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Stakeholder Perceptions of Factors That Limit Career and Technical Education Course Offerings

Antonio Cooper
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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Stakeholder Perceptions of Factors That Limit Career and Technical Education Course

Offerings

by

Antonio Cooper, Jr.

EdS, Walden University, 2013

MS, Alcorn State University, 2009

BS, Alcorn State University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2017

Abstract

This study addressed the problem of the lack of Career and Technical Educational (CTE) courses offered at 3 high schools located in a rural Alabama county. Guided by Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, this study examined cultural capital in reference to the transference of knowledge that each high school in this study provides its students throughout their high school education. The research questions explored the stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevent the schools from offering more CTE programs and how CTE programs should be expanded in each school. A collective case study design was used for this study, with the data collected through transcribed interviews of 9 educators from the study schools and the examination of archival documents. The data were coded and categorized into a case study spreadsheet. According to the stakeholders, the major factors that prevented the schools from offering more CTE programs were lack of funding, proximity, and conflicts within the schedule. The stakeholders believed that the school system needed to create regional CTE centers that offered more courses with hands-on learning experiences that matched the students' interests. These findings led to a policy recommendation to the Board of Education to create a section under the current CTE policy which addresses program expansion. The policy recommendation and results from this study may effect positive social change by informing the creation and implementation of CTE courses that match students' interests, which may aid in those students being more college-and-career-ready upon graduation. The results from this study are also of interest to researchers examining problems in other school districts with similar deficits.

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Table of Contents

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

After 10 years of implementing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Obama administration began allowing "flexibility to the states regarding specific requirements of the act in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students" (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, para. 4). In 2013, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) was granted approval by the United States Department of Education (USDE) to be removed from many of the requirements of NCLB. In ALSDE's request, the Superintendent created a strategic plan entitled Plan 2020 (ALSDE, 2013a). According to the Superintendent, "Plan 2020 is a rigorous and comprehensive Alabama-developed plan designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction" (ALSDE, 2013a).

After the creation of Plan 2020, the Superintendent charged all of the school systems in the state of Alabama with striving to meet the goals that will be set after baseline data have been collected and to think creatively when developing innovative educational ideas (ALSDE, 2014b, p. 1). The vision of this plan is to "prepare all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school" (ALSDE, 2014b, p. 2). During several state forums, the Superintendent stated that this plan was developed based on the premise that every student was not going to attend college after graduating high school, so the school systems needed to provide opportunities for every

student to be prepared to financially contribute to the economy through the workforce upon completion of high school. One of the strategies for learners in Plan 2020 was to implement an assessment and accountability system. This accountability system lists several indicators/targets that have been set by ALSDE with an expectation of being reached in 2016 by every Alabama public high school (ALSDE, 2014a). One of these indicators is an "increase in the number of students who are college-and-career-ready as measured by receiving an industry credential upon graduation" (ALSDE, 2014a, p. 8). As defined by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE; 2014), an industry credential "offers a strategy for improving instruction and signaling that students have acquired a defined set of skills and knowledge" (p. 1).

This study was designed to address a specific gap in practice: at the time of this study, three out of six high schools in a rural school district in Alabama offered less than 15% of the 16 national career clusters as options for their students to participate in while enrolled (ABCD, 2015b). In comparison, the other high schools in this district offer over 69% of the national clusters to their students (ABCD, 2015b). Students in Alabama receive industry credentials through Alabama's career and technical education program (CTE) by choosing to take courses in the 16 national career clusters. The three schools in this study have a disadvantage as it relates to meeting this goal. If careers that students are interested in are not represented in the course offerings at their high schools, they will not be able to receive an industry credential before graduating. This, in turn, negatively affects the amount of students who will be deemed as "college-and-career-ready" at each of these schools.

If the students at the study schools are not interested in the few CTE programs that are being offered at their schools, then those schools' chances of reaching the goals set in Plan 2020 are less likely. Logic suggests that the students who graduate from these three schools are not as qualified as the students who graduate from the other three high schools in the district who offer close to 70% of the 16 national career clusters. It is also more difficult for the schools in this study to increase the amount of students in their programs due to the limited availability of course and session offerings. In fact, one of the study schools had only one CTE program with one teacher at the time of this study. According to one of the administrators, regardless of whether there was a high interest in the specific CTE program offered at that high school, an access barrier existed because their one teacher who serviced the school split time between the high school and the neighboring middle school (C. Long, personal communication, November, 2014).

The problem identified in the local setting was that the local school district only offered 11 out of the 16 national career clusters, and three out of its six high schools offered far less than that (ABCD, 2015b). According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), a career cluster is "a group of jobs and industries that are related by skills or products" (OSPI, 2014, p. 1). Each cluster contains pathways that link to groups of courses that prepare students for their selected careers. The National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc; 2014) stated that career clusters play a major role by providing an opportunity for high school students to discover their interests and their passions and the capacity to choose the educational route that can lead to successful careers. Two out of those three schools

only offered courses within two of those national career clusters and the third school has slightly more offerings with five (ABCD, 2015b).

All three of these high schools also had at least one school in their feeder pattern that had been identified as a school in need due to high poverty, as indicated by high percentages of students who received free or reduced lunch (ABCD, 2015a). The combination of poverty and the lack of CTE course offerings suggests that students who drop out of school will not have the skills to be productive in society, which, in turn, will only increase the poverty level in all three of these high schools' zones (Carlson, 2014). Saddler, Tyler, Maldonado, Cleveland, and Thompson (2011) summarized this problem, stating, "when a student prematurely leaves school, the economic, social, and political impacts result in negative consequences for the individual and the community" (p. 38). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2011), the total number of students that graduate high school is projected to fall 3% between the 13-year time frame between 2007-2008 and 2020-2021. This decreasing graduation total clearly shows the importance of, and need for high school stakeholders to put more focus into increasing the amount of CTE courses that they offer in order to produce students who will be trained and ready to contribute to the economy when they leave school.

Rationale

I chose to address the educational problem of a lack of CTE courses offered at three high schools in this local school district because of the vast amount of course offerings at the other high schools in this district and the conversations held with the principals and the director of CTE. In those conversations, frustrations were voiced about

not having enough CTE programs to keep some of their unmotivated students interested in coming to school. One of those administrators also stated that an increase in CTE programs would better prepare their graduates for college and/or the workplace once they left school (C. Long, personal communication, November 4, 2014). Several other factors also suggest that students are graduating from these high schools without possessing the vital skills necessary to work in their areas of interest. For instance, if students from the high school in this study that only offers one program are not interested in human services courses related to family studies and community services, then they will not graduate with any knowledge or skill in their preferred area unless they have sought it out and attained it on their own.

This problem is supported by the literature. Bersudskaya, Chen, and NCES (2011) and Fletcher (2012) added that the experiences that students gain while in school play a vital role in their path of life, particularly in terms of postsecondary and workforce outcomes. Compton, Laanan, and Starobin (2010) stated that "with a shortage of high-tech, high-skilled workers in the United States, it is important for both employers and students or potential employees that the linkages between CTE and the workforce be strengthened" (p. 94). Those linkages could be weakened in these three communities if the course offerings are not increased. This is one of the main reasons why Plan 2020's goals were written (ALSDE, 2014a).

This study was designed to identify gaps in practice and to influence an increase in the amount of CTE course offerings in each of these schools. It specifically explored the methods taken to add more CTE programs to each of the three schools in this study,

using Bourdieu's (1973) theory of cultural capital. Cultural capital theory states that people are more privileged and apt to contribute financially to society if they are exposed to more resources and knowledge (Bourdieu, 1973). If the students have more CTE options to explore while in high school, they are provided with a better opportunity to positively contribute to the economy upon graduation (Fletcher, 2012). All of these are positive shifts that will help the students in these three schools be more college and career ready before they graduate. The results from this study could also lead to further research being done in other school districts with similar deficits.

Definitions of Terms

Alabama Course of Study: Career and Technical Education (CTE): State Board of Education approved standards describing the minimal instructional content of the career and technical education programs (ALSDE, 2013b).

Career Readiness Indicators (CRI): Credentials/certifications made available to all students enrolled in a program where career and technical skill proficiencies are aligned with industry-recognized standards (ALSDE, 2013b).

Career and Technical Course: Content standards that must be taught as identified in the approved Alabama Course of Study: Career and Technical Education.

Career and Technical Education Program: An area of study that blends academic, occupational, and life skills leading to a credential, employment, or further education (ALSDE, 2013b).

Career clusters: A grouping of occupations and broad industries based on commonalities. The 16 career clusters provide a framework designed to prepare students

to transition successfully from high school to employment or further education (ALSDE, 2013b).

Career pathway: A specialized grouping of knowledge and skills within a career cluster (ALSDE, 2013b).

Human services: A career cluster that offers the following pathways in early childhood development, counseling and mental health services, family and consumer services, personal care services, and consumer services (ALSDE, 2013b).

Industry credential: A recognized credential that offers a strategy for improving instruction and signaling that students have acquired a defined set of skills and knowledge (NRCCTE, 2014).

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to address a gap in practice consisting of a lack of available CTE course offerings at three out of six high schools in a rural school district. The purpose of this study was to explore the stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevent the study schools from offering more CTE programs and course offerings. The results from this study reported the stakeholders' perceptions of the CTE program and the factors necessary to expand the number of courses.

The overall objective of this study was to investigate what the educational stakeholders perceived as the reasons their schools did not offer enough CTE courses. Plank et al. (2005) found that taking a CTE-to-academic credit ratio of 1 to 2, significantly reduced their risk of dropping out of high school. Addressing this gap is important because Plank et al.'s findings suggest that an increase in the amount of CTE

programs at these three high schools will generate an increase in the number of working citizens in surrounding communities. This study promoted positive social change in the local setting by identifying information to assist training more working citizens, potentially decreasing local poverty levels.

Research Questions

This study addressed the problem of the lack of CTE courses offered at three high schools in a local school district. The purpose of this study was to explore the stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevented the study schools from offering more CTE programs and course offerings. Stakeholders at each these schools were concerned with the limited amount of course offerings available at their respective schools. The following research questions were used to guide this research:

1. What are the factors, as perceived by the stakeholders, that prevent the schools from offering a wider variety of CTE programs?

2. What are the stakeholders' perceptions on how CTE programs should be expanded in each school?

Review of the Literature

The following literature review is composed of various sections pertaining to CTE. The literature review begins with a theoretical framework. The history of CTE is located in this section as well as Alabama's procedures for evaluating local CTE programs. Saturation was reached through a search that was conducted for relevant studies and other types of literature within the following databases: Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, ERIC, and Walden University library. The following governmental and

organizational websites were also searched for applicable material: the Association for Career and Technical Education, the Alabama Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE), and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) which is now known as the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).

Keyword and phrases used in the search were *CTE and high school dropouts*, *CTE and at-risk students*, *history of CTE programs*, *CTE, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Act*, *CTE accountability*, *cultural capital theory*, and *social capital theory*.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Bourdieu's (1973) cultural capital theory. Bourdieu found that cultural factors play a major role in socioeconomic differences in education. Cultural capital refers to the way that information and knowledge about how to navigate realms of advantages and benefit accumulate within certain factions through transference of resources, attitudes, or knowledge (Bourdieu, 1973). In this study, enrollment in the schools with a wider variety of CTE programs than the study schools perpetuates privilege by providing several CTE tracks for their students to choose from throughout their high school education. That privilege is evident, and illuminated, when those schools that offer more CTE programs are compared to the three schools on which this study focuses. Park (2012) stated that cultural capital, in

perpetuating privilege, creates and produces high status for some groups and perpetuates low status for others. Dumais and Ward (2010) further stated that cultural capital consists of an unwritten ability, general cultural awareness, artistic preferences, information about the school system, and educational identifications. Bourdieu (1973) stated that cultural capital is primarily acquired through investments in cultural training and over time through the socialization process. According to Bourdieu (1997) and Dumais and Ward (2010), cultural capital acquisition can occur in three different states:

- Embodied State – in the form of long-lasting character of the body and mind, which cannot be gathered beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent. The embodied stated is an important part of who an individual is and how they interact with society.

- Objectified State – in the form of cultural goods such as books, pictures, machines, and instruments. Only the individuals from a particular culture can understand and relate to certain cultural goods.

- Institutionalized State – a form of cultural goods that describes academic achievements, credentials, and qualifications that certify an individual as a capable and proficient member of society. Individuals are less likely to continue their education if they fail to recognize the value of this form of cultural capital.

Cultural capital is perpetuated through the learning that occurs in CTE programs. From my professional observation, I found that the students from the study schools graduate from high school with less cultural capital in its embodied and institutionalized states than the students in the other high schools in their district.

In my years as an administrator, I have noted that oftentimes, high school students do not know who they want to become in life or what they want to do in reference to careers. The study schools have limited opportunities for their students to acquire more cultural capital based on the limited CTE program offerings. As Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker (2011) stated,

> Limiting one's goals, commitment, and effort to one domain may close the door to other equally rewarding experiences and careers, especially if the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and learning how to learn are foundational to entry into these other areas. (p. 200)

High schools that offer multiple career and technical education programs give their students more opportunities to gain those rewarding experiences. Career and technical education programs allow students to explore different careers and trades of their interests, while allowing them to acquire credits and credentials while they are still in high school (ACTE, 2014).

The students in this study appeared to be limited in their ability to gain their postsecondary and industry-based credentials if they were not interested in pursuing a career and/or college degree in the few programs that their high schools offer. Exploring the different careers and trades through taking courses and earning credits helps to empower them to choose the educational pathway that can lead to success in high school, college, and career (Kreamer, 2014; NASDCTEc, 2014). Ryska and Vestal (2004) stated that the extent to which students concentrate on learning new skills and on improving how they performed in the past could have a momentous effect on their involvement in

other areas such as the classroom. This is demonstrated by the fact that students are less likely to drop out of school and are more productive in their core academia if they add one CTE course per every two academic courses to their curriculum (ACTE, 2014).

Students who acquire more cultural capital by the time of graduation are more likely to attend college and to secure high-status jobs (Dumais & Ward, 2010). Bourdieu (1997) stated that students can prolong the acquisition of cultural capital based on the length of time those students are given before they are financially responsible for contributing to the economy. This highlights the importance of offering a wide variety of CTE programs in high schools when students are generally not expected to financially contribute to society. They are less likely to have time to focus on their studies if they have to work and take postsecondary courses at the same time.

History of Career and Technical Education

This section discusses how improving high school students' cultural capital of working skills has been embedded in public high school curricula throughout the years. CTE was originally referred to as vocational education, and has a history that dates back as far as 1914. After the 1914 Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education advocated for vocational education to be integrated into the secondary curriculum, $1.7 million dollars of public funding for vocational education was finally granted in 1917 with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act (Brewer, 2011). The Smith-Hughes Act marks the first government authorization for federal funding of vocational education (Brewer, 2011). Friedel (2011) described vocational education as "practical education and career skill instruction" (p. 38). The main objective of vocational education was to get students

prepared for entry-level positions in occupations that require less than a baccalaureate degree (Plank, DeLuca, & Estacion, 2008; Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2004; Tillman & Tillman, 2008).

Most of these entry-level work positions were a direct result of the Industrial Revolution (Lynch, 2000; Hersperger, Slate, & Edmonson, 2013). Hersperger et al. (2013) and Lynch (2000) stated that most of those occupations were categorizable under agriculture, trades and industry, and home economics. These categories were chosen for families who wanted their children to learn a skill and help the family immediately. Under the Smith-Hughes Act, states had to develop comprehensive policies and procedures that would assess the effectiveness of these categories on a consistent basis (Brewer, 2011). As a result, public education programs received funds from the federal government based on this accountability measure (Hersperger, et al., 2013).

Congress passed the George-Reed Act in 1929, authorizing an annual increase of $1 million of federal funding from 1930 to 1934 (Friedel, 2011). There were three more George Acts that authorized an increase in federal funds for vocational education following the George-Reed Act. Those George Acts were 1) the George-Ellzey Act of 1934 which authorized an annual amount of $3 million for three years; 2) the George-Deen Act of 1936 which authorized an annual amount of $14 million a year; and 3) the George-Barden Act of 1946 which increased federal support for all of vocational education in general (Friedel, 2011). The increased financial backing by the U.S. federal government through the passage of the George Acts helped to further the growth of the United States as a nation through public education.

Concerned that "rapid rates of technological and economic change, particularly the automation of production processes, would require the retraining of many already in the workforce," President John Kennedy requested that a "Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education" review the status of vocational education in the secondary schools (Lewis & Stone, 2013, p. 108). The resulting *Education for a Changing World of Work* study contributed to the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (Lewis & Stone, 2013). According to Epperson (2012), the Vocational Education Act of 1963 not only increased federal funding for vocational education, but also improved the categories of employment training that could fall under vocational education.

