

**Erie County Technical School
Director's Report
March 2011**

Yes, I am Interested, But No Application

As discussed with the committee at last month's meeting, there are 645 students that visited the campus, indicated they had a favorite program, intended to apply, but did not turn in an application. Our improved marketing and recruitment process allows us to identify each student by name, district and program. With the endorsement of the superintendents and guidance counselors, ECTS will oversee focus group interviews in each district so we can better understand why these students did not turn in an application.

The 'heart and mind' of each of these 645 students holds the answer(s) to why students decide not to attend ECTS. The opportunity to 'get at' this information is far more powerful than just addressing the 34% decline in applications for 2011-2012. It holds the potential to answer the historical question as to why students decide against a technical education. Once we understand why students say 'no,' then we will be able to work within ECTS and with the districts to design messages, services and programming that enables these students to say 'yes.'

Guidance counselors are meeting with ECTS staff on Friday, April 1 to receive instructions on the focus group plan. They will be conducting the focus groups the week of April 4. We hope to have the results compiled for some preliminary analysis by the end of May.

Chapter 339 Audit Results

As will be discussed during this month's work session, the administration is reporting on our appeal of some of the findings in the Ch. 339 audit. In response to our appeal, the Bureau of Career and Technical Education changed some of the items to recommendations, while other items remained corrections. At this point, the administration has updated our corrective action plan, is asking the operating committee to approve our plan, and then we will return it to the Bureau.

Non-HPO Programs

The Pennsylvania Departments of Labor & Industry and Education are coordinating efforts to allocate state funds based on a system called High Priority Occupations (HPO). Each year, the Department of Labor and Industry reviews occupations for those that have a high employment demand and a high family-sustaining wage. The review leads to a statewide list of HPOs as well as regional lists (based on Workforce Investment Boards). After several years of discussion, the Department of Education now has guidelines and consequences for technical education programs that do not align to an HPO. The most significant consequence is declaring a program as not approved by PDE and ineligible for state vocational subsidy. The state subsidy for ECTS averages about \$500 per student.

ECTS has five programs that are non-HPO: Auto Body Repair, Automotive Technologies, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts and Tourism & Hospitality Management. We are working with the six other career and technical schools in our workforce investment board to submit a petition to our local WIB to place aligned occupations on the regional list. If the state WIB does not approve the programs for the regional list, there is an alternative program approval process in Ch. 339. PDE is insisting that CTCs follow the WIB petition process first. We will keep the operating committee apprised of our progress on this matter.

Update--District Withdrawal from Consortium

We can report some progress on the superintendents' recommendation on five ways to address lost revenue should Millcreek withdraw.

- 1) Work with the City of Erie School District to make seats available to students that have an interest in technical education. *Projected revenue is \$100,000 (20 students at \$5,000).*

Update: Dr. Lansberry met with ESD staff on this matter. With a focus on reducing expenses, the ESD did not see that a sufficient number of students would participate so that it would help reduce ESD expenses. The suggestion is on hold.

- 2) Consider enrolling adults into the high school program. Numerous CTCs across the state are doing this with a revenue benefit. *Projected revenue is \$100,000 (20 students at \$5,000).*

Update: None for this month

- 3) Work with a community college to start post-secondary programs. ECTS would create revenue through facility rental and other negotiated items. *Projected revenue is \$100,000.*

Update: As reported by Dr. Tracy at last month's JOC meeting, this suggestion is placed on hold while another initiative in the region takes shapes.

- 4) Promote enrolling charter school students into ECTS. The districts have provided their high school charter school enrollments. *Projected revenue is \$100,000 (20 students at \$5,000).*

Update: This activity is awaiting further study, a recommendation or authorization to proceed.

- 5) Reduce expenditures through program alterations, reductions or the elimination of services.

Update: A draft budget is available for review and discussion. The activity is on hold until the superintendents or JOC warrant it.

- 6) JOC members meet with MTSD board members. See if there are areas to reconcile in order to maintain MTSD's participation in the ECTS consortium.

Update: The director is anticipating that Mr. Scutella will report that he recommended that the MTSD board delay any meeting until they have more information about their plans.

Enrollment Review At-Risk Meetings

During the past month, the director has met with six faculty members and several federation officers to inform them of programs that are at-risk for program alteration or curtailment due to low enrollments. Despite the discouraging message, the staff members have been professional and respectful during and after the conversations.

Director's Travel and Meetings

The director's recent and scheduled meetings include:

- ❖ *Non-HPO Programs Work Session*; Crawford County CTC; February 28; meeting with CTC directors to plan for state approval of non-HPO programs
- ❖ *Professional Advisory Council*; ECTS; March 4; monthly meeting with superintendents
- ❖ *County-level Workforce Development Team*; Erie; March 8
- ❖ *Workforce Investment Board*; Erie; March 10 & 11; board retreat and bi-monthly board meeting