

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER'S CORNER FEATURING GUEST WRITER, DICK RAY



Tennessee Board of Education Member Richard (Dick) Ray of Maryville represents Congressional District 2. Mr. Ray is a former Plant Manager at Alcoa, Inc. We asked Mr. Ray to share his perspective of the Tennessee Diploma Project.

In 1992 the Tennessee General Assembly passed the Educational Improvement Act. This law created a two-path system for high school graduation. An essential component of this legislation was a requirement that all students complete Algebra One. It could be taught by the applied or theoretical method but regardless of the pedagogy the courses were to be of equal rigor. Career and Technical Education (CTE) students were traditionally assigned to the applied tract and college bound students the more traditional path. The intent was genuine, but for CTE students it became a lower expectation.

In 2005 a statewide group of CTE stakeholders was formed. The group was called the "2020 Vision" committee. It included CTE directors, DOE staff, and State Board of Education, and post secondary educators among others. When the group was formed, one of the key focus issues was rigor in the curriculum and assessment that would accurately reflect how well CTE students were prepared for post secondary education and the world of work.

Governor Bredesen had similar thoughts. He felt education leaders had over-embellished how well Tennessee students were doing when compared to the rest of the nation, and that students were not nearly as well prepared to meet the economic demands of this century. To rectify this he asked The National

Governor's Association to include Tennessee with 34 other states in the American Diploma Project—a consortium of states focused on preparing students to have legitimate choices after graduation and meet the challenges of the future. Our participation would require our state to take a serious look at what we teach, and how we measure learning. It also meant that Tennessee would need to create a system that challenges all students, not just those perceived to be the brightest, at high levels. Core subjects had to be added. For example, Algebra II is now a required mathematics course along with Algebra I and Geometry. Also, a student must take either physics or chemistry and a high-level fourth year mathematics course. This gives every student the opportunity to pursue a post secondary course of study.

If Tennesseans were to enjoy the quality of life we have come to expect, the two-path system of 1992 would need to vanish and a more equitable system of education would need to take its place. No employer wants to hire a graduate who took the "lesser path" and no state should endorse a program that does not maximize a child's potential. With the reality of global competition and loss of good jobs being transferred overseas our CTE graduates must be competitive. The State Board and Department of Education with strong backing and initiatives from CTE directors have provided a pathway for them to accomplish this. Now it is up to the school systems, teachers, and students to make it happen.



SCOR
Student Perspective
by
Chelsea Doss
National Southern Region
Vice President
National FFA Organization

"The skills learned through Career and Technical Education are specific, measurable, and invaluable to employees. Every student should experience CTE; furthermore, every CTE student should experience the most intricate components of the math, science, and reading curriculum that their school has to offer. When we provide our students with the opportunity to succeed at a higher level in all aspects of education, we are producing more capable leaders for our home, community, state, and nation."

METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CAREER EXPLORATION FAIR

by Donna Gilley, CTE Director

In 2006, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) received a federal grant to implement Small Learning Communities in its comprehensive high schools. As a part of this grant, career academies have been organized with Career and Technical Education (CTE) as an integral part of high school reform efforts. In order to make students aware of the academy structure and of career opportunities, a freshman seminar course was designed for ninth grade students. This course was created by Lynn Anderson, SLG Project Specialist, in collaboration with Donna Gilley and Kelly Henderson, MNPS CTE Coordinators; and CTE teachers. On November 6, 2009, at the Nashville Convention Center more than 3,200 ninth grade students attended the first annual Career Exploration Fair as a part of the course requirements of freshman seminar.

Prior to the event, students completed pre-fair interest inventories and heard from multiple career guest speakers from the MNPS Speakers Bureau, a joint effort between MNPS and the PENCIL foundation. During the Career Exploration Fair, students, equipped with career fair workbooks, were charged with interviewing no fewer than five career role models from the vast array of choices at the event. Following the event, students were to continue researching and investigating careers while relating their interests, abilities, and findings to the career academy offerings within MNPS high schools. As a part of this ongoing research, CTE teachers in the schools work jointly with freshman seminar teachers to help students understand the breadth of career and technical education and to discover the ways it will benefit them in the future.

