

Chapter 6

Financial Implications

Assess financial needs and concerns, and explore alternative funding sources.

CONCERN: Financial Resources for the Education of Career-Focused Students

Meeting the unique needs of the career-focused learner requires significant financial resources, necessitating outreach, collaboration and leadership by local boards of education and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 58.** NJSBA and other state education organizations should work with local school districts to advocate for more state and federal funding for CTE programs to benefit students in all settings, including comprehensive high schools.
- 59.** NJSBA, other state education organizations and local school districts should create partnerships with business and industry and labor unions to generate internships and apprenticeships.
- 60.** Local districts should reach out to businesses and labor unions that operate in their regions for funding, support and resources.
- 61.** Boards of education should identify areas in which existing funds for curriculum can be reallocated to meet the needs of all students, including college-bound and career-focused learners.
- 62.** Wherever possible, school districts should identify resources within the annual budget to support the career-focused student.
- 63.** Boards of education should establish public-private partnership committees that include school officials, local business leaders, municipal officials and members of the municipal economic or industrial board.
- 64.** The New Jersey School Boards Association should involve the New Jersey Public School Labor-Management Collaborative in the development of public-private partnerships for the benefit of students.
- 65.** NJSBA and/or its corporate members should assist local school districts by developing a guide on effectuating public-private partnerships.
- 66.** NJSBA should explore grant opportunities and formal partnerships with all branches of the military to support non-college-bound learners.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

If our high schools are to address the unique needs of non-college bound students and expand their program offerings, they will need additional financial resources. To properly serve

the non-college-bound student and implement the necessary career and vocational tracks with fidelity, many districts may need to budget additional resources, even beyond an equitable distribution of funds among college preparatory and CTE courses.

Broadening career and vocational programs in comprehensive high schools represents a viable, cost-effective means of providing career education opportunities.¹¹¹ Such action would ensure that there are CTE programs for those students who do not gain admission to a selective county vocational school. Possible resources to fund in-house programs would include federal and state funding, private-public grant opportunities, and enhanced relationships with businesses, corporations, and labor unions. Also, a school district's creative scheduling, staffing and collaborative arrangements with other districts, including inter-local agreements, can help it meet the needs of all students in a financially efficient manner.

School districts and boards of education are also encouraged to evaluate their current resources and identify areas in which existing funds in curriculum budgets can be reallocated. However, finding adequate resources to expand vocational program offerings and learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students will require ongoing effort and the cooperation of multiple entities.

State and Federal Funding

As mentioned in the Introduction section of this report, there is no state aid category specifically for CTE programs in comprehensive high schools. A number of comprehensive high schools have received funding through federal Perkins Act grants.

Under policy established in 2012, "NJSBA believes that the state should provide funding and support to local school districts to facilitate the development of career-readiness programs to assist students who are unable to attend county vocational programs."¹¹² Securing additional resources from the federal and state governments could be challenging given the limited funds available. However, the Task Force believes that NJSBA, its partner education organizations and local school districts should continue working together to advocate for more state and federal funding.

Local, county and statewide public relations campaigns are necessary to increase awareness of the need for career and vocational learning opportunities. These efforts may benefit from the increasing recognition that there are many unfilled jobs that do not require a college education. The news media has featured numerous articles about employers' difficulty in finding workers with the skills needed to fill these positions, a void that has a negative impact on economic growth. And for decades, business and industry have reported exorbitant costs involved in training entry-level employees.¹¹³ Publicizing the importance of CTE programs in helping students acquire these skills should help efforts to attract more support for programs and funding.

¹¹¹ Sampson *et al.*, "Op-Ed: Comprehensive High Schools, a Key Piece of the Vo-Tec Puzzle," <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/18/05/22/op-ed-comprehensive-high-schools-a-key-piece-of-the-vo-tec-puzzle/>.

¹¹² Career Education: Vocational-Technical Education," *Manual of Positions and Policies on Education*, FC6142.12, <https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/resources-policy-ppm-6000-6142-12.pdf>.

¹¹³ Wilhelm Schnotz, "The Average Cost to Train a New Employee," *Small Business - Chron.com*, November 21, 2017, accessed June 25, 2018, <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/average-cost-train-new-employee-44072.html>.

Task Force members researched whether there may be foundation, federal or NJDOE grants available to support the creation of apprenticeships and internships for non-college bound students. The members sought information from the Grants Program staff at NJSBA, consulted with local school business administrators, contacted the NJDOE staff, and shared information learned over time by individual committee members.

They also learned that federal funding is generally directed towards vocational-technical schools and not comprehensive high schools.

Grant Funding

On the state level, in 2014 the NJDOE announced the creation of County Vocational-Technical School Partnership Grants.¹¹⁴ This is a state-funded partnership program between county vocational school districts and urban districts, other school districts, business and industry groups, county colleges and other entities to expand access and opportunities in career and technical education for high school students.

