Industry Certificate Guidebook

Industry Certificate Work Group, January 2015

The information for industry certifications was created by the Graduation Guidelines Industry Certificate Work Group. For a list of the members of the work group or for a copy of <u>*Industry Certification: Implementation Recommendations, Resources, and Tools,*</u> *please* click **<u>here</u>**.

Implementation

The unique needs and resources of each district will dictate the implementation of industry certifications as an approved component of a district's graduation requirement. The following are suggested steps that districts may consider for implementation

Phase 1: Assess the Need

Perform an internal analysis to determine if certifications are currently being utilized. If certifications are not being utilized, perform a high-level assessment of the district or school's need and capacity to implement certifications as a component of the district's graduation requirement. Addressing these questions will encourage and require collaboration and coordination among administration, faculty and staff, as well as post-secondary and industry partners

Some questions for consideration may include:
- Is there a desire by key stakeholders to add Industry Certifications to the district's menu of Graduation Guidelines?
- Are there certifications currently being offered in CTE or non-CTE programs? (see CTE section for details)
- Is there curriculum in place that could lead to industry certification?
- Is there a strong alignment with local workforce needs?
- Do partnerships with industry and/or post-secondary institutions already exist? (see industry outreach section for a detailed checklist)
- Is there a mechanism for communicating the need for industry certifications to our local constituents (students, teachers, parents, community members)?
- Is there an existing committee or entity that can lead the implementation (e.g. shared decision making team, curriculum committee, etc.)?
- Does the existing staff have expertise is this area and what professional development might be necessary?
- Will identifiable certifications be district initiated, school initiated or student initiated?

Outcome: Go, No Go Decision. If it is determined that there is a need and the approval from district leadership is received, the next phase is to design an Implementation Plan.

Phase 2: Design an Implementation Plan

- **Create a diverse oversight committee**
Create a committee of individuals who can lead the work. Members should include administration, faculty and staff, Career and Technical educators, post-secondary partners, industry partners, and students. By involving the community, schools will be able to provide avenues to new resources and opportunities for students and teachers.

- **Establish a process framework**
Develop a framework that will support management and accountability as well as a commitment to a culture of quality certifications. Focus areas to include are:

  - Internal policies – Develop polices or procedures to ensure quality and accurate use of the certifications. Incorporate connections into existing relevant policies for sustainability as appropriate.
  - Internal systems and processes, such as:
    - Systems and processes to store and secure any necessary data and to focus on ensuring that data are actively used in decision-making and evaluation measures
    - Processes to sign up, pay for, and take exams.
    - Integration with existing programs such as Credit for Prior Learning, Credit for Work or Internship Experiences, or Capstone Projects.
  - Human Capital– Identify the human capital available and determine roles and responsibilities**.** Clearly identify if and how industry will be engaged in the process.

- **Create a shared vision and purpose**
A common vision and purpose for including industry certifications is critical for long-term success and sustainability. Ensuring that all stakeholders understand the purpose and potential allows for focus and clarity. Public meetings can engage constituents in the design and purpose of implementing industry certifications. If the purpose of including industry certifications can be constructed transparently, communication to stakeholders is lessened.

- **Identify possible certifications**
Certifications could be identified at the district level, the programs level or the individual student level. Industry or state generated lists may also be available. In any case, consideration should be given to possible alignments with:

  - District's curriculum and academic standards
  - Existing or expected career pathways and/or CTE programs
  - Funding sources to support the costs of certifications
  - Local, regional, and state workforce needs
  - Accessible post-secondary programs
  - ICAP implementation
  - Alignment to concurrent enrollment opportunities

- **Create Industry Validation Process**
  Once possible certifications have been identified, identify processes for identifying and documenting alignments to:

  o Course Content through a sequence of courses (career pathways)
  o Core content standards and CTE standards (*see standards alignment section*)
  o Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and/or courses *(see CTE integration section)*
  o Alignment to Business/Industry needs and standards *(see Industry Engagement section*)
  o Certifications and/or programs at post-secondary institutions *(post-secondary alignment section)*

- **Identify Accountability Metrics**
  Identify data related to the implementation of recognized certifications to collect.
  Examples include:

  o Number of students and type of certificates that are awarded
  o Number of students who earned a certificate that are hired in the industry of their certification
  o Number of students transitioning to post-secondary programs or additional training that align with the certification

- **Create an external and internal communication plan**

- **Create an internal staff training plan**