Advisory Committee Handbook for Career and Technical Education Local Administrators

From Competence to Excellence

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Career and Technical Education
Commonwealth of Virginia

January 2007

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Preface

The Advisory Committee Handbook for Career and Technical Education Local Administrators has been updated to assist you in your role as a local administrator of career and technical education and to inform advisory committee members of their responsibilities.

The Virginia Advisory Committee for Career and Technical Education believes that effective interaction of professional educators and citizens of the community strengthens educational programs across the state. Public education increases its contribution to the community when a mix of citizens and professionals participate in planning and evaluation of instructional programs.

We thank you for your time and expertise and hope this publication will be helpful to you.

Caroline Martin, Chair 2003–3005
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Virginia Advisory Committee for
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Acknowledgments

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History

In the early twentieth century, vocational educators began to fear that the growth of vocational programs was threatened by local school officials with academic backgrounds. The U.S. Congress responded to this concern by passing the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. The act encouraged the use of citizen advisory groups to assist in planning and evaluating vocational programs and to establish a communication link between schools and communities.

By the late 1940s, state supervisory personnel and vocational teacher educators began to endorse the concept of using local advisory committees. Because the establishment of the committee was the responsibility of the individual teacher, some communities had advisory committees and some did not. For the next 40 years, vocational education teachers at the secondary, postsecondary, and adult level used local advisory groups with varying degrees of effectiveness.

The emergence of vocational-technical education centers and community colleges in the mid-1960s made the use of general vocational advisory committees a common practice. Since then, involvement of local advisory groups has become a tradition in Virginia.

Federal legislation encouraged citizen involvement in the planning stages of vocational education in the 1960s and 1970s. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 established the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education, and the 1968 amendments included the first legal mandate calling for the formation of state advisory councils. The Education Amendments of 1976 emphasized greater involvement than in the past of national and state councils and called specifically for advisory councils at the local level.

On July 1, 2002, the new *Regulations Governing Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Virginia* went into effect. Part II, Section 3 (8VAC20-120-50) of the regulations requires that each local education agency or region "shall establish a general career and technical education advisory council to provide recommendations to the local education agency (or board) on current job needs and relevancy of career and technical education programs and to assist in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the local plan and application." It further states the following:

- ✦ The council shall be composed of members of the public, including students, teachers, parents, and representatives from business, industry, and labor, with appropriate representation of both sexes and racial and ethnic minorities found in the school, community, or region served by the council; and

- ✦ That the council shall meet at regular intervals during the year to assist in planning, implementing, and assessing career and technical education programs.

Purpose

The purpose of a local advisory committee is to help schools and school divisions improve the quality of instruction in their career and technical education programs that prepare students with workplace skills. An advisory committee is essential to local CTE administrators as they establish and operate an up-to-date CTE program. Seeking the advice of community business and industry leaders who have firsthand information concerning current business trends, technological demands, and realistic job requirements creates effective communication lines between education and the world of work. This communication system enables CTE students to receive instruction based on input from people who have practical, everyday occupational knowledge of the skills needed in the workplace.

CTE programs based on current, real occupational skills facilitate the transition of students from school to work. For this reason, the advisory committee should focus consistently on innovative, quality instruction using best practices. Additionally, the advisory committee can assist in making the best use of resources by being responsive to social, economic, and cultural changes.

Committee involvement and presence in local activities will encourage high performance by students, faculty, and staff in an atmosphere of mutual respect and enthusiasm. Strong advisory committees help promote a positive image of the school division to the general public as well as among the division's staff and students.

Types of Advisory Committees

General advisory committees form a link between a school division and the community *(see diagram on page 9)*. Made up of recognized experts in their respective fields, the committee identifies for the school district current and future business, industry, and community needs. For the community, the committee identifies CTE scope, direction, and current and future program needs.

