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**IMPLEMENTING THE BOARD VISION FOR
VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL
EDUCATION IN IOWA: RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR ADOPTION**

**Division of Community Colleges
Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education**

June 17, 1992

VISION FOR VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN IOWA

As the Iowa State Board of Education considered the approval of the Three-Year State Plan for Vocational Education in Iowa, the Board decided that it must take a leadership role in shaping the direction for vocational-technical education. Consequently, the Board set a strategic goal to "establish a vision for the future of vocational-technical education in Iowa."

A 10-member task force composed of representatives of secondary schools, community colleges, the State Council on Vocational Education, and teacher preparation institutions was charged with developing recommendations to assist the Board. The Task force was instructed to consider current and emerging issues, including work force composition and future skill requirements, state and federal legislation related to vocational education, and major activities such as the world-class schools initiative.

It was to develop recommendations on: (a) the roles and relationships between secondary and postsecondary institutions; and (b) strategies to enhance the delivery of vocational education programs and services to secondary and postsecondary students. The Task Force submitted recommendations on a vision and a new paradigm in February 1992.

Based upon the recommendations of the Task Force, the Board adopted a vision and paradigm for vocational-technical education in Iowa in February 1992. This action was taken in concert with "**Education is Iowa's Future: The State Plan for Educational Excellence in the 21st Century**". The Board's vision stresses provision of opportunities for all learners to have access and choice in preparation for living in an international society, competing in a global and dynamic work force, and continuing lifelong learning. Some guiding principles include:

- access for diverse populations;
- high quality, dynamic programs that provide for achievement of academic and vocational-technical skills;
- collaboration between school districts and community colleges;
- partnerships (or collaboration) with business, industry, labor and other educational entities; and
- state leadership in encouraging cooperation.

The roles of secondary and postsecondary institutions for the delivery of vocational education were defined. Secondary institutions are to concentrate on exploratory and basic workplace skill development. This training is intended to permit students to explore a variety of career

opportunities and to prepare them for employment or a variety of postsecondary options, including preparatory vocational education at the community college, apprenticeship, or continued education at a four-year institution. Community colleges are to concentrate on preparation for employment or preparatory skill development (including training and restraining) tied to identified current and emerging employer needs. Emphasis for the development and delivery of programs is on coordination between the secondary schools and the community colleges.

The following goals for vocational-technical education were developed by the Task Force and adopted by the Board.

Goal 1 – Quality

All vocational and technical education programs will guarantee that students completing programs and courses will acquire skills, attitudes, and knowledge which meet or exceed both current and emerging employer and individual needs.

Goal 2 – Access

All citizens in the state of Iowa will have unrestricted access to a diverse selection of vocational-technical education programs that coincide with the real and emerging employment opportunities in this region of the nation. This access will start at the secondary level and continue with opportunities for additional career preparation in the postsecondary system. All programming will exceed the minimums specified in the *Code of Iowa* and will be equally accessible to all persons who can benefit.

Goal 3 – Diversity

Enrollments in all vocational education programs will reflect greater participation from groups formerly underrepresented. Necessary supportive services will be provided to assure entrance to and successful completion of vocational-technical programs.

Goal 4 – Delivery

Quality vocational education will be available for all students through state-of-the-art technology and innovative concepts developed and articulated through the state's various delivery systems.

Goal 5 -- Resources

More effective use of human, physical, and financial resources will be made in the delivery (of services) through sharing among all vocational education delivery systems in order to support student achievement and program development.

Goal 6 -- Image

Iowa residents will perceive vocational-technical education as playing a major role in empowering youth and adults to contribute to state economic goals and society in general.

Goal 7 -- Career-Focused Education

A comprehensive, statewide system of career development and guidance programs will be established by all elementary-secondary schools and community colleges. These programs involve activities which provide assistance to youth and adults in making informed choices.

Goal 8 -- Accountability

The effectiveness of vocational-technical programs and delivery of services will be documented to support planning, policy development, and legislation.

The recommendations below were developed based upon the results of the Iowa Vocational Needs Assessment (Supplemental) which was conducted by the Department in March 1992 (see Attachment I). The primary purpose of the assessment was to determine the quality of programs in terms of their ability to meet the labor market needs and training needs of secondary, postsecondary, and adult students. The results of the study provide the basis for the establishment of the policy statement, the proposed goals for program improvement, and the use of federal vocational funds. However, the data also provides information essential to the actualization of the Board's vision for vocational-technical education.

