

Spotlight Strategy: Be intentional and systemic about change
Berks Career and Technology Center

Starting in 1999, Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) began using a data-driven continuous improvement model to systematically address and implement change on an ongoing basis. This model was adopted by the career and technology center (CTC) as part of a statewide initiative to increase accountability and CTC success.

The continuous improvement model used by BCTC is a multi-step process designed to help faculty and administrators implement and monitor students' academic skills. It provides continuous monitoring of student performance, addresses the achievement gap among all sub groups and supports data-driven decision making.

In 2003, after the model was set in place, BCTC achieved ISO 9001 registration, a rigorous certification process. This achievement was made possible through a state-led pilot project, and allowed the CTC to start using consistent and reliable data to direct analyses and decisions.

Roughly every three years, BCTC administrators evaluate the long-term strategic plan which is used to set the direction for the CTC. Through surveys, data analysis, committees and advisory meetings, this evaluation involves direct input from key stakeholders including faculty, students, parents and business.

Related to the long-term Strategic Plan is an annual blueprint. This blueprint sets clear, measurable primary and secondary goals for the year. These goals are very similar to those in the Perkins plan and the PA state plan. They are grouped into two categories – short term and long term. In order to achieve success, short term goals and related indicators are monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure BCTC is on track. For example, the CTC evaluates and addresses failure rates and retention regularly. Monthly administrative cabinet meetings also review data when available.

To create the blueprint, an intense three-day administrative retreat is held annually. Administrators from BCTC use ISO data to analyze all initiatives and to draft the blueprint for next year's initiatives. Following the administrative review, the blueprint goes before different stakeholder groups (i.e., superintendents, joint committees, advisory boards) to receive input. After any necessary changes are made, the annual blueprint goes before the school board for approval. Once the blueprint is complete, it is presented to faculty at the annual in-service meeting.

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Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC) operates two campuses in Leesport and Oley, Pennsylvania. As a part time career and technology center, it enrolls approximately 1,850 students in grades 10 through 12 and provides 35 career and technical education programs. BCTC serves 16 school districts.