

**Testimony of Janet Goble**

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**House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Providing More Students a Pathway to Success by Strengthening Career and Technical Education**

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Good morning, Chairman Rokita, Ranking Member Polis, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. My name is Janet Goble and I am the Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Canyons School District in Sandy, Utah, a comprehensive school district serving approximately 35,000 students. Additionally, I currently serve as the Administration Division Vice President of the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), a national organization committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers.

I am humbled and honored to be here with you today and want to thank you for your invitation to talk about some of the wonderful opportunities available to students through CTE.

I am deeply passionate about my profession. My mother taught business education and instilled in me the importance of gaining marketable skills. As the product of CTE, the skills I gained through my education allowed me to realize my career goals, and have helped me to have a positive impact on the lives of my students.

While there are many facets to successful CTE programs, this morning I would like to highlight programs of study, business partnerships and work-based learning opportunities – all of which are extremely beneficial for students and are key tenets of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

**Programs of Study for Students**

In Canyons School District, students have the opportunity to participate in 35 different programs of study—some of which require attendance at our technical center. These pathways start in either 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade and are followed by a succession of related courses that lead into postsecondary education and careers. As a culminating activity, students in comprehensive high schools are able to earn industry certifications as juniors or seniors, including IC3 Internet and Computer Core Certification, ASE Auto Electrical/Electronics and ASE

Engine Performance. With these credentials, students are prepared to be successful in their chosen field.

For students who choose more concentrated pathways, Canyons Technical Education Center (CTEC) offers capstone programs. Not only are students engaging in rigorous coursework, they are also earning industry certifications, including MTA Security Fundamentals or Adobe (Illustrator, Photoshop, Flash and Premiere) or ASE Diesel Engines. Additionally, many students leave high school with Utah licenses in Cosmetology, Certified Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant and Emergency Medical Technician. These students are already pursuing their chosen career pathway and are ready to hit the ground running in the workplace.

Last year, students in Canyons School District earned an impressive 1,739 industry credentials. I believe these credentials provide proof to potential employers that students have the skills necessary to be sought after in their field and ready to perform on day one. Additionally, students are able to be gainfully employed in high-paying jobs while pursuing postsecondary education.

Indeed, many of our CTE students also plan to pursue higher education. This year, we are offering 44 CTE dual enrollment courses with our postsecondary partners at Salt Lake Community College, Utah State University-Eastern and Utah Valley University. There are an additional 18 general education concurrent courses as well. These classes give students an advantage because they are earning college credit while enrolled in high school. Students in these courses have the opportunity to experience the rigor of college-level coursework while saving time and money toward earning a college degree.

Through the reauthorization of the Perkins Act, Congress should focus federal resources on building seamless pathways for students—beginning with career awareness and exploration activities early on, and connecting secondary and postsecondary education through CTE programs of study.

### **Business Partnerships for Seamless School to Work Transitions**

Business partnerships are a key component of our program of study efforts and support real-world learning experiences for our students. Through their interactions with industry professionals, students realize their coursework is relevant and, in fact, does translate into meaningful career skills and job opportunities.

As one notable example of a successful partnership, we have worked with the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), industry partners and Salt Lake Community College to develop the Utah Diesel Technician Pathway. In direct response to providing a workforce for the diesel industry, we now have a partnership with major diesel companies: Cummins International, Komatsu Equipment Company, Kenworth Sales, Kilgore Contracting, Utah Transit Authority and C.R. England. This pathway starts with dual enrollment courses in high school, transitions to college courses, and then allows students to enter the workforce with industry-

grade skills. The industry partners have donated many hours of their time to job shadow experiences for our students, participating in numerous career fairs and enlightening counselors about this viable career pathway. Additionally, they donated 12 diesel engines and stands valued at approximately \$180,000 to our district so students can be trained on the same equipment used in industry.