In many cases, representatives of occupational advisory committees serve on the general advisory committee to provide continuity between programs and schools.
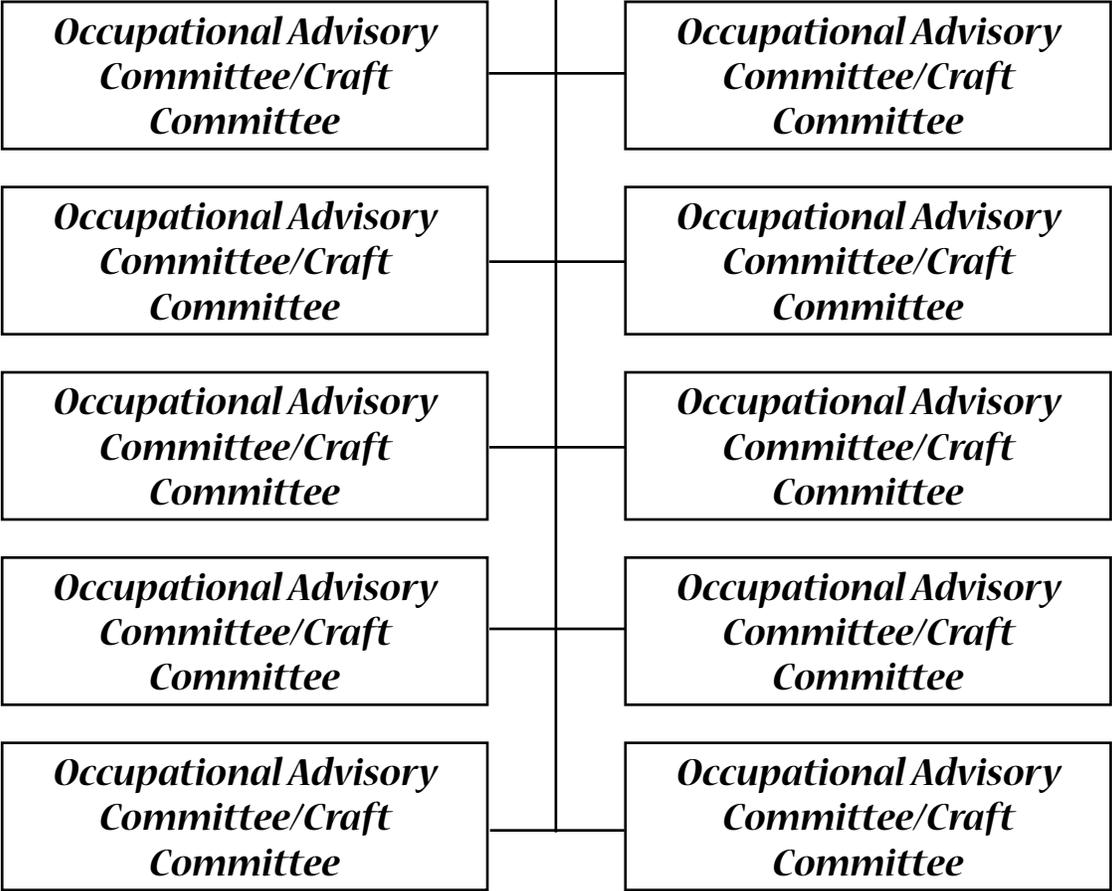
Occupational advisory committees (sometimes called craft committees) form a link between one school or multiple schools within a school division and experts in a particular career field, such as masonry or graphic imaging technology. Occupational advisory committees help teachers ensure that instruction is current and that the program has sufficient resources.

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│     State Advisory Committee for         │
│     Career and Technical Education       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     ┊
                     ┊
School Division Level┊
                     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Local General Advisory Committee       │
│   for Career and Technical Education     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                     │
Program/Course/School Level
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Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee	Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee
Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee	Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee
Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee	Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee
Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee	Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee
Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee	Occupational Advisory Committee/Craft Committee

Roles of a General Advisory Committee

Local general advisory committees serve three main roles: to **advise**, **assist**, and **provide support and advocacy** to career and technical education.

