

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Position Statement on the Career Pathways Initiative

Adopted March 4, 2009

One of the many goals of education is to prepare students to successfully enter the workforce. A strong academic foundation and preparation for career opportunities are important educational components for Connecticut students whether they plan to enter the workforce immediately after high school or after attending a postsecondary program. Students can benefit from participation in educational programs which provide a Coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career-related courses under the career pathways initiative. A career pathway is used to develop an individual student success plan which includes a strong academic core, electives within a career pathway or other areas of interest, opportunities to earn college credit while in high school, experiential learning and transition to postsecondary education. Extending learning opportunities beyond the classroom walls reinforces and enhances essential academic, technical and employability skills and knowledge that can be transferred across a wide range of professions. Student achievement can be raised through participation in learning experiences that require the application of knowledge and skills in real-life situations. The State Board of Education believes that, through this set of experiences, more students will attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve in postsecondary education and the workplace and continue learning throughout their lives. The Board, therefore, encourages all school districts to participate in the Career Pathways Initiative and to augment school-based instruction with career learning. It further supports collaboration between the business and education communities to provide students with opportunities to connect the educational experience to the employment world, to make informed career decisions, and to contribute as citizens of their communities.

The Career Pathways Initiative provides:

- a solid academic foundation;
- an integrated program of studies that combines theory and learning through the acquisition of higher-level academic, technical and employability skills in one or more career clusters, which are groups of occupations sharing a common set of skills and knowledge;
- opportunities for students to receive the Connecticut Career Certificate, a portable credential that provides employers and higher education institutions with consistent validation of the skills necessary to succeed as prospective employees and students;
- relevance to educational experiences by helping students relate classroom learning to real-life situations, become more actively engaged in learning and develop an awareness of their interests, skills and career and postsecondary options;
- a variety of learning environments and individualized methods of assessment, such as the career portfolio and career certificate;
- an understanding of state, regional, national and global economies, which will help students make informed choices about their adult work lives; and
- reinforcement of the belief that every student should have the opportunity to participate in programs and occupations regardless of gender, and develop an understanding of diversity in the workplace, as well as in our schools.

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Completion of high school academic courses and acquisition of a diploma alone are no longer adequate to prepare all individuals for lifelong economic sufficiency. As part of a continuum of learning that progresses throughout life, the Career Pathways Initiative forms a solid foundation for continued learning in postsecondary institutions and the workplace.