

## 2014 Governor’s Grants for Career & Technical Education Project Summary February 2016

### Overview

In February 2014, twelve school districts in South Dakota received grants totaling over \$8.5 million. The grants were awarded by Governor Dennis Daugaard from the South Dakota Future Fund to build Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that supported workforce development at the secondary level. The grant activities were completed in the fall of 2015, and the results have been overwhelmingly positive for middle and high school students throughout the state.

Each grant focused on workforce priorities in the state of South Dakota. These included the need for fulfilling labor market needs, regional collaboration amongst school districts, and partnerships with local business and industry and postsecondary institutions. With these priorities as a guide, districts submitted proposals to develop sustainable programs with a systems-approach to change.

### 2014-15 Participation Totals

School Districts:	58
Industry Partners:	60
Students:	3,200

The twelve districts each addressed the priorities with their students, communities and workforce needs in mind. Descriptions of each grant project along with ways other school districts can implement similar projects are included in the following pages.

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## Aberdeen School District—Facility Provides Seamless Career Education

Through a grant award of \$2 million, the Aberdeen School District created the Aberdeen Technical Education Center (ATEC). Previously, CTE education in Aberdeen, housed primarily at the Hub Area Multi-District, was struggling with enrollment and a poor image among students, parents and the community at large. Constructing new facilities on the campus of Aberdeen Central High School to comprehensively renovate programs and offer additional programs that fit both students’ and business and industry’s needs solved these issues.

Designing a facility from the ground up to **provide seamless career and technical education** was the centerpiece of this grant. Constructive discussions between CTE and core content staff, school counselors, business and industry, and postsecondary institutions were held throughout the planning and implementation of the new courses and construction of the new building. These



discussions determined what was important for students and how to provide quality, hands-on education to ensure students are prepared for college and careers. Contractors in the Aberdeen area moved quickly to make the building a reality. This was not only because they had been hired for the job, but also because of their interest in helping students and supporting CTE.

A major part of the success was the instructors and partner schools involved. The centralizing of courses under the ATEC allowed financial efficiencies for collaborating districts. Schools are now charged tuition

Student Enrollment	2014-15	2015-16
Aberdeen	448	641
Out-of-District	14	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>681</b>

which is more economically feasible for area schools than the former multi-district model of shared governance and financing. The new facility made an increase in course offerings possible.

To promote opportunities for dual and concurrent credit, the district worked with postsecondary schools, especially Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) and Mitchell

Technical Institute (MTI). Seven dual credit courses were offered. The grant first called on existing business partnerships and internships for direction, but as implementation began, new businesses were added and momentum built. All secondary staff within the district participated in CTE and career development training and toured a variety of local industries to learn more about the skills students need to be career ready.

Postsecondary Institution	Concurrent Credit Course Name	Credits
Lake Area Technical Institute	Autobody Prep & Repair	2
Lake Area Technical Institute	Autoshop Safety	1
Lake Area Technical Institute	Construction Technology	3
Lake Area Technical Institute	Video-Audio Production	3
Mitchel Technical Institute	DC/AC Circuits	3
Mitchell Technical Institute	Welding Safety Certification	1
Mitchell Technical Institute	Basic Welding Lab	2

#### Replication Opportunities:

The Aberdeen School District’s experience showed that school districts can increase dual credit courses by making **deliberate connections with career exploration, academic classes and other CTE classes**. Making those connections visible to students and parents is very important. For example, related courses such as Introduction to Engineering Design and physics are now scheduled in the ATEC center to plant the connection between them in student’s minds.

#### Unintended Results:

Through the establishment of the centralized career academy, students were able to make more connections between CTE and academic classes such as engineering and physical science because they were taught by the same teacher. Instructors and other staff members developed new and renewed vigor about teaching because of the interest industry representatives took in supporting their classrooms.

*“People I never met before showed such a genuine interest in our students and wanted to help them succeed. The grant gave us the publicity and tools needed spark that in our community.”*

- Dr. Becky Guffin  
Aberdeen Superintendent

## Burke School District—Mobile Classrooms Offer Flexibility for Students

The Burke School District utilized their grant, totaling \$581,044, to develop mobile classrooms for use in **four schools in south central South Dakota, thus creating the West River CTE Consortium**. The goal was to provide quality CTE programs in the areas of residential construction, welding, and the engineering and biomedical pathways from Project Lead the Way (PLTW). The grant provided monies necessary to purchase the mobile classrooms, equip them, and find personnel that could address the needs of students and the communities targeted in the grant. **During the 14-15 school year, over 50% of each participating school districts’ high school enrollment took a CTE course**. The main factor in both the focus and the effect of the grant was the partnership between development corporations, businesses, and schools to assist in guiding the grant. Four school districts collaborated through regular meetings. A CTE academy in a central location was previously discussed, but distance and travel time were limiting factors. However, this **discussion opened the door for sharing programs**.