✦ The advisory committee advises educators on the many facets of CTE programs. It assesses specific areas of CTE and formulates suggestions and recommendations designed to create or improve the instructional programs.

   The committee establishes a two-way system of communication, informing the school of the needs of business and industry and informing business and industry of the services the school can provide.

   Examples of recommendations include suggestions for new, innovative CTE programs that meet current needs of local business and industry, modification of curriculum content, purchase of new instructional materials or high-tech equipment, and adoption of a new safety policy.

✦ In its assisting role, the committee members contribute to carrying out specific activities. Examples include judging competitive skill events, establishing a scholarship program for teachers and/or students, and obtaining media coverage for special events. An advisory committee also helps in whatever ways possible to make CTE programs operate efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of both business/industry and students.

✦ In its support/advocacy role, the committee promotes CTE programs throughout the community. Advocacy efforts include influencing local and state legislators on behalf of CTE, showing support for CTE programs at local school board meetings, and raising awareness of CTE programs and students in these programs among community businesses and industries.

Research shows that successful CTE programs have a strong general advisory committee that actively advises the local school division. The advisory committee has no administrative authority and is not created to usurp the authority of local boards of education and administrative staff; it serves strictly in an advisory capacity.

Functions of Advisory Committees

The functions of a **general advisory committee** include, but are not limited to, the following systemwide activities:

✦ Advise on current and projected workforce needs that are most relevant to the local economy.

✦ Review and sign off on the local school division's annual CTE plan.

✦ Suggest course content and program development.

✦ Build support from the business community for the school system and CTE specific programs.

✦ Make recommendations on equipment, instructional materials, and specifications for training areas.

- ✦ Promote public relations and publicity for CTE programs.

- ✦ Assist in placement of students in cooperative education programs and in employment.

- ✦ Make suggestions on work-based projects to enhance occupational objectives.

- ✦ Review CTE program budget items, such as instructional materials and equipment.

- ✦ Support student organization activities at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

- ✦ Serve as liaison with businesses that can provide craft committee volunteers when applicable.

- ✦ Provide support for the school with the school board, state legislature, and other policy-making bodies.

- ✦ Facilitate equipment donations or loans.

- ✦ Identify businesspeople who can serve as mentors or role models for students.

- ✦ Help locate qualified instructors.

- ✦ Help update training for instructors by employing them part-time or simply keeping communication lines open between the occupational areas and the instructors.

The functions of an **occupational or craft committee** include, but are not limited to, the following program-specific activities:

- ✦ Help keep the curriculum updated.

- ✦ Help keep equipment updated.

- ✦ Help place students, sometimes employing them in part-time or full-time positions.

- ✦ Help obtain supplies.

- ✦ Help keep the instructor updated, such as through job shadowing or part-time employment.

- ✦ Provide support for the program in the community .

Specific Activities of Advisory Committees

Once the committee has identified its functions, its discussions should become more specific in terms of exactly what the committee wants to accomplish. As the committee plans its program of work, it may want to consider the following activities:

Public Relation Activities

- ✦ Promote community awareness of CTE programs through media coverage and marketing efforts.

- ✦ Make formal presentations on CTE programs and activities to civic and service groups.

- ✦ Establish scholarships and financial aid programs for deserving students.

- Establish scholarships for deserving teachers who wish to further their education and training.

- Establish awards programs to recognize outstanding students, teachers, administrators, and community leaders.

- Make presentations to curriculum committees and school boards.

Curriculum Activities

- Review curriculum to ensure basic skills content.

- Review curriculum materials for up-to-date content.

- Provide classroom speakers from business and industry.

- Recommend and/or provide tours and field trip experiences.

- Assist instructors in obtaining instructional supplies and equipment.

- Assist in securing adequate funding of CTE programs.

