

# Technology Centers That Work

## *An Enhanced Design to Get All Students to Standards*

SREB

Founded in 2007, the *Technology Centers That Work (TCTW)* school improvement model is designed to assist shared-time technology centers in preparing graduates for postsecondary studies and employment in high-demand, high-wage, high-skill fields. Whether the schools are technical high schools, technology centers, career centers or career/technology centers, they all have a common purpose: to provide high-quality career/technical (CT) studies to high school students. Students may attend these centers for only a portion of the school day, week or year while completing the balance of their studies at the home high school, or they may attend full time, receiving both academic and technical instruction at the center.

*TCTW* was modified from SREB's *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* design to address shared-time centers' specific challenges. Like *HSTW*, *TCTW* is an effort-based model founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous CT and academic studies if schools create an environment that motivates them to make the effort to succeed. Technology center leaders and teachers can take these actions to motivate students to achieve at high levels:

- Expand students' opportunities to pursue a career-focused program of study that joins a "ready" academic core and a CT concentration taught in ways that enable students to see the usefulness of what they have been asked to learn.
- Create supportive relationships between students and adults and between home high school and technology center staff. These relationships provide students with the support needed to meet challenging course standards and complete a career-focused program of study, enabling more students to transition successfully from the high school to postsecondary studies, advanced training or work.
- Work with parents and home high schools to help students set educational and career goals and complete the right combination of academic and CT courses that prepare them for postsecondary studies, further training or employment.
- Support teachers with common planning time and professional development to improve what and how students are taught.

The *TCTW* initiative builds the capacity of technology center staff to teach essential college- and career-readiness academic standards in the context of CT courses through authentic projects, problems and activities. This emphasis highlights the shift from old views of CT education as a way to teach occupational skills to low-achieving students to new beliefs that CT education, embedded with academic skills and intellectually demanding assignments and joined with a coherent sequence of academic courses, can help more students complete high school and graduate prepared for a wide variety of postsecondary options.

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With rising workplace requirements, completing a rigorous, relevant high school education is more important now than ever before if students are to have successful careers. Yet too many students do not graduate from high school, and many who do graduate lack preparation for further study and work in high-demand, high-wage fields.

To assist technology centers in preparing more students for graduation and success in postsecondary studies and careers, the *TCTW* school improvement design provides a framework of Goals, Key Practices and Key Conditions for accelerating learning and setting higher standards. It recommends research-based practices for technology centers to use in improving academic and CT instruction and student achievement. Research has shown that sustained school improvement occurs when state, district, school and teacher leaders work together to take ownership of school improvement and adopt the *TCTW* design for the specific needs of technology centers.

<b>CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES</b>	
<b>Old Approach</b>	<b>New Approach</b>
Instruction focuses on procedural skills.	In addition to learning procedural skills, students are given open-ended problems requiring the use of technical, academic, cognitive and personal skills.
Students follow a set of steps to complete assignments.	Students are given open-ended assignments that require them to do research and prepare their own steps for completing them.
Instruction takes place in the classroom or laboratory.	Classrooms, laboratories, business and industry, the home and the community are all locations for instruction.
Content is determined by what the instructor likes to teach or what the students want to learn.	All students must learn a core set of major competencies (knowledge and skills).
Students are given oral instructions and shown what to do.	Students are expected to do research and prepare a work plan for completing assignments.
Standards vary according to each student's perceived ability.	All students are expected to meet the same high standards.
Assignments do not require students to use academic skills.	The teacher uses activities and problems that require students to integrate and use academic and technical skills and knowledge.
The teacher measures student learning through informal observations and written tests.	Assessment is continuous and uses a wide variety of techniques, including written exams that assess both academic and technical knowledge in the context of the technical field.
All assessment is done by the teacher.	Students evaluate their own work based on the definition of quality learning that they have developed with their teacher before submitting work for the teacher's review.
Assessments are conducted primarily for assigning grades.	The purpose of assessments is to help students and instructors improve, as well as to determine grades based on standards.
Students get one chance to learn the content before they are graded.	Students are given multiple opportunities to learn the content. They may be expected to use their own time to meet quality standards.
Students are not expected to work outside of class.	Students are expected to work on assigned projects outside of class.