Partner School Districts
Burke
Gregory
Colome
South Central

The grant made it workable for the individual schools—each had a physical classroom for the program, and a contracted an instructor. The businesses and industries in the area were also supportive and provided needed input to assist instructors in offering real world, hands-on experiences. One example in the



biomedical science program included sharing an instructor, a medical lab technician, between the school program and Community Memorial Hospital in Burke. The teacher works part-time for the school and part-time at the hospital. The hospital holds the employee’s full-time contract. The district pays the hospital for a portion of the instructor’s time. This provides an instructor experienced in the healthcare industry and develops potential future employees for the hospital.

Through the grant, students at the four participating school districts are encouraged to take related dual credit courses after they complete CTE courses available through the mobile classrooms. In addition to online options, the grant established one concurrent credit options. The West River CTE Consortium districts are in the process of developing more opportunities in manufacturing and architecture & construction.

The grant’s success was attributed to three main factors. First, the support and buy-in from communities was key. Each community had different needs and successful CTE programs to build on.

However, true buy-in came from the desire for programs and opportunities they had been unable to have. The actual dollars were key in making the mobile classrooms a reality. Those monies made it possible to meet each community's different needs to provide career exploration and relevant, rigorous CTE courses. Finally, the project involved instructors in the design and delivery of curriculum and helped generate a positive feeling for the overall-concept of the project.

**Replication Opportunities:**

A component of this grant that holds potential for other districts to replicate is the set-up of mobile classrooms and sharing monetary and personnel resources between school districts. When geographic location is a limiting factor in establishing or expanding programs, taking the program to the students works more seamlessly with the individual schools because of the elimination of travel time and schedule conflicts.

**Unintended Results:**

The bottom line for this grant's success is the opportunity to expose students to programs and careers. Students were given a taste of the job and preparation required to be a contributing part of the workforce that is needed and wanted by the community.

*“Part of what makes the West River CTE Consortium work for its member schools is the sharing of staff. Each school district contributes a half of a staff member trained in one area of CTE.”*

- Erik Person  
Burke Superintendent

## Madison Central School District—Business Partnerships & Enrollment Options Equal Student Success

The Madison School District was awarded \$376,808 for their proposal. The grant focused on linking students to workforce preparation through a variety of vehicles. Data generated in SDMyLife and local business and industry needs determined focus courses and programs. The district also looked at the history of past graduates to understand the types of jobs their students earned.

With a strong background of trust and support from the community and a career-focused internship program already in place, the district worked to move CTE to the next level with **certification and dual credit opportunities**. This resulted in fast-tracking students to postsecondary training and jobs in the community in health science, manufacturing and transportation. As a result, the district provided an outlet for students who wanted a hands-on experience and work-force training. Students gained knowledge and skills and had the opportunity to experience a real-world work setting to understand the work-place environment and expectations.

Business Partners
Gehl Manufacturing
Golden Living Center
Madison Community Hospital
Prostrollo Automotive

The focus areas of dual credit and business partnerships were addressed in the planning and implementation of the grant. A partnership with postsecondary schools such as Lake Area Technical Institute and Southeast Technical Institute and business partners such as Prostrollo Auto and Madison Community Hospital made auto technician and CNA certification available to high school students. The technical institutes and Gehl Manufacturing collaborated to give dual credit to welders. The importance of business partnerships was foremost to the success of the grant. Administrators and instructors thought “outside the box” to come up with ways to gain experiences for students and benefit their business partners.

Postsecondary Institution	Course	Credits
Lake Area Technical Institute	Oxyacetylene Safety	1
Lake Area Technical Institute	Proper Use of Cutting	.5
Lake Area Technical Institute	Shop Orientation, Maintenance & Safety	1
Lake Area Technical Institute	Gas Metal Arc Welding	6
Lake Area Technical Institute <i>and</i> Southeast Technical Institute	Certified Nursing Assistant	3

### Replication Opportunities:

Many communities have multiple business partners available to team up with for student experiences and certification. Hospitals, retirement centers, and automotive dealerships need these trained workers and often welcome partnerships with schools to increase their workforce potential.

