

OCL Study Session, April 10, 2014

OCM BOCES, 6820 Thompson Road, Syracuse

Attendees: Kimberly Armani, Laurie Black, James Branche, Jessica Cohen, Jeff Craig, Suzanne Gilmour, Heidi Holtz, Mike Irwin, Phil Jakes-Johnson, Ava Kerznowski, Robert Leslie, Don MacLaughlin, Richard Mahan, Melissa Menon, Sarah Merrick, Laura Miller, Brian Moore, Brian Nolan, Rhonda O'Connor, Kristine Perkins, Frank Ridzi, Tim Riehlman, Mike Sattler, Honora Spillane

OCL: Co-chairs Barbara Carranti and Ben Lockwood; Sandra Barrett; Renée K. Gadoua

Committee members enjoyed lunch at OCM BOCES cafeteria, with food prepared by students in culinary arts program.

Secondary School Career & Technical Education Panel:

- Michael Caraccio, Academic Dean, West Genesee High School
- Robert Leslie, Director, Adult and Career and Technical Education, OCM BOCES
- Brian Nolan, Executive Director, High School & CTE Education, Syracuse City School District

A. Panel members responded to question about what each organization now offers and why.

1. Brian Nolan opened with a short video on SCSD CTE programs. (See <http://bit.ly/1n70mSt> for an overview.) He then provided these details:

- District offers 10 career tech programs in five high schools.
- Students can choose any school program and participate even if it's not in their home school.
- District is moving away from off-campus career tech programs in favor of putting programs in the schools.
- The district's Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central is a career academy. Website describes it as preparing "students for the 21st century through a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum with a focus on Automotive Technology, Biotechnology, Computer Engineering, Culinary Arts, Media, and Robotics."
- New career academy is being phased in at Fowler High School.
- Henninger HS offers Health Careers program.
- SCSD offers Pathways to Technology Early College High School (P-TECH). It is a grade 9-14 model in which students graduate with a hs diploma and an associate's degree from OCC. Program partners with MACNY. Program focuses on mechanical engineering and electrical technician training. Successful graduates are often first in line for open positions via MACNY.
- STEM program offered at Nottingham.
- Welding offered at Corcoran.

- Overall district vision, Nolan said, is that \$300 million capital improvement will help create citywide CTE programs that are high-cost, but low-enrollment, such as heavy machinery.
2. Robert Leslie offered these details about OCM BOCES' CTE programs: (See <http://www.ocmboces.org/>).
 - Districts send students to BOCES campus for 13 career training programs. They are two-year programs that require students to spend half-day of junior and senior year at BOCES and half-day in traditional classes.
 - Programs include: Automotive Collision Technology; Automotive Technology; Computer Technology; Construction Technology; Cosmetology Culinary Arts; Early Childhood Education; Graphic Communications; Health Occupations Technology; Laboratory Technician; Pastry Arts; Data Analysis & Research and Scientific Inquiry and Research.
 - Among students who take these programs, many earn CTE credentials for their h.s. diploma – an achievement above and beyond Regents' requirements. Recertification process allows BOCES to assess its alignment with employment needs in the community.
 - New programs since 2009 include: Lab technician (preparation for medical, technology, food prep jobs); Cisco networking; embedding programs in local businesses, such as a automotive classroom at Drivers Village.
 - The aim of embedded programs is “teaching students expectations from the skills and employment culture context.”
 - Another program, Strength in Motion, partners with OCC to allow hs students to earn 13 college credits via program at ESM. Program developed in response to anticipated increased demand for physical therapists. (Welding program also expanded in response to increased demand.)
 - New next year: BOCES will partner with WCNY to offer multimedia program focusing on social media, graphics, video, etc.
 - District also offering one-year partnership programs on health, environment and criminal justice.
 3. Michael Caraccio shared these highlights about his district's experience: (<http://bit.ly/1hOFRCi>)
 - He sees more engagement across the board with CTE principles.
 - District offers four CTE “strands” approved by NYS Ed: Business, Engineering Technology, Computer Technology and Finance.
 - CTE strands connected to OCC courses. “What better preparation for college than to take a college course,” Caraccio said.
 - Programs include job shadowing, experience, portfolio and opportunity to earn CTE seal on diploma.
 - He said people in these industries are looking for the skills these students have – including soft skills.

