

**Sugar Valley Career Centers
Career Technical Study
September 2015**

SREB

High Schools
That Work

Executive Summary

Technology Centers That Work's (TCTW) study of Sugar Valley Career Centers, Claremont and Newport, included (1) administering teacher and student surveys, (2) conducting desk audits of current data, (3) conducting on-site institutional reviews at both centers and (4) facilitating a focus group. Eight research questions guided the study:

1. How aligned are current programs of study with projected high-skill, high-wage job needs in the next decade for the region and state workforce?
2. Do all programs have articulated agreements that provide postsecondary credit opportunities and proven methods of success?
3. How aligned are secondary career programs with current community and technical college offerings?
4. Are students placed in career clusters/pathways that align with their career goals and community workforce needs?
5. Do teachers believe that professional development opportunities allow them to meet the emerging trends of the workforce?
6. Do both centers have advisory committees that participate in program reviews to ensure alignment with industry standards, expectations and trends?
7. Can one career-technical (CT) director lead the work to improve the quality of career-technical education (CTE) for the Claremont and Newport students?
8. Are facilities safe, state-of-the-art and well-maintained so all students can master the full range of required skills and competencies?

Data Sources

Faculty and Student Surveys. Fourteen teachers completed the faculty survey and 65 seniors completed the student survey.

Desk Audit Data. The SREB research team reviewed regional data from Sullivan County workforce region. In addition, Claremont and Newport provided a broad range of data on CT programs at their technical centers

On-site Reviews. TCTW conducted reviews at both centers. The review team consisted of a former state CTE director in Missouri and the TCTW director.

Each technical center created a profile of artifacts that included curriculum, unit and lesson plans, classroom assignments, samples of student work and assessments. During the two-day on-site visit, the review team conducted walkthrough observations in 22 classrooms and analyzed dozens of center-provided artifacts, including curriculum maps, lesson plans, projects and assessments..

The team also conducted face-to-face interviews with 90 students (both formally and informally), four school board members, 13 teachers (formally) and eight teachers (informally), two directors, one parent, two superintendents, two central office staff members, ten business and industry partners and three guidance and advisement staff.

Business/Industry Focus Group. TCTW conducted one focus group on September 15, 2015 with ten members of Claremont and Newport businesses, industry and community representing a cross-section of stakeholders, including potential employers and postsecondary representatives. Participants answered questions regarding the current state of district technical education and their vision for CTE in Region 10.

How aligned are current programs of study with projected high-skill, high-wage job needs in the next decade for the region and state workforce? (1)

Recommendations:

- For each program offered at Claremont and Newport, create a pathway program of study that outlines the possible certifications and stackable credentials for students who desire postsecondary opportunities. For programs that do not have a pathway beyond high school, continue to monitor workforce forecasts to ensure that students have jobs, not only upon graduation, but into the future.
- Conduct feasibility studies before reinstating or opening programs.
- Claremont and Newport need to collaborate with home high schools to promote optional career pathway programs of study and dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities to students and parents, through:
 - Students' Naviance Plans
 - Promotional materials that advertise career pathways and high school studies, jointly developed by industry representatives, technical center and home high school leaders
 - A jointly developed website that identifies the benefits of completing career pathway programs of study that link high school and community college.
- Since manufacturing is one of the biggest employers in Sullivan County, create an optional career pathway for Advanced Career manufacturing with a curriculum that provides a non-duplicative sequence of technical and college-ready academic courses offered across the technical center, the home high school and the local community college. A joint education-industry panel could develop and pilot this pathway as a prototype.

Plan: Region 10 is in the infancy of rolling out Naviance and completing initial PD training for staff. We are looking at targeting a smaller group possible 9th or 10th grade to complete the career inventory information and complete career pathways. Both directors agree that they need to work together to promote one school Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center. They will create a joint program of study that will be present to all sending schools. We may look at creating a joint website that holds all programs that are offered at both locations. Newport will look at working with Claremont and local manufactures to implement a similar program that runs out of Stevens high school here at Newport.

