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## LEGAL UPDATE

Legal Services Division



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### **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING — DECEMBER 12, 2019**

**Purpose.** *Legal updates are prepared by the nonpartisan Legal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency. A legal update is intended to provide legislators, legislative staff, and other persons interested in legislative matters with summaries of recent meetings, court decisions, Attorney General Opinions, regulatory actions, federal actions, and other occurrences of a legal nature that may be pertinent to the General Assembly's consideration of a topic. Although an update may identify issues for consideration by the General Assembly, it should not be interpreted as advocating any particular course of action.*

**Co-chairperson:** Senator Tim Kraayenbrink

**Co-chairperson:** Representative David Kerr

**Overview.** The Legislative Council authorized the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Implementation Study Committee, granted the committee one meeting date, charged the committee to “study administrative rules related to career and technical training and work-based learning programs in consultation with former members of the Secondary Career and Technical Programming Task Force, including an assessment of the membership of the regional career and technical education planning partnerships to assure that all affected groups have substantial representation,” and directed the committee to submit its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly for consideration during the 2020 Legislative Session.

**CTE in Iowa and Leveraging Perkins V.** Mr. Jeremy Varner, Administrator, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation, Iowa Department of Education (DE) and Mr. Eric St. Clair, Consultant, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation, DE, provided an overview of CTE in Iowa following the enactment of House File 604 (2013 Iowa Acts, ch 141, section 52), which established the Secondary Career and Technical Programming Task Force, and the enactment of House File 2392 (2016 Iowa Acts, ch 1108), the language of which was largely based on the recommendations of the task force. The task force and HF 2392 focused on three themes: career and academic planning, ensuring high quality CTE programs with business-driven advisory committees and ongoing review and approval of such programs, and regional planning because CTE is capital-intensive and robust offerings are expensive and require a critical mass of students and stakeholder partnerships to expand opportunities to include globally competitive programs.

Mr. Varner observed that the provisions implemented since 2016 have achieved results. Institutions are investing funds in CTE, improving programs, sharing resources and coordinating delivery, expanding college credit opportunities, and changing perceptions about skilled career areas. However, he noted there is much to be done to eliminate disparities and inefficiencies and to help students explore and prepare for high-demand careers. The General Assembly has taken steps to help with this work by increasing state CTE funds, creating summer college credit programs in support of the Future Ready Iowa Initiative, and establishing a Career Academy Incentive Fund. He noted that the fears regarding administrative rules have proven unfounded. His division is currently working to develop a state plan that will align with the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Public Law No. 115-224), commonly referred to as Perkins V, and to address gaps and align state efforts. Perkins V provides funding for CTE in the state's schools and colleges. Currently, there are 9,000 CTE programs in Iowa's high schools, more than 1,300 programs in Iowa's community colleges, and 100,000

Iowa students are enrolled in CTE coursework annually. Mr. Varner observed that skill and labor shortages hamper economic growth; unskilled or under-skilled Iowans face economic insecurity.

Mr. St. Clair discussed the current state of CTE in Iowa, including data relating to CTE offerings, enrollment, and demographics. He noted that reforms are ongoing, foremost being the Future Ready Iowa Initiative and related state workforce investments and Perkins V. He also presented information relating to the redesign of CTE following HF 604, the Secondary CTE Task Force recommendations, and HF 2392; the CTE service areas; regional planning partnerships; stakeholder engagement; and the department's current efforts to integrate the state's CTE system with Perkins V. He identified the general themes, focus areas, and priorities of Perkins V, and described the planning timeline for completion of the four-year state plan under Perkins V. Under the timeline, the plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in April of 2020.

**Perspectives from Secondary Career and Technical Programming Task Force Members.** Mr. Murray Fenn, CTE Consultant, Green Hills Area Education Agency (AEA); Ms. Dana Lampe, Technology Instructional Coach and Future Business Leaders of America Adviser, Linn-Mar Community School District; Ms. Kathleen Nacos-Burds, Vice President of Learning and Student Success, Northeast Iowa Community College; and Mr. Ken Sagar, President, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, provided an overview of CTE in Iowa since 2016 from their perspectives as former members of the task force.

Mr. Fenn identified career and academic plans as the chief topic of concern in his AEA. Regional planning partnerships in the area have asked school districts to submit their plans to the AEA. He noted the program approval process has helped focus the partnerships, and caused instructors, schools, and community colleges to work more collaboratively and to integrate academic and CTE coursework. He stated that HF 2392 has done a great job of focusing the state Perkins V matching funds to CTE.

Mr. Sagar noted that labor is partnering with schools and postsecondary institutions on job fairs, visits to construction sites, and pre-apprenticeship training programs to make students aware of the value of a variety of trade jobs, many of which demand high levels of mathematics and science knowledge. He observed that any recommendations made relating to CTE in Iowa must receive funding and other support if the recommendations are to have any effect. Iowa's present and future infrastructure depends on tradespeople, he stated.

Dr. Nacos-Burds noted that the regional planning partnerships have brought all of the area's schools, the AEA, the community college, and business and industry together to talk collaboratively about priorities and to learn from each other in order to make greater progress in the area. She stated that the community college has added success coaches in every area school to review student career plans. Through accreditation and program approval, the community college and school districts work closer to make curricula tighter, allowing students to achieve college credit and possibly graduate high school with an associate's degree. However, she observed, staying current and providing robust programs with state-of-the-art technology is expensive. The community college is looking at models for partnering with business and industry to share resources and provide more certifications and apprenticeships with cutting edge equipment. Relationship building is the biggest achievement accomplished by the legislation.

Ms. Lampe noted that 70 percent of students take CTE coursework, but often as electives. It is not required that students complete a CTE program of study. She opined that schools need more guidance counselors, support, and resources to assist students to become career and college ready. Students who are involved in high school organizations have a higher rate of graduation, but their monetary costs for participating can be relatively high. Offering incentives that help pay organization dues and participation costs could remove some of the barriers to student participation.

**Committee Discussion.** Mr. Varner noted that school districts, in order to comply with Iowa Code section 279.61, must utilize a career information system that meets state standards and is approved by the department. He observed that Iowa is ranked among the top three states in concurrent enrollment opportunities in terms of participating students. There is also robust infrastructure in Iowa's schools and the state is competitive with other states. Issues discussed by committee members and presenters

included the difficulty of engaging employers to participate in CTE programs, particularly in certain rural areas but even in some urban areas; whether regional partnerships are reflective of their areas; the career planning engaged in by school districts and their students and access to such plans by partnerships; raising the compulsory attendance age; focusing on students at earlier grade levels and providing information to the parents and legal custodians of such students to make them aware of CTE opportunities, the value of CTE, and scholarships and grants available for postsecondary CTE coursework; streamlining the program approval process; participation by chambers of commerce; career exploration activities, work-based learning experiences, internships, and apprenticeships; collaborations with organizations such as Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (IJAG) and Girls Who Code; career pathways; incorporation of the Iowa Core in CTE coursework; and CTE summer programs.

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