Targeted programs and career pathways within workforce development policies

States are introducing and enacting an increasing number of bills targeted toward workforce development and career and technical education. The increase in legislation illustrates a shift toward creating collaborations between higher education institutions and employers in the state as one strategy to enhance workforce development and postsecondary attainment success.

A new Education Policy Analysis released today by Education Commission of the States offers a review of enacted legislation from 2012-14 across the country and provides several state examples.

“To assist state leaders in their pursuit of information about policies that can better align education programs and workforce needs, we take a deeper dive into the content of specific, related policies,” said Lexi Anderson, a researcher for Education Commission of the States. “The policies outlined in the report work toward the greater goal of increasing workforce opportunities for students at multiple levels.”

Some important takeaways from this report:
- States are focusing on workforce needs in specified labor markets.
- The programs created are targeted to specific populations or career fields the states found needing a more direct link to employment.
- Targeted programs for specific occupations connect students with employers in the state.

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- Take a look at policies in CT, IN, MN, NM, OR and TN that address workforce development. bit.ly/1y1RK6M
- See how states are working toward the greater goal of increasing workforce opportunities for students. bit.ly/1y1RK6M

Related ECS resources that you’ll find useful:
- This Education Commission of the States’ 50-state analysis looks at economic and workforce development polices across the country.
- An overview of governor’s 2015 State of the State addresses makes note of workforce development and career and technical education.
- Research makes it clear that career and technical education dual enrollment courses improve outcomes for traditionally underserved students.

For questions, contact ECS Director of Communications Amy Skinner at askinner@ecs.org or (303) 299. 3609.

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