### Unintended Results:

An unintended result for the Madison School District was an increase in business interest in the district's CTE programs. As the grant was implemented, additional business partners reached out to the school to offer resources and expertise for other courses, such as precision machining and electrical wiring. Ultimately, the grant empowered teachers, students, and the community to take an active role in career education and CTE gained positive publicity as a result.

*"Our community now has a better concept of what CTE is and a positive view of CTE education. It showed we can deliver career focused education to meet the needs of all students and the needs of the community."*

- Adam Shaw  
Madison High School Principal



## Meade School District—Internships Build Careers

The Meade School District in Sturgis was awarded \$89,967. The district used business and postsecondary partnerships through every step of bringing the grant to life.

Because the district has a long history of positive relationships with business and industry and a strong internship program, they were able to draw from these two components to develop a new course with real-world work experiences. Key players in this partnership included the **Sturgis Economic Development Corporation and Western Dakota Technical Institute (WDT)**.

Through the Sturgis Economic Development Corporation, space in an incubator building was made available to house a machining class. The school district and instructor partnered with local businesses to develop the course to meet the needs of employers in Sturgis and surrounding communities in the Northern Black Hills. The grant provided equipment and instructional materials, expanded youth internship opportunities, and gave students hands-on experiences. In the **2015-2016 school year, 33 students were placed in two sections of the machining course**, far exceeding the expected interest and enrollment. The district plans to open the machining program to students in surrounding districts in the future.

By working with WDT, students can enroll in dual credit options in machining, welding, and computer assisted drafting (CAD) giving participating students a jump start on their postsecondary education. To make the course work for the high school schedule and compensate for required travel distances, the district uses creative scheduling. Students attend WDT one day and then work at an internship in Sturgis the other four days of the week. **Two students were offered full time employment after completing first semester internships with area business partners.**

Postsecondary Institution	Dual Credit Courses	Credits
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Turning Theory & Operations	3
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Milling Theory & Operations	3
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Engine Construction & Operations	3

A publicity tool that was well received by students, parents, and the community was the Reverse Career Fair focusing on welding, CAD, and machining courses open to students in Meade and surrounding school districts. For the Reverse Career Fair, applications are taken and selected students and their parents tour participating businesses. A question and answer session is held following the tours. Western Dakota Technical Institute and the local newspaper also participate.

Other activities conducted through the grant included certification opportunities for CTE courses, **working with local businesses to pay for certification fees** students were unable to pay, and continuing to explore dual enrollment opportunities with postsecondary institutions.

**Replication Opportunities:**

The classroom component of the courses offered at the school and supported by business and industry through internships is a solid piece to replicate across the state in communities of all sizes. Strong business partners provide the expertise and are open to workplace experiences for students. Using creative methods of publicizing the program leads to buy-in from students, parents, and community members.

**Unintended Results:**

Students and their parents recognized the wide variety of high-wage jobs available to them in their own community.

***“One of the ‘unsung’ benefits of this grant was showing students, parents, and the broader community there are good paying jobs in the communities going unfilled because trained personnel are unavailable. The Governor’s CTE Grant helped to solidify CTE course offerings, increase interest in the programs, and help otherwise disconnected students find personal connections.”***

- Coleen Keffeler  
Youth Internship Coordinator  
Meade School District

## Mitchell School District—CTE Academy Builds Workforce Skills

The Mitchell School District was awarded a \$2 million grant to update programs, renovate existing facilities and build lab spaces to enhance the quality and scope of CTE programs in the district. A major accomplishment was the addition of the Architecture and Construction programs. The ability to provide **up-to-date equipment and lab spaces** with the input and assistance of business and industry and postsecondary institutions was integral to the success of the grant.

A key factor in the grant implementation was the commitment of high school instructors to getting the best value for their grant dollars. Experienced professionals from Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) and businesses helped to write the grant and serve as key personnel in the development and implementation of the grant goals.



In addition to the facility remodel, the Mitchell School District partnered with MTI to develop dual credit opportunities for auto, cabinetry, and CAD classes. These are in addition to the dual credit opportunities

Postsecondary Institute	Course	Credits
Mitchell Technical Institute	Welding	4
Mitchell Technical Institute	Nutrition	3
Mitchell Technical Institute	AWS Safety Certification	1
Mitchell Technical Institute	Manufacturing Symbols & Measurements	1
Mitchell Technical Institute	Blueprint Reading	1
Mitchell Technical Institute	Welding Lab	2

already available in health science through Dakota Wesleyan University, in welding through MTI, and in the engineering and biomedical pathways of Project Lead the Way through Augustana University.