- Recommend realistic safety policies.

- Recommend instructional materials, equipment, and facilities for serving specialized training needs.

Community Resource Activities

- Identify community resource people.

- Recommend tours and field trip experiences.

- Recommend speakers.

Recruitment Activities

- Assist in reviewing teacher selection criteria.

- Assist in recruiting new staff.

- Assist in recruiting students for adult CTE programs.

Student Organization Activities

- Judge competitive skill events.

- Sponsor student organization activities.

- Sponsor or collect contributions of equipment and supplies for skill events.

- Arrange for display space to promote student organizations and special events.

Job Placement Activities

- Organize employer/student conferences.

- Notify teachers of job openings for students.

- ✦ Provide students with cooperative training sites.

- ✦ Promote development of additional cooperative training sites with other employers.

- ✦ Assist students in developing interviewing skills.

- ✦ Recommend employability skills curriculum content.

Staff Development Activities

- ✦ Provide in-service activities on current methods and processes for instructors.

- ✦ Provide skilled technicians to supplement teachers' experience.

- ✦ Support participation of instructors in technical workshops or factory schools.

Program Review and Evaluation Activities

- ✦ Review program goals and objectives.

- ✦ Participate on program-evaluation teams.

- ✦ Compare program accomplishments with program objectives.

- ✦ Compare student performance standards to business/industry standards.

- ✦ Review adequacy of a facility as a training site.

- ✦ Evaluate quality and quantity of graduates and job placement.

- ✦ Make recommendations for program improvement.

- ✦ Give periodic reports to administration and/or school boards.

Legislative Activities

- ✦ Provide tours for legislators through CTE classrooms and facilities.

- ✦ Communicate with legislators about CTE needs.

- ✦ Gather information on new legislation.

- ✦ Promote legislative support for CTE.

This list of activities is not all-inclusive and should be viewed as possible activities for consideration. Again, the functions and activities should match the needs of the program and community.

Composition of Advisory Committees

A general advisory committee should be composed of seven or more people who by position, background experience, or training can contribute to the improvement of CTE programs. The majority of members should include

- supervisory and non-supervisory workers currently employed in a business/industry directly related to programs offered at the division level

- representatives of labor unions, trade associations, or professional organizations

- a representative of special populations

- a representative of postsecondary programs

- a representative of career and technical education teachers.

Additional members may include

- former students with at least three years of on-the-job experience related to the specific program

- parents of current or former students enrolled in CTE programs

- a current president of a student organization.

An occupational or craft committee should be composed of business, industry, and/or labor representatives who have occupational background in, working knowledge of, or involvement with a specific CTE program within a school.

To provide effective communication between those involved in the CTE programs and members of the community, local advisory committee membership must represent a cross-section of the community, including representatives of

- all geographical sections of the school division or region being served

- all types and sizes of business and industry in the area

- both labor and management

- economic development organizations or the local chamber of commerce

- regional employment and training agencies

- various age groups

- various educational levels

- both sexes, handicapped individuals, and racial and ethnic minorities.

This representation will ensure the school division is serving all points of view within the community.

For both the general advisory committee and the occupational or craft committee, a CTE administrator should serve as an ex officio member of the committee. This person cannot serve as chair or serve in any other appointed position on the advisory committee.

Criteria for Committee Members

- ✦ **Experience**: Committee members should have firsthand business and industry experiences in one or more of the school division's CTE programs of study. They should be recognized as leaders in their profession.

- ✦ **Adequate Time**: An advisory committee should meet as frequently as necessary (minimum of two to three times a year). Potential members must commit to the time needed to provide strong support for local CTE programs.

Selection of Committee Members

- ✦ The instructor(s) in each program area, current committee members, and local administrators should make recommendations for membership to the advisory committee.

- ✦ The advisory committee chair should submit nominees to the local school board annually.

- ✦ The local school board should annually appoint members.