In Utah, medical device manufacturing is another a large industry sector in need of a skilled workforce. In partnership with GOED and Salt Lake Community College, as well as industry partners like Edwards Lifesciences, BD Medical, Merit Medical, Nelson Laboratories and Sorenson Genomics among others, we will begin offering the new Medical Innovations Pathway (MIP) to students starting this fall. Students will take high school courses—whose standards and objectives have been developed in consultation with industry—to gain necessary skills for entry-level employment upon high school graduation. Our district will offer pathways in medical devise manufacturing, while others will focus on biotechnology. For students unable to participate at the secondary level, Salt Lake Community College also provides a MIP pathway for adult learners.

As a result of these successful partnerships, Governor Gary Herbert recently announced in his State of the State address the new “Talent Ready Utah” initiative. By continuing to have industry working directly with education to offer work-based learning opportunities for students, his goal is to fill 40,000 high-skill, high-wage jobs over the next four years. We are poised to participate in a new statewide building construction initiative and look forward to a similar partnership in the information technology area.

Last October, in an effort to connect more students with industry, we were an integral part of our region’s “Pathways to Professions” expo event. Students and teachers were able to interface directly with businesses from the career cluster pathways. In its maiden year, over 8,500 students attended. There were even a few students who were hired on the spot! We are excited to be involved again this fall and look forward to an even bigger event.

A reauthorized Perkins Act should provide for substantive and ongoing consultation with employers and other local stakeholders, and offer the business community an important role in the development and implementation of CTE programs, including identifying relevant standards, valued credentials and industry-standard equipment.

### **Connecting students to industry through Work-Based Learning experiences**

The opportunity for career exploration is important for students. In our district, career exploration activities start with elementary school career days. Additional experiences occur in our College and Career Awareness course in middle school. This required core class exposes students to occupations within the career clusters. Then in high school, examples of work-based learning activities include field trips, guest speakers, lunch-and-learn activities and internships.

High school students also participate in schoolwide career fairs. For this huge undertaking, work-based learning facilitators recruit professionals in their community to represent dozens of possible career fields. Having the support of over 70 business partners is overwhelming and speaks to the support of industry wanting students to learn about opportunities they may not even know exist.

We also host an annual job shadow event wherein work-based learning facilitators match student interests with local businesses. A wide range of careers are represented, including engineers, physicians, diesel technicians, pilots, legislators and graphic designers among others. The sky is the limit! This year, 89 students and 41 companies took part in the event. Spending the morning at the business gives students a first-hand look at possible future careers. Some students realize the career they shadow is not a good fit—which is a valuable experience and allows time to re-evaluate their career aspiration. And for those students who have found their passion, this experience serves to cement their career decision and also gives them an opportunity to network with industry professionals. Our business partners make a point of talking with the students about how to enter the profession and its educational requirements. The capstone of the experience is a networking lunch and motivational speaker sponsored by the business partners.

Other annual work-based learning events specifically target Perkins indicators. One good example is our annual “You Go Girls” conference aimed at introducing middle-school-aged girls to non-traditional occupations. It’s very empowering for these young girls to hear from female engineers, computer scientists and business owners (to name a few) and realize that they, too, can be successful at these non-traditional occupations. Available to all of our eight middle schools, an average of 300 girls participate in the experience. Since initiating this event, the percentage of students enrolled in high school non-traditional programs has risen from 26% to 53%.

In our district, work-based learning personnel and activities are funded with our Perkins allocation. Without this flexible funding, we would be unable to offer many of these valuable learning experiences for students.

## **Conclusion**

When students are more engaged in their learning—and certainly work-based learning and career pathways elevate that engagement—they are more likely to stay in school. Perkins data on high school graduation rates show that CTE concentrators, those who earn at least 1.5 credits in the same pathway, have higher high school graduation rates. In our district, 94% of CTE concentrators graduated from high school; while the overall district graduation rate is 85%.

In my capacity as the ACTE Administration Vice President, I have the opportunity to interact with administrators from across the nation. The work-based learning and pathways programs I’ve described are not unique to Utah. Excellent CTE programs—programs that engage students—can be found in every state and congressional district across the country.

With the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Congress has the opportunity to ensure that high-quality CTE programs, including work-based learning experiences, are available to all students.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony today. I look forward to answering your questions.