The Mitchell School District also worked to maintain and establish many business partners, such as Patzer’s Woodworking, Muth Electric, Paulson Sheet Metal, Pro Build, and Ethan Co-Op Lumber. These businesses provided supplies, equipment, and invaluable advice and mentoring.

The district also put a great deal of effort into **increasing collaboration with area schools**. The results of a

Partner Schools
Ethan
Hanson
Mount Vernon
Parkston

pre-survey directed what classes were offered; currently there are four schools sending students to the Mitchell CTE Academy. This is an area Mitchell plan to continue expanding.

**Replication Opportunities:**

A piece of this project that would be useful and doable in other districts is the meshing of the curriculum in the courses with business and industry input and postsecondary collaboration. The Mitchell experience found a real willingness and desire of partners to work together to build their workforce. Everyone has valuable input and resources to offer. School districts can build contacts and be the entity that ties stakeholders together. **Mitchell projects a 33% increase in student enrollments from surrounding school districts, based on spring registration.**

**Unintended Results:**

Regional participation at MCTEA started slowly. However, as more students from surrounding districts took classes in the updated buildings, other students from the partner districts heard about the opportunities their classmates participated in and wanted to take courses at MCTEA as well. Partner districts now bring their 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders to the building for a tour each spring.

*“The climate for CTE at the school district became more professional and current with the transition to the CTE Academy (MCTEA). Lab spaces now provide workplace environments similar to industry and the expectations of the instructors are similar to those in the workplace for student conduct in areas such as attendance, behavior, and work ethic.”*

- Denise Hoffman  
MCTEA Director

## Northeast Technical High School—Partnerships Promote Agriculture Programs

Northeast Technical High School (NTHS) received a grant of \$150,000 to give students in the region surrounding Watertown the opportunity to have agriculture classes and promote dual credit opportunities. The grant also focused on developing an awareness of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) careers for Watertown Middle School students. The results of the grant included the establishment of two agriculture classes at NTHS, concurrent credit with Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI), and the creation of two additional STEM classes at Watertown Middle School.

NTHS partners with 9 schools. Agriculture is the largest program at LATI, but few of these area high schools offer agriculture classes on their own. Because of the grant, NTHS hired an instructor and purchased

equipment, textbooks, and supplies for courses in Animal Science and Crop Science. A strong partnership was developed with LATI through the new agriculture program. The LATI Foundation is subsidizing the Ag instructor’s salary for three years. This salary has been added to the NTHS budget as a regular expense in the future to supply the support needed and emphasize the value of sustaining this program.

Partner Schools
Castlewood
Florence
Grant-Deuel
Great Plains Lutheran
Hamlin
Henry
Summit
Watertown
Waverly-South Shore

### Replication Opportunities:

Instructors at Watertown High School and Middle School were trained and certified in the engineering track of Project Lead the Way (PLTW). With support from local businesses, community organizations or grants, many schools would be able to start a PLTW program on some level.

### Unintended Results:

Offering agriculture courses revitalized the local FFA chapter and resulted in additional leadership opportunities for students and good parental and community support for the FFA chapter and organization.

*“Northeast Technical High School has experienced wonderful community support and direct support from its member schools. The grant allowed for the expansion of our CTE programs, galvanized current relationships, and has led to new interest in what our technical high school can offer to northeast South Dakota,”*

- Bert Falak  
Northeast Technical High School Director



## Northwest Area Schools Multi District—New and Renovated Mobile Classrooms Revitalize Courses

The Northwest Area Multi-District was in great need of new equipment and mobile classrooms to deliver CTE education to its eight area member schools. Their grant of \$830,800 met this need.

“Without the dollars provided in this grant,” said Quinn Lenk, Northwest Area Multi-District Director, “we would have not been able to add the four new mobile classrooms and re-build the four existing classrooms. Some of those classrooms were over 20 years old and in great need of renovation.”

The grant also allowed for new equipment that met current industry and CTE standards and made hands-on experiences available for CTE students.

