

## **CTE Students Outperforming Their Counterparts**

Career Technical Education (CTE) students are outperforming their counterparts, according to an analysis of data from Minnesota. In fact, scores in reading, math, and writing, as well as grade point average, attendance, and graduation rates, show that CTE students are doing better in school.

Each year, the Minneapolis Public Schools conduct a survey of career and technical education (CTE) teachers, followed by a comparative analysis of CTE and non-CTE student data. In order to meet Perkins reporting requirements, the Minneapolis Public Schools also developed a system for monitoring the impact of Perkins-supported program enhancements, as shown in student achievement indicators.

According to Wendie Palazzo, CTE Grants Coordinator for the Minneapolis Public Schools, the most significant finding in the teacher survey is that males and disadvantaged student groups show the greatest benefit from participating in CTE. Data suggests that CTE program enhancements, including Tech Prep activities, may be responsible.

### **Perkins investments making a difference**

General findings of the teacher survey indicated that Perkins investments enhance classroom technology, connections with community resources, skills/certification opportunities for teachers and students, and instruction addressing career and educational options and how to access them. Most importantly, CTE engages students in repeated practice of academic and technical skills in authentic contexts.

The impact of Perkins-supported program enhancements is reflected in student achievement data. For the past several years, the Minneapolis research has shown that CTE students outperform their nonparticipating counterparts, with larger differences noted for struggling demographic groups.

### **Survey data gathered online**

District administrators and CTE teachers in the Minneapolis district have worked to refine an online survey that, with support from the Minnesota Department of Education, will be accessible statewide. This system monitors CTE inputs—primarily services that are enhanced by Perkins funding—and outputs—primarily student achievement indicators.

In recent years, results showed that Minneapolis CTE teachers were providing an average of 17 targeted educational activities for students as outlined in Perkins. The top three included career planning and development, software/IT instruction, and guest instruction/presentations.

### **Perkins funding critical to success**

According to Palazzo, “Although the size of the CTE/non-CTE achievement differential varies across demographic groups, the pattern is consistent. CTE is working.” She adds, “Studies like these suggest that Perkins funding may be one of the most critical tools in achieving the goals of No Child Left Behind legislation.”

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