:

The Bridges to Opportunity through Career Pathways Brochure

This brochure discusses the progress being made toward accomplishing our shared vision to leverage partnerships and implement career clusters, career pathways and plans of study to transform CTE across Colorado.

The Colorado Career Cluster Model

In this model, the workforce needs of Colorado have been condensed into six industry sectors. The model groups careers that rely on shared competencies together to guide the composition of programs and demonstrate to students the options that unfold depending on the path their education follows.

The Colorado CTE Plan of Study Template

This template can be used by educators and counselors as a guide to developing local Plans of Study. In addition, educators and counselors will use Plans of Study to show students and their parents how each CTE program is a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career-related courses, commencing in ninth grade and leading to an industry-recognized certificate or licensure and/or a college or university degree.

An Executive Summary of the Colorado State Plan

This synopsis of the new Colorado CTE Five-Year Plan outlines how Colorado's CTE educators will collaborate to create a seamless transition from P-20 education to high-wage careers.

The left side of this marketing kit includes:

The Bridges to Opportunity Career Pathway Case Studies DVD

This video, hosted by Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien, uses case studies to demonstrate how the career pathways strategy is working to align education with Colorado's economic opportunities.

A Sampling of Communications Generated by Citizens, the News Media and Colorado Succeeds

We have enclosed recent newspaper clippings about the importance of CTE in addressing the state's educational goals. We have also included a report about CTE from Colorado Succeeds, a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving education for workforce development and economic growth. These communications detail the directions many believe law and policy makers should pursue to enable CTE to have an optimum impact on Colorado's economy.

These are exciting times for Career and Technical Education in Colorado. I hope this kit is a useful guide to you as you continue to adapt your program(s) to meet the needs of the students and employers in your region like never before. I also hope it will serve as a valuable tool to educate your internal and external stakeholders about the current and potential impact of your CTE operation. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Scott Stump, Interim Dean of Career & Technical Education, at 303-595-1578

Best Regards,



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President
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