B. Second question for panel: How are students recruited?

1. Caraccio: Start at middle school. (He noted career and business planning is required in all four CTE strands.)
 2. Nolan: Start at the fifth grade to embed career awareness and identify opportunities at high school and in the real world. He added that the transition from 8th to 9th grade could be smoother.
 3. Leslie: Guidance counselors, teachers, student visits, peers
- C. Third question to panel: How is success measured, other than by employment?
1. Nolan: The gold-seal diploma is Advanced Diploma with CTE Endorsement. Last year, for the first time, district used national assessment to measure success.
 2. Caraccio: District looks at graduates. West Genesee began CTE about six years ago. Now about 20 students a year participate and programs beginning to attract more.

Using Skills USA assessment.
 3. Leslie: We see success when businesses call us looking for graduates.

In 2010, 40% of graduates pursued two- or four-year degree; in 2013, that increased to 60%.

D. Question and discussion session

1. Jessica Cohen, retired OCM BOCES superintendent, noted that the state requires all CTE programs do follow-up on graduates. There is historic data for districts and BOCES. It measures graduates six months after graduation, calculating the percentage of grads who go through course and are employed, in college or in the military.

Cohen added that typically 90% of CTE grads are successful six months after graduation. Longer term tracking would help assess programs, she said.

2. Question: What would you like to add to offerings?
 - Caraccio: West Genesee would like to add broadcasting and digital media. Constrained by inability to find qualified teachers who would have skills and experience for appropriate certification. (Certification is a state checklist.)
 - Nolan: City district wants to increase skilled trades (electrical engineering) and health-related programs. (Related similar problem finding and retaining teachers.)
3. Discussion about ways to get students CTE perspective
 - Use English and Social Studies to make content more engaging and relevant.
 - More interdisciplinary integration
 - Standards-based focus led to decline in value of CTE.

- Create options so that kids with different skills and backgrounds have multiple pathways to careers.
- Laura Miller of Darco Manufacturing and Phil Jakes-Johnson of Solvents & Petroleum Svc. suggested local companies partner with schools, perhaps by lending skilled workers at CTEs and splitting salary or creating apprenticeships.
- Programs are approved by state via advisory committee to keep programs relevant to economy. Advisory committee members are needed.

4. Question: What are employers looking for other than technical skills?

Students have to be able to work within the culture of the business: communicate, work in team, be on time. Students need to understand why these skills are important.

5. Question: What does BOCES offer long-term unemployed?

- Nolan: 4,000 adult learners in SCSD, most of them refugees seeking language skills. District also offers LPN program for adults.
- Not enough money to offer programs to fill need; district could probably serve 8,000 adult learners.
- Leslie: BOCES offers dental assistant and other medical training. Students are eligible for Pell grants and internships are available. Graduate two classes/year

6. Open discussion

- Jessica Cohen noted that the state studies graduation rate of students in CTE programs, and CTE students tend to do better.
- SCSD loses kids below proficiency at high school entry. Kids disengaged because of poverty, socioeconomic issues, mental health problems. The school has to do a better job preparing kids for high school, and the community needs to address poverty.
- Laura Miller again urged call to engage businesses. They have money to help schools and an incentive to do so.

7. General discussion of CTE and role

- NYS ed dept certification not always aligned with reality.
- Do CTE programs overlap? Duplicate? Some districts already collaborate and exchange programs informally. More is possible.
- BOCES sees itself as an extension of the district and an arm for programs to complement districts. State law separated BOCES and city district in the 1940s, when the city was wealthier. Should the state address this? Like state aid formula, this is political. (Note that some parts of state law allow Syracuse and BOCES to share special education programs.)
- Leslie: BOCES is tied in with CNY Works, Jobs Plus via literacy program

8. Who teaches young people how to find a job?
9. BOCES requires resume and cover letter.
 - School district is working to address transportation challenges.
 - West Genesee has a career center. Career and finance management course required for all CTE students.
 - There is some networking via instructors.

The schedule for upcoming meetings is as follows:

April 22, Study Committee meeting, 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. at ProLiteracy with employer panel.

April 24, TMR, 8:15-9:15 a.m. at Drumlins with Jenn O'Connor of America's Edge, CNY Skills Gap report.

May 8, Study Committee meeting, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at ProLiteracy with nemployed/underemployed panel.

May 20, Study Committee meeting, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at ProLiteracy, topic TBD.

Submitted by Renée K. Gadoua, study writer