Over 250 different careers were represented at the career fair, all of which require some type of education and training past high school, from college degrees to apprenticeship programs. All exhibitors were asked to provide students with interactive opportunities, and they did. The students operated heavy equipment training simulators, bandaged wounds, painted, played musical instruments with studio musicians, walked an I-beam complete with safety harness, interacted with Deloitte employees in California via video conferencing, and much more. Career role models ranged from doctors, architects, hotel managers, chefs, iron workers, crane operators, musicians, police officers, carpenters, actors, financial planners, entertainment lawyers, and more.

Many partners from the community invested time, money, and energy for these students. Partners included the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, especially Education Liaison Chelsea Parker, Nashville Convention Center, Major's Office, CEO Champions, Shoney's, Trevecca University, Nashville Visitors Bureau, and Middle Tennessee Building Trades. Within MNPS, the Director's Office, Career and Technical Education, MNPS' Career Partnership Councils, Transportation, Maintenance, Safety, Learning and Leading, ELL, and many others worked together for the overwhelming success of the Career Exploration Fair.



"The Career Exploration Fair was powerful," said Starr Herrman, MNPS Director of Career Academies, "A job well done!"



CTE COMPETENCY ATTAINMENT RUBRIC PILOT 2 UNDERWAY

Forty-eight school systems are participating in the CTE Competency Attainment Rubric Pilot 2. Kendra Kisbeth, a Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher at Cocke County High School, is participating in the Pilot. Kendra states, "Learning to implement the new Rubric into the existing competency reporting process has been an interesting experience. It has challenged me, as a teacher, to incorporate more rigorous assignments into my coursework, as well as, become a stronger evaluator of student success. The Rubric requires CTE teachers to move from a binary process of reporting (mastery vs. non-mastery) to addressing four levels of student achievement. This alteration has allowed me a better vision of what "mastery" looks like. The Rubric has also prompted me to raise the level of expectation in my classroom and is allowing my students to achieve greater success in Career and Technical Education."

A Best Practice on the Tennessee College & Career Planning System at Bolton High School, Arlington, Tennessee

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS: CAREER EXPLORATION & FINANCIAL PREPARATION

by Mason Grace, Teacher

At Bolton High School in Arlington, Tennessee, the Tennessee College and Career Planning System (TCCPS), powered by Kuder® is utilized by students in the required Personal Finance class. This class is designed to help prepare students for their financial futures with lessons on banking, budgeting, career searching, and debt management. The system is introduced early in the semester to allow students ample time to get acquainted with its features.

At the beginning of the semester, several days are designated to introducing the TCCPS, helping students register, and taking the Kuder® Career Search with Person Match interest assessment and Kuder® Skills Assessment. After assessments are completed, a set of questions is distributed to allow students to evaluate what they learned about themselves from the two assessments and how their skills and interests compare to each other. The questionnaire helps students to begin thinking about which career paths might best fit and prepare them for the next activity.

The second activity is a scavenger hunt that allows students to further explore the system and its many resources. A major part of this assignment requires students to explore and identify an occupation that corresponds with a career cluster that ranked high on their assessment scores. Once an occupation is chosen, they use the TCCPS to find a local business where that occupation is performed and interview a person in that occupation. Students perform this activity for their top two career clusters.

After several weeks of assessments, research, and interviews, the TCCPS connects students with adults in the workforce in their field of interest and is a valuable tool for helping them decide on majors, colleges, and careers. For students who did not have a career path in mind before beginning the lesson, the TCCPS has proven to help give them a starting place for researching career fields and specific occupations.

One of the curriculum standards is that students will “interpret factors affecting career choices and potential income.” The TCCPS is a highly effective resource for accomplishing this standard and creating a realistic picture of career and income expectations. Once

students have completed these activities and this class, they are better equipped to find occupations that align with their skills and interests, and have discovered first-hand what it takes to be successful in that specific industry. For more information, go to: www.planningyourdreams.org

Commissioner James G. Neeley receives the 2009 JAG National Government Leader Award

by Betsy Houston

Commissioner James G. Neeley was awarded the 2009 JAG National Government Leader Award for his expert guidance and commitment to the youth of Tennessee. Under his tenure as Commissioner of Labor & Workforce Development, Commissioner Neeley has built a strong partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education to support students “at promise”. During the past six years, JAG-Tennessee has grown incrementally from implementing programs in 35 to 51 high schools and producing a 2008 graduation rate of 97.13% and a placement rate of 84.99%. Commissioner Neeley is a true leader in the workforce development arena, not only for youth, but for all citizens of Tennessee.