The U.S. federal government passed the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, which amended the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and has been reauthorized three times. According to Lewis and Stone (2013), Friedel (2011), Association for Career and Technical Education (2002), and Hayward and Benson (1993), the original intent of the Perkins Act was to address the special needs populations by improving their access to the vocational education programs and to address the economic needs of the nation.

The first reauthorization of the Perkins Act came with its name being changed to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990. Hersperger et al. (2013) stated that in addition to improving the vocational programs, this reauthorization also improved the academic components that dealt directly with technology. This Act also created the "Tech Prep" title to encourage more programs that linked high school and postsecondary courses (Lewis, Stipanovic, & Stringfield, 2012).

Perkins II, as it came to be known, also strengthened provisions for programs and services that were provided to students who were underprivileged, disabled, and had limited English proficiency (Friedel, 2011).

The Perkins Act was reauthorized again in 1998. Perkins III included multiple changes, one of which was an improved accountability plan. This version of the Act required every state to produce a report on performance data in reference to student aptitude, high school completion, postsecondary education or training, and military services (Friedel, 2011; Hersperger et al., 2013). These performance data were measured by performance indicators that were developed for Perkins III (Friedel, 2011). Another change was to include public and private nonprofit organizations or agencies, and a consortium of such institutions, organizations, or agencies to the list of eligible recipients for funding under the Act (Lewis & Stone, 2013).

The Perkins Act was reauthorized again in 2006. Perkins IV brought about a change to the term *vocational education*. In Perkins IV, the term *career and technical education* replaced *vocational education*. This Act is the first legislative documentation to officially implement the name change to CTE (Friedel, 2011; Hersperger et al., 2013; Lewis & Stone, 2013). This was done, in part, to improve the focus of academic achievement for CTE students and to reinforce the networks between high school and postsecondary education through enhanced state and local accountability (United States Department of Education, 2011). Perkins IV also held schools accountable for high school completion, postsecondary education, and employment outcomes of students

enrolled in local level CTE programs (Foster, Kelley, Pritz, & Hodes 2011; Trach, 2012; Turner, 2006).

Under Perkins IV, every U.S. state was required to create a 5-year plan for Tech Prep and CTE (Hersperger et al., 2013). This new reauthorization also introduced the term *programs of study* (POS; Blosveren, 2014, p. 12). POS are created arrangements of CTE and academic courses that are intended to help students achieve an industry credential (NASDCTEc, 2014). In 2012, the Obama administration released a blueprint for a reauthorized Perkins Act that would create a more rigorous and data-driven CTE shaped by four core principles, which were: alignment between the CTE programs and the labor market; collaboration among high school and postsecondary schools; accountability for high schools to build job technical and employability skills in CTE; and being more innovative in supporting the implementation of CTE (USDE & OVAE, 2012).

Procedures for Evaluating Local CTE Programs in Alabama

The general concept of the method of evaluating local high school CTE programs derives from the most recent reauthorization of the Perkins Act, which required each state to create a system of core performance measures and principles for the purpose of assessing its high school CTE programs (Compton, Laanan, & Starobin, 2010; Kotamraju, 2010; Maguire, Starobin, Laanan, & Friedel, 2012; NRCCTE, 2014; PCRN, 2015a; Richard, Walter, & Yoder, 2013). In order to fulfill this requirement, the Alabama State Department of Education has developed its own set of accountability requirements geared towards assessing the effectiveness of the state in achieving statewide progress

and continuous improvement in CTE (ALSDE, 2013b). In Alabama, effectiveness in CTE is assessed through performance measures called indicators of performance. This research study was grounded in the conceptual framework of how the state of Alabama evaluates its CTE standards. That evaluation is conducted and dispersed annually in the Alabama Career Readiness Report and the CTE Core Indicator Performance Targets Report. The ALSDE Carl D. Perkins CTE Act of 2006 Grant Management Procedure Manual states that there are six core indicators of performance:

- student attainment of academic content standards and achievement standards;

- student attainment of career and technical skill proficiencies;

- student rates of attainment of each of the following:

    o a secondary school diploma,

    o a General Education Development (GED) credential or other state-recognized equivalent,

    o a proficiency credential, certificate, or degree, in conjunction with a secondary diploma;

- student graduation rates;

- student placement in postsecondary education or advanced training, in military services, or in employment; and

- student participation in and completion of career and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional fields. (ALSDE, 2013b, pp. 20-21).

Perkins IV also gives the states the opportunity to establish their own measures for the core indicators as well (PCRN, 2015b). In Alabama, each of these core indicators

of performance is assigned a specific number for tracking purposes. Along with being tracked, each core indicator of performance has a preestablished level of performance both on the state and local levels. Those levels of performance are measured from year to year (ALSDE, 2013b). The levels of performance are written and are assessed in the career readiness report and the core indicator report. If a local school district does not meet 90% of its performance levels, then it is considered to not have met the State standard and will be required to write a corrective action plan and lose funding from the Perkins grant. This research study analyzed the trends in the two reports to assess this district's CTE programs. If this district loses all or a portion of its CTE funding, then the CTE programs in the study schools will be in jeopardy of becoming cancelled.

Implications

Students must possess the technical, academic, and employability skills that will prepare them for the careers of their choice (Kreamer, 2014). Students at the study schools appeared to be at a disadvantage in terms of career choices due to the limited CTE program offerings at each school. Education stakeholders are in an ideal position to lead systematic and programmatic modifications that may alter the amount and variety of CTE programs in these schools based on the findings from this research. Projects geared toward selecting careers, other than the limited amount that are offered, that the majority of these particular students are interested in could be started as a result of this study as well. By adding more CTE programs, these schools could produce more people in high poverty areas who positively contribute to the economy. The results of this study were

summarized in a qualitative case study report that will be presented to the stakeholders of the participating school district.

Summary

In this section, a description of Alabama's Plan 2020 was discussed. This plan was created as a result of Alabama State Department of Education's 2013 request to be removed from the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Plan 2020 was developed on the premise that upon graduating high school, every student needed to either be prepared to enroll in some form of postsecondary education or ready to contribute to the economy through the workforce. Career and Technical Education was identified as the method by which high school students in Alabama are provided the necessary training to immediately be productive in the economy or to further their training in college.

The focus of this study was on a local school district in West Alabama that had limited CTE program offerings at three of its high schools. The other three high schools in this particular school district offered a wider variety of CTE programs for their students to choose from that provided them with a better opportunity to join the workforce with high distinction or to further their education at an institution of higher education while already possessing postsecondary credits that put them ahead on their track towards completion. A study was conducted to explore the limited amount of CTE courses at each of the study schools. Along with state evaluation data, feedback was solicited from stakeholders to gain their perceptions of the factors that prevented the schools from offering more CTE programs.

A review of research regarding the history, importance, and purpose of Career and Technical Education in secondary education was also presented along with the conceptual and theoretical framework that puts this study in focus. Bourdieu's cultural capital theory was applied to show the importance of schools offering a wider variety of CTE programs in an effort to increase their students' cultural capital before they graduated high school which, in turn, would make them more apt to contributing to the society.

Section 2 includes an introduction to the methodology of this study. It also provides additional information on the qualitative case study approach chosen for this study along with information on the participants and data collection procedures. In Section 2, the qualitative study is also described and justified, explaining the plausibility of the study as related to the problem of lack of CTE courses offered at the study schools. The plan for data collection and analysis is also described and justified.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

This study explored the stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that they perceived as preventing the three Alabama public high schools examined in this study from offering more CTE programs and course offerings, and how CTE programs could be expanded in each school. After careful review of several different research designs for this study, I selected a case study approach. This section includes a detailed description of the research design and approach, research questions, selection of participants, role of the researcher, and data collection and analysis procedures.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

In this study, a qualitative research methodology was employed to gain insight on stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevented schools from offering more CTE programs. In a qualitative study, the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon through the interpretations of the individuals who are experiencing it and to find out what reality is constructed by those individuals as a result (Merriam, 2009). A phenomenon is the main process, idea, program, concept, or studied in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). In this particular study, the limited CTE course offerings were the central phenomenon requiring exploration and understanding (Creswell, 2012). The main focus of this particular study was to give voice to the perceptions of the participants (Lodico et al., 2010). According to Lodico et al. (2010) and Creswell (2012), several key features characterize qualitative research, including:

1. Studies are carried out in a naturalistic setting.

2. Studies consist of investigating a problem and developing a thorough understanding of a central phenomenon.

3. Researchers ask wide-ranging research questions designed to investigate, interpret, or comprehend social context.

4. Participants are selected through nonrandom methods based on whether the individuals have information vital to the questions being asked.

5. Data collection techniques involve observation and interviewing that bring the research in close contact with the participants.

6. The researcher is likely to take an interactive role where she or he gets to know the participants and the social context in which they live.

7. Hypotheses are formed after the researcher begins data collection and are modified throughout the study as new data are collected and analyzed.

8. The study reports data in narrative form.

I did not choose a quantitative research methodology because I was not seeking to discover any new statistical findings. Additionally, qualitative research was suitable because it could provide evidence and understanding that could not be acquired through quantitative studies that heavily rely on statistical measures (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research is inductive in nature, and seeks to answer the questions focusing on the essence and nature, while quantitative research is primarily deductive usually seeking to answer questions that focus on specific amounts (Merriam, 2009).

I used a collective case study design for this study. This design was appropriate because it focused on a specific element within the context of a case or bounded system

(Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010). This specific type of case study was chosen for this study due primarily to the fact that three different high schools were highlighted throughout the data collection process. A collective case study usually includes gathering and examining data on a single phenomenon, population, or general condition from multiple cases (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2000). The central phenomena in this study were the perceptions of the participants concerning the lack of CTE course offerings at the study schools. Merriam (2009) also explained that a case study is likely to be more compelling and have a better interpretation when it includes more cases. In this study, I delved deeply into the perceptual issues by including stakeholders in each of the schools. This study was bounded by the perceptions of the participants on an issue that all three schools have in common, which further supported why a case study approach was an ideal design.

Other qualitative research designs that were considered but not chosen include grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. Grounded theory was considered because it involves an exhaustive collection of observation data (Creswell, 2009). It was ultimately not accepted because the intent of this study was not to create a new theory. Ethnography was disregarded because it is a method in a which cultural group is studied in its natural setting for an extended amount of time (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Phenomenology was eliminated due to the fact this study was not intended to find out what human experiences such as feelings, reactions, and stresses mean to participants, which made it inappropriate (per Lodico et al., 2010).

Participants

The general research setting was a public school district located in a rural county in West Alabama. The school district contained 34 schools: 19 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 6 high schools, and 1 special education center. I conducted this study at three of the six high schools within this particular school district because of the discrepancy found in the CTE course offerings in the high schools. At the time of the study, there were three high schools that offered far fewer CTE programs than the other three high schools in this school district.

The specific type of purposeful sampling used in this study was convenience sampling. In convenience sampling, participants who are accessible and willing to be studied are selected by the researcher (Creswell, 2012). The participants of this study consisted of the education stakeholders within the study schools in the participating school district. The education stakeholders consisted of a total of 12 CTE teachers, counselors, and administrators. Due to the nature of this qualitative study, participants for this study were selected because of their knowledge and characteristics as they relate to the phenomenon being investigated, as suggested by Creswell (2012) and Lodico et al. (2010).

Teachers, counselors, and administrators all serve different roles in education and their perspectives vary based on their experiences. Those perceptions also vary based on the roles that the stakeholders hold in their buildings. By gaining insight on the perceptions of all of the stakeholders who are directly involved with the CTE courses, I was able to get a better understanding of key factors.

I decided to study this particular group of stakeholders because they had served in the same positions at the study schools and because I had the permission of the Superintendent of the school district to gain consent from each stakeholder to participate in the study. The sample for this study was 12 participants including 6 administrators, 3 counselors, and 3 teachers. Each school's participants included 2 administrators, 1 counselor, and 1 CTE teacher. Two of the high schools had more than one CTE teacher, so for this study, only the teachers who taught the same course in each school were considered. At the time of this study, all of the participants had at least 3 years of CTE teaching, counseling, and/or administrative experience at their schools. The teachers were considered *Highly Qualified* by the licensure department of the Alabama State Department of Education. The counselors were trained to aid students participating in a CTE program in the selection of stackable units in an effort to successfully matriculate through their programs of choice. The administrators had also received several trainings to help better understand the current updates to the CTE programs that they have at their schools.

Upon receiving approval from Walden University's IRB, (IRB approval number 04-11-16-0231551 and expiration date April 10, 2017) I gained access to participants through the Superintendent of the local school district. After being granted permission by the Superintendent, I notified the Director of Career and Technical Education and the principals of the study schools and established procedures to contact the stakeholders in each school.

I ensured that the participants were fully protected from harm during the study. The confidentiality of all participant responses was maintained by following the procedures and ethical guidelines set forth by Walden University to ensure the accuracy of the study and to protect the participants. Each participant's identification was kept confidential from other participants and all school personnel by using an alphanumerical identifier instead of the participant's actual name or initials. The alphanumerical identifier was comprised of the year in which the study took place, along with random letters and numerical identifiers. For example, one participant could be identified as R2015T16 and another as U2015V22. These alphanumerical numbers were kept private and confidential.

The participants were reached via email, face-to-face conversations, and personal phone calls. I informed the potential participants of their rights as willing participants in the study during the initial consent process. The participants were provided with a detailed list of rights and I explained the participants' access to their responses, transcribed notes, and final results upon completion of the study. Once the data were collected, participants' responses, identifying information, and all other confidential information were stored in electronic form in a secured filing cabinet in my home. This information will be kept for five years to ensure safety and confidentiality.

Data Collection

The data for this case study were collected using two methods: interviews and a review of documents, in alignment with recommendations by Lodico et al. (2010) and Merriam (2009). Data were gathered from the education stakeholders' responses to the stakeholder interview questions (Appendix C). A digital voice recorder was used to

record the responses of the participants and to ensure accurate documentation of the participants' comments. I also took notes. During the interviews, I prompted the participants, as needed, for more information. Audiotapes were transcribed to Word documents after the interviews. The constant comparative method was used to examine and compare information obtained from the interviews. Open and axial coding methods were used to analyze data and identify conceptual categories, themes, and concepts.

I also reviewed data from the annual Alabama Career Readiness Report and the CTE Core Indicator Performance Targets Report for each school. Both of these reports measured and provided a report on the actual effectiveness of the CTE programs at each of the study schools based on criteria set by the Alabama State Department of Education. The qualitative data from the interviews were coded and categorized first by schools, then by the specific position each stakeholder held, and subsequently by the key phrases or terms used by the stakeholders. The qualitative data from the interviews were collected from each school and were analyzed separately and then organized by common themes based on the stakeholders' answers to the questions for a deeper comparison.

At the time of this study I was the principal of an elementary school that fed into one of the study schools. I had developed a professional relationship with the 3 principals in this study only through monthly district meetings held for administrators. I did not have any professional or personal relationships with any of the other participants in this study. I did not serve in a supervisory role at any of the schools. I solely depended on the building-level principals to gain access to the teachers and counselors in this study.

Data Analysis

The main strategy that was utilized during data analysis was coding. As noted by Creswell (2009), coding is a core aspect of qualitative data analysis. Maxwell (2009) stated that the main objective of coding is to disaggregate the data in order to rearrange them into different categories that facilitate comparison between items in an effort to aid in the development of theoretical concepts. Categorizing strategies enabled the development of themes and/or patterns within the data. This process was completed during the first stage of data analysis.

I created a case study spreadsheet to organize the data so that I could locate specific information during intensive analysis, in alignment with Merriam (2009). The contents of the spreadsheet included, the Core Indicator Performance Targets Report, the Alabama Career Readiness Report, and the stakeholder interviews that I conducted. A case study spreadsheet is the collection of information relative to the study that the researcher feels is pertinent to further understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Single case studies were analyzed from each school and information from the interviews and state CTE reports were arranged in categories and themes. To add more credibility to the study, discrepant cases were examined for evidence that supported the case for adding a new theme or to explain why the specific case did not fit, as suggested by Creswell (2012) and Lodico et al. (2010). Those themes and categories were then regrouped for final analysis and triangulation using a cross-case analysis to find any commonalities between each of the school sites, as suggested by Merriam (2009).

Eleven out of the 12 potential participants responded to the invitational email, but only 9 of them agreed to participate. I scheduled times that were convenient to the stakeholders to conduct the interviews. All 9 of the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. The 9 participants included 2 principals, 3 assistant principals, 2 counselors, and 2 teachers. A round of member checking was conducted with each participant after their interview. Once all of the interviews were completed, the responses were transcribed onto a Word document (see Appendix D).

