

**ERIE COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL
AGENDA ITEM**

DATE: March 18, 2011

SUBJECT: Alteration of Programs Request to PDE--3

CATEGORY: Operations

INITIATED BY: Aldo Jackson

DESCRIPTION:

In order to properly alter or curtail a course, the Joint Operating Committee needs the approval of the Secretary of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The PDE guidelines appear in 24 PS § 11-1124 Causes for Suspension. This motion deals with two standards in 24 PS § 11-1124. One standard is *the enrollment in a course has decreased at least 20% from the school year five years prior*. The other standard is *the enrollment for a course is less than ten students*.

A review of enrollments for 2011-2012 to these standards indicates five courses are eligible for alteration or curtailment. They are:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Standard</u>
1) Computer Information Systems	20% Decline
2) Construction Trades	20% Decline
3) Electrical Engineering	20% Decline
4) Networking Technologies	Course Enrollment less than 10
5) Tourism & Hospitality Management	Course Enrollment less than 10

It is very important to note that seeking and receiving permission from PDE to alter or curtail a course does not require the Joint Operating Committee to actually take action. PDE permission is required if the JOC decides to suspend professional personnel for just cause.

The director's recommendation is based on a comprehensive review of the number of returning students and the number of applicants. The director's review takes into account the feasibility of altering a course to part-time status or reducing the number of professional personnel teaching a course (e.g. number of students per course, course capacity, likelihood of changes in the number of applicants or returning students, impact on instructional effectiveness). The conclusion is the courses are at varying levels of risk for alteration, meaning it is more feasible to reduce a course to part-time status or reduce the number of professional personnel.

The director's assessment of risk is as follows:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Risk</u>
1) Construction Trades	High
2) Networking Technologies	Moderate
3) Computer Information Systems	Moderate
4) Tourism & Hospitality Management	Low
5) Electrical Engineering	Low

The risk assessment gives the operating committee options in proceeding with this motion. The committee can use the risk analysis to decide to:

- 1) Request permission for all programs
- 2) Request permission on just some programs
- 3) Not request permission on any programs

Discussions with professional personnel and federation leadership involve topics such as applications still in process, more time to recruit more students, why five years prior-why not an average, increase the number of programs not reduce the number, effort put into recruitment, effort put into retention, etc.

The reality is:

- 1) The rules are the rules
- 2) This is the best information we have 'at the time a decision is made'
- 3) These 'times' are different

Recommended Motion:

To request the approval of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to alter three courses as a result of substantial decline in course enrollments, those courses being Computer Information Systems, Construction Trades and Networking Technologies, as required by 24 PS § 11-1124.

Approved by the Joint Operating Committee of the Erie County Technical School on this 24th day of March, 2011, attested by:

James H. Bucksbee, Chair Date

Paul D. Fritz, Secretary Date

March 25, 2011

Mr. Ronald Tomalis
Acting Secretary of Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

CERTIFIED MAIL

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of the Joint Operating Committee, please accept this letter as a request of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to approve the alteration of three courses offered by the Erie County Technical School. For two courses, the basis for the request is a substantial decline in student enrollment from a period five years prior. For the other course the basis is enrollment in the course is less than ten students. The alteration in the courses could result in the suspension or furlough of professional personnel.

Since the 2006-2007 academic year, the enrollment in three courses has declined by at least 20%. They include:

<u>Program</u>	<u>06-07 Enrollment</u>	<u>11-12 Enrollment</u>	<u>% Decline</u>
Computer Information Systems	45	30	33%
Construction Trades	76	57	25%

With regard to 2011-2012 course enrollments of less than ten students, enrollment for the two courses in Networking Technologies totals 18 students. One of the courses has an enrollment of six (6) students.

As required in 24 P.S. § 11-1124, the director and the Superintendent of Record, Dr. James Tracy, Girard School District, certify the enrollments. The Joint Operating Committee of the Erie County Technical School approved this request at their meeting on March 24, 2011.

We look forward to your prompt reply. Please feel free to contact me for additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Aldo R. Jackson, Ph.D.
Director

Enclosure: Copy of Approved Board Motion
cc: Mark T. Wassell, Knox, McLaughlin, Gornall & Sennett