

# CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION



Courtesy of Metro Tech,  
Oklahoma City, OK



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## EQUITY ACTIVITIES

Developed by:  
Gender Equity Advisory Committee (GEAC) of the Illinois State Board of Education and  
Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team (SNLT) of the Illinois Workforce Investment Board

# Ensuring Equal Opportunity For ALL Youth and Adults in the Education And Workforce Preparation System

*Illinois' productivity and competitiveness demands that we fully utilize all potential workers.* The ability of the education and workforce preparation system to meet the training and education needs of all future workers will have substantial impact on the economy of Illinois. Full access to education and training must be available to all. An education and workforce preparation system that strives to be inclusive cannot merely open its doors and expect equity to happen. Deliberate action from everyone involved in the education and workforce preparation system must be taken to insure that barriers that limit opportunities are identified and corrected. While barriers to full participation have impacted both men and women, the economic inequities have had a greater impact on women which is evident in the persistent 30% wage gap between men's and women's wages. In 1999, male and female graduating high school seniors in Illinois will experience a lifetime difference in earnings of \$1.59 million if the current wage gap persists.

*Efforts to improve access and opportunities are important because of the increasing reliance on women's wages for the well being of families.* Approximately 40% of Illinois single mother family groups with children under the age of 18 have incomes below the poverty level. Women's low earnings have a direct impact on the number of children living in poverty in Illinois, currently one in six. Women continue to be over-represented in the lowest paid, lowest opportunity jobs in the economy. They comprise 79% of administrative support workers and only 2% of workers in construction trades. In 1998, the six leading occupations for women were still secretaries, nurses, beauticians, waitresses, teachers and cashiers. These segregated occupational patterns contribute significantly to women's generally low wages and to the wage disparity between males and females. Seventy percent of women still earn \$25,000 or less in a year. Women and men with specialized technical training can expect to earn half a million dollars more in their lifetime than someone who is working at a low-skill, minimum-wage job.

*All students should be encouraged to explore career options based on their abilities and interests, not their gender.* Gender-based obstacles appear in the early stages of formal instruction and continue throughout women's educational and career experiences. Barriers to equal educational opportunity for girls and women in science, math and technology-related areas prevent Illinois from preparing its full pool of talent for the technologically sophisticated needs of employers. Such obstacles prevent girls and women from accessing the high wage opportunities available in technical fields. To adequately prepare all students to make educated choices, efforts must be made at the beginning of the educational process to present bias-free information to students and eliminate gender-biased attitudes and behaviors. Gender equity programs at later stages of the education process are necessary to reach students who have already received years of traditional teaching and messages about gender roles that may limit occupational choices. Counselors, teachers and parents play a crucial role in the decisions young people and returning adults make concerning career choices. Their understanding of gender equity issues is fundamental to ensuring equitable educational environments.

*To ensure that all youth and adults of Illinois have equal education and employment opportunities to pursue high wage, high skill occupations leading to economic self-sufficiency,* the Gender Equity Advisory Committee and the Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team recommend the following equity activities for Career and Technical Education.

For more information contact:

Gender Equity Advisory Committee – Kathy Malcolm, Chair (phone 309/796-5038)

Statewide Nontraditional Leadership Team – Julie Kruse, Chair (phone 312/942-1444)

## **CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION EQUITY ACTIVITIES FOR PERKINS CORE INDICATORS**

### **STUDENT ATTAINMENT OF CHALLENGING STATE-ESTABLISHED ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SKILL PROFICIENCIES.**