Recommendations Based Upon Supplemental Vocational Needs Assessment

I. Policy

State Board policy direction is generally used to set long-term strategies to address the most pressing problems in education. The vision established by the Board and the goal related to quality

supports strengthening programs to ensure that students will acquire the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to meet or exceed both current and emerging employer needs.

The needs assessment indicated a high need for tech-prep program establishment based upon the responses of secondary and postsecondary respondents. It was indicated that over 83 percent of secondary and 98 percent of postsecondary programs rarely have established tech-prep programs which lead to specific two-year associate degrees.

The establishment of tech-prep programs will provide rigorous vocational-technical education programs which are designed to enhance student achievement and opportunities for employment, apprenticeship, and continued education.

Therefore, it is recommended that the State Board of Education endorse the establishment and implementation of tech-prep programs leading to two-year associate degrees by secondary schools and community colleges.

II. Goals

Based upon the identification of the areas of greatest perceived need for both secondary and postsecondary institutions, the following goals are proposed for improving the quality of vocational technical education in Iowa. These goals were based on our ranking of the top 6 of 12 areas of need.

- A. Common Goals for Secondary and Postsecondary Vocational Programs
 1. To increase linkage between secondary and postsecondary programs.
 2. To improve academic and occupational competency development.
- B. Goals for Secondary Vocational Programs
 1. To increase the capacity to assist students with the transition from school-to-work.
 2. To increase the relevance and responsiveness of local programs to the labor market, and current and emerging needs.
 3. To improve the use of performance-based student assessment.
- C. Goals for Postsecondary Vocational Programs
 1. To increase the ability of the institutions to meet the diverse needs of students who are members of special populations.

2. To increase emphasis on higher order thinking, listening, team work, goal-setting, negotiations, organized effectiveness, and leadership skills.
3. To provide comprehensive instruction in all aspects of an industry/occupational field.
4. To improve vocational guidance services for special populations.

III. Program Improvement Activities

The needs assessment indicated a high need to improve programs in several curricular and instructional areas. These needs were reflected in the goal statements. To ensure improvement in these areas, it is recommended that the state utilize state leadership funds to provide leadership and technical assistance to local schools and community colleges with the following:

- A. The improvement of curriculum, student assessment, and articulation to ensure that students are prepared for successful entry and advancement in the work force, apprenticeship programs, and other continuing education opportunities.
- B. The utilization of input from employers and labor market information in order to develop a world-class work force that is responsive to current and emerging employment opportunities.
- C. The improvement of the provision of supportive services to ensure the full and equitable participation for members of special populations.
- D. The assurance that staff development opportunities are readily accessible to ensure that instructors of vocational-technical education programs are successful in providing all students with experiences that will enable their successful entry and advancement in the work force, apprenticeship, and/or other continuing education opportunities.

IV. Funds

The Board, in adopting its vision for vocational-technical education in February 1992, recognized that resources are essential for improvement of the quality of vocational programs delivered. When the Board adopted the recommendations of the Task Force, it recognized that resources are finite and that collaboration between high schools and community colleges is essential to serving the needs of the state.

Based upon the recommendation of the Task Force, the Board adopted a goal on resources to support vocational programs. That goal emphasizes more effective use of financial resources through sharing among both secondary and postsecondary delivery systems. Federal funds must be used in conjunction with resources available from the state and other sources.

Funds to support vocational programs are derived from federal, state, and local sources. For fiscal year 1991, secondary career and vocational courses and programs were supported as follows: \$54.7 million from the state; \$34.1 million from local taxes; and \$0.9 million from federal Carl Perkins funds. Community college support was as follows: \$36 million in state funds; \$23.8 million in tuition and fees; \$4 million in federal Carl Perkins funds; and \$0.46 million in local taxes. Federal resources comprise one percent (1%) of the vocational expenditures for secondary schools and eight (8%) percent of expenditures for community colleges (see Attachment 2).

The Carl Perkins Act stipulates that the Board has the authority and responsibility for allocation of funds for improvement of secondary and postsecondary programs. In order to establish an allocation, the state was required to determine program need as a basis for distribution of funds. The State Plan must reflect the results of the needs assessment.

