



# Get the FACS

New York State Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Education  
Vol. 7 Issue 9  
May 2012

## Presidents Message:

Back in March I attended the ACTE National Policy Seminar in Washington, DC. There were several sessions that focused on issues briefings, as well as advocacy strategies. We visited with staff members of several legislators “on the hill”.

Here are some tidbits from that seminar I wish to share and ask you to consider and take local action on:

- a. 70% of America does not have any direct contact with public education. We often can't be telling others ourselves how important we are as CTE. Each of us needs an “A-team,” other messengers who can carry our message in the public eye – this could be local educational organizations, business leaders, chamber of commerce, clergy, parent/teacher organizations, workforce investment boards as well as our own colleagues, and our students and their parents. Some of these individuals might be on our own CTE advisory councils in our school districts, and some may be part of our wider “network”. We need others to speak on our behalf and they can't do it if they don't know what we do. Cultivate relationships with these “messengers” and be sure they have a clear understanding of what Family & Consumer Sciences is all about.
- b. Go public with the FACS/CTE message. Attend town hall meetings of state and federal level legislators and take students with you; come prepared with questions. Write letters to the editor or an op-ed piece. Stay on point with your message – see ACTE website for talking point tools. Help students develop their voices; when a student talks, everyone listens differently. The more often our message goes across people's radar the more important they perceive it to be.
- c. If you have not presented to your own school board in a long time, the time is now. While public school budget voting is right around the corner in NY State, it is never too late to present to them “a program year in review”.

Plan ahead now for next year. I realize that some of us are dealing with staff cuts in some of our own departments but the message we share is still very necessary.

- d. We need to build our Career & Technical Student Organizations (CTSO's) such as FCCLA. I am aware that many of you have a “FACS Club” in your school that may focus on cooking, sewing, etc. Please consider starting right there and affiliate this group next year as an FCCLA chapter. For many of your students this could be a way to build their own resumes through membership in a national organization. Even if you choose to keep your group active at only the local level, please affiliate!!! Additionally, there is an after-school world that we could be tapping and money available for “after school programs” to consider. We could build bridges in this way.

The school year is starting to wind down and I know we are all growing weary. I feel like I've been wearing a firefighter's hat myself the last few months helping to put out fires of program threats and a continued lack of understanding of what FACS is all about. As an anecdote to this weariness, I encourage you to enjoy the end of the year dinners that many NYSAFCSE areas have to celebrate what we do every day in our classrooms and communities. Draw strength from your neighboring FACS colleagues. Be assured that your NYSAFCSE state officers, board members, area coordinators and professional development leaders continue to work hard to promote the value and importance of Family and Consumer Sciences and Career & Technical Education.

With a son in the Marines now, I will close with the words “Semper Fidelis” – *always faithful* to the mission we share in NYSAFCSE.

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## What happened at the Regents meeting?

Once again, the Board of Regents discussed Career and Technical Education (CTE) at their recent meeting. Each time CTE is before the Board, I will provide you with a summary and some suggestions for action you may wish to take. The more informed we are, the better able we are to discuss Regents reforms with confidence and authority.

### April 23, 2012

Career and Technical Education was included in a Regents discussion item titled, "Proposal to Create Multiple Pathways to a NYS High School Diploma." This 19-page item followed a series of prior Board discussions on potential changes to the graduation requirements, specifically:

- October 2010 - The discussion item, "Potential Revision of High School Graduation Requirements," outlined a number of reform initiatives related to graduation requirements, testing requirements, and GED opportunities. The item was structured around four possible policy directions for the Regents to consider: increasing graduation requirements; allowing flexibility in ways students can meet requirements; offering alternative or supplemental credentials; and rethinking the "safety net" for students with disabilities.
- December 2010 - The discussion item, "Potential Changes to the High School Graduation Requirements" included additional background information and a few more specific suggestions. The Department posted a "College and Career Readiness Survey" of approximately 25 questions seeking public comment on the content of this item. A series of public forums were held statewide.
- March 2011 - Two presentations were made around the "Potential Revision of High School Graduation Requirements." The first was a report on the results of the College and Career Readiness Survey. Results of the public forums were also shared. Common threads across responses included:
  - Call for real world/practical/applied academic experiences
  - Need for flexibility
  - Interest in financial literacy, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and STEM
- Importance of safety net for students with disabilities
- Positive response to increasing number of integrated CTE credits and for substituting Regents exam with CTE assessment
- April 2011 - The Board planned to discuss several items, including:
  - Global History and Geography: Course and Exam Revisions
  - Earning Additional Course Credit through Integrated CTE Courses
  - Options for Students to Meet New York State High School Assessment Requirements
- May 2011 - The Board considered the item, "Integrated Academic Credit in Approved CTE Programs." This item introduced a panel of NYS CTE experts to the Board of Regents. Panelists were asked to show the Regents what integrated CTE looks like by presenting the model of how they operationalize the CTE approval process in their particular school settings.
- February 2012 - The item, "Career and Technical Education and Student Achievement Measures" posed the question of whether CTE students who earn a technical endorsement and who earn a passing grade on all required Regents exams could be "counted with full credit for accountability purposes" by school districts. In other words, should these CTE students be deemed "college and career ready?" The Board decided to appoint an expert panel to investigate these issues over the next year.
- March 2012 - The CTE team presented an item, "Expansion of Career and Technical Integrated Course Options" to the P-12 Education Committee of the Board of Regents. The Board approved a phase-in plan for integrated academic credits in approved CTE programs and directed staff to identify revisions necessary in the Commissioner's Regulations and the CTE Program Approval process to ensure a level of rigor that is aligned with college and career readiness. The Board also directed staff to determine possible pathways for including CTE as part of New York State's graduation requirements.

