

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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April 28, 2008

Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1514
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Smith:

The Office of Inspector General is required by §20.055, Florida Statutes, to provide a six-month follow-up of the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) audit report #07-40 regarding *Career Academy Students Perform Better Than Other Students During High School; Later Outcomes Vary*.

The attached response from the Division of Workforce Education addresses the recommendations provided by OPPAGA's report dated September 2007. If you have any further questions, please contact me at 245-0403.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed W. Jordan".

Ed W. Jordan
Acting Inspector General

EWJ/br

c: OPPAGA
Florida Legislative Auditing Committee

ED W. JORDAN, CIG, CFE, CIA
ACTING INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Florida Department of Education
Six-month Follow-Up Report in Response to the OPPAGA Report #07-40
*Career Academy Students Perform Better Than Other Students during High School; Later
Outcomes Vary*
April 2008

Recommendations

1. The department should verify data reported by school districts on career academies and notify districts of missing student data. This verification should include comparing career academy data from year to year to identify new career academies as well as those no longer operating. In addition, the department should compare school district career academy information to the list of career academies that is maintained by the Division of Workforce Education.

The Education Information and Accountability office works with the Division of Workforce Education to verify career academy data following each data submission (October, February and end of year). Data for students in career academies is compared to the Master School Identification (MSID) file of schools that operate one or more career academies and to the list of districts with career academy grants. Districts are contacted and asked to update questionable data.

An up-to-date indicator of schools with career academies is maintained via the MSID file and is available on the web at <http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/EDS/MasterSchoolID/index.cfm>.

Three new data elements have been added to the automated student database for collection at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The new data being collected will provide 1) the number of students participating in a Career and Professional Academy as defined in the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act, s. 1003.493, F.S.; 2) the number who took/attempted an industry certification or technical skill attainment by third party assessment; and 3) the number who passed this assessment. These data will be disaggregated by the type of career academy, the type of assessment, district and school as well as by other relevant demographic items.

In addition, to meet the requirements of the CAPE Act, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has developed a web-based Career and Professional Academy registration tool located at <http://www.fl DOE.org/workforce/fepea/default.asp>.

Each district is responsible for the input of information pertaining to Career and Professional Academies operating in 2007-2008 that meet the requirements of the Act. The registration includes data input and a verification process. For the purpose of data analysis, academy information fields include: district, school, academy, enrollment, current status, and industry certification(s) programs (from a drop-down menu from the FLDOE database) for which students in the academy will receive the curriculum and training necessary to sit for the examination.

In the Industry Certifications section of the Registration, the district will also report the number of certifications earned in 2007-2008. The School District Superintendent (or designee) has the opportunity to review and edit the information prior to final submission, verify the information in each field and then submits to finalize the registration of the Career and Professional Academy. This registration process will be completed in May, 2008.

Through a similar and on-going registration process, an up-to date list of all schools with career academies will be maintained on the Division of Workforce Education web site.

2. The department should expand its definition of career academies to include business or higher education partnerships and small learning communities.

All publications—printed and electronic—emphasize the essential core elements of a career and professional academy include business or higher education partnerships and instruction delivered through small learning communities. The FLDOE *Career Academy Participant* data element reflects this definition.

3. The department should collect data that identifies whether a career academy leads to industry certification.

The three new elements as well as the Career and Professional Academy Registration process referred to in item #1 above will allow the department to identify whether a career academy leads to industry certification. The FLDOE is creating a permanent database for industry certifications/technical skill attainment. This database will be used to satisfy statutory requirements of the 2007 Florida Career and Professional Education Act and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).