A case study spreadsheet (Appendix F) was created after triangulating the data from the Core Indicator Performance Targets Report, the stakeholder interviews, and the Alabama Career Readiness Report. The Alabama Career Readiness Report revealed that only 77 out of 1,278 high school students in this school district possessed industry credentials. Only 6 out of those 77 students possessed college credits. The Core Indicator Performance Targets Report revealed that only 21% of their students demonstrated proficiency on the high school state assessment in math and 48% of students demonstrated proficiency on the high school state assessment in reading. The Core Indicator Performance Targets Report also displayed that the high schools in this district only have 15% of students from underrepresented groups that actually completed a CTE program that actually leads to employment in nontraditional fields.

During the stakeholder interviews, I discovered that all high school students had to enroll in a certain amount of CTE courses in order to be eligible to graduate. These two facts support the statements made by most of the stakeholders that their CTE classes were overcrowded with students who were not interested in the course of study, and were

simply enrolled to complete their graduation requirements. One stakeholder added that uninterested students rarely ever completed the requirements to receive an industry credential in their course and they negatively affected the students that were actually interested in attaining a credential by disrupting the class and limiting the amount of materials to be used. It was also evident that this school district had a low number of students attaining industry credentials because they did not have enough of the required materials and components to satisfy the state mandated course requirements.

Research Question 1

RQ1: What are the factors, as perceived by the stakeholders, that prevent the schools from offering a wider variety of CTE programs?

To examine RQ1, which focused on the factors the stakeholders perceived prevented their schools from offering more CTE programs. I first categorized the responses to interview questions by school, then by the specific position each stakeholder held at the time of the interview. The participants' responses were subsequently divided by the key phrases or terms used by the stakeholders related to limitations of offering more programs. The phrases that were most frequently used in all of the interviews were reported in Appendix E.

The Alabama Career Readiness Report revealed that only 77 out of 1,278 high school students possessed industry credentials. During the stakeholder interviews, I discovered that all high school students had to enroll in a certain amount of CTE courses in order to be eligible to graduate. These two facts supported the statement made by most of the stakeholders that their CTE classes were overcrowded with students who were not

interested in the course of study. They were simply enrolled to complete their graduation requirements. One stakeholder added that uninterested students rarely ever completed the requirements to receive an industry credential in their course, and they negatively affected the students that were actually interested in attaining a credential by disrupting the class and limiting the amount of materials to be used. It was also evident that this school district had a low number of students attaining industry credentials because they did not have enough of the required materials and components to satisfy the state mandated course requirements.

Several of the stakeholders mentioned that their CTE classrooms did not meet the state requirements in reference to having all of the necessary supplies and fixtures. For example, one school had an industrial-sized kitchen but did not have all of the industrial equipment to successfully offer the courses that would lead to an industry credential in the culinary field. That said, the students at that particular high school would only be able to take entry level courses in that field. If those students wanted to pursue certification in that field, they would have to continue their education at a postsecondary institution or seek courses to take at another high school if they had space available and it fit into their schedule.

Another factor that most of the stakeholders brought up during the interviews was that the courses the students had to take that were not located on their campus. If their high schools did not offer a course that they were interested in, the students could attempt to enroll in courses at other high schools in the same school district or another high school that is a part of another school district. The issue of time and distance came up as

a large barrier seeing as though most of the alternative locations were at least 20 minutes away going in one direction. Most of the schools had to give students two periods of travel time and one period of instructional time for the students to be able to take courses on other campuses. This process limited the amount of eligible students for this course. As for students involved in extracurricular activities such as sports or band, they have to choose between their activity and the CTE course. Which the stakeholders stated that their activity was selected in the majority of those cases. For those students, their only option would be to take those courses in the postsecondary setting after graduating from high school.

Research Question 2

RQ2: What are the stakeholders' perceptions on how CTE programs should be expanded in each school?

To examine RQ2, which focused on the stakeholders' perceptions on program expansion. I first categorized the responses to interview questions by school, then by the specific position each stakeholder held at the time of the interview. The participants' responses were subsequently divided by the key phrases or terms used by the stakeholders related to limitations of offering more programs. Those phrases are also in Appendix E.

Most of the stakeholders mentioned that more hands on learning experiences needed to be provided to the students. They believed that the courses that their students needed were ones where they are working with their hands. This statement was based off of their conversations with the students while enrolled in school and after graduating. The

stakeholders believed that if the courses they offered were more geared towards what the students were interested in, the enrollment in their CTE programs would increase.

When asked who chooses the courses for their school, one stakeholder stated that they believed the Director of CTE along with the Alabama State Department of Education were the only two entities who made those decisions. Another mentioned that they thought the local schools chose their own courses, but they were not sure as to why they chose courses that their students were not interested in. One of the stakeholders suggested that the local school and the Director of CTE should send surveys out to the students, teachers, and parents in the communities to see what CTE programs they think the high schools should offer seeing as though they are the ones who have the most incite. That same stakeholder added that if the school community had a true say in the decision-making process of adding CTE programs, that more meaningful programs would be selected and enrollment and completion numbers would increase significantly.

The stakeholders also felt that if the school district would create at least two regional CTE centers, their students would be more involved in the CTE program – which in turn would increase the amount of students receiving industry credentials and securing jobs upon completion of high school. The creation of regional centers would cut down on the travel time between schools, which in turn would lead to more time to take additional courses. The stakeholders mentioned that different core courses could be taught at those regional centers to help reduce the back and forth that the students would have to do between schools. Several of the stakeholders referenced how the neighboring school system and other systems within the state utilize their regional CTE center and

shared their desire for their district to use something similar. These regional centers could possibly be a major contributing factor in increasing the students' cultural capital by giving them access to a wider variety of CTE courses to choose from and a more feasible option to take them. Which, in turn, could give them a better opportunity of achieving the goals set in Plan 2020 in reference increasing the amount of industry credentials received upon graduation.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to gain insight on stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevented schools from offering more CTE programs. A collective case study was the selected research design used in this study, in alignment with Creswell (2009) and Lodico et al. (2010). The participants of this study consisted of the education stakeholders within the study schools in the participating school district. The education stakeholders consisted of a total of 12 CTE teachers, counselors, and administrators. The participants were reached via email, face-to-face conversations, and personal phone calls. I informed the potential participants of their rights as willing participants in the study during the initial consent process. The participants were provided with a detailed list of rights and I explained the participants' access to their responses, transcribed notes, and final results upon completion of the study.

The data for this case study were collected using two methods: interviews and a review of documents, as suggested by Lodico et al. (2010) and Merriam (2009). The main strategy that was utilized during data analysis was coding. A case study spreadsheet was created to organize the data so I could locate specific information during intensive

analysis, as suggested by Merriam (2009). The contents of the spreadsheet included, the Core Indicator Performance Targets Report, the Alabama Career Readiness Report, and stakeholder interviews that I conducted.

The intent of this research was to answer the following questions:

- RQ1: What are the factors, as perceived by the stakeholders, that prevent the schools from offering a wider variety of CTE programs?

- RQ2: What are the stakeholders' perceptions on how CTE programs should be expanded in each school?

The results showing a lack of clarity amongst stakeholders in reference to CTE program expansion and factors in offering a wider variety of programs in their schools led to a policy recommendation to the Board of Education to create a section under the current Career and Technical Education policy which addresses program expansion. The recommendation made was to create steps to follow to add new CTE programs to high schools. Those steps would be to solicit feedback from stakeholders as to what programs best match the students' skills and interests, analyze the school's infrastructure and location, and assess the current demands in the local job market. Recommending the creation of a new section in the CTE policy could lead to an improved understanding, district-wide, on what steps need to be taken to diversify their CTE course offerings based specifically on the students' needs in their buildings. Adding CTE courses and programs that match the students' interests could possibly increase student enrollment and increase the amount of cultural capital the students can receive at each of the study schools.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Section 3 includes a description of the policy recommendation for the local school Board of Education from this study to review and consider adopting. This section also provides a scholarly review of literature on Career and Technical Education and policy recommendations. A description of the project and an evaluation plan is also addressed in this section. This section also discusses how the policy recommendations are predicted to impact the study schools, as well as other high school CTE programs in a larger context.

The goals of the proposed project are to improve the educational stakeholders' understanding of how to create a more well-rounded CTE program in their schools that is based on the needs of the students. The project description outlines several measures to be taken when schools are adding new CTE course offerings for their students.

Rationale

The rationale for choosing this project was inspired by the stakeholders' responses during their interviews and the lack of CTE courses currently being offered at the study schools as compared to the other high schools in the same school district. Because of the lack of clarity as to how to increase the amount of CTE courses in their buildings, all while making sure that the courses match the students' interests, logic dictates that providing a systemic process for all schools to follow would improve student enrollment and completion in the CTE program, among other benefits. Adding experiences relative to students' interests while in high school play a vital role in their postsecondary and workforce outcomes (Fletcher, 2012).

The schools examined in this study function through their local Board of
Education policies, so it was necessary to create a policy that addressed the expansion of
relevant CTE courses to all of the schools to ensure that they were accurately focusing on
the specific needs of all of their stakeholders. Therefore, a policy recommendation was a
logical choice for this project. This policy recommendation addressed the findings of this
study as well as other benefits creating a more unified approach to addressing specific
CTE school needs (see Appendix B).

Review of the Literature

In the data analysis in Section 2, I noted a significant lack of clarity amongst
stakeholders as to what process to follow to expand their current CTE program offerings
in their own schools. The limited amount of CTE course offerings in the study schools
inhibited the students' ability to earn industry credentials before they graduated, which is
one of the main goals identified in the Alabama State Department of Education's Plan
2020. Those same students were also less likely to gain the necessary cultural capital to
be able to compete with their peers from other high schools when applying for different
jobs and scholarships.

These students need to have more CTE course program offerings to choose from
while they are in high school. The offerings are necessary to further develop their skills
and ability to contribute to the workforce upon completion of high school, or to gain the
necessary prerequisites for postsecondary degrees. More specifically, the students at the
study site need CTE programs at their high schools that actually match their interests and
skills. The current Board policy for the local school district stresses the importance of

CTE, but it does not include any information addressing how programs are selected for each school. The project goal for this study was to recommend an addition to the policy that outlined specific criteria for school CTE program selection for all of the education stakeholders to refer to whenever they needed clarity and/or guidance.

In order to contribute background and support for the policy recommendation that will be made to the local school board, this review of literature was conducted on policy recommendation, policy, CTE policy, and recommendations. Saturation was reached through a search that was conducted for relevant studies and other types of literature within the following databases: Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, ERIC, Academic Search Complete, and Walden University library. The following governmental and organizational websites were also searched for applicable material: the Association for Career and Technical Education, the Alabama Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE), and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) which is now known as the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).

Keyword and phrases used in the search were *education policy*, *school policy*, *CTE policy*, *policy*, *policy recommendations*, *policy change*, *school Board policy*, *and policy analysis*.

School Policy

In an effort to improve the education stakeholders' capacity to better serve their students concerning CTE program expansion, a policy recommendation will be made to the local School Board. Over the past 40 years, the work on school policies have quickly widened covering issues such as the relationships between the district administrative team and the school officials, as well as the support provided to students (Lüftenegger et al., 2012; Mainhard, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2011; Stringfield & Teddlie, 2011). A policy, according to Kyriakides, Creemers, Antoniou, Demetriou, and Charalambous (2015) is a "course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual" (p. 113). Since schools and school systems are viewed as organizations, they are expected to follow courses or actions created by education stakeholders in an effort to improve and promote student learning (Doyle, 2010; Kyriakides et al. 2015; Patel, 2016). Those policies are voted on and recorded in the local board of education documents that are made public to all stakeholders.

Local school boards often meet to vote on whether to accept or decline different policy recommendations. According to Desouza and Lin (2011), local boards of education in the United States are guided by the state board of education and are accountable for setting priorities and making educated decisions based on accurate and detailed information. These board policies can be reviewed and revised by the local governing board of education whenever needed. Oftentimes, those revisions are a result of an issue discovered on the central office or the local school level (Doyle, 2010). Dysthe and Engelsen (2011) stated that policies are decided by three levels of

organization: the micro, meso, and macro levels. The micro level consists of the actual school level personnel who implement the policy (Dysthe & Engelsen, 2011). Micro level examples include building principals, teachers, and counselors. Departments, organizations, or institutions comprise the meso level (Dysthe & Engelsen, 2011). Local school boards of education are primary examples of the meso level. Governmental and major institutions such as the state board of education and the United States Department of Education make up the majority of the macro level. The majority of school policies are created on the macro level (Dysthe & Engelsen, 2011). However, the meso and micro levels have the greatest impact on how the macro level policies are chosen and practiced seeing as though that is where the policies are carried through.

Board policies are extremely vital to school systems as they have the potential to directly improve student learning outcomes if they are written to address the specific needs of the schools that they represent (Flessa, 2012; Kyriakides, Creemers, Antoniou, & Demetriou, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2014). More specifically for the problem in this study, effective school policies on providing learning opportunities to the extent of ensuring that students are offered more extra-curricular activities promote and support student learning (Scheerens, 2013; Schleicher, 2014). Policies are created where there is often a lack of understanding and/or procedures to address certain issues, as was the case for the policy recommendation made in this study.

At the time of this study, the study site's local Board policy did not address how to expand CTE programs. As a result, there was no prior resource for the stakeholders to seek consistent guidance and clarity on how to increase the amount of CTE programs in

their buildings. As far as CTE is concerned, the current policy only addresses on-the-job training and student criteria for participation (ABCD, 2016).

CTE Policy

Over the past few decades CTE has not seen any major overhauls with the changing of Acts in reference to CTE on the macro level. However, there have been quite a few meso and micro level policy changes. These changes have, in some cases, led to some macro level changes made by the US Department of Education. One in particular was with increasing the funding in the Perkins IV Act of 2006 for the "implementation of school-based occupational programs that support the school-to-work transitions of both college and non-college bound students" (Gottfried, Bozick, Rose, & Moore, 2016, p. 233). This governmental change led to a micro level change in schools by opening up an avenue for high school staff, both the general academic and CTE, to collaboratively create a curriculum that integrates academic and CTE material (Bahsam & Marino, 2013; Rose, 2012; Wang, 2013). On the state level, changes in CTE policy were made when states were mandated to incorporate CTE into local school districts' accountability rating (Stone & Lewis, 2012). The state of Alabama addresses this policy in its Plan 2020. Plan 2020 was also written to satisfy the conversations held on the macro level of creating specific accountability measures for how well they prepare students for the workplace and postsecondary education (Duncan, 2011; Kotamraju & Metille, 2012; Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011).

The study schools are not contributing positively to this school district's accountability rating due to the limited amount of courses that they have to offer their

high school students. Hence the need for a policy recommendation on program expansion criteria as a first step towards being able to provide more cultural capital to high school students through more specific CTE course offerings. While this problem has been recognized in the local setting, it has also become a nationwide concern (Aliaga, Kotamraju, & Stone, 2014; Castellano, Sundell, Overman, & Aliaga, 2012). With a heavy focus on students that are participating in industry credentialed CTE programs, students who take courses that do not result in receiving industry credentials have been going unnoticed (Aliaga, Kotamraju, & Stone, 2014).

There is very little data being collected in this area and due to their limited CTE experiences. As a result, it is more difficult to streamline them into the workforce and/or postsecondary educational opportunities because they lack a lot of the prerequisites. This is very troubling, especially with the findings from Packard, Leach, Ruiz, Nelson, and DiCocco (2012) showing that students' experiences with relevant work in CTE courses ultimately influences their workforce transitions and their career goals. This information further supports the urgency to action in recommending a policy that would give consistent directions for offering more relevant CTE courses at each of the schools in this study.

Project Description

Based on the evidence from this study, the project consists of a formal policy recommendation policy recommendation to create a section under the current Career and Technical Education policy that addresses program expansion (see Appendix B). The policy recommendation will be presented to the Board of Education in a scheduled

session during the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year. The recommendation was to create steps to follow in order to add new CTE programs to high schools.

The only resources that will be needed to present this project will be a projector and a computer to present the policy recommendation to the school Board. A potential barrier is the school board members' willingness (or lack thereof) to adopt the recommendation into the school system's CTE policy. In an effort to avoid this barrier, I will present the rationale of this study, share key points discovered during the data analysis, explain the imbalance of current CTE course offerings offered at each high school, and connect all of this information to lack of cultural capital that the study schools are providing their students. The timetable of implementation of this policy recommendation will consist of:

- A request to share the information with the school superintendent. After the presentation, a formal request will be made for an opportunity to address the local school Board during a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

- Initial presentation during a regularly scheduled Board meeting where the board members will have their first reading of the recommendations. During a first reading, the board members ask probing and clarifying questions about the potential policy. The board members could also request for certain things in the policy to be edited during this first reading as well.