Collaboration between area schools and technical institutes resulted in classrooms that can accommodate 60-70 students a day. That collaboration was key to developing curriculum, choosing equipment, and building relationships between technical institutes and the instructors. These relationships continue to be strengthened to meet the ongoing goal of developing dual and concurrent credit opportunities for students.

Partner Schools
Dupree
Faith
Timber Lake
Harding County
McIntosh
McLaughlin
Smee
Tiospaye Topa

Postsecondary Institution	Concurrent Credit Course	Credits
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Drafting Fundamentals	3
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Oxy Fuel Welding/Cutting	3
Western Dakota Technical Institute	Medical Terminology	3

### Replication Opportunities:

The multi-district hosted a Technical Career Fair and invited area school districts to bring students and attend sessions to find out about industry's needs and the knowledge and skills required in related careers. The technical institutes also presented information on available programs to train students for high-skill, high-demand careers. The format was engaging and informative for students, and provided valuable experiences in districts where community sizes limit the number of businesses and industries students are routinely exposed to. Other districts faced with some of the same limitations could collaborate with area schools and adapt this for their use.

*“Because of the distance between our schools, those classrooms are vital to bringing CTE education to more remote areas. Through the upgraded and new classrooms and equipment and expanded curriculum, students were introduced to more career options and are able to build skills in high-need areas.”*

- Quinn Lenk  
Northwest Area Schools Director

### Unintended Results:

Based on the updates to the mobile classrooms, partner school districts have reviewed their in-house course offerings to determine what additional courses can be added to extend what students learn in the mobile classroom and how they can connect students to related dual credit courses.

## Rapid City Area Schools—Dual Enrollment Opportunities Expand

Rapid City Area School (RCAS) and Western Dakota Technical Institute (WDT) made expanding dual enrollment participation their top priority. Their grant totaled \$2 million and focused on meeting the needs of business, industry, and students in the western region of South Dakota.

Western Dakota’s administration, instructors, and advisory committees were faced with the concern that jobs are going unfilled because of the lack of skilled workers. The Technology and Innovation in Education (TIE) Office, coupled with **SDMyLife data**, surveyed students in RCAS to determine the courses and programs students found interest in.

The results were positive. Dual enrollment rose from about 40 students in the fall of 2014 to 155 students in the fall of 2015. In the 2016 spring semester, **170 students** were enrolled in dual credit courses and projected numbers continue to climb. These students came from **25 different school districts**.

In addition to the huge increase in enrollment, updated equipment in the machining and welding programs was added to these high-need areas. A book loan program for required textbooks was available to students in need at no cost. Other services from WDT to students included presentations on dual enrollment, follow-up academic counseling for students, and mid-term career advising. Maintaining strong connections between WDT and students was a big part of student satisfaction and completion of the courses.

Previous feedback from high school students indicated hesitation to enroll in college courses because they would not be with their friends. That perception has changed. High school students are viewing dual credit as a huge opportunity and taking advantage of it. Due to the counseling services and the book loan program, **students that previously only considered university paths now look at WDT as a good option for their postsecondary education.**

### Replication Opportunities:

Resources such as TIE, career exploration camps, and SDMyLife can be utilized in any South Dakota school district. Districts can use all of these to develop or renew their own programs and target student needs. Technical institutes and universities are knowledgeable and helpful in guiding school districts to provide a variety of career development opportunities.

***“This grant proved to be a win/win for schools and students. The public in general is more aware of what CTE classes and technical institutes like WDT have to offer.”***

- Steve Buchholz  
Dean of Accreditation and Advancement  
Western Dakota Technical Institute

### Unintended Results:

Staff from WDT visited districts in person to discuss dual credit opportunities. The relationships developed during these visits have caused area school districts to reach out to WDT with new ideas for offering additional concurrent credit courses in-house and for partnering on career development activities outside of dual credit such as career camps, local advisory committees, and classroom speakers.

## Sioux Falls School District—CTE Academy Expansion Provides New Opportunities for Students

The Sioux Falls School District received a \$768,454 grant to add three CTE classrooms at the Career and Technical Education Academy. The new classrooms house additional courses to **meet regional needs and student enrollments**.

The district began by looking at existing classroom space and programs. Student registrations, course demand, and **career interests supported through SDMyLife data were reviewed**. Discussions with school partners indicated a need for additional programs in specialized spaces with industry-level environments and equipment. Needs were identified in information technology (IT) and finance. Because the CTE Academy serves as a regional base, input for course offerings and information on student interests came from the eight surrounding schools and the private schools in Sioux Falls.

