



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: H

Date: November 15, 2023

Title: First and Final Review of the Programmatic Accreditation Guidelines for Career and Technical Education

Presenter: Dr. Andy Armstrong, Assistant Superintendent of Strategic Innovation

Purpose of Presentation

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

Executive Summary

The Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education recommends the approval of state programmatic accreditation standards that support clearly defined and uniform standards that support career and technical education programming. The 2015 Virginia General Assembly amended and reenacted § [22.1-227.01](#) of the Code of Virginia, which defines in part “career and technical education” (or “CTE”) as:

an organized education program offering a sequence of courses that (i) may incorporate field, laboratory, and classroom instruction; (ii) emphasize career and technical occupational experiences; (iii) are designed to prepare individuals for further education and gainful employment; and (iv) **are aligned with state or national program certification and accreditation standards, if such standards exist for the sequence of courses**. However, clause (iv) shall not apply to any program offered by industry in cooperation with a local school board. [emphasis added]

The purpose of this guidance document is to establish state accreditation standards in order to open new pathways for programs to meet the statutory definition of CTE. State accreditation standards for CTE do not currently exist. Historically, Virginia school divisions have deferred to national, rather than state accreditation standards, limiting flexibility and adversely impacting opportunities for student engagement. Divisions are strongly encouraged to adopt state CTE accreditation standards in order to effectively create pathways of students to high skill, high demand careers and post-secondary success. Accordingly, the net effect of this guidance

document is deregulatory as it will allow more opportunities for school divisions to qualify a program as CTE.

The alignment process for state programmatic accreditation standards includes guidance for planning, implementing, and monitoring of CTE programs; state-established, industry validated course competencies that ensure students are college and career ready; business and industry validated equipment; and standards applicable to federal and state regulations related to health and safety.

Each CTE course has been reviewed by content area teachers and business and industry stakeholders as part of our curriculum revision process.

Action Requested

Final review: Action requested at this meeting.

Superintendent's Recommendation

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the Programmatic Accreditation Guidelines for Career and Technical Education.

Rationale for Action

This guidance document opens a new path for meeting the definition of CTE in § [22.1-227.01](#), which has the potential to lower costs and increase flexibility for school divisions.

Previous Review or Action

No previous review or action.

Background Information and Statutory Authority

[HB1616](#) (2015) amended § [22.1-227.01](#). Career and technical education; alignment with national certification requirements. Requires each sequence of courses constituting a career and technical education program to be aligned with national certification requirements, if any, unless such program is offered by industry in cooperation with a local school board.

Section 22.1-227.01 of the Code of Virginia states the following:

As used in this article, "career and technical education" means an organized education program offering a sequence of courses that (i) may incorporate field, laboratory, and classroom instruction; (ii) emphasize career and technical occupational experiences; (iii) are designed to prepare individuals for further education and gainful employment; and

(iv) are aligned with state or national program certification and accreditation standards, if such standards exist for the sequence of courses. However, clause (iv) shall not apply to any program offered by industry in cooperation with a local school board.

National programmatic accreditation requirements impacted by this guidance includes Graphic Imaging Technology; Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration; Small Engine Technology; Pharmacy Technician; and Culinary Arts; requiring school divisions with these programs to achieve and maintain accreditation by the associated national accrediting organization. Essential competencies for the programs were reviewed for alignment with the national accreditation standards. A panel of business and industry experts were invited to validate the curricula and standards for the relevant CTE programs during the curriculum revision meetings.

School divisions have determined the national accreditation process to be a barrier to students. National accreditation fees vary by organization but can be costly. The process can last a year or more and often involves multiple staff members, and as the number of programs that require national accreditation alignment increases, the burden on school divisions increases. In the last two years, national programmatic accreditation standards have been identified for the CTE pharmacy technician and culinary arts programs, which has resulted in some school divisions reevaluating their program offerings considering the barriers. State programmatic accreditation standards will allow school divisions the opportunity to weigh the costs associated with national accreditation alignment with the relative benefit to the program and/or student.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement included feedback from school division leadership regarding the adverse cost related to national accreditation, and support of state programmatic accreditation standards. Funds currently used for the initial national accreditation applications and on-going memberships can be invested in CTE programs to provide laboratories with the latest technology and equipment.

Implementation and Communication

After approval by the Board, the guidance document will be submitted to the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period in accordance with the Administrative Process Act.

VDOE staff will also communicate state programmatic accreditation standards for CTE programs through an article in the Virginia Education Update Newsletter, a CTE Director's Memo, and through a CTE professional development webinar for CTE Administrators.

The CTE Federal Program Monitoring Review process is designed to focus on continuous program improvement and student achievement. This process will monitor the progress and effectiveness of all CTE courses and programs.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

Any costs associated with the dissemination and monitoring of the programmatic accreditation guidelines will be provided by Department of Education according to state procurement policies and procedures.

State accreditation standards will result in cost savings for local school divisions that opt out of meeting national programmatic accreditation standards. Cost associated with national accreditation standards include but are not limited to application fees, travel related expenses for on-site visits, teacher certification testing, equipment, and membership renewal fees.