The results of the assessment reported the perceptions of secondary and postsecondary personnel on the incorporation of selected criteria and indicators in vocational program offerings. Tables 1 and 2 (of the attached needs assessment report) show the top six areas of need for program improvement, including their percentage of incorporation rating (level of need). Tables 3 and 4 (in the needs assessment report) reflect the subsequent ranking. These identified areas should be funded in order to constructively impact program development and improvement.

The Board adopted the following allocations for distribution of federal vocational funds in April 1991 and included them in the Iowa Three-Year State Plan for Vocational Education (Fiscal Years 1992-1994):

Fiscal 91-92	Secondary 28%;	Postsecondary 72%
Fiscal 92-93	Secondary 50%;	Postsecondary 50%
Fiscal 93-94	Secondary 66%;	Postsecondary 34%

The following funding recommendations are provided for Board consideration based upon the results of the needs assessment and the resulting goals for program improvement:

- A. It is recommended that the allocation adopted by the Board in April 1991 for fiscal year 1993 be continued and used to address the above goals and needs identified in the quantitative needs assessment.**

Fiscal Year 92-93

Secondary 50%; Postsecondary 50%

Implications:

1. Federal funds must be used to accomplish state goals based upon the defined needs resulting from the assessment.
 2. This fiscal year 1993 allocation enables institutions to continue planning programs and services in support of vocational-technical education.
 3. This allocation supports the federal intent for improvement of secondary programs to meet the needs of economically disadvantaged and individuals with disabilities with the goals of dropout prevention, developing more productive workers and decreasing the numbers of persons dependent on the welfare system.
 4. Vocational program planning over the past year is supported based upon projected use of funds in fiscal year 1993.
 5. Secondary federal funds would increase by approximately \$1.9 million in fiscal year 1993.
 6. Postsecondary federal funds would decrease by approximately \$1.4 million in fiscal year 1993.
- B. It is recommended that the State Board study allocation of funds to address state goals and needs for fiscal year 1994 and beyond based on the identified needs from the quantitative assessment, the recommendations of the Visioning Task Force report, and other new and emerging information, including state and federal resources, and that the Board make a decision by 1993.**

Implications:

1. The needs assessment provided quantifiable data on the needs of secondary schools and community colleges. The six priority

areas identified were used to establish goals for program improvement. These should be funded in order to constructively impact program development.

2. The suggested timeframe for consideration would allow the state to finalize any amendments for the State Plan, including development of the plan components to update the plan through fiscal year 1996. The Carl Perkins Act is to be funded for five years. However, states were required to submit a three-year plan with an amendment to the plan to be developed by the third year of the funding cycle (fiscal year 1994).
3. Due to the short time allowed between the analysis of the data and the development of the report, there has been limited time for vocational personnel to study the information. Although the data are compelling and demonstrate significant needs within the vocational education system, time is needed for staff to discuss the data and its implications with the field.
4. During the meeting with interested persons from the field held on June 12, 1992, it was requested that the Board not consider a recommendation in this area in order to allow time for vocational personnel to study the data and achieve consensus on future use of federal resources. In addition, comments submitted on June 15, 1992, indicate a need for the above. (See Attachments 3 and 4.)
5. The Board adopted vision and paradigm for vocational-technical education emphasizes that partnership and collaboration must occur to ensure the development and delivery of quality programs designed to meet the needs of individuals and the work force.
6. Consortia have developed over the past year to support the development of vocational programs across the state. This collaboration between the secondary schools and the community colleges should be supported.
7. The Iowa Vocational Needs Assessment provided a significant amount of data on programs; therefore, it will not be necessary to conduct another needs assessment in the near future. Data on the quality of programs at both the secondary and postsecondary levels have been collected and needs have been identified. These needs, which provide the foundation for the proposed goals, will be used as a basis for improvement of vocational-technical programs.

- C. **It is also recommended that local districts and/or consortia and community colleges be required to utilize funds received through the Perkins Act to improve selected programs per the requirement of the Act, in areas identified for program improvement in the goal statements.**

Although the above recommendations on funding relates to the use of federal funds, state resources will be required to accomplish the goals.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the above recommendations on policy, goals, program improvement, and funds for incorporation in the Iowa Three-Year State Plan for Vocational Education.