The classroom additions to the existing CTE Academy allowed for specialized space to meet student interest in programs that had not been addressed. Courses in computer networking and the Academy of Finance were two of these programs. A lab for the health science area specific to teaching EMT courses was also added to provide for high quality learning and instruction.

The addition of the finance program space allowed expansion of **partnerships with the financial community**. This led to support of summer academies. The Academy of Finance, a national organization, arranged internships through a variety of non-profit and financial institutions.

The grant improved and invigorated the CTE climate in the district. CTE has met a niche in the high school offerings as it provides hands-on, relevant learning for students. It has provided an engaging learning path toward graduation, with an emphasis on careers and postsecondary preparation.

Partner Schools
Baltic
Brandon Valley
Garretson
Harrisburg
Parker
Sioux Falls Christian
Sioux Falls O’Gorman
Tea
Tri-Valley
West Central

**Replication Opportunities:**

The regional format and collaboration between districts are pieces from this grant that are workable in for other districts. Even though each area is unique, a willingness to look at collaboration opportunities with other districts and business and industry is important and welcomed.

**Unintended Results:**

By expanding the CTEA building and further specializing the health science, IT, and finance programs, space was freed for other CTE programs and to offer academic classes in the CTE Academy with a career focus. For example, a speech class can be tailored to the CTE course or program and delivered on-site. This helps students see the connection between academic and CTE courses more deeply and delivers a relevant education experience.

***“Community and business support is vital—they’re looking for a future workforce, but also want to give back to students and the community.”***

-Jim Kayl

Sioux Falls CTE Academy Director

## Todd County School District—Connecting Middle School and High School

Todd County was awarded a grant of \$103,560 to update CTE curriculum and to align that curriculum to local business needs. A major component of the grant was the addition of a middle school Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program in partnership with the White River School District.

As a result of the grant, these middle schools saw high numbers of students receiving career education and basic skills in the STEM area with **over 360 students participating throughout the first year**. Several components of the grant were important. First, the implementation of the STEM program through the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Gateway to Technology courses such as Modeling & Design and Automation and Robotics showed middle school students how math and science were used in careers. The grant supplied equipment and supplies to engage students and provided hands-on experience. Second, teachers participating in the Gateway to Technology Curriculum received in-depth professional development. Third, teachers gained a feeling of professional trust and respect as the school supported them in revising their curriculum to make it more engaging and meaningful.

Another important factor for determining the project's direction was the **findings from a local job market survey**. This survey was done in partnership with Sinte Gleska University (SGU). SGU conducted a job market survey for skills students needed to join the local workforce and identified the skills businesses want to see in current and future employees. Discussion with staff and input from local businesses provided a starting point for how to develop those skills in students and find career curriculum to enhance those qualities.

The district will continue to partner with SGU for dual credit opportunities and hopes to collaborate with other postsecondary institutions to increase opportunities for students.

### Replication Opportunities:

Other districts could use the **labor market survey as a tool in their own communities**. Partnerships with local postsecondary institutions and other local organizations, **such as an economic development corporation or chamber of commerce**, to build a stronger workforce is positive and powerful for students, school districts, and the local economy.

### Unintended Results:

The grant started a mind-set at the middle school level for Todd County and White River that will continue to be supported, particularly the transition aspect from middle school to high school. Heightened awareness of careers and CTE program offerings helps students make connections between courses offered and careers in the future.

## Vermillion School District: Local Industries and Organizations Provide Mentors and Support

The Vermillion School District was searching for a way to address the **community and region's need for skilled workers** in residential construction. Their grant for \$134,380 was designed to enhance and expand this program and the courses offered. While the climate for career and technical programs was positive prior to the Governor's grant, this project elevated the district's programs to a new level with the significant investment in Vermillion CTE. The grant provided funds to construct a classroom to house the residential construction program in an industry-like environment.

The project, developed through a partnership with Builders Choice, Inc., resulted in equipment, materials, and trained personnel to supervise, inspect, and work with the CTE instructor. The district's residential construction program initially built portable restrooms for the oil fields in North Dakota that involved most elements of the construction process—carpentry, electrical, and plumbing. By having Builder's Choice personnel inspect work throughout the construction phase, students learned valuable skills to prepare them



for the workplace. **Enrollment in the program increased from four students to 20 in 2014-2015.** Progress was made and continues to be addressed to provide concurrent credit for this course.

