STATE ◆ DIRECTORS

National Association of State Directors
of Career Technical Education Consortium

A Look Inside: A Synopsis of CTE Trends
A Four-Part Series Analyzing State CTE Data and Initiatives
Focus: Governance
November 2010

Introduction

This brief, the first in a series of four, provides a baseline for where the state leadership for career technical education (CTE) resides. Governance has an influential role in defining a state's mission and vision for CTE, as well as leading the oversight and direction for the implementation of programs. Where CTE's leadership is housed also has a direct impact on how CTE partners and coordinates with other programs.

This brief draws its findings from a 2010 survey of CTE State Directors and compares responses to similar surveys conducted in 2003, 2005 and 2008. The 2010 survey received responses from 53 states and U.S. territories.
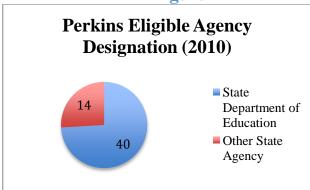
Key Findings

1) Since 2003, the agency designated as the Perkins eligible agency has remained stable for the majority of states. In 2010, 40 out of 54 states and U.S. territories designated the State Department of Education as its Perkins eligible agency.

2) Governance of postsecondary CTE programs varies significantly more than secondary governance, which generally reflects states' approach to oversight of higher education Also, an emerging trend is the devolution of programmatic control from states to local systems.

3) Due to government downsizing and state budget cuts, State Directors, the majority of whom are career employees, are seeing an increase in the scope of their responsibilities. While some fear that this is causing a diluted focus on CTE, others have taken this as an opportunity to build bridges between CTE and other related areas.

CTE Governance

CTE's governance is a reflection of the system itself - complicated. CTE serves multiple learner levels (secondary, postsecondary and adult) and is offered in a variety of settings (comprehensive high schools, middle schools, area technical centers, community colleges, technical colleges, four year college campuses, etc.) The "dose" of CTE offered at these institutions varies from exploratory to in-depth technical skills acquisition. And the strength of the connections CTE makes to education, workforce development and economic development range widely. These variables influence a state's decision on where to best house its state leadership for CTE.

Figure 1

Perkins Eligible Agency Designation (2010)

- State Department of Education: 40
- Other State Agency: 14

For the purposes of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), states select one agency to be its Perkins eligible agency. In 40 states/U.S. territories, the eligible agency is the state's Department of Education. Thirteen states and one U.S. territory identify an entity other than the State Department of Education as its eligible agency:

1. Arkansas - Department of Workforce Education
2. Colorado - Colorado Community Colleges System
3. Guam - Guam Community College
4. Hawaii - State Board for Career Technical Education – University of Hawaii
5. Idaho - Division of Professional-Technical Education
6. Kansas - Kansas Board of Regents
7. Kentucky - Department for Workforce Investment
8. Louisiana - Louisiana Community & Technical College System
9. Minnesota - Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, Office of the Chancellor
10. Montana - Board of Regents and the Montana University System
11. North Dakota - Department of Career Technical Education
12. Oklahoma - Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education
13. Washington - Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
14. Wisconsin - The Wisconsin Technical College System

Secondary Governance

While states select a single agency to serve as its Perkins eligible agency, leadership for secondary and postsecondary CTE is often located in or among multiple/different agencies or entities. Since 2003, the governance for secondary CTE has remained relatively stable with the majority of states reporting that its State Department of Education provides administrative and programmatic leadership to secondary CTE. In 2010, seven states indicated that an agency other than the State Department of Education provided administrative leadership to secondary CTE. In these states, it is usually the Perkins eligible agency that serves in this leadership role, which was either a postsecondary agency or a separate state agency.
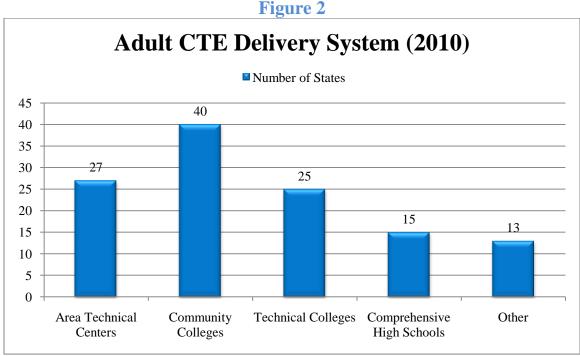
Postsecondary Governance

Postsecondary governance in education is far more diffuse and varied from state-to-state than it is in secondary education; this is no different for CTE. The majority of the states, since 2003, have consistently responded "other" when asked which state agency provides administrative and programmatic leadership to postsecondary CTE. This "other" category includes responses ranging from higher education commissions to state community college boards to local control by individual campuses. Since 2008, the shift toward local college boards having programmatic authority over

postsecondary CTE has grown. This increasing trend will impact the ability to implement statewide initiatives such as articulation and programs of study.