Between 2015 and 2018, annual appropriations for the grants ranged from \$1 million to \$3 million. Eligibility has been limited to county vocational-technical schools as the lead agencies, with comprehensive high schools among possible partners. Seventeen comprehensive high schools have been awarded grants as partners with the county vocational-technical schools to develop or expand their program offerings. In November, NJDOE announced the awarding of the fourth cohort, which involved grants to seven county CTE districts as the lead agencies; seven comprehensive high schools were among partners in the programs.¹¹⁵ (Appendix III, “County Vocational-Technical School Partnership Grants,” provides a description of the programs.)

A pilot program created by NJDOE in 2016, “Building Capacity for Career Pathways: A Pilot Program for Comprehensive High Schools,” has supported a handful of comprehensive high schools in expanding their career programs. The Vernon Township Public Schools were among the awardees of the available funding. School district administrators from Vernon Township made a presentation to the Task Force describing the successful implementation of their program. However, that NJDOE funding initiative was a one-time opportunity. NJDOE staff could not confirm if the pilot program would be expanded and/or continued in the future.

Through their research the Task Force members also learned about the Harbor Freight Company’s “Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence”¹¹⁶ to help build “industrial strength classrooms for the 21st century.” This program provides prizes for teaching excellence and innovation in industrial and technical education, but those prizes are only awarded to vocational programs and pathways already in existence.

¹¹⁴ “County Vocational School District Partnership Grant-Cohort 4-Competitive,” New Jersey Department of Education, 2017, accessed August 07, 2018, <https://www.state.nj.us/cgi-bin/education/grants/gropps2.pl?string=recnum=01745&maxhits=1>.

¹¹⁵ “Murphy Administration Announces Vo-Tech Partnership Grants,” New Jersey Department of Education, May 7, 2018, accessed June 22, 2018, <https://www.state.nj.us/education/news/2018/0507voc.htm>.

¹¹⁶ “Prize for Teaching Excellence,” Tools for Schools, Harbor Freight Company, accessed August 07, 2018, <https://harborfreighttoolsforschools.org/what-we-do/prize-teaching-excellence/>.

The Task Force was unable to identify foundation grants that would help school districts support in-house programs or the creation of apprenticeships and internships for non-college bound students.

In sum, available grants and other financial resources are limited. School districts should consider new sources of revenue. The NJSBA Grants Support Program¹¹⁷ might be a resource for possible grant opportunities. Sources of revenue might also include the United States Army and corporate sponsorships. NJSBA should also explore grant opportunities and formal partnerships with the all branches of the military.

NJSBA and our education partners should advocate for state and federal funding to support programming for non-college-bound learners. Local districts should also reach out to businesses located within their areas and to local labor unions for funding, support and resources. And where districts have established Public-Private Partnership Committees, those committees could research and review any new grant opportunities that may arise and ensure application for viable funding opportunities.

Informing the Public

Board members, the public and school employees may not have ready access to pertinent information about the financial resources that the district has committed to supporting the non-college-bound student. During a Task Force meeting, a member suggested that, as a “best practice,” the annual school budget request should identify resources committed to supporting non-college-bound students.

As a ‘best practice,’ the annual school budget request should identify resources committed to the support of non-college-bound learners.

While it may take some additional time and care on the part of school district business office staff to carve out and identify these items, it should not be an onerous task within the routine course of budget preparation. It is reasonable to include that information in the budget process to better inform board members, administrators, staff and the public of the cost and extent of the district’s efforts and needs.

Public-Private Partnerships

To succeed in the global economy and equip our students to thrive, the education community must forge relationships with employers. The creation of relationships with businesses, corporations, and labor unions may take time and effort to cultivate. NJSBA and other state education organizations with whom school districts have existing relationships (e.g., the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, the NJEA, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, AFT-NJ, and the New Jersey PTA) should assist school boards by facilitating these alliances. In particular, there should be a focus on generating more internship and apprenticeship opportunities for our

¹¹⁷ "Grants Support," New Jersey School Boards Association, accessed August 07, 2018, <https://www.njsba.org/services/grants-support/>.

students. These opportunities provide hands-on learning for students, are cost-effective for local school districts, and benefit businesses as well. Public-private partnerships involving the education community are trending nationally.¹¹⁸

In that same vein, boards of education are encouraged to establish Public-Private Partnership Committees, which should include the superintendent, the school business administrator, board members, and representatives of the local Chamber of Commerce or other business organizations. Since creating tomorrow's workforce is a societal challenge, districts should strengthen these alliances by formally including the mayor, municipal governing body members and representatives of the economic or industrial development board. These Public-Private Partnership Committees could work to facilitate additional funding, training and apprenticeship opportunities for our students.

