

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

Enrollment and Programs

- 93,000 students; 81 ACTES and 302 district high schools
- Modest increase in ACTES; absolute decline in district HSs
- Students with disabilities overrepresented in CTE

Outcomes

- Completion rate: 54%
 - ACTES: 70-75%; District HSs: 35%
- Minority completion rate lower than for whites
 - African-Americans in district CTE: 25% of enrollments; 15% of completions
- Rigorous course-taking beginning to rise...in English, Algebra, Sciences...
- But success on PSSA disappointing
 - 20 percent of 11th graders scored at or above state average
- Technical skills need improvement
 - Less than half of students achieve competency levels at or above national norms
 - Only 514 certificates last year (118 in cosmetology)



FINDINGS: **STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE**

Academic Rigor

- Integrate CTE reform with overall high school reform
- Insist on high standards for all students

Industry Relevance

- Strengthen connections to employers and their needs
- Adopt industry-recognized skill standards

Postsecondary Connections

- Smooth the progression from secondary CTE to postsecondary programs

State Leadership

- Invest in system capacity and teacher professionalism
- Strengthen program oversight and review processes



RECOMMENDATIONS: SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

Academic Rigor

- Ensure remediation for CTE students with weak academic preparation
- No separate academic track for vocational students

Industry Relevance

- Use relevant labor market data and give priority to high-wage, high-demand programs
- Eliminate obsolete, ineffective programs
- Apply industry-recognized standards to technical programs wherever possible

Postsecondary Connections

- Strengthen incentives for articulation between secondary CTE and college programs, including dual enrollment programs
- Allow ACTESs with quality programs to grant college credit for approved (non-duplicative) programs

State Leadership

- Set clear, specific goals for CTE performance improvement
- Create Innovation Fund to encourage expansion of quality programs
- Expand PDE program review to stress improvement, results