Because of a downturn in the oil industry, the partnership with Builder's Choice was not available after the first year. A partnership with the **Vermillion Chamber and Development Corporation (VCDC)** resulted in a new path for the program. During the 2015-2016 school year, a house is being built in the new classroom. This is a 1,600 square foot house, built in the climate-controlled facility made possible by the grant. The district is collaborating with the VCDC to find a building site for the house to be moved to in spring 2016. The community's response has been supportive. **An open house was held to publicize the results and the program.**

**Replication Opportunities:**

The partnership with business and industry and community organizations, such as the economic development office or chamber of commerce, is a vital element for successful CTE programs. Districts can utilize their expertise and desire for skilled workers to direct and build CTE programs.

*“Work with your business and industry partners and be willing to look for alternative solutions to problems if needed. Our experience pointed out the impact the economic changes can have on a business, and districts need to be flexible in finding solutions to address those changes.”*

-Dr. Mark Froke  
Vermillion Superintendent

**Unintended Results:**

Students learned the expected skills in the construction process, but also learned the impact of economic trends on business. The change in the project pointed up the need for flexibility and life-long learning when planning a career.



## Yankton School District—Middle School Opportunities Lead to High School Achievement

The Yankton School District was awarded \$280,325 for their proposal to expand the offerings in their health science and manufacturing programs through improving existing programs, developing new dual enrollment classes, and building community partnerships. Through the grant, the district was able to increase student participation in CTE courses, develop opportunities for credit and certification, and strengthen the dual and concurrent enrollment offerings for CTE courses.

Prior to the grant, there were several classes that students, parents, and community members knew nothing about. The activities the grant supported provided clarity to these areas and got students excited about enrolling in these classes. Student participation and awareness of CTE was increased through **the development of a course for eighth grade students in career-exploration**. At the end of the course, students completed an end of course exam, and if they passed, received 0.5 high school credits. In addition, the eighth grade students left the course with a clearer idea of what careers they were interested in and could better plan which courses to take in high school related to their career goals.

Dual enrollment and certification was also a priority. The grant activities provided dual credit opportunities for Yankton High School and four area schools in welding, CAD, and anatomy & physiology through Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI). Credit for a manufacturing academy was also developed through MTI. These courses took CTE education to a higher level and increased the rigor and relevance of these programs. The district also offered CNA training through a summer institute and on-line programming and face-to-face CNA training through AVERA Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton. In both activities, the level of engagement for students far exceeded expectation.

Postsecondary Institution	Concurrent Credit Course	Credits
Mitchell Technical Institute	Anatomy/Physiology	3
Mitchell Technical Institute	Welding	3
Mitchell Technical Institute	Manufacturing Academy	1

Partnerships were established and renewed with organizations such as the Yankton Area Progressive Growth, Inc. (YAPG) and the Regional Technical Education Center (RTEC). YAPG provided funding for **“Friday CTE Academy”** instructors. RTEC made it possible for students to utilize the actual manufacturing environment. Both were vital for the hands-on experiences that promoted both the programs

Partner Schools
Avon
Bon Homme
Irene-Wakonda
Gayville-Volin

and students' attainment of skills.

**Replication Opportunities:**

Expanding course offerings by working with business and industry is possible for many districts. The use of **the summer academy for CNA training**, in cooperation with area health care facilities can be re-created in many districts. Choosing activities that are important to businesses in the area has also created sustainable programs for the districts.

**Unintended Results:**

The intangible result most rewarding for the students, instructors, and district was the excitement and publicity generated for all CTE courses. The course offerings and information about the need for these increased interest and enhanced the importance of CTE courses in the community and surrounding communities.

***“Build on what you have and focus on community needs. Don’t be afraid to reach out for different perspectives and include as many perspectives as possible. This will make your project relevant to both students and the community.”***

-Dr. Jennifer Johnke  
Yankton Superintendent

## How can CTE programs in your community be improved and enhanced?

In Spring 2016, **Workforce Education Grants** will be available for school districts. These grants are designed to support and align secondary school CTE systems with South Dakota’s postsecondary education programs and workforce needs. Funds from this grant program will be available to support projects similar to the 2014 Governor’s Grants for CTE.