Length of Membership

- ✦ The term of committee members should be three years with staggered termination dates to allow for continuity. Provisions to ensure that there will always be experienced members serving on the committee are critical.

- ✦ Members may be recommended for reappointment after completing their membership term.

Responsibilities of Advisory Committee Members

Each advisory committee member is expected to

- ✦ attend meetings regularly, participate in the committee discussions, and serve on subcommittees when asked

- ✦ review and advise the local school division on current labor market needs, employment projections, and program offerings

- ✦ keep the CTE administrator and instructor(s) informed of new industry developments

- ✦ assist with student leadership activities in cooperation with student organizations

- ✦ advise on the relevance of CTE program offerings as related to current workforce needs

- ✦ advise on the development, operation, and evaluation of the CTE program

- ✦ assist the school division in planning activities to promote CTE programs

- ✦ assist with developing the local CTE plan, presenting the plan to the local school board, and signing off on the approved plan for submission to the Virginia Department of Education.

Accountability of the General Advisory Committee

The general advisory committee should submit a written report annually to the local school board. This report should include specific recommendations, action taken and to be taken, and business/industry and labor trends that may have an effect on curriculum development and the delivery of CTE programs and services.

Recognition of Outstanding Advisory Committee Members

Recognition is especially important to local advisory committees because members are not paid for their efforts. Rewards should not be given indiscriminately but should be based on actual contributions to the committee's activity. The best types of rewards or recognition are those that can increase productivity, improve committee interaction, and increase member satisfaction. A prestigious recognition program can encourage committee attendance and involvement and attract the interest of other qualified people who may someday serve the organization.

CTE leaders may wish to recognize committee members in any number of ways, including the following:

- ✦ Issue press releases announcing appointments to the committee.

- ✦ Report at meetings on the results of adopting committee recommendations and the ways in which committee members have been of service.

- ✦ Invite members to visit programs to see the actual results of their recommendations.

- ✦ Invite members to attend special CTE events.

- ✦ Introduce advisory committee members at CTE meetings or events.

- ✦ Send personal letters to committee members about the results of their advice and recommendations.

- ✦ Send each member a letter of thanks and appreciation, signed by the appropriate school officials, at the end of the school year.

- ✦ Send a letter of appreciation to the advisory committee member's supervisor and/or company, affirming the good job being done by the member and thanking the company for its support.

- ✦ Hold a banquet in honor of the committee, and present a certificate of service to each member.

- ✦ Have the chief administrator of the school or institution attend a committee meeting in order to express his/her appreciation for the members' work.

- ✦ Place members' names on a display board or plaque at the school or institution. Be sure that announcements and reports made by administrators about the program include references to the committee members.

- ✦ Involve all members in developing the program of work for the year.

- ✦ Send a personal note in recognition of special events, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and job promotions. Include your thanks for the member's work on the committee.

Advisory Committee Officers

An advisory committee should elect officers as established in its bylaws or standing rules. Committee bylaws or standing rules should also define terms of office and the duties of each officer.

Chair: The chair is a representative from business and industry elected by majority vote of the committee members. The chair should be sensitive to the views of the members, be able to listen critically, be reasonable, exercise good judgment and fairness, and be able to work closely with the instructor(s). The committee should elect a chair at its first meeting to serve during the current school year. The responsibilities of the chair include planning and setting the meeting agenda and presiding over all meetings.

Vice-Chair: The vice-chair, also a business and industry representative elected by majority vote of the committee members, works closely with the chair on all tasks and presides in the absence of the chair. The vice-chair serves as chair-elect for one term prior to his/her automatic nomination for chair for the next term.

Secretary: The secretary is responsible for taking the minutes of each formal meeting and submitting them to committee members and the instructor(s). This person, selected by the committee members, may be a committee member, an ex officio member of the committee, or a school division staff person.

