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MARYLAND'S

LIBRARY

PUBLIC AWARENESS

CAMPAIGN FOR CTE

BY LYNNE M. GILLI AND MARJORIE R. LOHNES

Career and technical education (CTE) has grown and changed tremendously over the past 20 years. While great strides have been made in upgrading CTE in Maryland, many parents, students, policymakers and community members were not familiar with the “new and improved” CTE. A marketing and public awareness campaign, in partnership with the public library system, is beginning to alleviate the remaining misperceptions about what CTE has to offer all students. Today’s CTE:

- Offers rigorous, relevant programs of study that prepare students for both college and careers.
- Emphasizes high-skill, high-wage, high-demand careers in existing and emerging professions.
- Incorporates rigorous and challenging academic content standards.
- Provides a sequence of courses leading to an industry-recognized credential, an associate or baccalaureate degree, or entry into an apprenticeship program.

While CTE has evolved from the job-specific training of the past, many still assume that its sole focus is to prepare lower-achieving students for work immediately following high school. Recognizing the need for greater awareness, a partnership was established between the Maryland State Department of Education’s (MSDE) Division of Career and College Readiness and the Division of Library Services, along with three public school systems and their public libraries (Carroll, Howard, and Calvert counties). The goal was to increase the awareness and knowledge of parents, students, policymakers and the broader community about today’s CTE programs. This partnership is being successfully replicated in different school systems each year and has the potential for replication in other states.

Designing the Campaign

A design team was formed including representatives from each of the partnering agencies, and a Gant chart was developed to guide the timely completion of all assignments. The local school systems’ CTE directors and the library directors joined forces to develop resources describing CTE, and they produced interesting and engaging activities to attract students and their parents to the library (see sidebar). The school system leaders revised registration information for CTE programs of study, planned the agenda for back-to-school night, and designed career development information. Displays were created for each branch of the library systems to share information about CTE with parents, students and the community. Since library staff members, both paid and volunteer, were engaged in the initiative, a training program and materials were designed to help them answer questions from parents and students about Maryland’s system of CTE.

Each partner involved in this initiative had individual yet aligning goals. The MSDE sought to replicate this awareness campaign in several other local school and library systems across the state. The local school system leaders wanted to raise awareness among parents, students and members of the community about the CTE programs offered in the comprehensive high schools and CTE centers. The public library system directors, meanwhile, enthusiastically engaged in this awareness campaign because of their increased interest in workforce development programming.

The Maryland State Department of Education provided a \$5,000 grant to each of the three local school systems that participated in this CTE awareness project. The funds were used to design and print student posters, “save the date” cards, invitations, banners and brochures; pay for postage; and pay teachers’

A Sampling of Campaign Activities

Some of the activities that involved the community included:

- Participation in a computer-based career development scavenger hunt. Students who completed it received a wristband that said “CTE—Don’t Go to College Without It,” the theme for the event. Also, all scavenger hunt participants’ names were entered into a drawing and one student won an IPOD.
- Viewing a showcase of students’ projects from CTE programs of study.
- Observing student demonstrations related to their program area.
- Participating in hands-on experiences in career areas (each branch of the library featured activities from every career cluster).
- Attending Back to School Night, or an open house, to visit the CTE classrooms and learn more about the programs of study. ■

stipends for evening and weekend hours to accompany students who participated in CTE presentations and exhibits at the libraries.

Measuring the Campaign’s Success

The successful implementation of this awareness campaign was measured in the following ways:

- The timely development of all marketing materials, including posters with photos and quotes from one student enrolled in each of Maryland’s 10 career clusters for display in the library and the middle and high schools.
- The number of people who attend the awareness sessions (open house nights,

SAMPLE PROJECT STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES, OUTCOMES, TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBLE STAFF