- A second reading will take place during the next regularly scheduled board meeting, which will be three weeks after the first meeting. During the second reading of the policy recommendation, the board members will check to see if

their requests for editing have been addressed – if any were made. If all questions have been addressed and the majority of the Board members are in agreement with the policy, then they will vote to adopt it as a new CTE policy.

This project will not require that any students or other school officials participate.

Project Evaluation Plan

The purpose of implementing this new policy for expanding CTE programs is to provide a guide for every high school in this local school district to follow when trying to increase the amount of course offerings in their buildings. The criterion set in this policy should be evaluated in a goals-based manner, formative manner. The changes that this policy will make in the students will be gradual. It will take time to gather funds through state allocation and by applying for various federal grants. The main goal that this policy should address would be the implementation of CTE programs on the local school level that match the students' interests – which, in turn, should lead to higher course enrollment. That goal can be formatively assessed through multiple methods including but not limited to:

- an increase in student enrollment in the schools' CTE programs,
- an increase in students acquiring industry credentials,
- overall student participation in the high school CTE programs,
- stakeholder satisfaction surveys, and
- student satisfaction surveys.

The best measure of achievement is to track the students after they graduate from high school to see if they enrolled in postsecondary courses to further their knowledge and

certification in the fields that match the programs from high school, or to see if the students joined the workforce in those same fields. These evaluations should be done on a yearly basis to gauge the effectiveness of the CTE courses in every high school. The key stakeholders are teachers, counselors, assistant principals, principals, the Director of CTE, the superintendent, the Board of Education, and the community.

Project Implications

Local Community

The purpose of this new policy is to increase the stakeholders' capacity as to how to increase the CTE course offerings within their high schools. Students will gain more cultural capital through the addition of more CTE programs, which will make them more marketable to the job market and postsecondary institutions of higher learning upon completion of high school. It could possibly increase the amount of student participation in the schools' CTE programs which could directly lead to more jobs being filled in the local job market.

According to Alabama Senate Majority Leader Greg Reed, in the next five years there will be over 2,000 jobs that people in this rural Alabama county will not be certified to do (G. Reed, personal communication, September, 2016). Senator Reed also stated that there was a company with over 300 vacant positions in this county right now with that same issue, and further stated that in the next three months another company would be looking to hire 570 certified welders – a demand significantly higher than the actual number of certified workers currently in the state of Alabama. According to the education stakeholders' responses, the positions that Senator Reed spoke of actually match the

interests that the students in this study have. That said, the students in the study schools would benefit greatly from these new jobs. As mentioned earlier, if these students were to acquire jobs such as these, they could possibly help to decrease the areas in poverty surrounding each of these schools.

Far-Reaching

In the larger context, the implications of this policy change for positive social justice include a better focus of CTE program implementation in high schools across the state and country, more students continuing their education in postsecondary schools, and more jobs being filled in the workforce which will in turn positively boost our economy. As it stands today, according Bevins, Carter, Jones, Moye, and Ritz (2012), "America's youth is less well-educated and less prepared for the workforce than their parents" (p. 9). Students tend to learn more about things they are actually interested in. By creating a policy that directly guides schools to selecting programs that match the students' interests in their buildings, schools will help to break the current trends of producing citizens that are not instantly ready for the workforce or are unsure as to whether they will further their education through postsecondary learning.

Conclusion

The aim of this policy recommendation was to provide a set of criterion for schools to follow in an effort to expand their CTE programs on the local school level. The literature review contained research on policy, policy recommendation, and CTE policy in schools. In the literature review I explained the role that the federal, state, and local policy has on schools and instruction. I went on to share the significance of

recommending a set of criterion being added to the local Board policies to give schools a detailed set of steps to follow to ensure that they are adding programs that match the needs and interests of their student body and school community. The project was then described and a plan of evaluation was outlined. Finally, the implications for both local and far-reaching positive social change were explored. The policy recommendation that has been proposed could possibly set an example for all schools to follow, both within the local school district and throughout the United States.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Section 4 discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the CTE policy recommendation. This section also includes the scholarship developed throughout the entire process of this study, as well as a reflection on leadership skills and other changes that have taken place. Finally, the project's impact on social justice and implications for future research are explained.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The problem identified in the local setting of this study was that the local school district only offered 11 out of the 16 national career clusters, and three out of its six high schools offered far less than that (ABCD, 2015b). After interviewing several education stakeholders in reference to their perceptions as to why their schools did not offer a variety of CTE courses, I determined that there was a consistent lack of clarity on how to increase the amount of course offerings in their building. The project is a policy recommendation that was developed to create a consistent process for high schools to follow when attempting to expand CTE programs and course offerings in their building.

The strengths of this project are based on procedures involved with its application. Three of the six high schools in this school district do not offer enough CTE courses and programs for any students to even receive an industry credential, while the other three high schools offer several different courses for their students to explore that lead to various industry credentials. One main strength that this policy recommendation has is that it will provide direction (as recommended by Kennedy, 2011) by establishing

consistency and giving all of the schools a set of criterion to follow when attempting to expand their CTE programs. All of the stakeholders interviewed in this study stated that they believed that they had low attendance and overcrowding in their CTE courses because the students were either not interested in the courses and were only taking them to meet the requirements to graduate, or in some cases because it was the only thing for them to take during that school period. This policy is designed to assist these schools in selecting CTE programs that match their students' interests and abilities, leading to students actually taking courses that they are actually interested in.

Another strength of this policy recommendation is that it can be evaluated at various points throughout the school year, or over a longer period of time to ensure that the courses offered match the innate skills, abilities, and interests of their students. Schools can then meet to determine whether a particular program currently in place should continue the next year or if they should explore other options and possibly make changes. Bird, Dunaway, Hancock, and Wang (2013) stated that authentic change within a school or school district requires the consistent use of best practices. This policy recommendation is designed to increase collaboration amongst the high schools in this district by providing an avenue for discussion about how the three high schools that have a wider variety of CTE course offerings developed their programs. The schools with the limited amount of programs should take that information and try to recreate them in their schools. Peurach and Glazer (2012) also discussed the use of best practices and supported the replication of successful strategies and practices by schools and school systems.

The main planned outcome of this policy recommendation is for the students to be provided with more opportunities to increase their cultural capital in an effort to be more marketable to postsecondary institutions and better trained for the workforce should they choose the career path after graduation. Another planned outcome of this project is for the study schools to develop better relationships with postsecondary institutions and the local businesses and industries through constant communication of what their needs are on both sides. This will, in turn, provide better insight on what skills and attributes the students need to be eligible for different employment opportunities once they have completed high school.

One of the limitations of this policy recommendation is that it is solely dependent upon the local school board's approval. Some of the board members may have their focus elsewhere and fail to see the importance of CTE which would lead them to vote against it. However, if the school board chooses not to approve this policy, the recommendation in and of itself could still lead to further discussions and dialogue amongst central office and school administration on the topic of program expansion. Those discussions may contribute to changes still being made on the local school level that will provide their students with more opportunities to enroll in courses that match their interests and needs.

Another limitation of this project study is that the implementation depends on the determination and disposition of the education stakeholders at the local school level. This policy could be considered as difficult to achieve based on all of the other accountability measures that schools are expected to follow. It could be viewed as something else the

school personnel have to do, which would make implementation less likely or like effective.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem of the lack of CTE course offerings in three high schools could have been addressed in different ways. An alternative approach could have been the use of a different methodology. In this study, I worked to gain insight on the perceptions of the education stakeholders located in the three high schools of focus. A qualitative case study design was chosen to provide a detailed description of the stakeholders' perceptions. A quantitative or mixed-method approach for additional research could be used to produce statistical evidence of the impact the limited amount of CTE courses has on student dropout rates, graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment, and participation in the workforce. A quantitative study might lead to new statistical discoveries that would allow future researchers to test a hypothesis on the impact of offering a wider variety of CTE courses.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

As a scholar, I have learned to pay more attention to detail and to precisely say what is intended to be said. Throughout my doctoral study, I have learned various qualities that have made me a better scholar and a better person. For this study, I had to learn how to connect different sources of information together to support the objectives in my dissertation. I also had to learn more about synthesizing information to make it flow to where others could follow and understand what I am presenting.

As an administrator, I have to be careful of how I present different things. Over the course of this doctoral process, I have greatly improved my methods of presenting alternative viewpoints to my colleagues by supporting all of my information with evidence and encouraging others to consider all options before choosing a particular path. I have also utilized several of the skills and strategies that I have learned throughout this process to help develop different programs and projects in my building. This has led me to become more dependent on researching different topics to discover all of my options before starting new initiatives. The resources that I have found have helped to develop intentional projects that are more welcomed by my faculty and staff.

My doctoral work has also led me to develop more patience and to pay more attention to detail. Before beginning this process, I had grown accustomed to getting things right the first time that I did them. I had to learn very quickly that what possibly looks perfect to me could have several flaws and it could be missing quite a few components. It was at that moment that I learned to be more analytical when reviewing my own work. That has helped me as a practitioner because I now go over any document that I come across to check the tone, purpose, and flow. I am also more intentional when conducting research. This has helped me to find more relevant information to assist me with whatever I am working on at the moment.

My passion for providing students with a platform to stand on to see beyond their current situations to what they could possibly become led me to study Career and Technical Education. As a result of my research, I am now finding myself – an elementary school principal – having new, in-depth conversations with my students, as

well as high school students, about what they want to do after graduating high school. I use the information that I have learned about CTE and the workforce to offer helpful steps and procedures for those students to follow to accomplish their dreams and goals.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The work accomplished through the research conducted and the creation of this policy recommendation has the potential of improving the lives of the students in the three high schools in this study. If these students are provided an opportunity to participate, and possibly gain industry credentials, in CTE courses that they are actually interested in they would instantly become more attractive to employers and postsecondary institutions. In the workforce, as of the way it is right now, they have to fight an uphill battle to gain entry-level positions due to their lack of experience and training in their fields of choice. At the same time, their counterparts at other schools will be eligible for higher paying jobs in the same fields due to the experiences and credentials that they gained while they were in high school through participation in related CTE courses.

These students face this same scenario when applying for postsecondary scholarships and taking first-year courses in college. The students from the study schools will more likely have to enroll in more prerequisite courses due to their lack of exposure and training, while their counterparts will be able to skip several courses due to the fact that they were able to receive college level credits through their high school CTE programs.

This policy recommendation has the potential to balance the field of course offerings. It will also give students a better opportunity to get quality jobs in their fields of choice without having to sit through additional training which they could have gotten while still in high school. This policy will also help school leaders learn how to create those opportunities for the students by providing the programs that the students want and need.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Making this addition to the CTE policy will help the students in this local school district achieve the main goal of Plan 2020, which is to produce graduates that are college and career ready. These students are our future leaders and we will depend on their leadership when we decide to retire. If they are not properly trained to lead us, our country will begin to decline. This policy will help to bring about changes on all levels. Students will be more intrinsically motivated to come to school if they know they will get the chance to participate in a course or program that they have a valued interest in. Families will financially benefit from these programs once their children graduate school and join the workforce. Schools will also benefit in the realm of offering programs that are specific to their students' needs. This will also help with graduation rates as students will have a vested interest in attending school.

Future research may benefit from expanding the scope of this study and project. Other school districts with limited CTE opportunities could be brought into the study to determine whether they are experiencing similar issues and concerns. In addition, future research could examine possible options for funding to create regional CTE centers for

the high schools to share in an effort to provide the students with more CTE opportunities. Research could be conducted on school districts that already have regional centers established in their school districts.

Conclusion

The goal of this research study was to examine the perception of education stakeholders on the limited amount of CTE course offerings at their individual schools. The study and its findings have the potential to alter the way schools in this school district plan and maintain their CTE programs. The application of the recommendations could possibly unify the district in an effort to make more collective decisions where certain schools will not feel, or appear to be, left behind. The study also has the potential to alter the way educators in neighboring districts and across the nation view offering CTE programs that match their students' interests and needs; thus, the study has the potential to be a catalyst for positive social change locally and abroad.

Jobs are constantly leaving the United States due to several reasons. One of these reasons can be resolved by simply producing more high school graduates that are capable of fulfilling and certified to fulfill all of the expectations of those jobs. My original intentions were to gain insight on the stakeholders' perceptions as to why their schools lack a variety of CTE courses. As a result of the review of literature and the analysis of the findings, I discovered inconsistencies in the way programs are created and how information is relayed from the local school board of education to the schools. I developed the policy recommendation with the intent of standardizing the process

schools should follow when considering their options of adding additional CTE courses and programs.

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Appendix A: Policy Recommendation

To: The ABCD Superintendent
             The ABCD School Board
Cc: The ABCD Director of Career and Technical Education
From: Antonio Cooper
Subject: Policy recommendation for CTE program expansion

Problem

In 2013, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) was granted approval by the United States Department of Education (USDE) to be removed from many of the requirements of NCLB. In their request, the Superintendent of ALSDE created a strategic plan titled, "Plan 2020" (ALSDE, 2013a). According to the Superintendent, Plan 2020 is a rigorous and comprehensive Alabama-developed plan designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction" (ALSDE, 2013a).

After the creation of Plan 2020, the Superintendent charged all of the school systems in the state of Alabama to strive to meet the goals that will be set after baseline data have been collected and to think creatively when developing innovative educational ideas. The vision of this plan is to "prepare all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school" (ALSDE, 2014b). This plan was developed based on the premise that every student was not going to attend college after graduating high school, so the school systems needed to provide opportunities for every student to be prepared to financially contribute to the economy through the workforce upon completion of high school. One of the strategies for learners in Plan 2020 was to implement an

assessment and accountability system. The accountability system (ALSDE, 2014a) lists

several indicators/targets that have been set by ALSDE with an expectation of being

reached in 2016 by every high school. One indicator is an "increase in the number of

students who are college-and career-ready as measured by receiving an industry

credential upon graduation" (ALSDE, 2014a). As defined by The National Research

Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE, 2014), an industry credential

"offers a strategy for improving instruction and signaling that students have acquired a

defined set of skills and knowledge."

The gap in practice is that three out of six high schools in a rural school district in

Alabama offer less than 15% of the 16 national career clusters as options for their

students to participate in while they are enrolled (ABCD, 2015b). In comparison, the

other high schools in this district offer over 69% of the national clusters to their students

(ABCD, 2015b). Students in Alabama receive industry credentials through Alabama's

career and technical education program (CTE) by choosing to take courses in the 16

national career clusters. The three schools in this study have a disadvantage as it relates to

meeting this goal. If careers that students are interested in are not represented in the

course offerings at their high schools, they will not be able to receive an industry

credential before graduating. This, in turn, negatively affects the amount of students who

will be deemed as "college-and-career-ready" at each of these schools.

If the students at these three schools are not interested in the few CTE programs

that are being offered at these three high schools, then those schools' chances of reaching

the goals set in Plan 2020 are less likely. Logic would dictate that the students who

graduate from these three schools are not as qualified as the students who graduate from the other three high schools in the district who offer close to 70% of the 16 national career clusters. It is also more difficult for the schools in this study to increase the amount of students in their programs due to the limited availability of course and session offerings. In fact, one of the schools in this study only has one CTE program with one teacher. According to one of the administrators, regardless of whether there was a high interest in the specific CTE program offered at that high school, the fact that they only have one teacher who services sixth through twelfth is a colossal barrier (C. Long, personal communication, November, 2014). This means that she splits her time between the high school and the neighboring middle school.

The problem identified in the local setting is that the local school district only offered 11 out of the 16 national career clusters, and three out of its six high schools offer far less than that (ABCD, 2015b). According to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), a career cluster is "a group of jobs and industries that are related by skills or products" (OSPI, 2014). Each cluster contains pathways that link to groups of courses that prepare students for their selected careers. According to the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc: 2014), career clusters play a major role by providing an opportunity for high school students to discover their interests and their passions and the capacity to choose the educational route that can lead to successful careers. At the time of this study, two out of those three schools only offered courses that fall within at least two of those national career clusters and the third school has slightly more offerings with five (ABCD, 2015b).

All three of these high schools also had at least one school in their feeder pattern that had been identified as a school in need due to high poverty (as measured by the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunches: ABCD, 2015a). The combination of poverty and a lack of course offerings creates an increased likelihood that students who drop out of theses schools will not have the skills to be productive in society which, in turn, will only increase the poverty level in all three of these high schools' zones (Carlson, 2014). This prediction aligns with Saddler, Tyler, Maldonado, Cleveland, and Thompson's (2011) statement that "when a student prematurely leaves school, the economic, social, and political impacts result in negative consequences for the individual and the community" (p. 38). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011), the total number of students that graduate high school is projected to fall 3% percent between the 13-year time frame between 2007-2008 and 2020-2021. This fact clearly shows the importance of the need for high school stakeholders to put more focus into increasing the amount of CTE courses that they offer in order to produce students who will be trained and ready to contribute to the economy when they leave school.

