

This coordinated management response to the State Auditor's Office (SAO) performance audit report received November 21, 2017, is provided by the Office of Financial Management, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board).

SAO PERFORMANCE AUDIT OBJECTIVES:

The SAO designed the audit to identify school districts that are providing effective Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that meet the needs of students and employers and develop a set of leading practices that may be useful to other districts across the state. It asked:

1. Are secondary CTE programs and courses aligned with the needs of students and employers?
 2. Are there leading practices that could improve the success of the state's secondary CTE programs?
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SAO found the following conditions that could improve the alignment between the courses students that are offered in secondary CTE programs and job opportunities:

1. Improving career guidance given to students and providing it in a classroom setting in the seventh or eighth grade.
 2. Strengthening employer engagement could better align CTE programs and courses with high-wage industry-needed skills.
 3. Updating the list of high-demand programs, strengthening the review of local labor demand data and clarifying laws may help reduce the skills gap.
 4. Expanding the number of CTE dual-credit opportunities to increase the number of pathways from high school to college.
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SAO directs recommendations 1-4 to the Legislature and 5-7 to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

SAO Recommendation 8 to the Workforce Board: Gather input from OSPI and the State Board of Education to enhance the Career Bridge website. This website should include information about CTE and dual-credit opportunities in high school.

STATE RESPONSE: The Workforce Board agrees with the recommendation and will gather input from OSPI and the State Board of Education on improving the Career Bridge site. We agree with the report's emphasis on Career Bridge as a useful tool for career and education planning for students. The Workforce Board has been working on creating new components to Career Bridge that demonstrate the value of secondary career and technical education as well as developing concepts such as a digital portfolio, where students can save their resumes and letters of recommendation, along with other career-connected learning efforts. These features would make the site much more valuable for middle and high school students.

The Workforce Board also will reach out to OSPI and the State Board of Education to retrieve data on dual-credit opportunities and CTE. This will take place on a regular basis once information is available and contingent on additional funding to support the creation and maintenance of additional webpages on Career Bridge.

The Workforce Board is also interested in working with its stakeholders on other resource and revenue models for Career Bridge. Currently, Career Bridge does not have a sustained or predictable funding source.

Action Steps and Time Frame

- The Workforce Board will consult with OSPI and the State Board of Education for feedback about ongoing efforts to make Career Bridge a more useful tool for students. *By March 31, 2018.*
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SAO Recommendation 9 to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC): Share with OSPI and the Workforce Board the labor market data and analysis that colleges and SBCTC consider when developing postsecondary CTE programs and courses.

STATE RESPONSE: The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges agrees with the recommendation. Due to the large number of programs, it is not practical to share program-specific data. We will share tools and processes used by the community and technical colleges when developing postsecondary CTE programs and courses.

Action Steps and Time Frame

- SBCTC will share with OSPI and the Workforce Board the labor market data tools and professional-technical program approval process used by community and technical colleges when developing postsecondary CTE programs and courses. *By March 1, 2018.*
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