Do all programs have articulated agreements that provide postsecondary credit opportunities and proven methods of success? (2)

- All teachers must be familiar with the articulation and dual credit agreements for their programs and the processes for the students to follow to obtain these credits.
- Articulation and dual credit agreements need to establish policies and procedures for academic and technical content alignment, student eligibility for dual credit courses, criteria for dual credit courses and criteria for dual credit instructors
- Develop a plan to ensure all sending school counselors, parents and advisory committee members are aware of the postsecondary opportunities for each program and report to them each year the number of students who receive college credit and how much they receive.

Plan: By creating single program of study we will create a more streamlined process to notify students of the dual credit enrolment, articulations and post-secondary career pathways. The centers also would like to look beyond RVCC to other community colleges that better align to our programs.

How aligned are secondary career programs with current community and technical college offerings? (3)

- Provide technical center directors with timely and accurate data on how many of their students are earning dual credits as well as how many credits they have earned.
- Create a collaborative partnership between Claremont/Newport and Community College on a long-term plan to create a pathway that aligns with a local workforce need and create a series of stackable credentials that begin in grade 11 and go through post-secondary to an associate's degree

Plan: By creating single program of study we will create a more streamlined process to notify students of the dual credit enrolment, articulations and post-secondary career pathways. The centers also would like to look beyond RVCC to other community colleges that better align to our programs. The centers will also create a way to follow up with students on where they are in their post-secondary plan.

Are students placed in career clusters/pathways that align with their career goals and community workforce needs?(4)

- Sending high school guidance counselors have a great deal of influence on parents and students because they offer postsecondary guidance. Claremont and Newport advocates must work to ensure that sending school counselors understand the benefits of CTE and how it fits into the school curriculum and leads to successful postsecondary experiences. Newport / Claremont need to develop a plan to educate sending school counselors on the content and technical skills required in the programs prior to enrolling students.
- Have the sending high school guidance counselors serve on advisory committees for CTE programs; attend department meetings, curriculum meetings and meetings with business partners; and share information and success stories about students that reveal their performance in school or recognition once they graduate.

- Create guidance systems that include career information, exploration and advisement and engage students in ongoing career and college counseling beginning in the middle grades. Mandate career exploration courses and activities in the middle grades and high school and adopt distributed, curriculum-based career guidance systems that make career and college counseling the shared responsibility of every adult in the school. Increase the emphasis on working with sending school faculty members to ensure that all high school students are following a program of study that will lead them to postsecondary education and a career.
- Develop a process for the Naviance plan to follow the student and be used at Claremont and Newport by counselors and instructors as mentors. Since Naviance is in the initial phases of implementation, it is imperative that all administrators, counselors and staff are trained and buy in to using the system.
- Helping middle grades and high school students, parents, teachers and school leaders understand the CT opportunities available to them at the center, as well as what it takes to be ready to attend the center.
- Provide students in grades eight, nine and 10 with a comprehensive set of educational and career exploratory experiences that will help them make informed decisions about career pathway programs of study.
- Both the high schools and the technical centers need to actively engage parents in understanding the value of students becoming college- and career-ready and earning postsecondary credits and industry certifications while in high school.
- Technical center leaders need to do more to make the programs offered more attractive to students and parents. Strategies might include

Plan: The centers will get guidance from all sending schools more involved in the centers. We will start by meeting with them in regards to what our programs have to offer in dual credit, articulations, post-secondary pathways. We will also talk with them about NH state scholars and how our programs meet some of those required courses. This will also be streamlined into a program of study of all programs at Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Director at both campuses. The centers will look at how to create a comprehensive career exploratory experience to help make informed decisions about their career pathways. The Centers will look at their advertisement of the programs and make them more attractive to all. The centers are requesting a regional career and college advisor to work with the sending school guidance counselors and focus on

Do teachers believe that professional development opportunities allow them to meet the emerging trends of the workforce?(5)

- Teachers should continue to reshape their assignments to make them more student-centered, intellectually demanding, relevant and reflective of college- and career-ready grade-level standards.