Adult CTE

Adult CTE programs assist adults in obtaining a new skill or upgrading an existing skill set and generally result in a certificate, certification or credential. The governance of these programs has remained relatively stable since 2008. In 2010, 16 states noted that the State Board of Education oversees adult CTE, compared to 14 in 2008. In both survey years, the majority of states responded "other" as the entity overseeing adult CTE. This category was comprised mostly of postsecondary state agencies, although 'multiple agencies' and State Departments of Labor also ranked prominently among the responses.

Because of the current state of the economy and the growth in the interest and availability of adult career pathways, adult CTE programs are experiencing increased interest. In the 2010 survey, we wanted to learn more about where these programs are offered. Community colleges are the largest provider, but interestingly, area technical centers slightly outpace technical colleges in the delivery of these programs. The "other" category includes private proprietary colleges, community-based organizations, prison based programs, university systems, adult education centers and vocational/technical schools.

Figure 2

Adult CTE Delivery System (2010)
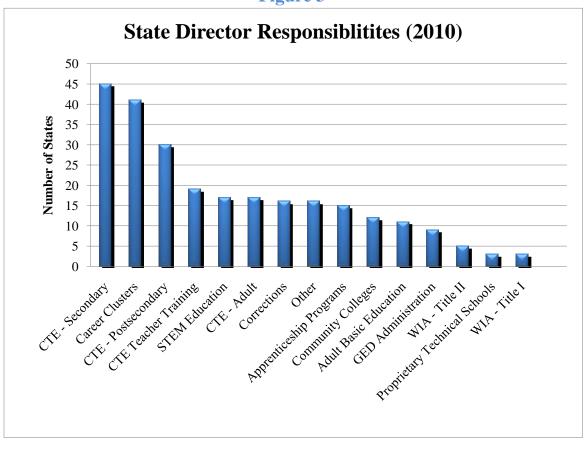
State Director Leadership

Regardless of the agency that administers CTE, the State Director holds a critical leadership position. Since 2003, the significant majority of State Directors are and continue to be career employees.

Table 1

	2003	2005	2008	2010
Career Employee	19	39	41	39
Political Appointee	7	6	8	6

As CTE has evolved to meet the needs of a fluctuating economy and workforce, so has the scope and breadth of the responsibilities of the State Director. The 2003, 2005 and 2008 surveys asked State Directors to list their responsibilities, which were quite varied and made it difficult to compile. In the 2010 survey, we asked State Directors to choose from a list of program areas so that we could have more comparability in the responses. Since 2003, the clear trend is that many State Directors have added new programs to their portfolio of responsibilities. One reason for the increase in responsibilities is government downsizing, specifically a decline in state staff, as budgets decrease. The impact of these circumstances remains in question. The situation may dilute the focus of CTE within states; however it may create opportunities for State Directors to build bridges between CTE and related areas such as high school improvement or workforce development.

Figure 3

State Director Responsiblitites (2010)

The "other" category, which drew a number of responses, included areas ranging from leading the state's high school reform efforts, financial literacy, technical institutes and 2-year postsecondary education.

Conclusion

The complexity and diversity of CTE governance creates both opportunity and challenges. This is also true as State Directors' responsibilities increase. The opportunities to build partnerships and collaboration among programs occur when leadership and governance are consolidated. However, the consolidation of responsibilities and governance may also present concerns with focus and loss of programmatic identity. The November 2010 elections are bringing unprecedented change to state governments; the impact on CTE governance and current leadership is uncertain. NASDCTEc hopes that the principles in *Reflect, Transform, Lead: A Vision for Career Technical Education*,[i] which all states expressed support for, can transcend political transitions and instead serve as a guidepost for the new leadership to build upon.

The key to successful programs is not only having the right leadership to guide the system but also having the right individuals teaching in CTE programs. Part II of this series highlights current and projected secondary teacher and postsecondary instructor shortages.

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[i] NASDCTEc, *Reflect, Transform, Lead: A New Vision for Career Technical Education*, March 2010.
http://www.careertech.org/uploaded_files/Vision_Paper_PDF_to_Download_0d.pdf