

Director's Report February 2005

Culinary Arts Presentation. Mr. Curt Oakes and Mrs. Janet Grossman, Culinary Arts instructors, will conduct our February Program Presentation. Culinary Arts is one of our most popular programs. The instructors have also taken on a leadership role in national program accreditation and curriculum development. We know this program well for attracting diverse levels of students, ranging from students with significant disabilities to students headed to acclaimed culinary arts schools. I am sure you will enjoy and learn much from Curt and Janet's presentation.

Legislators Visit Campus. Two of our local Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the Honorable Matthew Good and the Honorable Curtis G. Sonney, visited the ECTS campus on Friday, February 11. After a brief presentation about the school, the legislators toured each of the 19 programs. While on the tour, they had the opportunity to talk with many of the faculty members and see the morning session students working in their laboratories.

During a lunch prepared by the Culinary Arts students, two students, Anthony Fatica (Millcreek, Tool & Die) and Whitney Wagner (Harbor Creek, Commercial Art) talked about their experience at ECTS and answered questions from the legislators. Three home school guidance counselors, Kelly Drahushack (Harbor Creek) and Bob Martin and Julie Van Volkenberg (Millcreek) joined the group for lunch to talk about the relationship the home schools have with the technical school.

Thanks to Bob Craft, Tourism & Hospitality Management Instructor, for arranging the visit and to Elaine Shaffer, Student Services Coordinator, whom coordinated the morning's activities. We also offer our thanks to Rep. Sonney and Rep. Good for taking the time to learn more about the Erie County Technical School.

Report on Career & Technical Education in Pennsylvania. As noted in the Director's August 2005 board report, there were concerns about the political and operational viability of career and technical education (CTE) in Pennsylvania, especially from the Governor's office. To the governor's credit, this fall he commissioned Jobs for the Future (JFF), a "think-tank" group based in Boston, to conduct a study of CTE. The Pennsylvania Department of Education released the JFF study on February 2, 2005. While the JFF report needs further study, initially it looks favorably upon CTE and the role it can play in workforce and economic development (*a copy of the JFF study is in the supplemental items section*). The JFF study was especially encouraging in that many of the recommendations in the report align closely with our own strategic vision and quality action plan.

In the Governor's budget proposal on February 10, he discussed the role CTE could play in education reform, workforce development and economic development. This is the first time a governor has made a direct reference to CTE in their budget speech. A review of the governor's budget proposal also shows he took the JFF report to heart and included many of the recommendations in his proposed budget.

Adults in the Secondary Program. A draft of a policies and procedures handbook for fulltime adult education programs is in place. The document is a compilation of several documents including the former Skill Center handbook, the high school student handbook and a handbook created for the RCTC to comply with Council of Occupational Education accreditation guidelines. The administration would like to ask two or three board members to review the handbook before the operating committee approves it.

Performance Check-ups. Each quarter the administrators conduct 90-day performance check-ups with the Director. Each administrator identifies five or six projects he or she will be working on during the quarter. The director and administrator review the projects at the end of the 90-day period. During February, administrators reviewed winter projects and established spring projects.

2005-2006 Budget. The Operating Committee is scheduled to vote on the proposed 2005-2006 Budget this month. To date, there have been very few questions and no concerns from superintendents or operating committee members. We look forward to your favorable approval of the budget.

Recruitment and Enrollment. Administrative and support staff continue their efforts to refine and improve this process. The Leadership Council is currently writing an action plan to address the entire process, including recruitment, application, admission and enrollment.

Additionally this month, we sent a letter and other informational items to 47 students that returned the reply card from our Open House mailer. The packet of materials mailed to each student included a personalized letter signed by the director and principal (*see copy in supplemental information*), our general information brochure, a clusters brochure describing any programs noted by the prospective student and an application form. We intend to take the list of 47 students and ask faculty members to place a follow-up telephone call to each student to answer any questions they may have about the program and to reinforce their decision to attend the technical school.