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Career Tech Education: A Union View of the CCC Board’s Task Force Report

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Outline of Approach

• I am discussing the Report of the Board of Governors’ Task Force on *Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy* as a policy document from the perspective of a national union analyst of higher education.

• I am not speaking for NEA’s state affiliate, the California Teachers’ Association, nor am I speaking for any local that is bargaining over the implications of this report.
NEA on Higher Education

- NEA believes that Higher Education encompasses the broad range of education opportunities available to students beyond high school, and does not prioritize any one type over another. Studying for a training certificate is just as appropriate as graduate school in history.

- A better term for our approach is **post-secondary education**. Our members serve in all types of post-secondary education.
The Challenge of Career Technical Education

“Some College” is the New Gateway Into The Workforce

THE LABOR MARKET IS INCREASINGLY DEMANDING A MORE SKILLED WORKFORCE.

IN THE 1970s

28% of jobs required more than a high school education.

IN 1992

56% of jobs required more training.

BY 2020

65% of job openings in the U.S. will require some postsecondary education or training—though not necessarily a four-year degree.

Source: Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce analysis
NEA Policy Documents

• NEA’s policy is determined, and reviewed each year by the delegates to our annual Representative Assembly.

• Resolutions express the sense of the Association as to what ought to be. Our Legislative Program commits us to a particular action.

• Following are the sections on Career Technical Education from each document
NEA’s Resolution on **Vocational, Career, and Technical Education**, states:

- The National Education Association believes that preparation of students for vocational, career, and technical jobs should be the responsibility of secondary, adult, and higher education in collaboration with labor and business. Educational programs that ensure equal opportunity for occupational development and encourage students to consider nontraditional vocations should be developed for all students at all levels. Vocational, career, and technical education should provide a comprehensive program of lifelong learning for the training, advancement, and promotion of all students.
• The Association supports vocational, career, and technical education as a major component of education and advocates that every student have the opportunity to enroll in such classes without restrictions. To be effective, vocational, career, and technical education should be preceded by career awareness and exploration programs. These vocational, career, and technical education courses should be coordinated and integrated with traditionally academic courses. These integrated programs should be combined, when appropriate, with cooperative efforts on the part of educators and industrial and business leaders to provide school-to-work experiences for students.
NEA Policy – Resolutions, Continued

• Organized vocational, career, and technical education programs offer a sequence of courses that are directly related to the preparation of individuals in paid or unpaid employment in current and emerging occupations. Such programs shall include competency-based applied learning that contributes to an individual’s academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, interpersonal and collaborative skills, general employability skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society.
NEA Policy – Resolutions, Continued

• The Association also believes that adequate resources must be provided for educators to maintain, enhance, and expand quality vocational, career, and technical education programs; to procure up-to-date equipment and materials for those programs; and to prepare students for a highly technical work environment. The Association further believes that the involvement of education employees, private sector employment and training program personnel, and the labor and business communities is essential to the development of quality vocational, career, and technical education programs. The Association believes such resources should be substantially increased, not merely redistributed among states or other federal initiatives.

• The Association supports vocational, career, and technical courses as an option for all students. The Association also believes that placement into vocational, career, and technical programs should be voluntary. (1976, 2010)
NEA Policy
Legislative Program

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

**NEA supports**

- the efficient and effective provision of adequate resources to local career and technical educational authorities, including K—12, secondary, and/or postsecondary institutions to maintain, enhance, and expand quality career and technical education programs;

- federal resources for programs that prepare students effectively for the high-technology environment that will exist throughout their working lives;

- direct federal assistance to secondary education agencies and postsecondary agencies and/or institutions for purchase or lease of up-to-date equipment for career and technical education programs in response to changes in the job market;
NEA Policy

Legislative Program

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

NEA supports

• the provision of equity and access to quality career and technical education programs for those underserved in the past, as well as for traditional students, and the use of career and technical education as a tool for eliminating biases in employment opportunities;

• the involvement of teachers and other appropriate education employees, parents, and students in development of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs;

• coordination of career and technical education programs with other employment and training programs through public education institutions;

• cooperation with the business community in the implementation of career and technical education programs;

• effective school-to career initiatives;

• lowering Perkins funding allocation base limits to allow smaller school districts to participate in the program.
California Community College System

• California Community Colleges constitute the largest system in the country, offering some 8000 certificate programs and 4500 associate degree programs in 350 fields of study.

• CCCS serves more than 2.1 million students at 113 different colleges.

• Also provide workforce training, basic skills education, transfer preparation, apprenticeship programs, short-term training aligned to third-party credentials, and incumbent worker training to upgrade skill sets in various industry sectors.
Board of Governors
Task Force on Workforce, Job Creation, and a Strong Economy

• Board commissioned Task Force on November 17, 2014. Made up of

  – Community College faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and students

  – Employer community, labor organizations, public education, workforce training and economic development entities and community based organizations.
The Report

• The Report makes 25 recommendations in the areas of Student Success, Career Pathways, Workforce Data & Outcomes, Curriculum, CTE Faculty, Regional Coordination, and Funding.

• Many of the recommendations make total sense, but are so general that they will not get us very far. Who is going to disagree with “Improve CTE Student progress and outcomes?”
Initial Reactions

• This is an impressive report and I’d like to commend the Board, the Chancellor’s office, and the Task Force itself for the composition of the Task Force, the process that they used to work through the issues, and the overall level of the recommendations, which are in the highest traditions of California’s history in higher education.
Issues of Concern

Inclusion

• While we welcome the fact that labor organizations were included in the development of the report, we would hope that they continue to be involved in the implementation of the recommendations.

• For example as metrics are developed, the data program is defined, and student learning outcomes standards are set, it will be critically important that college faculty and staff as well as labor union representatives are included meaningfully in the process.
This report sets forth a staggering task for community colleges, and many recommendations to carry out this particular task.

However, CTE is not the only mission of community colleges. Community Colleges are charged with many other, equally critical, missions. These recommendations need to be implemented, and funded, within the context of the entirety of the institution’s missions.
Issues of Concern

Specific Recommendations

- There are three basic areas where we have specific concerns with the recommendations. While it is possible that these can be easily resolved, they bear raising and discussing.
  - Curriculum: Faculty Role.
  - CTE Faculty: How Faculty are categorized.
  - Funding: The most critical issue.
Curriculum

• **Curriculum is the purview of the faculty.** I understand the concern about lengthy approval processes, and I agree that local industry and labor groups need to be consulted in CTE, but faculty must have final approval of curriculum matters. In a rush to become relevant, we cannot jeopardize academic quality.
CTE Faculty

• Again, we encourage the inclusion of practitioners to enhance the teaching offerings for CTE, and we recognize the need for higher salaries in many cases. [This highlights another critical need – higher salaries for faculty.]

• Nevertheless, faculty on campus should be part of the bargaining unit. We would oppose the creation of new types of instructors outside of existing bargaining units. And if we were to organize a new faculty unit, we would insist on including all faculty in that unit.
Funding

• Funding to carry out the recommendations must be appropriate to accomplish the goals of the report. Funding must also be appropriate to carry out all institutional missions of the campus. And it must be ongoing. A one-time appropriation will not achieve the ambitious goals of the report.

• We do not have to settle for the new normal. We need to fight for adequate funding for all higher education. It makes sense for CTE, and it makes sense for USA.
In Closing

You see things and you say “Why?” But I dream things that never were, and I say “Why not?”

George Bernard Shaw

“Back to Methuselah”