

Career Readiness Expansion

Purpose

Career readiness will assure Oklahomans have the ability to analyze issues, resolve problems, work well with others and adapt to complex work environments. It will enhance students' creativity and problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Key program activities

Career readiness programs will accomplish four goals:

- Develop students' abilities to demonstrate vital skills:
 - Creativity.
 - Critical thinking and problem-solving.
 - Teamwork.
 - Innovative thinking.
- Provide employers a workforce that can adapt to complex work environments regardless of technical skill requirements.
- Prepare students for advanced career preparation at the secondary and/or postsecondary levels.
- Benefit individuals, companies and taxpayers in four ways:
 - Providing a better workforce.
 - Developing a creative, problem-solving and innovative workforce.
 - Providing students marketable and transferable skills.
 - Developing and enhancing skills that will facilitate job placement, retention and advancement.

Key Components

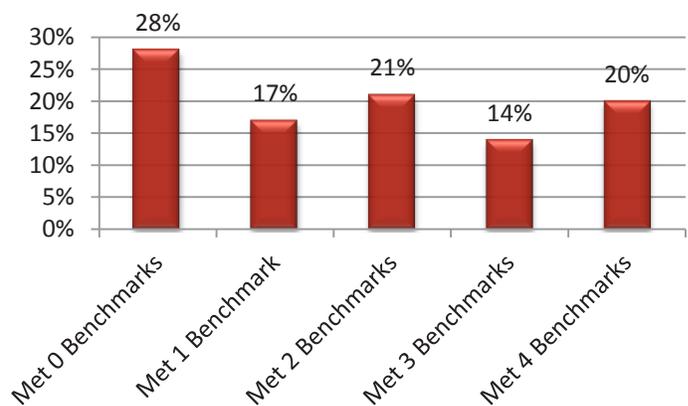
The career readiness expansion will offer students better services in two ways:

- Enhance programs through careful attention to results and through enhanced curriculum development and teacher professional development.
- Expand programs, especially at the lower grade levels. These programs will focus on enhancing STEM interest and other career readiness programs' capacities for Oklahoma students.

Why these programs are needed

Oklahoma's overall student academic performance indicates that only 20 percent of ACT® exam participants in Oklahoma are prepared for careers and continuing education. Recent workforce engagement rates for young adults have shown dramatic declines, especially among young men. Women are underrepresented in the STEM fields. A growing number of reports and presentations are calling for more creativity, problem solving, communications skills and critical thinking in the workforce. Career readiness programs are

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specifically designed to address these issues. To ensure their success in continuing education and careers, these students must have the opportunity and guidance to obtain the skills necessary to achieve their goals.

Career readiness programs serve more than 132,000 students each year throughout Oklahoma. The Oklahoma CareerTech System is affecting student preparation for advanced areas in agricultural education; business; information technology; science, technology, engineering and math; and other program areas. Through career readiness education in the STEM field, more than 25,000 middle school and high school students annually receive advanced education that prepares them for continued education and careers. These successes show the program works, but CareerTech needs to reach more students. Early participation in career readiness programs will cultivate creative students who are problem-solvers, innovators and logical thinkers who show strong communication and excel in academics.

Cost

Career readiness programs will receive performance funding as outlined in the performance funding proposal. Additionally, \$1,500,000 is needed to expand career readiness programs by 10 percent.

How results will be measured

The effectiveness of career readiness programs will be measured in three areas:

- Market share.
- Program assessment results (e.g., end-of-course assessment, Project Lead the Way national assessment, etc.).
- Career Readiness Certificates.

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