

Erie County Technical School Director's Report September 2008

Technical Assistance Project. Our commitment to improve the academic achievement of our students through the PDE Technical Assistance Project got underway this month. Three staff members and two sending school district representatives attended a two-day workshop in New Stanton to become acquainted with the Technology Centers That Work (TCTW) initiative and school improvement practices promoted by the Education Trust.

Patty Palo, guidance counselor; Joe Salorino, Graphic Communications instructor; Joe Tucci, principal, North East; Dennis Cerami, guidance counselor, North East; and the director worked together to map out a preliminary action plan that aligns to the Key Practices of TCTW. This group, along with members of the numeracy and literacy committees will finalize the action plan for submittal to PDE by October 31.

The Key Practices for improving student achievement include:

1. *High expectations* — Motivate more students to meet high expectations by integrating high expectations into classroom practices and giving students frequent feedback
2. *Program of study* — Require each student to complete a plan of study leading them to complete a true concentration in an approved sequence of at least four technical courses and an upgraded academic core
3. *Academic studies* — Teach academic content and skills to real-world problems and projects within their career and technical studies
4. *Career/technical studies* — Provide more students access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies in high-demand fields that emphasize higher-level mathematics, science, literacy and problem-solving skills
5. *Work-based learning* — Enable students and their parents to choose from programs that integrate challenging high school technical studies and work-based learning
6. *Teachers working together* — Provide teams of teachers from several disciplines the time and support to work together to help students succeed in challenging technical and academic studies. Integrate reading, writing and speaking as strategies for learning into all parts of the curriculum and integrate mathematics and science into technical classrooms
7. *Students actively engaged* — Engage students in technical and academic classrooms in rigorous and challenging proficient-level assignments using research-based instructional strategies and technology
8. *Guidance* — Involve students and their parents in a guidance and advisement system that develops positive relationships and ensures completion of a technical concentration
9. *Extra help* — Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content
10. *Culture of continuous improvement* — Use student assessment, program evaluation data, school performance reports, program enrollment, retention and placement reports, college remediation reports, student follow-up reports and advisory committee input to continuously improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning

Feasibility Study. We have taken the first steps in conducting our feasibility study. On September 5, Chris Coughlin, of Hallgren, Restifo, Loop & Coughlin, met with members of the feasibility study steering committee. Representatives from Tower Engineering also toured the campus on that date to assess our buildings' infrastructure. The steering committee has decided to conduct interviews between Chris Coughlin and our faculty. Joe Tarasovitch is scheduling interview sessions of 3-4 faculty members for Wednesday, October 1. We are also working on interview sessions with the superintendents and operating committee.

ISO Recertification. Thanks to Natalie Fatica and all of our instructional and support staff for their efforts in our quality management system recertification audit. Our auditors were impressed with many of the aspects of our quality management system. ECTS has been committed to the ISO 9001:2000 principles since 2002 and that commitment has led to improved instruction and operations.

Director's Travel and Meetings. The director's recent and scheduled meetings include:

- *County-level Workforce Development Meeting*, Erie; September 9
- *Technical Assistance Project—Academic & Technical Achievement*; Central Westmoreland Career & Technology Center, September 15 & 16; with Patty Palo, Joe Salorino, Joe Tucci and Dennis Cerami; to create an action plan addressing academic and technical achievement
- *Meet & Discuss*, ECTS; September 17; with administrative staff and federation officers to review and discuss issues and opportunities
- *Faculty Meeting*, ECTS; September 18; faculty review of 2007-2008 NOCTI results and development of improvement plans
- *SchoolIDESX Committee*, ECTS; September 23; initial meeting with committee members to address issues and opportunities within our student information management system
- *PACTA's Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Workshop*, State College, October 6-8; participant and presenter at the initial workshop of the PIL program addressing data-driven decision making to improve student achievement