Recipients of the 2014 Governor’s Grants for CTE had overwhelmingly positive responses about the results the grants made possible and **offer valuable advice for future grant applications.**

### How can need or relevancy for a project be determined?

- Form a team (administrators, community members, businesses) to reach out to the community and postsecondary institutions to determine what the workforce needs and concerns are. Look for different perspectives and invite fresh ideas. Determine how CTE can meet those needs.
- Reach out to business and industry representatives with vision to identify what is needed for employees, now and in the future.
- Ask students about career concerns and goals. What are their concerns for their future employment? Use SDMyLife for data about students’ career and postsecondary interests.
- Review Perkins data to identify program areas of need or concern.
- Look at sustainability—How will the district sustain the project?
- Communicate with stakeholders and make all parts of the project “transparent”. Focus on the benefits to all parties involved and the students served.
- Ask for outside help when needed. The Division of Career & Technical Education can assist through all phases of the grant.
- Focus on community needs. If economic development corporations aren’t available, contact the Chamber of Commerce, parent organizations, and community service groups. Thinking “outside the box” to find partners as necessary.
- Be aware of what’s going on in your geographic region and the state. Be able to back up and justify your proposals with evidence and data.

### **What should be considered when choosing personnel to write the grant?**

- The author should be one person for continuity, but get feedback from a broad group.
- Include detail-oriented people, those with long-term vision, and those who can provide clarity in the grant goals and project implementation, and those who can fundraise and friend-raise.
- Make sure instructors are involved in the design and delivery of curriculum. Share the big picture view and show how the district and curriculum will benefit.
- Call on counselors, instructors and administrators; look for people with strong visions and creativity.
- Business and industry involvement is critical.

### **What considerations are important in the grant writing process?**

- Research and review current state and local information and statistics to give a solid foundation for your proposal.
- Determine reliable benchmarks and final results. Focus activities of the grant on meeting those benchmarks and attaining the final goals.

***“When you’re setting goals, don’t get too fancy—keep it simple. Decide what you want to do and what evidence you need to tell if the project is succeeding.”***

-Erik Person  
Burke Superintendent

### **How do you develop benchmarks and track progress?**

- Determine accountability measurements: enrollment statistics, minutes of curriculum meetings, contacts with businesses and community resources, news articles, Perkins data, course grades, etc.
- Identify a key person to be accountable for documentation and evaluation of progress.
- Develop timelines and delegate responsibility.
- Good communication between all parties involved is vital.
- Be aware of enrollment changes. The program may grow dramatically or circumstances may change and a business or course may be gone. Be prepared for whichever way it may go.
- The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and a host of other industry certifications can be valuable accountability tools.

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### ***What are some potential challenges to be aware of?***

- Geographic location can be a challenge for dual enrollment, collaboration, and business and industry connections, though solutions can be developed to address them all.
- Collaboration between school districts can be hampered by scheduling conflicts and distance. Be creative when devising ways to reduce those limitations.
- In areas with less business and industry diversity, creativity is vital. Bringing industry and business leaders in through career fairs, taking students on field trips, businesses and career coaches on SDMyLife Network, connecting professionals and students virtually, and developing hybrid classes are possible ways to address this.
- Technical institutes and four-year colleges and universities will develop dual credit or concurrent credit, but each school is unique. Start forming relationships and use creativity to help mesh programs and courses. Remember these partnerships incorporate postsecondary-level courses into high school settings. The curriculum, textbooks, and student expectations are college-level courses. Concurrent credit courses, or dual credit courses taught at the high school level by high school instructors, require teachers to meet instructor qualifications from the postsecondary level.
- Communication with postsecondary schools is vital. Try to work together to find ways to benefit students, local districts, and the postsecondary institutions.
- Be upfront with your other students, parents, and teachers about how scheduling, dual enrollment, on-site work experiences, etc. might benefit and affect them.

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### ***Final Thoughts***

- Share your successes and be strong proponents for your programs; remind the community that CTE programs produce tax payers, not tax collectors.
- Be sure to have quality courses and programs—rigor, relevance, and current industry-alignment is important so students understand what career fields are all about and come out of CTE courses with strong workplace skills.
- Communicate early and often with your Regional Career Development Specialist at the Department of Education. The staff is willing and able to support districts in every step of the grant, from development through implementation and assessment.
- Postsecondary institutions are eager to help; high school students become their students so they have a stake in promoting and producing quality CTE programs.
- There is power in what CTE does for students, families, and communities. These grants can be empowering for teachers, students, parents, and communities.
- Awareness and respect for CTE can be gained by the grant publicity. Use as many tools as possible to promote the grant and your successes.