

CTSP CENTER UPDATES

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New Website, New Tools

Welcome to this edition of CTSP Updates. We are thrilled to announce that we have upgraded our website and supplemented it with some additional tools for you. Here is a quick overview of what you will find on <http://ctsp.tamu.edu>:

What was already there?

- Instructional videos – learning modules
- Webcasts – short informational videos
- Newsletters – printable bulletins
- Library Database – searchable
- Helpful Links
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Google Translator
- Live Chat

What's new?

- Redesigned Brochure
- Embedded Videos – searchable Vimeo Channel
- Help Desk to submit queries – organized by topic, including technical troubleshooting
- Daily Updates on Facebook and Twitter
- Blog (Subscribe option available)
- Mobile-friendly
- Searchable Website

Bookmark our website, and check back often!

Clarifications for U.S. Department of Education on Special Ed Regs

Regulations for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were published in the Federal Register on August 14, 2006, and became effective on October 13, 2006. Since publication of the regulations, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

(OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has received requests for clarification of some of these regulations; thus, on July 23, 2013, USDOE issued a 64-page document consisting of questions and answers relating to Mediation, State Complaint Procedures,

Due Process Hearings, Resolution Sessions, and Expedited Due Process. In addition to posting the complete document, Wrightslaw has broken it down into the specific components as smaller files, which can be found at <http://www.wrightslaw.com/idea/osep.statute.htm>.

CTE/Perkins news

CTE: February is National CTE month. Mr. Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education blogs that high-quality CTE programs are a vital strategy for helping diverse students complete their secondary and postsecondary studies. CTE programs provide instruction that is hands-on, rigorous and relevant and help to connect students with the high-demand science, technology, engineering and math fields.

Perkins Funding: In January, the FY 2014 omnibus appropriations bill cleared the House and the

Senate. This bill includes a \$53 million increase for the Carl D Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act.

In the annual State of the Union address President Obama put forward a broad policy agenda that included efforts on skills training, manufacturing and education. The president applauded the 2014 budget agreement that rolled back much of the 2013 sequester cut and paved the way for an increase in Perkins funding in the recent omnibus appropriations bill.

Establishing an Online Professional Learning Community



Often at a six-hour in-service session or during short presentations at education conferences, you start a discussion with colleagues who offer amazing ideas or strategies that you want to know more about, but there never seems to be enough time. Research has also shown that for these one-shot professional development (PD) sessions to be truly effective, they need to be more ongoing, help you process the information, and especially give you a chance to apply what you have learned.

To help you address these PD concerns, we propose that you form an online “Professional Learning Community,” or PLC. A PLC is composed of a group of teachers who wish to help students improve their learning. The members help each other by sharing ideas, brainstorming, and troubleshooting. Using ideas generated at formal PD sessions or workshops, PLCs can be conducted online, organized according to themes, and follow prescribed timelines. However, an online PLC can also serve as a help line such that quick answers to everyday issues can be obtained from colleagues. The CTSP Center recommends the use the free Wikispaces site to get started. Teachers can create a free account and then upgrade to the Plus Wiki for Educators for free. Teachers can control the privacy level of their wiki, ensuring that only invited people are able to view and edit the contents.

Wikispaces allows members to upload files, add and edit content, and share resources with other members. The built-in discussion board allows for an ongoing conversation about the content of the wiki. All members of a wiki have editing rights, so everyone can contribute to the PLC equally. PLC members can use a wiki to upload lesson-planning templates and other documents, post links to instructional websites and videos for teachers, and share updates that may be pertinent to classroom instruction. To learn more about PLCs, go to: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/resources/proflearn/>. To get started with your own PLC, go to: <http://www.wikispaces.com/>.

Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Initiative (T-STEM)

Texas has initiated the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Initiative (T-STEM) to empower teachers, inspire students, and advance studies in these four fields. T-STEM employs best practices such as academies, co-curricular activities, networking, and a faculty training institute to improve instruction and academic performance in science and mathematics-related subjects at secondary schools. In the 2012-2013 academic year, over 35,000 students and 2800 teachers were supported by the T-STEM initiative. To learn more about how T-STEM can help you, go to: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=4470>.

Department of Labor will use up to \$100 million for Youth CareerConnect

The Youth CareerConnect grant program is designed to encourage America's school districts, institutions of higher education, the workforce investment system, and their partners to scale up evidence-based high school models that will transform the high school experience for America's youth. Youth CareerConnect schools will strengthen America's talent pipeline through: Integrated Academic and Career-Focused Learning, Work-Based Learning and Exposure to the World of Work, Robust Employer Engagement, Individualized Career and Academic Counseling, and Integration of

Post-secondary Education and Training. Grants will be awarded to local education agencies, public or non-profit local workforce entities, or non-profits with education reform experience. All grantees will have to demonstrate a strong public/private partnership and must include, at a minimum, a local education agency, a local workforce investment system entity, an employer, and an institution of higher education. Awards are anticipated to be made in early 2014 for program implementation to align with the 2014-15 school year. For applications, visit: http://www.doleta.gov/ycc/applicant_Information.cfm.



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