Background

Originally referred to as vocational education, CTE has a history that dates back as far as 1914. After the 1914 Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education advocated for vocational education to be integrated into the secondary curriculum, $1.7 million dollars of public funding for vocational education was finally granted in 1917 with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act (Brewer, 2011). The Smith-Hughes Act marks

the first government authorization for federal funding of vocational education (Brewer, 2011). Friedel (2011) described vocational education as "practical education and career skill instruction" (p. 38). The main objective of vocational education was to get students prepared for entry-level positions in occupations that require less than a baccalaureate degree (Plank, DeLuca, & Estacion, 2008; Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2004; Tillman & Tillman, 2008).

Most of these entry-level work positions were a direct result of the Industrial Revolution (Lynch, 2000; Hersperger, Slate, & Edmonson, 2013). Hersperger et al. (2013) and Lynch (2000) stated that most of those occupations were categorizable under agriculture, trades and industry, and home economics. These categories were chosen for families who wanted their children to learn a skill and help the family immediately. Under the Smith-Hughes Act, states had to develop comprehensive policies and procedures that would assess the effectiveness of these categories on a consistent basis (Brewer, 2011). As a result, public education programs received funds from the federal government based on this accountability measure (Hersperger, et al., 2013).

Congress passed the George-Reed Act in 1929, authorizing an annual increase of $1 million of federal funding from 1930 to 1934 (Friedel, 2011). There were three more George Acts that authorized an increase in federal funds for vocational education following the George-Reed Act. Those George Acts were 1) the George-Ellzey Act of 1934 which authorized an annual amount of $3 million for three years; 2) the George-Deen Act of 1936 which authorized an annual amount of $14 million a year; and 3) the George-Barden Act of 1946 which increased federal support for all of vocational

education in general (Friedel, 2011). The increased financial backing by the U.S. federal government through the passage of the George Acts helped to further the growth of the United States as a nation through public education.

Concerned that "rapid rates of technological and economic change, particularly the automation of production processes, would require the retraining of many already in the workforce," President John Kennedy requested that a "Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education" review the status of vocational education in the secondary schools (Lewis & Stone, 2013, p. 108). The resulting *Education for a Changing World of Work* study contributed to the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (Lewis & Stone, 2013). According to Epperson (2012), the Vocational Education Act of 1963 not only increased federal funding for vocational education, but also improved the categories of employment training that could fall under vocational education.

The U.S. federal government passed the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, which amended the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and has been reauthorized three times. According to Lewis and Stone (2013), Friedel (2011), Association for Career and Technical Education (2002), and Hayward and Benson (1993), the original intent of the Perkins Act was to address the special needs populations by improving their access to the vocational education programs and to address the economic needs of the nation.

The first reauthorization of the Perkins Act came with its name being changed to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990. Hersperger et al. (2013) stated that in addition to improving the vocational programs, this

reauthorization also improved the academic components that dealt directly with technology. This Act also created the "Tech Prep" title to encourage more programs that linked high school and postsecondary courses (Lewis, Stipanovic, & Stringfield, 2012). Perkins II, as it came to be known, also strengthened provisions for programs and services that were provided to students who were underprivileged, disabled, and had limited English proficiency (Friedel, 2011).

The Perkins Act was reauthorized again in 1998. Perkins III included multiple changes, one of which was an improved accountability plan. This version of the Act required every state to produce a report on performance data in reference to student aptitude, high school completion, postsecondary education or training, and military services (Friedel, 2011; Hersperger et al., 2013). These performance data were measured by performance indicators that were developed for Perkins III (Friedel, 2011). Another change was to include public and private nonprofit organizations or agencies, and a consortium of such institutions, organizations, or agencies to the list of eligible recipients for funding under the Act (Lewis & Stone, 2013).

The Perkins Act was reauthorized again in 2006. Perkins IV brought about a change to the term *vocational education*. In Perkins IV, the term *career and technical education* replaced *vocational education*. This Act is the first legislative documentation to officially implement the name change to CTE (Friedel, 2011; Hersperger et al., 2013; Lewis & Stone, 2013). This was done, in part, to improve the focus of academic achievement for CTE students and to reinforce the networks between high school and postsecondary education through enhanced state and local accountability (United States

Department of Education, 2011). Perkins IV also held schools accountable for high school completion, postsecondary education, and employment outcomes of students enrolled in local level CTE programs (Foster, Kelley, Pritz, & Hodes 2011; Trach, 2012; Turner, 2006).

Under Perkins IV, every U.S. state was required to create a 5-year plan for Tech Prep and CTE (Hersperger et al., 2013). This new reauthorization also introduced the term *programs of study* (POS; Blosveren, 2014, p. 12). POS are created arrangements of CTE and academic courses that are intended to help students achieve an industry credential (NASDCTEc, 2014). In 2012, the Obama administration released a blueprint for a reauthorized Perkins Act that would create a more rigorous and data-driven CTE shaped by four core principles, which were: alignment between the CTE programs and the labor market; collaboration among high school and postsecondary schools; accountability for high schools to build job technical and employability skills in CTE; and being more innovative in supporting the implementation of CTE (USDE & OVAE, 2012).

Findings from the Literature

In an effort to improve the education stakeholders' capacity to better serve their students concerning CTE program expansion, a policy recommendation will be made to the local School Board. Over the past 40 years in education, the work on school policies have quickly widened covering issues such as the relationships between the district administrative team and the school officials, as well as the support provided to students (Lüftenegger et al., 2012; Mainhard, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2011; Stringfield &

Teddlie, 2011). A policy, according to Kyriakides, Creemers, Antoniou, Demetriou, and

Charalambous (2015) is a "course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an

organization or individual" (p. 113). Seeing as though schools and school systems are

viewed as organizations, they are expected to follow courses or actions created by

education stakeholders in an effort to improve and promote student learning (Doyle,

2010; Kyriakides et al., 2015; Patel, 2016). Those policies are voted on and recorded in

the local board of education documents that are made public to all stakeholders. Local

school boards often meet to vote on whether to accept or decline different policy

recommendations. According to Desouza and Lin (2011), local boards of education are

guided by the state board of education and are accountable for setting priorities and

making educated decisions based on accurate and detailed information. These policies

can be reviewed and revised by the local governing board of education whenever needed.

Oftentimes, those revisions are a result of an issue discovered on the central office or the

local school level. Dysthe and Engelsen (2011) shared that policies are decided by three

levels of organization: the micro, meso, and macro levels. The micro level consists of the

actual school level personnel who implement the policy. Micro level examples include

building principals, teachers, and counselors. Departments, organizations, or institutions

comprise the meso level. Local school boards of education are primary examples of the

meso level. Governmental and major institutions such as the state board of education and

the United States Department of Education make up the majority of the macro level. The

majority of school policies are created on the macro level. However, the meso and micro

levels have the greatest impact on how the macro level policies are chosen and practiced seeing as though that is where the policies are carried through.

Board policies are extremely vital to school systems as they have the potential to directly improve student learning outcomes if they are written to address the specific needs of the schools that they represent (Flessa, 2012; Kyriakides, Creemers, Antoniou, & Demetriou, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2014). More specifically for the problem in this study, effective school policies on providing learning opportunities to the extent of ensuring that students are offered more extra-curricular activities promote and support student learning (Scheerens, 2013; Schleicher, 2014). Policies are created where there is often a lack of understanding and/or procedures to address certain issues. That would be the case for the policy recommendation for this study. As it is currently written, there is nothing in the local Board policy that addresses how to expand CTE programs. Therefore, there is nowhere for the stakeholders to seek consistent guidance and clarity on how to increase the amount of CTE programs in their buildings. As far as CTE is concerned, the current policy only addresses on-the-job training and student criteria for participation (ABCD, 2016).

While over the past few decades CTE has not seen any major overhauls with the changing of Acts on the macro level. However, there have been quite a few meso and micro level policy changes. These changes, in some cases, have led to some macro level changes made by the US Department of Education. One in particular was with increasing the funding in the Perkins IV Act of 2006 for the "implementation of school-based occupational programs that support the school-to-work transitions of both college and

non-college bound students" (Gottfried, Bozick, Rose, & Moore, 2016, p. 233). This governmental change led to a micro level change in schools by opening up an avenue for high school staff, both the general academic and CTE, to collaboratively create a curriculum that integrates academic and CTE material (Bahsam & Marino, 2013; Rose, 2012; Wang, 2013). On the state level, changes in CTE policy were made when states were mandated to incorporate CTE into local school districts' accountability rating (Stone & Lewis, 2012). The state of Alabama addresses this policy in its Plan 2020. Plan 2020 was also written to satisfy the conversations held on the macro level of creating specific accountability measures for how well they prepare students for the workplace and postsecondary education (Duncan, 2011; Kotamraju & Metille, 2012; Symonds, Schwartz, & Ferguson, 2011).

The three schools in this study are not contributing positively to this school district's accountability rating due to the limited amount of courses that they have to offer their high school students. Hence the need for a policy recommendation on program expansion criteria as a first step towards being able to provide more cultural capital to high school students through more specific CTE course offerings. While this problem has been recognized in the local setting, it has also become a nationwide concern (Aliaga, Kotamraju, & Stone, 2014; Castellano, Sundell, Overman, & Aliaga, 2012). With a heavy focus on students that are participating in industry credentialed CTE programs, students who take courses that don't result in receiving industry credentials are going unnoticed. There is very little data being collected on them and due to their limited CTE experiences, it is more difficult to streamline them into the workforce and/or

postsecondary educational opportunities because they lack a lot of the prerequisites. This is very troubling, especially with the findings from Packard, Leach, Ruiz, Nelson, and DiCocco's (2012) study which stated that students' experiences with relevant work in CTE courses ultimately influences their workforce transitions and their career goals. This information further supports the urgency to action in recommending a policy that would give consistent directions for offering more relevant CTE courses at each of the schools in this study.

Findings from the Data Analysis

The aim of this study was to gain insight on stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevent schools from offering more CTE programs. A collective case study was the selected research design used in this study is a collective case study (Creswell, 2009; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). The participants of this study consisted of the education stakeholders within the three high schools in the participating school district. The education stakeholders consisted of a total of 12 CTE teachers, counselors, and administrators. The participants were reached via email, face-to-face conversations, and personal phone calls. I informed the potential participants of their rights as willing participants in the study during the initial consent process. The participants were provided with a detailed list of rights and I explained the participants' access to their responses, transcribed notes, and final results upon completion of the study.

The data for this case study were collected using two methods: interviews and a review of documents, as suggested by Lodico et al. (2010) and Merriam (2009). The main strategy that was utilized during data analysis was coding. A case study spreadsheet

was created to organize the data so I could locate specific information during intensive

analysis, as suggested by Merriam (2009). The contents of the spreadsheet included, the

Core Indicator Performance Targets Report, the Alabama Career Readiness Report, and

stakeholder interviews that I conducted.

The intent of this research was to answer the following questions:

- RQ1: What are the factors, as perceived by the stakeholders, that prevent the

  schools from offering a wider variety of CTE programs?

- RQ2: What are the stakeholders' perceptions on how CTE programs should be

  expanded in each school?

The results showing a lack of clarity amongst stakeholders in reference to CTE

program expansion and factors in offering a wider variety of programs in their schools

led to a policy recommendation to the Board of Education to create a section under the

current Career and Technical Education policy which addresses program expansion. The

recommendation made was to create steps to follow to add new CTE programs to high

schools. Those steps would be to solicit feedback from stakeholders as to what programs

best match the students' skills and interests, analyze the school's infrastructure and

location, and assess the current demands in the local job market. Recommending the

creation of a new section in the CTE policy could lead to an improved understanding,

district-wide, on what steps need to be taken to diversify their CTE course offerings

based specifically on the students' needs in their buildings. Adding CTE courses and

programs that match the students' interests could possibly increase student enrollment

and increase the amount of cultural capital the students can receive at each of the three high schools in this study.

Current Policy

Section 4.81 of the ABCD School Board Policy reads:

The ABCD Board of Education recognizes the importance of the school-community linkage in training individuals for specific occupations; assisting individuals with the transition from school to the world of work; providing an environment for developing proper skills, knowledge, work and safety habits, and pride in achievement. As such, Cooperative Career/Technical Education Programs will be provided to the extent possible to strengthen this linkage. These programs will operate in compliance with general career/technical education policies established by the Board and program standards outlined in current administrative code.

Each cooperative career/technical education program shall provide on-the-job training that:

1.   is related to existing employment opportunities which offer promotion and advancement.

2.   is related to the student's occupational objective.

3.   does not displace other workers who can perform such work.

4.   is conducted in accordance with written training agreements and training plans that incorporate methods for solving problems at work and problems at school.

Criteria for Participation

The following criteria must be met prior to a student's participation in

Cooperative Career/Technical Education Programs:

1.   The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) must select the cooperative

career/technical course(s) as an elective.

2.   The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign a release form authorizing

the school to release his/her child from school to travel to and from the

educational job site.

3.   All transportation costs must be borne by the student and his/her

parent(s)/guardian(s).

4.   The student meets prerequisites for the cooperative career/technical course

selected as described in the current ABCD School System course catalog

(ABCD, 2016).

Policy Recommendation

The following policy recommendation is intending to be considered as an addition

to the current CTE policy that the school district already has in place. The main goal of

this recommendation is to create a set of criterion for schools to follow when attempting

to expand their CTE course offerings within their schools. This criterion could also be

used to evaluate current CTE programs and course offerings at any time throughout the

school year to measure effectiveness.

Criteria for CTE Course Selection and Program Addition

The following criteria must be met prior to adding new CTE course offerings or programs on the local school level:

1. The school must create and conduct a survey comprised of questions directly related to the 16 national career clusters to gain a working knowledge of what their students are actually interested in.

    a. The students that should be considered during the survey should be in grades 6 – 12.

2. The school should send out a survey to parents to get data on their perceptions as well.

3. The school should conduct a survey on staff members to determine what the staff believes are the best programs for their student body.

4. The school should send out a survey to the local businesses and industries within their school district to find out what they are lacking.

5. All of the data should be triangulated and categorized into themes based on the actual career clusters. Schools should then determine their budget and pursue the addition of the most feasible program based off of the highest ranking category.

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about the lack of Career and Technical course offerings in high schools. Alabama's Plan 2020 was developed based on the premise that every student was not going to attend college after graduating high school. Hence, the school systems needed to provide opportunities for every student to be prepared to financially contribute to the economy through the workforce upon completion of high school. This study will address the problem of the lack of Career and Technical Educational (CTE) courses offered at three high schools in this school district. The researcher is inviting specific education stakeholders from each school to participate in this study. For this study, the term "education stakeholders" has been defined as high school CTE teachers, counselors, and administrators. I obtained your name and contact information from the district directory on your school's website. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Antonio Cooper, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher as an elementary school principal in your school district, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the stakeholders' perceptions of the factors that prevent the three schools in this study from offering more CTE programs and course offerings.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- Participate in one 25-minute interview where you will be asked to answer a series of questions in an effort to gain your perception of the CTE program at your school.
- Verify your answers after I summarize them at the end of the interview. At that time, you have the right to change and or request that different portions of your answers be omitted from the record. This interview will be audio recorded for accuracy.

Here are some sample questions:
- Some high school principals would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?
- How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your drop out rate?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at your local high school or in the ABCD School System will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue or stress. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

There will be no direct benefits to you. The results from this study will determine stakeholder perceptions on the CTE program and the factors that may expand the number of courses. The overall objective of this study is to find out what the educational stakeholders perceive as the reasons their schools do not have enough CTE courses.

Payment:
There will not be any type of compensation for participating in this study.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Each participant's identification will be kept confidential from other participants and all school personnel by using an alphanumeric identifier instead of the participant's actually name or initials. Data will be kept secure by utilizing password protected security storage devices. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher by email at antonio.cooper@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **04-11-16-0231551** and it expires on **April 10, 2017.**

You may print or save this consent form for your records.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by replying to the invitational email with the words "I Consent."

Appendix C: Stakeholder Interview Questions

Career and Technical Education Program Education Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

Appendix D: Stakeholder Interview Responses

Participant: IM2016T20

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

   a. I have 0 years of teaching experience in secondary schools. However, I do have experience as an Instructional Coach in the middle and high school area.