The April 2012 item "Proposal to Create Multiple Pathways to a NYS High School Diploma" built on

all of the items referenced above. It asked the Board to consider options for expanded pathways for students to meet graduation requirements. The recommendations included a CTE graduation pathway that would allow CTE students to earn a Regents diploma by substituting a technical assessment for a required Regents exam (possibly the Global History and Geography). A timeline for the implementation was also included. A section called "Ongoing Work in Revision of Middle Level Requirements," appeared at the end of the item. It suggested (once again) that restructuring the middle level may be necessary if multiple graduation pathways are approved.

The discussion of allowing substitutions for the Global History and Geography Regents exam led the Regents into a conversation about what it means to be college and career ready, and what it means to be an informed citizen. It did not appear that the Board embraced the recommendation to make the global exam optional. They did, however seem interested in continuing the discussion of the CTE graduation pathway.

No decisions were made. CTE will most likely be back on the Board agenda in June.

### **What action might the FACS field take?**

Please read the Regents item referenced above available at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/>. It is an especially dense item and it may take a couple of reads to absorb all of the information in each of the recommendations. Please recognize that FACS professionals need to see themselves in the CTE recommendations. They need to identify specific areas where their FACS programs promote the goals the proposed changes are designed to meet. It is a time to be visibly relevant. One way to do this is to work on getting CTE approval for your FACS program! Your students will benefit from the flexibility offered by a CTE graduation pathway only if they are in an approved CTE FACS program.

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### **Ask a Pro**

*Dear Pro: What can be done to get students to turn in their homework on time?*

When spring arrives, it seems like every student's attention turns to all kinds of things except homework and every teacher struggles with this same question. My school has a homework policy for everyone in every class. If an assignment is 1 day late (not due to absence) it is -10points. More than 1 day late and the highest you can get is 65. Once the unit or topic is finished, any undone assignments are counted as zero. This does help set good work habits. If your school doesn't have such a policy, you might want to bring it up for use next year. You can certainly institute it in your own class.

I make a point of telling students that I don't believe in giving homework just for busy work. I don't give it every night but when I do, it's for an important reason. You also need to show students how lack of homework affects their grades. I count homework as 1/5 of their grade. Show the students what happens if you average 83, 87, 90, 80 and 0.

Getting your work done on time is an important job skill. In order to help students understand that they are developing job skills in school, one of the 5 grades I use is for Job Skills. Each week students rate themselves (and get checked by me) on: being on time, having all the necessary materials, having work done on time, doing work neatly and carefully, using correct spelling and grammar, effort, cooperation (following rules and participating in a positive way) and relationships (using good manners and working well with others). They see getting their work in on time as a simple way to get a good grade. I see it as a way to help them learn. It also helps if students understand why the skills you're teaching are important to them.

Marketing people often say, "Perception is everything". It works for teachers as well. Students perceive many, dare I say most, homework assignments as boring and a waste of time. If your assignments are perceived as fun or useful, they are more likely to get done. Rather than assigning reading and questions to complete, tell students that "tomorrow we're having a contest/game show in class and there are prizes. And, by the way all the answers are on pages ....." The students who rarely do reading assignments will be motivated to put forth effort to win a game. You'll be amazed. Call homework

assignments “challenges” or “experiments” and make them hands-on rather than questions or worksheets. Students appreciate when we recognize that they have busy lives. Whenever possible, try to give more than one night for an assignment. I also like to use an Enrichment Center. These are worksheets on whatever topic we’re working on and are worth 10 points each so if a student has a late assignment, they do have a way to make it up. They usually realize that it's easier to do the original work than extra work but it helps.

When collecting homework, if a student doesn't have any, I have them fill out a No Homework sheet. It's just a slip with the missing assignment, why it wasn't done, when they plan on making it up and a parent's phone #. I admit that I probably won't call home if I have just one of these for a student. I've only ever called home twice but word gets around fast. These sheets are also good to bring to parent conferences.

What techniques work for the rest of you? Send me your strategies and we'll print them next month. This is a problem every teacher deals with.

*Ask a Pro appears monthly. If you'd like information, suggestions or advice from a seasoned FACS veteran, just email [phillip3@twcny.rr.com](mailto:phillip3@twcny.rr.com). If you'd like an answer sooner than the next month's issue, just ask. NYS AFCSE is there for YOU!*

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