STRATEGY/ACTIVITY	OUTCOME	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE STAFF
School system and library staff will develop awareness materials focused on the CTE system. These materials will be used at the back-to-school nights and CTE Open House and be on display in the libraries.	Develop marketing materials with consistent message. Reeducate parents and students about the new CTE. Encourage students to register for CTE programs.	July–August (develop materials) August–September (back to school nights)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system staff • Library staff
Include CTE program and economic development information on Web site.	Encourage the use of technology by students and parents seeking information about CTE programs.	August–October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSDE staff • School system staff • Library staff
Develop training materials to educate library staff about state and local systems of CTE.	Develop a packet of materials, including a PowerPoint presentation, that can be shared with library staff.	Materials developed by August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSDE staff • School system staff • Library staff
Host CTE awareness campaign kickoff at a library branch with high ranking representatives from MSDE, the school system, the library, county council, school board, legislature, economic development, as well as other local dignitaries.	Introduce the CTE display in the libraries and highlight the state and local partnership for CTE awareness.	One day during “American Education Week” in November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSDE staff • School system staff • Library staff
Provide a series of presentations by local CTE students at each branch of the library to highlight and demonstrate today’s CTE programs.	Reeducate parents and students about the new CTE. Encourage students to register for CTE programs.	November and December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system staff • Library staff
Register students for CTE programs.	Increase enrollment in CTE.	January–February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system staff

▲ This is a list used by MSDE, library and school system staff outlining the campaign’s projects, activities, timelines and the staff responsible for each activity.

library partnership kickoff event, and students’ presentations at each library).

- The number of students who indicated that they gained knowledge of the CTE system through this campaign, as evidenced by feedback provided on the CTE program registration form, Web site hits and responses to surveys.
- The interest demonstrated by others in replicating the project in local school systems and libraries, following presentations by all partners at the annual statewide conference for library personnel and CTE directors’ briefings.

The staff members from the library and CTE offices at the MSDE recognized early on that a state-level campaign would not have the same impact that a local one would generate. The excitement and involvement generated at each event were impressive. The state and local superintendents shared remarks, as well as county executives and library directors. Secondary and postsecondary educators were all in attendance; one local school system even scheduled its monthly school system administrative leadership meeting at the library just prior to the kickoff event.

The students’ presentations about their involvement in CTE programs of study, and what it has meant to their future college and career decisions, were the most exciting part of the kick-off event. The subsequent exhibits and program demonstrations by students at each branch of the library drew many people to the libraries—even regular library patrons became interested and involved. Many comments were made by those in attendance regarding the enhancements to CTE programs “since they were in school,” and that they had “no idea”

"I received college credits for completing the Project Lead The Way Biomedical Sciences program while pursuing my interests in medicine and cardiology."

Student—Project Lead The Way Biomedical Sciences Carroll County Career and Technology Center

"I enjoy working with children and the Teacher Academy is helping me build the foundation to pursue a career in the field of teaching."

Student—Teacher Academy of Maryland Westminster High School

"There are many career choices available in the Information Technology field. Completing this program will give me a jumpstart on college and an IT career."

Student—Computer Programming Calvert Technology Academy

- ▲ These student quotes were among many shared with the community during the Library Public Awareness campaign for CTE.

about the array of new offerings that prepare students for both college and careers. Overall, the library CTE awareness project continues to be a tremendous success and it seems to grow and improve each year. **I**

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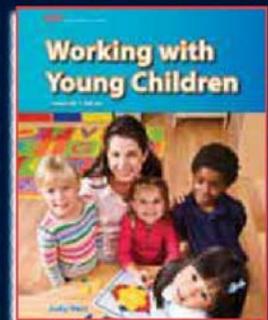
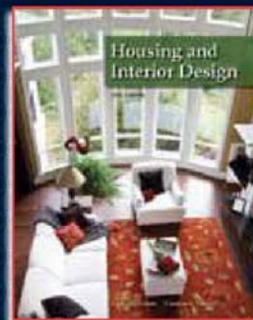
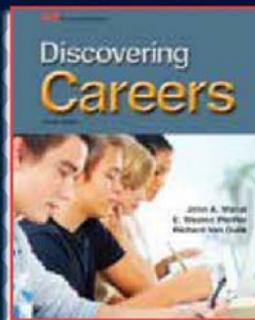
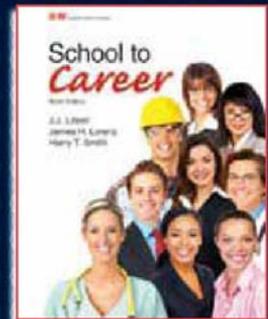
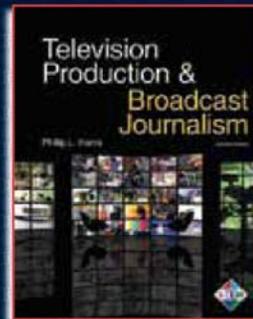
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