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

   a. 1 year

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

   a. I guess I'm satisfied with it. Coming from elementary school, it is something different and is something that I have to get use to and better understand. I must say that I am satisfied with the program. There are some areas that we would like to see some improvement in. A lot of the students – well some of the students – I would like to see the program bigger meaning more students, more student interested in the program. Right now the class sizes are fairly small, with the exception of cosmetology – I think she stays pretty busy. But the other classes are small. So I would like to see the program more attractive to the students, and I know that's on our end to make them more attractive. That's just one of the things that I would like to see differently with the program.

      i. What did you mean when you said it's on your end to make the program more attractive? How can you make it more attractive?

1. I guess making the students more aware with what the programs consist of and what are the benefits of each program. I think from what I've seen within my first year of being here is just "Ok are you going to take cosmetology? Are you going to take this?" and then there's no promoting it – if that make sense. I guess I'd like to see more promotion and helping the students understand, "Here's what we do here and here are the benefits…" "Once you complete the program, there's scholarship opportunities that you can receive." I think a lot of students don't know that, so that's what I mean. Just promoting it more and making it more attractive to the students.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

   a. Well definitely here recently, the students that complete 3 or 4 years of the program, they are considered as completers. Basically what that means is that they are certified to a level to where they could possibly take their credentials and go and obtain a job. So that's definitely a positive. I think the next positive is in my instructional observations I see where there are several opportunities for the instructors to engage in math problems. I know one of the courses, one of our math teachers and the constructional

teacher co-teach one class where the math teacher will focus on the math part and the constructional teacher teaches more of the hands-on information. So that's definitely a benefit for the students when they have the opportunity to engage in complex text and gain a deeper understanding on reading directions in an effort to be able to apply the information that they are reading. That's definitely a plus, like I said earlier – implementing other core discipline areas into the CTE courses is definitely a positive to help us build on whatever the area of focus is. One of the negatives, honestly I can't think of any negatives. I know we have been running into a few problems district-wide because we're on different schedules. That one thing has interfered with the learning just a smidge because when our students' class changes here and they are 30 to 40 minutes different than the students from Tuscaloosa County High and Brookwood High so when they have to come and go to those schools it interrupts the scheduling a little bit. But I don't know how that plays into the industry credentials. But honestly, I don't see there being any disadvantages to our students in our program entering into the work industry.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

    a. I think we're offer the most appropriate number of courses and honestly I don't think it has any impact on our graduation rate.

i. When you say most appropriate, what do you mean? Do you mean based off of your demographic makeup?

1. Based on the demographic makeup and the requirements that are left up to the Alabama State Department of Education. Like I said earlier, the way the program is set up, students are to complete I think 3 or 4 years, I can't remember right off of the top. They have to spend that amount of time in the program.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

a. For the amount of students we have in our school, we currently have 4 CTE programs and I think that's most appropriate for our school size. I think if we added some more it could possibly make it a little more attractive to the students. But one of the things that we are doing at our school is that if the students are interested in other programs they do have the opportunity to take those courses at Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy in the Tuscaloosa City School System. I know a lot of our students have been interested in one particular program at that school – and that's welding if I'm not mistaken. I think we have a good amount of classes for the size of our student body, but we could offer some more programs here on campus to make it more attractive such as welding the Tuscaloosa City School System offers that we don't offer.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

    a. I would definitely like to see the district change to a block schedule, or whatever schedule we're going to be on and have all schools on the same page with it. I would like to see more students participating in our program, even if they're not going to go to a 2-year university or college. I think this is definitely something that could benefit all of our students not just career-wise but in their personal lives as well. So definitely more students interested in the program – I would like to see that changed. We have something that I just learned about called "Live-Work," where for example building construction – where someone in the community wants something built and in our program if we have the materials to build it for them, our students will go out and make it. I would like to see our school's CTE programs participate more in Live-Work where people are coming in for example in our cosmetology class and give our students an opportunity to get hands on experience in doing their hair for a wedding or a special event. Also with our auto-tech program with more people from the community coming in to have their oil changed and their spark plugs and wires changed out. That's what I'd like to see differently.

        i. You said something about more students participating in the programs that you offer. Would you that they don't participate

1. Honestly, I don't know. If I was a betting person, I would say yes probably more students would participate if we opened the program up. But because of our student body size, it just doesn't allow us to bring in more programs because of funding – I'm just assuming. But I do believe if we had more things to offer such as robotics or nursing programs – I know in the Tuscaloosa City School System, they offer nursing programs and they also offer sports medicine training, computer programming classes. I think that would open the program up and we'd have more student participation.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

   a. I would say it's definitely on the cutting edge. What I mean is with the level of technology that's visible now – it would look like that. I think the best program now looks like real work. It's more live and hands-on than versus just sitting listening and things like that. If I had to put numbers with it, I'd say it's about 20 percent classroom instruction and the remaining time would be spent in the field practicing. Another thing I'd

probably say is it would have programs that are conducive to your environment – if that makes sense. Programs that correlate to Mercedes Benz would be more ideal seeing as though we have a Mercedes Benz plant in our county. And anything else that's going to be most conducive to the industries that we have here in Tuscaloosa and our surrounding counties.

b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

    i. I'd say we're about 80 percent there. But there's definitely room for improvement. I'd say we're about 3 or 4 years away.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

a. I would definitely say that it depends on the culture of your school and the number of enrollment. However, with a small enrollment such as ours, having multiple classes would definitely increase the enrollment and produce smaller class sizes. I think a lot more of our students would be interested if we had more programs to choose from. I don't think that it would cause less students to enroll it would just produce smaller class sizes. With smaller classes, you will have more opportunities to work one

on one with your students and get more things done, so that's a benefit

more than a deficit.

Participant: IM2016T40

Career and Technical Education Program Education Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

   a. 10

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

   a. 0

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

   a. Well I think that it could be much better. I think we do the best that we can

      do, but I feel that if we had students that really wanted to be in our

      classrooms, we would have a better program. And if we had less students

      in our programs, they would be better. I'm not sure if I'm the only one that

      actually deals with that. I don't know how many students are enrolled in

      the other CTE classes that we offer to know if they have that same

      problem. My class is set up more like a regular classroom and I know

      every class, especially this year, I have been overloaded with around 32

      kids. If I'm going to take students into the kitchen to cook, you're giving

      me 32 kids to take and put into 5 kitchens. That's a lot of students in one

      kitchen and one room that will be dealing with fire, using oil, and heating

      up grease. There's a lot of safety hazards. So for a person like me, dealing

      with Family and Consumer Science, I'm going to need smaller class sizes

      to be effective.

i. Based off of what you've answered, may I ask – do the students have to take your class or is based off of their interest?

    1. They have to take 3 career tech electives so that they're not locked in to take my class. But a lot of times I'm just a filler and they'll say "Well so and so has an empty slot so let's just stick her in this class." So that's one of the issues. I did have an Education in Training program this year. That's a class that students should have to have a desire to do because you have to teach them how to teach and to deal with children. I've had students in this program before that hated working with kids but somehow they were placed in my class. That's the kind of stuff that I'm talking about. Now I've changed some of the things we will be doing next year to just the Food, Wellness, and Dietetics. More people will be interested in cooking but I want people that will be interested and willing to go into the restaurants and working in the culinary field.

        a. So it sounds to me that if your school had different CTE programs that the students were actually interested in, then your classes would actually be smaller and more informed?

            i. Definitely.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

    a. Well that's kind of why I'm focusing on the Food, Wellness, and Dietetics because there's only 1 industry credential that they can get out of this program and that's the ServSafe credential. I guess the negative is that it takes a long time to teach that program. And again if the students are just in that class because they were placed in there then they don't care to learn it. They then become a distraction for the other students that are actually in there to learn it. The ServSafe is the credential that will get the students into a working environment. The negative, I guess, will be the large classes with students stuck in there that don't want to be in there. The positive is that this is a really cool credential because every restaurant or place that serves food has to have at least one person on duty at all times that has a ServSafe credential. People with those credentials are in high demand right now. So most of our students do start out in the fast food industry whether their career will be in something else, they always start there. I try to explain to them the importance of having that credential.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

a. I don't know if I can answer that one. I do know that there are some students that if they're interested in our auto program that they've stuck with it throughout their high school career and didn't drop out. I can say that if it were a field that they are actually interested in we'd have a few more students to not drop out but I'm not able to put any figures with that. If we had more programs that are relevant to these students it would help tremendously. I know we have a lot of boys here at this school that have talked about wanting to be electricians and a lot of people that want to be welders – if we had more of those programs, because most of our students are more hands on, if we had more technical and trades that are don't require a college education because a lot of our students don't have an interest in going to college; I think adding things like that would be more beneficial for this area. I really think you have to look at the area of where your students are coming from to develop a good program. A lot of the students in our area are not going to go to college so I think we should provide the necessary training for them to learn a trade to be able to go out and get a job, it would be more beneficial.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

a. Well like I said, I think there could be more that would be more targeted to the area of our population of students. So I don't feel like we offer the

electrical, welding, and I think that we would have more students that would go in that direction if they were available.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

    a. Well if we had the ideal situation, we'd need a the CTE program where all of the CTE courses would be set up in one building. I think a career tech center would be most appropriate.

        i. So are you talking about for just your campus alone or for the district?

            1. Well I do know that as far as the district is concerned, they've talked about doing 2 career tech centers. They've talked about putting one at Lloyd Wood School that would take care of the schools in the northern and western regions, and putting one in the Brookwood High School area to service the eastern schools. I'm not sure what they were planning on doing for the southern schools though. They were going to have specific programs at each of them, but that has just not come about yet and I don't know where we stand as far as doing that. I do know that these programs cost a lot of money to run them, so it's not necessarily that we could put $30,000 worth of equipment in every school just to have one program like an Educational Development

course because it's too expensive. So I guess I've been on that end of trying to get good quality programs, but having one at every high school is not a good plan if you're talking about having all of the necessary materials, supplies, and equipment to run them successfully. It would be ideal but not realistic. But we do need them in a general vicinity to where all of the students could get to them. They've talked about those 2 locations to serve our students but I'm not sure where we are on that. But that would be my ideal setup where we'd funnel all of our money into 2 career tech centers to where we could bus the students into those programs where we could offer better quality instruction with the necessary resources.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like.

    a. You have given me the answer to this one already. You said that having an individual building at each campus is kind of unrealistic due to funding concerns. You said that instead of that, an ideal setup would be where you all had 2 centrally located buildings within reach of each region where the students could be bused in to take the CTE courses that they're actually interested in. Those programs would be more effective because they would have all of the necessary materials and supplies that the teachers and students would need to successfully complete the course requirements.

b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

    i. I thought that it would be this past year and it didn't happen. I know it's not going to be over the next 2 years. So I would say it's safe to say within the next 5 years. Schools are slow about making moves like that.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

a. I know that a lot of them are looking at funding because our funds are based off of numbers. And we definitely want students in your program. But you don't want a program that's overloaded. Our programs are overloaded and you can't teach a CTE program the way that it should be taught if the classes are too large. So I guess I'd tell them we would have to find a balance. I'd tell them 1) I want the students in a program that is of interest to them; 2) an ideal class size would be 20, with 25 being the max – I know that's only 7 less than I have now but it makes a huge difference when you have to do a lab or some sort of project with them. I think the lower numbers are better and I want the students to be able to participate in the classes that they are interested in. There are lots of testimonies out there where people got stuck in classes that they didn't

want to be in and they ended up falling in love with the subject and

eventually went and made a career out of it – and that's great but that isn't

the majority. Most of the time we have students that are in there and are

not interested in it when they come in and still aren't interested when they

leave.

Participant: MR2016T10

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

    a. 15

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

    a. 7

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

    a. Right now our CTE program is lacking very much. As of right now, we
    have one CTE teacher. One true CTE teacher, and that's in the Family and
    Consumer Science Department. We do have LaDonna Beck, the Career
    Coach for our school system, that comes up to help out with our co-op
    program. She's not assigned to our school, but she just helps out. She
    really does it out of the goodness of her heart. That has helped our co-op
    program a great deal. But as far as any other program, we don't have any
    here. We are able to send students to Echols Middle School for welding.
    But with the traveling time and scheduling issues, we're very limited on
    the amount of students we can actually send. Plus, that teaching unit
    doesn't belong to us and we're not really helping them to hold that unit at
    Echols by sending our students – but they're just gracious by letting our
    students come down there. Also, Tuscaloosa County High has helped out a
    lot by allowing some of our students to come down there to participate in
    the HOSA program for the last two years. It's been great because we've
    been able to send about 10-13 kids down there. As far as what we have up

here and being able to meet the needs of the majority of our students – we have not been able to do that.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

   a. Well as far as in my school, we don't have any.

      i. So then there's a negative influence then?

         1. Yes.

      ii. In Plan 2020, did I read somewhere that the Alabama State Department of Education wants students to graduate high school with at least a few industry credentials?

         1. Yes, with the new graduation requirements, they have to have at least 1 CTE credit to graduate. They can have 1-3 credits. But they have to have at least 1.

            a. So the Family and Consumer Science program that you have doesn't lead to any industry credentials for the students at your high school?

               i. No it does not.

                  1. That's far away from Plan 2020 then.

                     a. Yes, it is.

                  2. When did Plan 2020 come out?

                     a. About 5 years ago.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

    a. I would say that it probably has affected our dropout rate. I just don't have statistics on it. I can tell you that there was a student, last year and this year, that had they not have been able to get into the welding program at Echols Middle School, I truly believe that they would have dropped out of school. Simply because that's what they're going to do when they get out of high school. They're going to get into some type of technical job, and the welding has trained them in that area and they enjoyed it where they didn't like general classroom work. So like I said, I can't give you statistics but I know it has an effect.

        i. So would you say that if you all had more programs like welding and in the construction area, would that decrease the amount of students that you have dropping out?

            1. I believe so, yes.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

    a. Dissatisfied.

        i. Is that because you all don't offer that many?

            1. Yes, because we don't have many.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

a. I would like to see us have a true CTE program. There's been talk about looking for places to build a facility where we could offer those courses here. There was talk, a couple years ago from our previous superintendent, about building that facility here on our campus. But right now those funds are just not there to do that.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like.

a. The ideal program would be one where you have facilities where you could offer the complete program in many different areas. For instance, like the technical, or the welding, or the HOSA. You could do Family and Consumer Science, or the business. A program where students have a choice and can take that track and see it through their senior year. Right now we're kind of piecemealed where we might can get a few into the welding program this year, but we're not guaranteed it's going to work in your schedule for you to take the second year of welding the next year. So I would like to see consistency across the board for our students.

b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

i. We are far, far, far away. In a galaxy far, far, far away. I'd say we are at least 5 years away – at least.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses.

Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

a. You do have to consider the size of the school that you're in. I think the larger schools can handle a larger variety of CTE programs. I think that if we can just get a technical program and a HOSA program we'd be fine. That's two programs that our kids could take advantage of. I think that would be a perfect world. I do agree that you could possibly offer too many, especially at a school this size. We have 460 students, so I figure that 50 or 60% of our students would take that route. That's about 200 to 300 students in your school taking CTE courses. So I see where having more classes in our building would help out tremendously.

   i. Will you please explain what HOSA is?

      1. It's the Health Occupational

   ii. On the two programs that you could add, do you think the technology and the HOSA programs would be the best to add to your school due your student's demographics?

      1. Yes, I think so. At this point, I really do. We've had a really big interest, especially from our female population, in the HOSA program. Now I think the best thing that we can do would be is to have our students take interest inventories to see who is interested in what.

iii. So then who determines what programs that you would get if you were able to add more?

1. Well it would have to come from us and the Central Office. But I think we would have the responsibility of getting the community involved in that decision as well. For example, if the Central Office were to tell us that we're getting some new CTE programs in our building, it would be our job to take that to a community forum and ask them what jobs would they like to see. Honestly, I think we would really need to start their because we can't off everything.

MR2016T20

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

    a. 18

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

    a. 2

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

    a. I think we're making due the best we can with what we have. It doesn't allow a lot of options for students, but we're trying to take full advantage of what's out there.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

    a. As far as industry credentials for what we offer, that's a real positive. Because our kids can obtain welding certification which will lead to immediate employment if they choose that route. It could also lead to college credits if they're interested in furthering their education in a welding program at a technical school. As far as the health science program, it kind of gives them a foot up into what the real world is going to be like in the nursing field.

        i. Is the welding program offered on your campus?

            1. Now that would be the negative, both of those programs are not offered on our campus and our kids have to travel a

minimum of 30 minutes each way to get to their programs. So they lose school time just due to the travel process.

a. So do they lose out on a couple of periods because of travel time?

    i. We give them one period because of travel time. Yes.

b. So that's one period that they could've been earning a high school credit in something else?

    i. Correct, because it becomes a non-credited period.

c. So what about the athletes or students involved in similar activities at school, does it discourage them of wanting to learn more about these programs while in school?

    i. We haven't had any athletes that have chosen to pursue these programs. But it would put a strain on them of trying to do the CTE programs and athletics due to the loss of a period.

    ii. So do you think that's a deterrent as to why you all don't have any athletes taking any of

   1.   We think there'd be a few, so yes.

5.   How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your

dropout rate?

   a.   I think because we do not offer any in the building that it does negatively

affect some of our students. Even though we do have those available. Even

though we try to offer transportation to those kids, I still think it plays into

it negatively.

