**Agenda Topic:** Report from the Career and Technical Education Challenge Task Force

**Materials:** Task Force Report

**Staff Contact(s):** Diana Robinson

**Purpose of Agenda Item:**

- To present to the Board the final report of the Career and Technical Education Challenge Task Force.

- To provide the Board with an opportunity to interact directly with a small delegation of Task Force members.

**Expected Outcomes of Agenda Item:**

Board acceptance of the Task Force report.

**Background:**

In March 2000, the Board was presented with a proposal developed jointly by the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Community College Board, in collaboration with the Governor's Office, to reposition Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Illinois. The context within which the proposal was made was that CTE has the potential to help all students meet the Illinois Learning Standards while improving the employability and technical skill level of Illinois’ workforce. Every year, 328,900 or 58% of all high school students take at least one CTE course.

At its March 2000 meeting, the Board approved implementation of a proposal to create a CTE Challenge Task Force. The Task Force would be charged with developing a comprehensive blueprint to reposition CTE in Illinois to support the Illinois Learning Standards and high educational achievement for students. A 40-member Task Force was constituted and has met monthly through 2000.

*The scheduled Task Force presenters include Kathryn Cihlar, Principal, Midwest Central High School, Manito; Ed Schwarze, Human Resource Department, Caterpillar; and Mike Skarr, President and CEO, Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce.*
In January 2001, staff presented the Board with an update of the progress of the Task Force, the Task Force’s preliminary recommendations, and plans to seek public comment on the Task Force’s final product. The strong connection between Education-to-Careers philosophy and the Task Force vision was emphasized. Staff explained that the Task Force felt strongly that CTE must be an integral component of the broader educational system and, for that reason, there was no such thing as a “CTE student.” The Task Force was also adamant that references to specific educational programs and initiatives be avoided that could be construed as jargon or convey unintended meanings.

During the ensuing Board discussion, interest in and support of the work of the Task Force was expressed and a number of insights and concerns were shared by Board members. Discussion highlights included:

- Affirming the overlap in knowledge and skills required by students to prepare for careers and post-secondary education;  
- Clarifying the relationship between this ad hoc task force and other ongoing education and workforce advisory committees;  
- Emphasizing the integration of CTE into standards-based work through applications;  
- Expressing concern that this work represented a “new” vision that was not integrated with the current directions and priorities of ISBE;  
- Questioning the resources needed to prepare adequate numbers of instructors to teach CTE;  
- Supporting the revival of a career scholarship program for high school seniors; and  
- Identifying the need to establish a baseline for CTE programs so improvements can be benchmarked.

Since the January Board meeting, five key developments have occurred.

1. Based on the Board’s concerns with the vision statement, a decision was made to not proceed with the planned public comment process.
2. A practitioner discussion group was invited to meet on May 15 to explore issues and solutions associated with CTE teacher supply and certification issues. This discussion will be co-chaired by Deputy Superintendents Frank Llano and Diana Robinson;
3. The work of the Task Force was compiled into a report by staff that includes a statement addressing the many strong connections with state statute and ISBE and ICCB directions and priorities;
4. Staff worked closely with other centers and divisions within ISBE to identify a set of manageable and strategic implementation activities that would respond to the Board’s concerns and align with agency priorities and activities. This included a focus on strengthening the integration of CTE with the Illinois Learning Standards through curricular exemplars, such as those developed in agricultural education; and
5. ISBE and ICCB staff met with the Task Force on April 9 to present this proposed implementation agenda and to thank them for and conclude their work.

After discussion with the Task Force on April 9th, it was the staff’s recommendation that the Task Force’s full report be presented to both of the agencies’ Boards.

Superintendent’s Recommendations:

- To provide representatives of the Career and Technical Education Task Force with the opportunity to share their recommendations and insights directly with the Board;
- To accept the Task Force report; and
- To direct staff to implement the Task Force recommendations as appropriate and in a manner consistent with ISBE priorities and Board directives.

Next Steps:

- Staff within the Education Center will continue their work to develop a joint implementation plan across program areas and functions and with ICCB; and
- Staff will present this plan to the Board at their August meeting.