- In order for teachers to meet the demands of the ever-changing job market and technology, it is imperative that the centers engage staff in professional development such as summer externships, training and recertification Investigate ways to encourage and reward teachers who participate in teacher externships.
- Provide intensive professional development to technical center teachers on how to design authentic, rigorous, project-based assignments in their career areas that require students to use mathematics, literacy, problem-solving, technology, software and 21st-century skills to complete.
- Technical center and high school leaders need to create an organizational and scheduling structure in *both* centers that enables CT teachers to work frequently with other CT teachers, academic teachers and counselors to plan integrated academic and technical learning activities aimed at enhancing students' college and career readiness.

Plan: Both centers need to create a PD plan around business and industry and project based learning. It is suggested that the centers sit together to share the cost and provide the PD to all teachers at each center.

Do both centers have advisory committees that participate in program reviews to ensure alignment with industry standards, expectations and trends? (6)

- Revamp program Advisory Boards to create a robust committee charged with transforming both centers into high-performing pathways that offer rigorous instruction in career fields relevant to students, the region and the state. Select Advisory Board members who have a personal need to see the center improve. Two-thirds of the committee's members should be regional business and industry representatives who can employ center program graduates or offer additional postsecondary education and training.
- Charge the Regional Advisory Board with addressing at least two major issues annually.
- Charge the Regional Advisory Board with taking actions that will make each technical center a world-class educational institution and a place they would be pleased to send their children and grandchildren.

Plan: Both centers are going to work on creating a more active advisory board that includes more stakeholders and will play an important role in the programs.

Can one career-technical (CT) director lead the work to improve the quality of career-technical education (CTE) for the Claremont and Newport students?(7)

- Meaningful community involvement plays an important role in student success. Many schools are actively involved in designing professional learning communities where school and community work together in partnership with families to educate youth and the entire school community.
- Numerous student benefits result from well-implemented school and community partnership programs. They include increased student attendance, higher achievement, a heightened sense of security, fewer behavior problems and an increase in positive attitudes about school.

- The central office and board member teams at both centers discussed the critical need for an organizational chart that supports continuous improvement and creates a clear focus on monitoring initiatives. Such a management tool will help staff understand the intended structure of the organization.
- The TA team recommends redefining roles within both centers to support continuous improvement. Craft an organizational chart that reflects where leadership wants the organization to go and determine the type of governance needed for making decisions. The leadership team should coordinate, inspire and support the work. Formal structures tend to help an organization's members act quickly and efficiently.

Plan: Both centers feel that in order to look at the structure that is suggested the foundation work has to be laid out. There are relationships with sending schools, partnership with business and structure to career and college planning that need to be addressed and implemented prior to having the director's step away from the centers and work on global planning. While the structures are put into place the duties are being shared amongst the superintendents, principals and directors of both districts.

Are facilities safe, state-of-the-art and well-maintained so all students can master the full range of required skills and competencies?(8)

- Conduct a feasibility study of the daycare housed at Claremont. Determine the return on investment and whether this is a proper expenditure for the board to incur on a yearly basis. Also consider that as the state transfers from an Early Childhood Program to a Teacher Preparation Program preparing students to teach K – 8, there is no longer a need on an on-site lab.
- Contact the New Hampshire Department of Education to get a copy of the space requirements and conditions for using the center beyond the CTE programs. Create a plan to use the space at Claremont where programs have closed. The district is paying utilities for unused space costing taxpayers' money.
- Create a plan to increase the space and bays in the Newport welding program to serve the number of students desiring to enroll. Capital bonds may be able to be used for the project. Table 20 contains a suggested square foot total to compare to the current space. Use the Health Science Program Advisory Committee members, along with local health care experts, to review existing equipment and create short- and long-term plans that prioritize updating equipment and supplies to meet industry standards.