6.   Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your

school?

   a.   With the programs that we do have that are working, I'm extremely

pleased. They're good programs, the kids enjoy participating in those

programs, and our kids come out sort of ahead of the game when it comes

to joining the work industry. But then again, those programs are not on our

campus. So if you're talking about what's in our school then we are very

limited in what we can offer. Extremely limited.

      i.   Do you believe that space has something to do with the fact that

you all aren't offering these programs in your building?

         1.   I think it's space, I think it's logistics where we're located

within the county. Of course then obviously finances.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

    a. I'd like to see the system continue to pursue trying to find a location within our region where they could build a CTE program that gives a lot of options to the students. Then it won't be a time burden, as far as travel and it would make things more available to the kids.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

    a. The ideal program would be what I left down in my previous school district, where they turned around and established what they called academies where they offered various different work modes. They had everything from aerospace engineering to culinary institute academy. Transportation was offered to the locations from all locations because it was a centralized location. It was available to all students and it did not interfere with students who wanted to participate in other extra-curricular activities from band, choir, athletics. Those students were able to do both. It was a pretty successful program. They actually had 10 different academies that the students could choose from. It was impressive.

    b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

       i. I would say that we're probably a minimum of 5 years away, but it probably be even more.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

       a. I'd tell that most all programs start out small and then as you build interest and programs become better run, then more interest is gained. So that it's a building process and encourage them to start small and then to grow it big. Glass half full baby! That's what I'd tell them, glass half full – you've got a program. Make those 3 kids super.

MR2016T30

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

   a. 12

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

   a. 0

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

   a. I feel like our offerings are very limited, and much of that is just because of our location and the facilities that we have here.

      i. What do you mean when you say it's because of your facilities?

         1. We don't have any open space to be able to offer anything differently than what we have. So there would have to be either some new construction or some type of Career Tech facility closer to us.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

   a. The positives are that we have several students in the welding area who are doing very well in gaining articulated credit for college and are ready to go into the workforce. Mrs. LaDonna Beck, our school system's Career Coach has worked with several of our other students through FBLA to get them credentialed in different areas. Then really the only one that we offer on site is our Family and Consumer Sciences program which includes

hospitality and tourism so for our students who have a strong interest in those areas it's definitely of benefit to them. The only negative that I can see is that we are only able to offer the welding program to very few students. We also have a few that go to Tuscaloosa County High School for the health and wellness program. But like in the welding program, we can only send about 4 students. We actually have a lot more that are interested but location, travel, and availability limits them.

i. Just for the record, the welding course is not offered on your campus?

1. That's correct, they have to go to Echols Middle School for that course.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

a. I will say that for every single student it makes a difference. So in terms of it making a 20 percent difference, no – but I can guarantee that a student we had here last year who was on the pathway to be a dropout got involved in the welding program and that absolutely changed his demeanor. He finished high school and has done very well. He actually went on to take part in the collegiate program for welding in a technical program at the college level. So for the 1 it makes a tremendous difference and for us 1 is about 1 percent. So for each student that we can reach in that way, I think it's pretty significant. But in terms of making a huge

impact, from 5 to 10 to 20 percent, we don't see that it's just based off of the availability of it.

    i. So do you feel that, with the small amount of dropouts that you have, if you had more of a variety of CTE programs at your school would that positively affect your dropouts?

        1. I feel that it would. I think we have several students who live out this way and don't have access to drive into Shelton State Community College to take programs or to drive all the way up to Bevill State Community College to take programs. These students actually have interests in doing things with their hands and that would be a great resource for them.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

    a. I definitely feel that there is room for growth. But I also understand that with staffing and the size of our school that it's not a decision that really no one in our building could remedy. That would have to come from being awarded teacher units and space to accommodate programs. So I think the ones that we have are working well. We have some of the community colleges that have expressed interests in offering some assistance. One of them had spoken with us about offering an EMS program for emergency medical technicians. But trying to offer programs like that here on our

campus brings up the issue of space. And we don't have the space to offer them where they have to have certain amounts of square footage and storage space for their equipment and things like that. When it was discovered that we didn't have that space, we were no longer considered for that opportunity.

    i. So there are some other opportunities out there outside of what the other high schools in the district have with community colleges that you could have actually gotten but lost due to limited space?

        1. Correct, that's correct.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

    a. I would love to be able to see us offer more courses related to technology and the computer area.

        i. Why technology?

            1. That's where jobs are right now. We do have a great need in our city where we have the University of Alabama doing football games, so the tourism parts need to be a strong focal point. But we don't see many males go into that program at the high school level. That's primarily occupied by our females, but it's a good program. We have 4 or 5 young men that go over to welding. I would like to see more things with students doing dual enrollment with the

local colleges. We had 1 student to do that with Shelton State in electrical technology. We need people like that who can come in and fix robots at the Mercedes plant. Students who have exposure and training in that field could possibly walk into the job market with the required prerequisites and certifications. I would like to see that increase because there's a need for that even in our own community. They won't have to move far away to get jobs in that area.

ii. So the selection of the Family and Consumer Science as it relates to hospitality and tourism – was the fact that we're that close to the University of Alabama the reason why that program was placed at your school?

1. I think that's just what's been here due to the way the school was built and what was offered. It was built here with a kitchen and those types of things already in it. It wasn't built with room for technology tables and different things like that.

iii. Would you say that the programs that you have on your campus – excluding the welding because it's offered off campus – match the interests of the student body in your building?

1. They do not.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like.

    a. My ideal would be for students that have a bona fide interest in the career and technical program for it to be a completely separate school where the students are involved there doing hands on things. Even where their academics could be offered there as well. There are so many courses now that technical courses could substitute for. You can substitute a construction course for a geometry, so a student could possibly earn a complete diploma by being involved in that technical school and come out with credentials. Because that's where their interest is, as opposed to just offering a random class. I think honestly a regional service center, if we could just build something close to Tuscaloosa County High School area that would service Sipsey Valley High School, Northside High School, and Tuscaloosa County High School would be great. I think that's very doable. I think having something like that just for our school would not ever happen, but it would work in a vicinity that's not that far away. I think it could be very successful.

    b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

        i. I would say very far away – very far away. I know that Dennis Duncan, our school system's Director of Career and Technical Education has a very big heart, and he's working very hard to make some changes. I know he's been working on that for our

system. But developing a brand new school would be a very far stretch. Possibly implementing more programs at Tuscaloosa County High School that our students could participate in is more realistic instead of building an entirely separate campus. I don't know if that's even a possibility right now.

1. So with the regional service center, if we were to get one of those, about how many years do you think we are away?

   a. I honestly don't know because I don't know if that's even in the long range plan. I know that there's a huge push for career and technical education and that's where all of the jobs are. We have to develop 4 year plans for all of our students and they can't fulfill those plans because we don't offer the classes that they will have to take. So if that's what's supposed to drive our instruction then the students' 4 year plans should be what's deciding what we're teaching and where we're teaching it at.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

a. I would say that I previously worked in another school system that had its own technical school and we saw what we were able to offer on our campus. We offered programs in computer and office management and family and consumer science. But all of our other technical programs, welding, automotive mechanics, graphic designs, computer technology, media – all of that is offered at the regional technology center for that school district. And I think that having those opportunities in masonry, automotive body repair – all of those opportunities were there so the students had the chance to fulfill courses that they said they really wanted to take and had an interest in. I think it's great to find that out in high school rather than having to go pay college tuition and find out that you really don't like it. But were there some programs that were more populated than others? Probably so, but I think that was more strongly related to the instructors of the program. People who made their classes very engaging and had great relationships with the students, their classes were always popular and highly selected – and full. And the other teachers who didn't do those things were less sought after. But I don't think that it was because there were too many things offered, I think it was the dynamic of who was teaching the courses that made students want to go into them.

   i. Who could you all bring the problem with the courses that you all
      have offered not matching the students' interests up to in an effort

to make some changes? How feasible do you think it is to switch those programs over to something that your students are actually interested in to get more students involved?

1. It's a requirement that every 8th grader comes over to our school with a 4-year plan and that's based on what their interests are and that comes from the interest inventory that they complete online. That information is reported to the Alabama State Department of Education. So I feel like Mrs. Gwen Harper, Director of Accountability, and Mr. Duncan at the central office could run a comprehensive report of every student in the county of Tuscaloosa to see what the students are actually requesting. The clusters that are generating the highest demand or level of interest should be the basis of selecting what programs go to specific schools. Those would have to drive staffing decisions as opposed to just saying, "Ok well we know we would like to put something in here for graphic art. Well how many people do we have that stated that they have a real interest in that?" But if you offered electrical technology and things like that for our school in particular, you would see a high level of interest.

MR2016T40

Career and Technical Education Program Education Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

   a. 21

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

   a. 0

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

   a. I'm ok with it for now. I know the middle school that feeds into our

      school, closed the CTE program that they had available to students over

      there. I was the one teaching it over there and over here too. I was going

      back and forth. I would spend a half a day at each school. Well they closed

      it, which was a surprise, and then they opened it back up with a

      technology course in its place. I see a purpose for it. I see that the students

      get hands on experience while taking this class over at the middle school,

      but then when they come over here there's nothing offered to them for

      them to follow up on. For example, with the shop classes where they are

      learning about the equipment and getting some hands on experience – it

      doesn't continue over here. They don't have any opportunities to further

      their knowledge and skills in that area. So I feel like there's a big gap as

      far as experiences that they're missing when they come to my school. As

      far as my classes, I'm very pleased with them. I am teaching a new course

      called Travel and Tourism and it requires you to have a commercial

kitchen with the commercial-sized appliances, which I do not have. I have the regular sized appliances like you would have in a regular home kitchen instead of in a restaurant kitchen. So I will be limited as far as how long I will be able to teach this class, because they want you to be able to teach culinary and to have restaurant style appliances. So that I'm a little disappointed with. But as far as the other classes that I'm teaching, I really like them and my numbers are good.

    i. Based off of what you just mentioned, the middle school decided to discontinue the course and program that you taught there last year in an effort to bring in a technology course that gives the students more hands on learning experiences. Whose decision was it to make that change? Was it decided by the school level administrators or by the central office staff?

        1. As far as I know, it would be central office – Mr. Duncan, the Director of CTE for our school system.

        2. Do you know the rationale behind that decision?

            a. Well I wish I knew because it was a surprise to me. What I do know is when I asked the question after being told that I would no longer be teaching over there was that the movement or the trend so to speak is science and technology. It is to train young people to give them skills to make them career

ready. I guess since we have the Mercedes plant and B.F. Goodrich here and some of these other industries where equipment such as megatronics and welding is involved, they're wanting these younger people exposed to these industrial kinds of skills. Which I see is great. I just wish that it was carried on up to the high school level so that these young men and ladies can continue those skills and then walk right into a job. If they are not planning to attend college, they can walk right into a job already skilled.

3. So this course was created for the middle school with good intentions, but what you're saying is that once the students leave middle school for high school, that training is not carried on for those students to further explore and develop their skills?

   a. Correct. Yes, and a lot of us feel, and when I say us – teachers in career tech, feel like if it would have been more productive if it was added to the high schools first instead of to the middle school level. Because all of the teen programs were closed for the middle schools in our school system.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

    a. As far as industry credentials go, I'm limited with what my courses can offer. As far as culinary skills, they get plenty of those because we do a lot of food labs. I do not have a childcare site with live children like they have in the industry. I don't have that, but we do more learning about child stages to help them if they were to go into a form of childcare program at a community college or university. They just would have knowledge; they would not have live childcare lab experience.

        i. So would you say that due to the fact that you don't have those culinary and childcare resources that it negatively affects them as far as acquiring a credential is concerned?

            1. I guess if you're looking at areas in my field then yes. See in my field, if you were just to leave high school and go into the workforce areas, most of the time you would need to further your education. Except for childcare work, they can pretty much train you on the job or you may take a class or 2 at a community college. As far as interior design, you need to have that degree and pass a test to become a designer. In order to become a registered dietitian or a nutritionist, you would need to go on and further your

degree. My courses require a little more training once you leave high school. I'm not qualified to help students get a culinary credential because we don't have the necessary appliances in the kitchen. Now for industry skills as it relates to our students being credentialed to go into the Mercedes plant and Goodrich upon graduation, we are in dire need having what used to be called the shop classes. We are in dire need of that program. We would probably be number 1 or among the top schools for the population for that program. I asked our students what their goals are and so many of them, males and females, say welding, construction, and boilermakers. So many are choosing jobs like electrician work that involve trade skills, and we do not have those here on our campus, and we so need them.

2. So who determines what programs that you all offer at your school then?

   a. Well, I'm sure Mr. Duncan, our career tech director has an influence on that. I'm sure that he would have to get some sort of approval from the Alabama State Department of Education on that as well. It would have to be a team effort.

3. In your opinion, are the programs that you currently offer at your school now of more need than the shop programs that you just mentioned?

    a. We need both because I have a big population of students who want to learn the life skills that I teach for independent living. So many students need that regardless of what they major in and that's what I teach. I teach life skills for independent living. Cooking skills and so many different skills that I teach and I feel very good and effective about that. We do lots of hands on projects in my class. As far as the shop classes, we have none. We are in dire need because we have zero. These boys need that. In order to become career ready and work ready without the 4-year college degree, there is a huge need for that – and we have zero.

    b. So would you say that the boys that graduate from your school are at a disadvantage compared to their peers at other high schools in our system when it comes to eligibility for those types of jobs?

        i. Yes.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

    a. I don't believe it has affected the dropout rate. Not like shop courses would.

        i. So if I'm understanding you correctly, are you saying that if you all had shop courses, then the dropout rate would be less than what it is now?

            1. As far as projecting it, a lot of CTE teachers in our school system have talked about that and we feel like it would give them some hope and an interest to pursue and stick with it. Now there is a welding program that is offered but they have to be of a certain age and it's only offered at Echols Middle School where our students would have to be transported to take those classes. From my understanding, they can only accept a few from our school because they take students from Tuscaloosa County High School and Sipsey Valley High School as well.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

    a. As far as the life skill courses that I teach, I'm very satisfied. I know the other teacher that teaches another class that falls under CTE is satisfied as well. But as far as the job skills for industry, I'm not satisfied with. I've

heard through Mr. Duncan that in the future that we will receive a building on our campus that will house these classes for career training. I don't know when that will happen.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

   a. I would love to be here teaching the life skills courses because it really does benefit the students in so many different ways. I would love to see that plan of having either an attachment to this building or a separate facility to teach the industrial skills to come to fruition. That way the students will be able to take the core classes, the shop classes, and to get skills for employment. There's a huge response from parents in this community in support of having those types of programs at our high school.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like.

   a. To have life skill classes for those students that are not planning on going into the industry that need the training to live independently. That would be me. Also, to have the facility or classrooms with the appropriate instructors and equipment for job skill training. That would be for industrial training. That would be the icing on the cake. That would complete this program. We had that years ago and it became the to, "Oh no! the 4-year degree is the way to go!" So a lot of these shop programs closed. Now the industry is hurting for really good qualified workers. It

gives a lot of these young men and ladies a purpose. It makes them see a purpose for their lives.

b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

   i. Well that's hard to answer. I guess it has a lot to do with their perspectives on where things are and it has to do a lot with funding. Because we have the need and the parents want it. So we have the need for it already. I would say within 5 years – and that's hopefully.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

   a. That doesn't happen in my situation. I guess because it's only one of me teaching these life skill courses and my numbers are good. I do have a variety of classes. I teach 4 different subjects a day and my numbers are great. I guess it depends on the number of instructors and the amount of students that you have. The numbers here are good. But they're not as large as they are at the middle school – and I love that.

BB2016T10

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

   a. 21

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

   a. 13

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

   a. We are deficient. We don't have the number of teachers to be able to carry programs. We have a computer lady that has to teach a career prep class because that's a requirement for graduation. But that's all that she can do. And a co-op. It doesn't allow us to expand to computer design and other things that she would need to have for that computer program.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

   a. I think they're very positive. I know we had the second largest pass rate in the ServSafe testing/credentialing. Which will help them along the way. And kids in welding at Echols Middle School who can do the same thing. But it's not an opportunity for a large number of kids because we're limited on what we can send.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

    a. I don't think it has anything to do with it. Because the kids who have dropped out in the past weren't involved in any CTE courses anyway.

   i. Do you feel that if you had a wider variety of courses to offer them in your building would they still be in school?

