

IMPLEMENTING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PATHWAYS

The initial set of Big Sky Pathways will be identified and will be made available to Local Education Agencies (school districts) and postsecondary institutions. Beginning with the program year 2007-2008, each LEA and postsecondary institution that is a recipient of Perkins funding will begin planning for implementation of at least one (per district, not CTE area) program of study by identifying by name only the Career Field in which efforts are underway in their school to develop.

RE-ORGANIZING TECH PREP TO SUPPORT *BIG SKY PATHWAYS*

Through a competitive process, one statewide Tech Prep consortium was created. The consortium will utilize the following six Career Fields and their respective Tech Prep *Big Sky Pathways* for Montana: Agriculture and Natural Resources; Engineering and Industrial Technology; Health and Related Services; Social and Human Services; Business, Management and Information Systems; Arts and Communications.

ASSESSING CAREER AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

To implement this new requirement for technical skills assessment, OPI is conducting a survey of its CTE programs to determine what assessments are currently in place. During 2008 and 2009, OPI and OCHE will work closely with teachers and administrators from local programs, will identify what competencies should be assessed in each of the *Big Sky Pathways* and other CTE courses, and determine what assessments mechanisms are most appropriate.

INTEGRATING ACADEMIC AND CTE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

During implementation of the 2008-2009 year, OPI will revise the *Montana Standards and Guidelines for Vocational and Technical Education*. These are the standards by which CTE programs are evaluated and approved at the secondary level. As part of the Standards and Guidelines review, OPI (in coordination with the *Big Sky Pathways Consortium*) will launch a curriculum crosswalk process. In this process, CTE teachers will be engaged to identify state academic standards that are appropriate to be integrated into each BSP and each CTE course.

ENSURING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

OPI and OCHE will provide leadership to assist school districts and two-year postsecondary institutions to gather and share information about strategies for special populations that show promising outcomes and can be implemented with reasonable costs. This activity will be referred to as the *Promising Practices Initiative*.

CONNECTING CTE TO EMPLOYERS AND WORKFORCE PRIORITIES

In the program approval and review process, OPI will ask each eligible recipient to explain how each program area relates to current or emerging occupational opportunities using the “high-skill, high-wage or high-demand” criteria. OPI will also require that eligible recipients indicate how business and industry is giving input into the CTE curriculum.

For more information, please contact OPI CTE at 444-9019.



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Definitions for Big Sky Pathways

The Commissioner’s Office of Higher Education (OCHE) and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) recommend these definitions to be used in Big Sky Pathways development statewide.

Career Field: Six Career Fields make up the broad organizing structure that Montana has chosen to portray this initiative in our state. As seen on the model, the Career Fields are shown as:

Health Sciences

Industrial, Manufacturing and Engineering Systems

Business Management and Information Systems

Environmental and Agriculture Systems

Human Services and Resources

Arts and Communications

Career Clusters: An organizing framework defining Career and Technical Education using the 16 clusters of occupations and related pathways with validated standards that ensure opportunities for all students regardless of their career goals and interests.

Human Services & Resources	Environmental & Agricultural Systems	Business Management & Information Systems	Arts and Communications	Health Sciences	Industrial, Manufacturing & Engineering Systems
* Law, Public Safety & Security	* Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	* Business Management & Information Systems	* Arts, A/V Technology and Communications	* Health Sciences	*Manufacturing
* Government & Public Administration		* Management and Administrative Services			*Transportation, Distribution & Logistics
* Human Services		* Hospitality and Tourism			* Architecture and Construction
* Education and Training		* Finance * Information Technology			* Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Big Sky Pathway (Program of Study): A tool to organize a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career courses leading to an industry recognized certificate or licensure, and/or a post-secondary degree and beyond.