Several JAG students attending the 2009 National Student Leadership Conference placed in competitive events. Lucas Hitechew, Cloudland High School in Carter County, placed 1st in Public Speaking. His teacher is Herman Boone. Felix Garcia, Centennial High School in Williamson County, placed 1st in the Program Cover contest. His teacher is Debra Odom. Amanda Mays, Fairview High School in Williamson County, placed 3rd for Employability Skills. Louchelle Lincoln, also from Fairview High School, won 5th place in the Program Cover contest. Their teacher is Vickie Parsons. A new US Citizen, Dennis Khadartsev, Centennial High School in Williamson County, helped lay the wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Memorial Cemetery while at the NSLC.



CAREER-PLANNING SIMPLIFIED

by Callie Wise, TCIDS Program
Tennessee Board of Regents

The famous quote by Lao Tzu about teaching a man to fish will feed him for a lifetime is at the heart of most educational and counseling practices. This philosophy is at the heart of TCIDS (Tennessee Career Information Delivery System—<http://tcids.tbr.edu>). TCIDS provides a free online career planning resource for Tennesseans to achieve career goals, self-sufficiency, and independence in career planning.

TCIDS is the central site offering career and college interest surveys for middle and high school students as well as adults, career and college databases with educational requirements and salary information on over 900 occupations, and many other resources. One of the most popular links is **The Learning Express Library**—a free link from the Tennessee Electronic Library—provides free practice tests, skill-building courses, and eBooks on hundreds of different topics such as math, writing, ACT/SAT prep, GED prep, and professional certification and licensure tests (i.e. cosmetology, electrician, nursing, teaching, etc.).

Two affiliate sites are **Pathways** and **The Virtual Career Center**. Pathways (<http://pathways.tbr.edu>) is the official website for the new CTE Programs of Study approved by the Tennessee Department of Education. Every program of study spreadsheet includes recommended courses for graduation, high demand, high wage, and high skill jobs for Tennessee, degree requirements for these jobs, and state college and university options for each job's educational requirements. Pathways also has a link to the admissions office of every public and private college in Tennessee. This website assists counselors with developing 4-6 year plans with their students.

The Virtual Career Center (<http://careers.rodg.org>) is a free job search resource for all Tennesseans. Links provide assistance with resume writing, interviewing, and managing a job search. In fall 2008, a pilot program called the **Virtual Career Fair** was held for middle school students to “chat” with Tennessee employers. The **next Virtual Career Fair will be held March 23-24, 2010**. Details can be found on the Virtual Career Center website.

TCIDS is the ultimate resource for students, counselors, and parents to develop long-term career goals and to build awareness of resources that can help our young citizens to be productive and successful.

RUS GRANT HELPS ROANE STATE EXTEND REACH OF DUAL STUDIES

Roane State Community College's dual studies program, which allows high school students to earn college credit and high school credit at the same time, has grown tremendously. In fall 2004, 103 students took dual studies courses. In fall 2009, 682 students were enrolled in dual studies. Thanks to cutting edge technology purchased through a \$265,000 grant received in the Fall of 2008 from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program (RUS),



Roane State is expanding the dual studies program. The college added new interactive classrooms at York Institute, Oneida High School, Clarkrange High School and Jellico High School. Roane State campuses in Roane County, Oak Ridge, Morgan County, Campbell County and Cumberland County also received new interactive classrooms. The instructor teaches from an interactive classroom in one location, and students at other locations can participate in a virtual class.

***“With this technology, we can offer schools more dual studies options than we ever have before”
said Cathy Day, Roane State’s dual studies coordinator. “Even if just a few students at a high school are interested in a course, we can offer the class through the interactive rooms.”***

The college received the grant in partnership with Alvin C. York Institute, Oneida Special School District, Scott County Schools, Fentress County Schools and Campbell County Schools. The collaboration has provided a major benefit for high school students in these communities. A York Institute student took four dual studies classes last fall in the interactive classroom at her school completing one semester of college while in high school. “The classes have really been great,” she said. “The teachers are really nice, and they really want to help you. They are very encouraging. I feel prepared. I know, going forward, how much work I’m going to need to put into college.” Even one dual studies class can help a student get a head start on college, but many students take as many classes as they can. One high school student completed 28 hours of college credit. Roane State looks forward to providing even more students the opportunity to complete as many college-level classes as possible before they leave high school.

RODG

<http://www.state.tn.us/education/cte/>