Bylaws and Meetings

Committee members are experienced business, industry, and labor representatives who are serving voluntarily, and they must feel their time is spent wisely. Bylaws *(see Appendix B)* are one way to ensure that each meeting is conducted in an effective and orderly manner. The bylaws will define how the committee organizes itself, selects its officers, establishes subcommittees, selects place and time for meetings, formulates programs, and prepares meeting agendas. Regularly scheduled meetings are important.

All advisory committees will meet a minimum of twice a year in formal, minute-recorded sessions. One meeting should be prior to November 1, and the second meeting should be in March to allow for local plan approval and presentation to the school board. Other meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the instructor(s) and chair of the committee.

Appendix A

Sample Letter of Agreement

Dear _____:

The _____City/County School Board is pleased to inform you of your appointment to _____'s Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee. Thank you for your willingness to serve on this committee.

The ultimate objective of this committee is to serve in an advisory role to ensure the most up-to-date CTE programs possible in our school division. Your active participation and interest in the committee's work will be helpful in the accomplishment of this objective.

Shortly, _____ will notify you about the time, date, and place for the next advisory committee meeting. At this meeting, the committee will clarify the roles and functions of the committee and its members. You will have the opportunity to meet other members of the committee, school board officials, and the school administrative staff. We will send you a meeting agenda upon our receipt of your acceptance form.

Again, thank you for your interest in our CTE program offerings. Please contact _____ at ____ _____ (phone number) or _____ (email address) if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you and your fellow advisory committee members.

Sincerely,

(signed by the chair of the
school board or an administrator)

(Acceptance form to be returned)

Appendix B

Advisory Committee Bylaws
(Suggested outline)

I.   Name

II.   Area Served

III.   Membership

      A.   Number of Members
      B.   Term of Membership
      C.   Appointment of Members
      D.   Ex-Officio Members

IV.   Purpose and Responsibilities

      A.   Purpose of Committee
      B.   Responsibilities

V.   Organization

      A.   Officers
      B.   Term of Officers
      C.   Minutes

VI.   Policies and Procedures

VII.   Meetings

      A.   Regular Meetings
      B.   Special Meetings
      C.   Quorum
      D.   Agenda

VIII.   Subcommittees

Appendix C

Advisory Committee Chair's Guide for Conducting an Advisory Committee Meeting

Agenda

(Date)

1.	Call to Order	Welcome and opening remarks by school personnel
2.	Secretary's Minutes	Minutes of last meeting; approved/corrected by vote
3.	Introductions	Introduction and biographical information about committee members and/or guests
		Introduction and biographical information about instructor(s)
4.	Old Business	Brief summary of old business items
5.	Special Reports	Recognition of individual(s) presenting report(s)
6.	New Business	Review, discussion, and vote on each item
7.	Plans for Next Meeting	Discussion on date and time for future meetings, subcommittees, etc.
8.	Other Items	Announcements, etc.
9.	Adjournment	

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References

Portions of this booklet are based on information adapted from the following sources:

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✦ The National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State University.

✦ *Advisory Committee Handbook for Administrators of Career and Technical Education,* Commonwealth of Virginia, 2002.

✦ *Advisory Committee Handbook for Career and Technical Education,* Alexandria City Public Schools, Alexandria, Virginia, 2003.

✦ *Local Advisory Councils for Vocational/Technical Education, Organization and Structure: Leadership Guide,* Montana Office of Public Instruction, Career, Technical, and Adult Education Division.

Web Resources on CTE Local Advisory Committees

Research

Effective Advisory Committees
In Brief: Fast Facts for Policy and Practice No. 17
Sandra Kerka, National Centers for Career and Technical Education, 2002.
http://www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/in-brief/in-brief17/index.asp

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http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/resources/acguide.pdf

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http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/cate/advisory_committee/handbook.pdf

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A Guide to the Operation of Career & Technical Education Advisory Committees
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Advisory Committee Information [Handbook]
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