            1. Yes, if I had welding, cosmetology, nursing, and things like that here then yes.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

    a. Somewhat.

   i. Can you give some more information as to why?

            1. Just because of our limitations to what we can offer.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

    a. Being able to add courses. Add space, teaching units so that we could have a variety of things to offer the kids.

   i. How would you feel about having the opportunity of deciding, based on your demographic makeup, what programs you would get? Or would you take anything the Central Office would give you?

            1. Yes, anything they've give us we'd take. But I think with our demographics the things that we need are the things like Brookwood High School – the agriscience, the

forestry, things like the welding, electricity, auto mechanic you know those are the things that our kids would jump on.

ii. So who chose the programs that your school offers now?

1. Basically what we have, we've had the opportunity to go off campus to welding at Echols Middle School. When we started here six years ago we had a computer teacher, we had to have her in Career Tech for the required course for graduation – Career Prep. It was BTA before that. Then we have a second teacher who does the fashion design, food nutrition, and child development. But those are the only two teachers we have.

iii. So who chose the fashion design and the other things that the second teacher that you have in your building? Who decided that those were the courses and programs that your school needed?

1. We got together and decided that she would best be fitted into those things. And now it has all changed all over again in CTE, now they have to take family consumer science before they can take food nutrition, child development, or fashion design. Now that's the only course that she will be teaching next year.

<p style="color:red">iv. So then what you're saying is you will be more limited in the courses and programs that you currently offer now next year because she'll only be teaching that class?</p>

    1. That's right.

<p style="color:red">v. And that limits the amount of industry credentials that they could possibly leave with?</p>

    1. At least for a year, that's right.

<p style="color:red">8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?</p>

a. Something with a wide variety of offerings. And it could be based on our demographics. The more they have to choose from, they're going to find a pathway.

<p style="color:red">b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?</p>

i. I think probably, realistically, 3 to 4 years. Only because, the County Board is talking about adding some building space for CTE.

<p style="color:red">1. So for the next 3 to 4 years based on what you answered earlier, your students will still be at a disadvantage of having a good amount of CTE courses?</p>

    a. That's right.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

   a. They're probably right, because it's going to be spread out more of who could take what. Like us this year, we had food nutrition, child development, and fashion. Well we only had 1 section of fashion and they were all girls. The food and nutrition we had 5 sections of it and 1 of the other. They're going to lean towards the popular and easier things. Guys aren't interesting in fashion and sewing and child development, but they don't mind going in there cooking. I think that having fewer CTE courses, your numbers are going to increase. But I think if you offer more, we're going to be ok.

BB2016T20

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

    a. 7

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

    a. 2 months

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

    a. That's kind of a hard question with me just getting here. But I do know
       that really the only thing that we have our kids going to is welding and it's
       at Echols Middle School, I think. Other than that, I don't know if our kids
       are really involved in anything. Which is unfortunate because there are a
       lot of good programs that they could be implemented but, I don't think we
       have a whole lot.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently
   offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials
   before graduating?

    a. I don't know of any negative. There is definitely a place for having
       technical courses, because not every child is going to go to a 4-year
       college. And kids that can take those technical courses in high school, it
       gets them ready to essentially what we talked about – college and career
       ready. That way they can step out of our building and be ready to walk
       into a profession because they're familiar, they don't have to learn a trade
       because they've already done it in high school and they've earned credit

for it. There's some legitimacy to it because they do get credit for it. So when employers see that, that makes a big difference instead of just grabbing somebody off of the street who has no training at all. My brother is an example of it, he got his welding certification while he was in high school so he could go straight into the field as soon as he graduated high school. So there are tons of positives that come along with that. Learning a skill in general. Even kids that plan on going to a 4 year, its good go in with that skill so they can work their way through college. I know that's what my husband did. He worked in construction all through college and that's how he got through. Now he doesn't do anything in construction. I mean it's good for kids to work with their hands; a lot of kids are afraid to get dirty. So there are a lot of positive aspects of it for sure.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

   a. I would think that it has affected it greatly. A lot of times the students that are not interested in school they're not good at school are the ones that drop out. A lot of them who are not interested in it – they are hands on learners, they want to get dirty, they want to be doing something. They're usually very active kids. And so, when you don't have those courses to put them in, it greatly hinders their ability to find out what they're good at, what they can do; giving them a goal and career path. That's why I'm very big on having those technical classes that kids can take. The town I grew

up in had a huge technical center and it was nationally ranked in some of
its programs because it had electrical and plumbing, and of course your
welding and your ag-science and things like that. I'm very accustomed to
having those programs around so coming in to this county – I'm having to
learn my way around because we don't offer a lot of those things to the
kids.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your school?

   a. Can I just say that I'm not satisfied?

   b. That's fine, you can answer however you like.

   c. I mean is that sufficient?

   d. Yes.

   e. I mean I think we need more county-wide, in general that our kids can get in to.

   f. Ok, and that's kind of connected to your answer about dropouts – because giving them more opportunities to get their hands dirty and doing hands on activities makes them more motivated to come to school.

   g. Right.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE program in the future?

   a. There are definitely some things there that I would like to see changed. I would like to see more programs. As big as our county is, we should

actually have a technical center like the Tuscaloosa City School System

does. I'm kind of at a loss as to why we don't with a system this large.

Especially since we're not a system of just a bunch of city schools. Which

a lot of these kids' parents are blue collar workers and a lot of times they

follow in their parents' footsteps and go into those fields. That's what they

know, that's what they've seen, that's what they're interested in. So I

would think that that is something that definitely needs a fix. There has to

be some emphasis put on that, especially with the mandated Alabama

College and Career Readiness Standards. You don't have any choice but

to turn your attention to those things.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

   a. It's just like with everything; they want to streamline everything with all

      schools. They think all schools should look the same. You can't streamline

      everything. All schools shouldn't look the same, it should be based on

      your clientele. And I think the same thing should be with the CTE

      program. I think you should offer a variety of courses, and it shouldn't be

      just your welding – which is a popular one; ag-science is another popular

      one, forestry. But you also need the technical side of things. Are we

      teaching them computer systems, are we teaching them business

      management? Because a lot of these kids, if they did go into welding, if

they did go into construction, they'll be running their own business. Do they have the tools and the skills to do that part of it? Do they have the mindset of, "Hey here is a budget, how much do I charge for this? Or how do I this or am I going to contract this out?" It shouldn't be a just "Hey I'm going to throw you into welding because we don't have anything else for you to take. Or go take forestry – go learn about the trees." There has to be more to it than just classes that these students are taking. I've actually been looking at the Tuscaloosa City School System because I know that they are going to be giving us some slots in their technical school's program. They offer a vast variety of so many different courses and programs – from fashion design to media to tv/film. Teaching these kids how to do these things. It can reach so many kids. We have to be careful of changing the mindset of the community from thinking that technical school simply involves plumbing and electricity. It's so much more than that now. The community has to learn that their child can go to technical school in high school and still go to a 4-year college and get a degree. A lot of times it's going to give their children the experience that most children aren't going to get before they get to college if they're going into something like programming or things like that. When I was in high school, we took programming and that's the first time I saw it – and I'm not going to say that's when I understood it. But when I went to college and had to take a programming course, it was a lot easier because I had

learned a lot about it in my high school course. There definitely needs to

be a variety of classes. The mindset around it in the community has to be

changed for sure. But there has to be a push from the top to get that going.

   b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what

   your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

      i. They're very far away. I'd say probably 5 years away. It's not like

      you can jumpstart it within a year. You have to take time to

      establish it. You have to find the room and determine how many

      rooms you will have. It's going to take money. I would say at least

      5 years if not more.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE

   course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses.

   Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings,

   what would you tell them?

   a. I would probably feel like in their mind they have a misconception.

   Because we offer a few courses and only a few of our students go. The

   more classes you offer, while yes it's going to spread the kids out across

   the board – you're going to have kids that are interested in different things.

   And if you have a perfect CTE programs, there's going to be a variety of

   programs that are going to reach lots kids. Not just the ones that are going

   to go out of school and straight into the workforce. You know with that –

   so what if the class sizes are smaller? That's every teacher's dream

anyway. You don't want 30 kids in a room, especially with something like that – you can't really function with 20 in a room. That said, I would have to say that's a misconception on their part. They're probably not viewing it through the right lens. But I would probably not have a problem with that at all.

BB2016T30

1. How many years of secondary teaching experience do you have?

   a. 22

2. How many years of secondary administrative experience do you have?

   a. 0

3. How do you feel about the current state of your CTE program?

   a. I don't know if it's just our school or if it's the system, but the system is not equal for everyone. The program at our school is falling behind, especially for us as a small school due mainly to not having the resources. I'm not sure if all of the schools are that way, but mainly in the small schools we don't have the resources as in the computers and teachers to teach those classes. Because we're having to spread our teachers so thin to try to cover everything. It makes it very difficult and the career tech classes are already so hard to teach, so resources as in the rooms to do those things would be wonderful. We would love to have an auto mechanic shop for our students to work with out here in the country and a person to be here to teach them what to do. We could also benefit from having our own welding class as well. We're lucky because we're able to send a handful of students to Echols Middle School to take a few welding courses. We've been trying to work on getting classes scheduled with Tuscaloosa Career and Technical Academy, which is in the Tuscaloosa City School System, but it is not working so well because of scheduling.

With it taking 30 minutes to get there, our kids would be gone all afternoon just to take 1 course – that'll take up 3 periods of their instructional time just to get 1 class in. That will hurt them on being able to take any extra classes.

      i. So how do you all set it up for the students that go to Echols? Do they have to lose a period of instruction to be able to get there? If so, what do you all call that?

            1. Well, travel time is what it is. We have to give them 2 credits for the class. We've got it worked out now that if they go in the morning both level 2 and level 3 welding students can go and they only miss 2 classes. But next year when they have to go in the afternoon, they're going to have to miss 3 classes. Therefore, that knocks out a lot of kids.

      ii. What about the athletes that know that they may not have a future in athletics but wants to play sports and enjoy high school athletics while they're in school? Do they lose out on the opportunity to participate in those welding courses?

            1. After they take Welding1, yes sir they are.

4. What are the positive or negative influences that the CTE courses, currently offered in your school, have on your students acquiring industry credentials before graduating?

a. Actually it has become very positive here over the last year or so. It's been pushed a lot more by our career tech teacher here. She has done a great job of informing the students. The kids are being certified. We gave out a few certifications the other day. We've had several students be able to check that mark off on the computer here lately. Some of the negatives would be the lack of ability to have the classes here on campus. Having the time for the kids to actually do the programs. I think that has a lot to do with personnel and 7 period days. They could have more ability to do it if we were on a block schedule where we could go to TCTA and do that stuff with them.

5. How has the amount of CTE courses in your school affected or not affected your dropout rate?

a. I think it's negatively because we're having more people dropping out because we don't offer the classes that they would be interested in. The principal and I just discussed this the other day. If we had a welding program or an auto mechanic program here, or any type of hands on career tech program here on campus for the guys and the girls that are comfortable with getting down and dirty – we would have less dropouts. They would have something that they would be interested in doing. Because not everybody is excited about taking 4 math classes, 4 English classes, 4 social studies classes, and 4 science classes. Not every student is

that way, everyone has to have some reason they are here. It would

improve if we had hands on career tech classes.

 i. I'm assuming that these answers are coming from your

  conversations with the students, as their counselor, over the years

  and listening to their concerns. Am I correct with this assumption?

   1. Yes sir, that's correct.

6. Please explain your level of satisfaction with the amount of CTE courses in your

 school?

 a. I'm dissatisfied due to the limited amount of courses and resources that we

  are able to provide to our students. I mean our teachers do a good job of

  using what they have to teach the students, but they're limited to how

  much they can actually do due to the lack of resources.

7. What would you like to see changed or remain the same in your school's CTE

 program in the future?

 a. I would like to see the numbers increase. The number of career tech

  classes increased. Because right now, we only have 1 career tech strand at

  our school. If the students don't like that strand, then they're stuck and

  they don't really have a choice of anything else. That's why I would like

  to see it changed to where it is a bigger group of students. But then again,

  that only comes if you have more of a variety of courses to choose from.

  i. So the students that are getting those industry credentials in your

   school are the ones that are actually interested in that 1 strand?

1. Yes sir, you're right.

8. Please describe what you think the ideal high school CTE program looks like.

    a. It would be one where you'd actually have a career tech center on campus that actually has a variety of things that your students actually are interested and they like. With us being out here in the country, a lot of our students are more hands on than at other schools. A lot of our students like the welding, auto mechanic, carpentry, and ROTC – we would benefit greatly from those types of programs mainly because it's what they want to do. Then of course include the home economic courses, cosmetology, and other things like that for the other students. If we had a program on campus or in an area that's between my school and Tuscaloosa County High School that we could share and would be easy to get to –we could actually have more students enrolled in the program. I mean a 100% ideal program would be for every high school to have one on campus, but this one is more logical and would work well for everyone.

    b. How close or far away would you honestly say your school is from what your version of an ideal high school CTE program looks like?

        i. I'd say we're millions of miles away from getting a program like that. It's one of those things that will never happen due to lack of funding. I've always said to the different industries that we've gone out and met over the years, that they have to be the ones to step up and put the money up. We as educators just don't have the

money to build career tech programs that will feed employees to these industries. They need to step up and pay for them.

9. Some high school CTE educators would say that having a wide variety of CTE course/program offerings leads to low enrollment across all of the CTE courses. Given your current situation, with only a few CTE course/program offerings, what would you tell them?

a. Variety is better is because at least you have everybody enrolled. Here, if you don't have the variety, you don't have choices. Therefore, students are sitting in your class that don't want to be in your class. A kid that doesn't want to be in your class is not going to behave, they're not going to want to do any of the worked that they've been assigned to do, and they're not going to learn anything. Which I think makes the job harder on the teacher.

We did a member check and everything was fine as it was read back to him.

He asked that I add:

If we were to do a regional center that multiple schools came to, it would be great to go ahead and have the core classes there at the regional career tech center. That would cut down on the travel time and the loss of class time. If a 9th graders spends a year on my campus and decides that he would like to take a career path, then he'd have that option to attend the regional center when he enters the 10th, 11th, and/or 12th grade. Maybe they could spend the first 2 years at my school and then the last 2 at the regional center doing

something that they're actually interested in doing. A lot of the classes that you do now in career tech have embedded credits that could actually substitute for core classes that we offer here. It could also speed up high school education to where they could possibly graduate early.

Appendix E: Theme and Frequency Chart

This chart displays the themes derived from the data analysis of the stakeholder

interviews and the amount of stakeholders that went into detail about them. There was a

total of nine stakeholders that were interviewed in this study.

Theme	Frequency
Creating centrally located regional CTE centers that are more accessible for all schools.	5
Making the current CTE programs match the students' interests and talents.	8
Classes are overcrowded with students that are not interested in the programs offered, but they have to take them to meet graduation requirements.	2
Dissatisfied with the current CTE program	8
Satisfied with the current CTE program.	2
Increase the amount classes that offer hands-on learning experiences for students.	6
Lack of funding limits the programs that can be offered.	5

Increase the amount of industry credentials that students could have by graduation.	4
Loss of time due to traveling to other schools that are not close their schools.	5

Appendix F: Case Study Spreadsheet

Core Indicator Performance	Alabama Readiness Report from all six high schools in the local school district	Themes from Stakeholder Interviews
1S1 – Attainment of Academic Skills – Reading/Language Arts Baseline 48%	Currently enrolled students with Career Tech Industry Credentials: 77 out of 1,278 met the Alabama College and Career Readiness Indicators	Creating centrally located regional CTE centers that are more accessible for all schools
1S2 – Attainment of Academic Skills – Mathematics Baseline 21%	Currently enrolled students with College Credits: 6 out of 1,278 met the Alabama College and Career Readiness Indicators	Making the current CTE programs match the students' interests and talents.
2S1 – Technical Skills Assessment 91%	Graduates from the 2014-2015 school year with Career Tech Industry Credentials: 6 out of 1,072 met the Alabama College and Career Readiness Indicators	Classes are overcrowded with students that are not interested in the programs offered, but they have to take them to meet graduation requirements
3S1 – School Completion 90%	Graduates from the 2014-2015 school year with College Credits: 6 out of 1,072 met the Alabama College and Career Readiness Indicators	Dissatisfied with the current CTE program
4S1 – Student Graduation Rate 88%		Satisfied with the current CTE program
5S1 – Placement 95%		Increase the amount classes that offer hands-on learning experiences for students
6S1 – Nontraditional Participation 19%		Lack of funding limits the programs that can be offered

6S2 – Nontraditional
Completion
15%