Among their activities, the committees could research and review grant opportunities that may become available and ensure that the district applies for viable funding opportunities. They could foster closer ties with labor organizations and the New Jersey Business and Industry Council that would help identify and make available apprenticeships and internships for the state's non-college-bound high school students.

School boards would be well served to obtain legal guidance on the appropriate roles of the school administration and the school board with regard to these committees. NJSBA and/or our corporate partners should help develop a guide for local districts to use in effectuating the public/private partnerships.

Labor-Management Collaborative

The New Jersey Public School Labor-Management Collaborative¹¹⁹ could serve as a model of collaboration. Through this effort, NJSBA has been working with Dr. Saul Rubinstein of the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations to bring together leaders of various education organizations to conduct a pilot program demonstrating how labor-management collaboration could advance student achievement. Additionally, NJSBA should explore the use of the Labor-Management Collaborative in developing relationships with labor unions that could facilitate the creation of alliances to support career-focused students.

Local industries and business have the potential to be exemplary partners in these efforts. For decades, business and industry have reported the exorbitant costs of training entry-level employees. It would behoove school districts to establish formal relationships with local businesses to identify skill deficits and then adjust curricula to address any areas of deficiency. They may also discuss development of internship/apprenticeship programs, as well as other means of support to enable students to gain the skills needed for employment.

¹¹⁸ Dave Guymon, "Public-Private Partnerships: The Real Future of Education," *Edutopia*, June 17, 2014, George Lucas Educational Foundation, accessed August 07, 2018, <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/public-private-partnerships-future-of-education-dave-guymon>.

¹¹⁹ "Gov. Murphy, N.J. Ed Leaders, Attend Public School Labor-Management Collaboration Conference," *School Board Notes*, March 06, 2018, New Jersey School Boards Association, accessed August 07, 2018, <https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/school-board-notes/march-6-2018-vol-xli-no-29/gov-murphy-n-j-ed-leaders-attend-public-school-labor-management-collaboration-conference/>

CONCERN: Inter-district collaboration

Collaboration among school districts could be a cost-effective means to provide programming and services for career-focused learners. However, it is practiced infrequently.

RECOMMENDATIONS

67. Boards of education and state education leaders should collaborate on the cost-effective inter-district delivery of career training for the non-college-bound student.
68. NJDOE and NJSBA should provide a forum for addressing the delivery of career training to non-college-bound students through inter-district collaboration.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Many school districts collaborate with one another in a variety of ways (e.g., transportation and staff training) to save money and maximize efficiency. These inter-district collaborations are particularly useful and successful when resources are limited.¹²⁰

Similarly, local boards of education should explore collaboration with neighboring school districts with the goal of providing career training to the non-college-bound students in their schools. Sharing resources can harness the expertise of one district for the benefit of many. Whereas one district may be able to provide training on a particular subject, another may be able to share its expertise in another area.

Creating “share-shops” through consortia or inter-local agreements could be a cost-efficient way to develop courses and programs that address the needs of non-college-bound students in situations where an individual district may not be able to support a program. For example, one district might provide the physical and staff resources to teach mechanics to students from a cohort of neighboring districts, a second district might provide the physical and staff resources to teach welding to students from the same group of districts, and a third may offer students a health-career program. Videoconferencing could be a valuable strategy in addition to hands-on teaching. Especially given the dearth of trained instructors, and because equipment and supplies are costly, such collaboration could save money while reaching a greater number of students.

¹²⁰ See:

"Twelve Years of Shared Services: The Best Educational Services, with Substantial Financial Savings," A+ Ideas, Programs and Practices, February 12, 2016, New Jersey School Boards Association, August 7, 2018, <https://www.njsba.org/news-publications/a-ideas-programs-and-practices/school-climate/twelve-years-of-shared-services-the-best-educational-services-with-substantial-financial-savings-passaic-county-manchester-regional-high-school-and-haledon-passaic-county/>.

David Sandler, "Students, Taxpayers Benefits from Shared Services," My Central Jersey, July 30, 2015, accessed June 26, 2018, <https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/middlesex-county/2015/07/30/podcast-focuses-shared-services/30469243/>.

Existing county-based meetings could serve as an ideal forum for discussing the possibility of forming these alliances. School board members, superintendents, school business administrators and curriculum staff could raise the topic at their respective county-level roundtables, engaging the various groups in dialogue.

In addition, NJDOE and NJSBA should explore the possibility of facilitating collaborative efforts among school districts by creating a training program and/or a forum for discussion. Ideally, such a platform would bring together experts in the field to share relevant information and make suggestions on how to seize the opportunities presented by the collaborative model.

Forging such collaboration may involve some “growing pains” related to trust, cost and other factors. It also might take some effort to get the public on board. But in this era of limited resources and given the compelling need to address this issue, the potential benefits of collaboration outweigh the concerns. Barriers to implementation of collaborative efforts can be addressed and overcome as has been demonstrated in numerous cases around the state.