- Enhancement activities such as tutoring and mentoring will be provided in areas in which learners have deficiencies.
- Teachers, students and parents will be provided with information about the future workforce, skills required in the future, the importance of math, science and technology education, the earning potential of various careers, and the importance of nontraditional\* employment opportunities.
- Students will research at least one nontraditional occupation as part of an academic and/or vocational class.
- Instruction will include applied academics to assist students in making the connection between school and their career choice.
- A student evaluation will include determination of whether the student is being exposed to all aspects of an industry including areas that are nontraditional for their gender.
- A list of available community resources will be compiled and disseminated to schools and programs.
- Barriers for specific learners will be identified and services needed to overcome those barriers will be determined.
- Availability of vital support services including child care, transportation, tutoring, preparatory training, support groups, and mentoring will be determined. A plan to address gaps in services will be developed.
- Linkages will be made with social services and community-based organizations to assist in meeting the support service needs of students.
- An on-site liaison/advocate will be designated to assess the needs of specific learners and assist them in accessing the services they need to fully participate.
- Technical assistance and inservice activities will include the following equity issues: gender role stereotyping, gender fair language, gender fair teaching, changing roles of women and men, labor market and workforce trends, impact of career choice on wages, nontraditional careers, balancing work and family, family friendly work environment, an environment free of racial and sexual harassment and discrimination.
- Technical assistance and inservice activities will address serving special populations students including how students are defined and identified, what barriers prevent their full participation, and how services will be provided to overcome those barriers.
- Curriculum and instructional materials including computer software will be reviewed to determine if all materials are inclusive, represent diversity and are gender fair. (Can all

students see themselves, are all students represented, is the language inclusive, are the graphics inclusive?)

### **STUDENT ATTAINMENT OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR ITS EQUIVALENT OR A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL.**

- An on-site liaison/advocate will be designated to assess the needs of specific learners and assist them in accessing the services they need to continue and complete their education.
- An ongoing support system for nontraditional students is provided that includes a drop-in counseling program, time spent with female role model/mentors from various nontraditional shops/jobs, and job shadowing with employees in nontraditional occupations.

### **PLACEMENT IN, RETENTION IN, AND COMPLETION OF, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OR ADVANCED TRAINING, PLACEMENT IN MILITARY SERVICE, OR PLACEMENT OR RETENTION IN EMPLOYMENT.**

- Placement staff are provided training on overcoming barriers to entry into nontraditional employment.
- Opportunities are provided for nontraditional students to strategize on how to succeed in an occupation dominated by the other gender.
- Linkages are developed with employers to ensure all students have equal access to jobs.
- Articulation agreements have provisions for traditionally underrepresented populations to ensure equity in transition.
- Employers will be provided with information on nontraditional employment including opportunities and potential barriers.
- Follow-up studies will include the retention rate of students entering nontraditional occupations and their wage rate.

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN AND COMPLETION OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS THAT LEAD TO NONTRADITIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT.**

- Each and every student will be exposed to a full range of careers including those which are nontraditional for their gender.
- Prior to assessing students' career interests, they will be provided with career exploration activities, including the provision of experiences and information about high wage, high skill and nontraditional occupations, access to role models in nontraditional careers, and visits to worksites.
- Career assessment will include interviews that draw out skills and interests learners may have that are transferable to nontraditional employment.

- Administrators, counselors and teachers will be provided training and support on gender equity, nontraditional careers and the needs of the future workforce.
- Inclusive language and gender-neutral terms are used (for example - technician, tradesperson, worker, firefighter, “he or she”).
- Posters, brochures, flyers and other promotional materials include nontraditional occupations which feature photos and testimonials of women and minorities working in these occupations
- Career fairs will include nontraditional occupations and role models who represent the workforce including those in nontraditional careers.
- Recruitment materials feature pictures of students in nontraditional programs, emphasize information about the types of jobs in which nontraditional training will result and indicate the salary range for entry-level and experienced workers.
- Women-owned and minority-owned businesses will be involved in all phases of planning and implementation of work-based learning experiences.
- Availability of work-based learning experiences in high wage, high skill occupations will be expanded.
- All participating businesses/organizations will receive an orientation about nontraditional careers and the composition of the future workforce and will be encouraged to require gender parity in the students they accept for placement.
- Training provided for workplace mentors will include awareness of gender issues, and how to mentor girls interested in nontraditional occupations.
- Information for students on general workplace skills will include legal rights on the job and techniques to prevent and diffuse sexual and racial harassment.
- Students’ work-based learning experiences will include awareness of all areas of the industry including those nontraditional for their gender.
- Work-based learning experiences will be evaluated by gender and racial/cultural background to determine if students are represented equally in all areas.
- Students are exposed to the full range of careers including those nontraditional for their gender and are assisted in determining skills and interests they have which are transferable to nontraditional occupations, prior to being matched to work-based learning experiences.
- Advisory committees will involve female and minority business, industry and labor representatives and advocacy groups for girls and women.

\*Nontraditional refers to occupations or fields of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.