

News Release

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Career readiness takes center stage

Wisconsin one of 17 states in CCSSO's Career Readiness Initiative

MADISON — Wisconsin will strengthen and expand its career and technical education programs as one of 17 states that joined the Career Readiness Initiative announced Monday by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

States that join the initiative pledge to make career and technical education (CTE) programs more responsive to the labor market by enlisting employers as lead partners, raise the threshold for quality career pathways, and make career readiness a higher priority in state accountability systems. Those priorities stem from the CCSSO Task Force on Improving Career Readiness, which issued its “Opportunities and Options” report in November 2014. State Superintendent Tony Evers was a member of the task force.

“Wisconsin public schools have many strong partnerships with the state’s technical colleges as well as business and industry to support our CTE programs,” Evers said. “We want to strengthen those connections to bridge the skills gap that employers have identified in a number of sectors and to ensure that every student has access to programs that help them connect their educational goals with a career.”

The state is piloting academic and career planning in 25 school districts this year and will move the model statewide for the 2017-18 school year, giving students and their families resources to make informed choices for education, training, and careers. Wisconsin has published [academic standards in each of the six CTE career pathways](#) — agriculture, food and natural resources; business and information technology; family and consumer sciences; health science; marketing, management and entrepreneurship; and technology and engineering — to ensure that CTE coursework is rigorous and aligned with academic subjects and career expectations. Additionally state students have numerous opportunities to earn college credit through dual enrollment, acquire career skills through industry certifications, and learn while working through youth apprenticeships. Currently, the Department

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of Public Instruction is partnering with the Future Wisconsin Project led by Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce to develop additional business and industry connections.

Data from the 2013-14 school year shows that in Wisconsin

- More than 25,600 students earned technical college credits while in high school;
- 275 high schools have transcribed credit agreements with Wisconsin technical colleges, which allow students to earn both high school and college credit for their coursework; and
- 302 high schools have advanced standing agreements with Wisconsin technical colleges, which allow students to complete beginning coursework for a career while in high school.

Additionally, students who take CTE courses in high school have higher graduation rates than students who don't take a series of classes in a specific career path (96.5 percent versus 88.2 percent in 2014). Students from special populations — economically or academically disadvantaged, disabled, or limited English proficient — also have better graduation outcomes than their peers if they've taken CTE courses (92.6 percent versus 79.7 percent in 2014).

“Strong career and technical education programs in our public schools must be part of our comprehensive efforts to improve academic achievement for all students, close achievement gaps, and ensure every student graduates college and career ready,” Evers said.

CCSSO will develop an online resource center for all states to provide strategies, case studies, self-assessment tools, communications materials, and models of best practices to support career readiness activities. Other states in the [CCSSO Career Readiness Initiative](#) are California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Wyoming.

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NOTES: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/news-release/dpinr2015_94.pdf. The national release can be found online at http://www.ccsso.org/News_and_Events/Press_Releases/CCSSO_Announces_State_Action_to_Advance_Career_Pathways_.html.