

Action Item

Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act Industry Certification List

Background:

The Florida Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act was created by the 2007 legislature to provide a statewide planning partnership between business and education communities to attract, expand, and retain targeted, high-value industry and to sustain a strong knowledge-based economy. One of the key aims of this bill is to improve middle and high school academic performance by providing rigorous and relevant career-themed curriculum that articulates to postsecondary level coursework and leads to industry certifications.

The implementation of this Act requires cross-agency coordination involving Workforce Florida, the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the Florida Department of Education. By law, the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) is required to identify the highest and best industry certifications—based upon the highest available national standards for specific industry certification—to ensure student skill proficiency and to address emerging labor market and industry trends. Annually, Workforce Florida (WFI) is required by law to approve and publish by March 1st a final *Comprehensive Industry Certification List*. The final 2008-09 *Comprehensive Industry Certification List* included 293 approved certifications. The Department of Education uses WFI's approved *Comprehensive Industry Certification List* to identify program-to-certification linkages and to identify certifications deemed sufficiently rigorous academically and, thus, eligible for bonus FTE funding.

Last fall during September and October, various business and industry groups, regional workforce boards, school districts and career and professional academies used a formalized process through Workforce Florida to submit certifications for consideration as additions to the *Comprehensive Industry Certification List*. At the close of the submission period October 31, 179 responses were received. These requests were compiled and forwarded to the Agency for Workforce Innovation for research.

An initial internal review process was used to determine if the proposed certification was 1) linked to occupations on Florida's Statewide Demand Occupations List or Enterprise Florida's Emerging Industries List; 2) nationally recognized; and 3) a product of a third independent party. At a meeting of representatives from Workforce Florida, the Department of Education and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, a list of 109 unduplicated certifications that met the initial requirements was compiled. This list of newly proposed certifications along with the current 2008-09 *Comprehensive Industry Certification List* was sent to all Banner Center Advisory Council members and various industry groups for further review and vetting.

After vetting by industry groups and Banner Centers, a final list was compiled by the cross-agency team. This proposed list includes 384 certifications from the preliminary list as well as the former *Comprehensive Industry Certification List*. During the review process some of the certifications on the current *Comprehensive Industry Certification List* were revised or deleted due to changes by the certifying entities, lack of rigor, lack of not having an independent third party as the certifying agency, or that fact that the occupations were dropped from the Statewide Demand Occupations List due to decrease in average growth rate and/or openings.

Florida Statue 1003.492(2) and implementing administrative rules approved for the CAPE industry certification list requires that the full WFI Board of Directors approve the updated list annually at its February meeting. Since this initiative falls under the direction of the Business Competitiveness Council, it must first be considered and approved by the Council before moving to the full board for action at the upcoming February 19th meeting.

NEEDED ACTION

- **Approval of Proposed 2009-2010 Comprehensive Industry Certification List. The approved list will be brought before the full WFI Board of Directors for action on February 19th, 2009.**
- **Authorize WFI staff, in collaboration with AWI and DOE staff, to make any necessary revisions to certifications on the approved Comprehensive Industry Certification List that may evolve from changes by the certifying entities relating to the release of newer versions, upgrades or other changes that may occur relating to eligibility issues of certification requirements.**