# TCTW Framework for School Improvement

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## TCTW Goals for Continuous Improvement

The mission of *TCTW* is to create a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement in technology centers. To achieve this mission, *TCTW* sites strive to meet these primary goals for improvement:

- Increase the percentage of CT students who meet college- and career-readiness goals on the *HSTW* Assessment to 85 percent.
- Increase the percentage of high school students who enter the technology center and graduate on time to 95 percent.
- Increase the percentages of technology center graduates who:
  - earn postsecondary credit while in high school.
  - meet college-readiness standards to succeed in credit-bearing postsecondary courses without needing remediation.
  - meet readiness standards to enter an advanced training program leading to a certificate, an employer certification or an apprenticeship program.
  - acquire an industry certification through a state-approved certification examination in a high-skill, high-demand career field.
- Work with middle grades schools to guide students in creating programs of study that will prepare them for success in high school, the technology center, postsecondary studies and careers.
- Advance state and local policies and leadership initiatives that sustain a continuous school improvement effort at technology centers.

## TCTW Key Practices for Improved Student Achievement

- **High expectations** — Motivate more students to meet high expectations by integrating high expectations into CT and academic classroom practices and giving students frequent feedback.
- **Program of study** — Require each student to complete a career-focused program of study, including both a concentration of at least four CT courses and a “ready” academic core, leading to better preparation for postsecondary studies and advanced training.
- **Academic studies** — Teach more students the essential concepts of the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging them to apply academic content and skills to real-world problems and projects within their CT studies.
  - Align CT and academic courses to essential state and national standards that prepare students for postsecondary studies and careers.
  - Align student assignments, student work and classroom assessments to college- and career-readiness standards as measured by the *HSTW* Assessment, state assessments, college placement exams and employer certification exams.
- **Career/technical studies** — Provide students with access to intellectually demanding CT studies that emphasize higher-level mathematics, science, literacy and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and in further education in high-demand fields.
  - Create new courses that blend academics and technical content, using applied teaching methods and new measures of academic and technical proficiency.
  - Develop standards, conditions and agreements for awarding postsecondary credit in high-demand CT fields to high school students.

## 21st-Century Skills

- Require students to complete senior projects aligned with academic and technical standards.
- Provide students with opportunities to earn a recognized employer certification.
- Include 21st-century skills in each student's learning experiences.
- **Teachers working together** — Provide teachers with time and support to work together in planning integrated lessons and projects to help students succeed in challenging CT and academic studies. Embed reading, writing and speaking as strategies for learning into all parts of the curriculum and embed mathematics and science into CT courses through authentic problems, projects and other learning activities. Technology center leaders need to support CT and academic teachers to engage students in reading books and articles, writing, making presentations, and using high-level reasoning and thinking skills.
- **Work-based learning** — Enable students and their parents to choose a program of study that integrates challenging academic and CT studies and work-based learning and is planned by educators, employers and students. Strive to make work-based learning a part of each student's learning through internships, job shadowing and formal work-study programs.
- **Students actively engaged** — Engage students in CT and academic classrooms in rigorous and challenging assignments using research-based strategies and technology.
- **Guidance** — Work with the home high school staff to create a system of guidance and advisement that involves students and their parents in planning a career-focused program of academic and CT studies. Provide each student with the same mentor throughout high school — at the home high school and at the technology center — to assist with setting goals, selecting courses, reviewing the student's progress and suggesting appropriate interventions as necessary.
  - Hold an annual meeting with students, their parents and their mentors to review progress and develop plans for the next year.
  - Develop efforts to educate middle grades and high school parents, school leaders and students about the achievement level needed for success in challenging high school and CT studies, postsecondary studies and careers.
- **Extra help/transitions** — Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content.
  - Support all CT students to become independent learners by giving them opportunities to practice the habits of successful learners (e.g., study skills, time management, cooperative learning).
  - Give students opportunities to meet course standards and graduate on time with their peers.
  - Support teachers in forming nurturing relationships with CT students aimed at improving students' work and achievement.

A 2006 Conference Board survey of more than 400 U.S. employers identified the essential skills recent graduates from high school, technical schools, and two- and four-year colleges need for success in the 21st-century work force:

- Professionalism and work ethic
- Oral communication
- Written communication
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Critical thinking and problem solving

*HSTW* Assessment data have shown that students whose classroom experiences emphasize these skills have higher student achievement than students who do not have such experiences. To prepare students for success in careers, training and further studies, CT course assignments and classroom learning experiences must provide students with opportunities to master these skills.

Source: *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce.* The Conference Board, 2006.

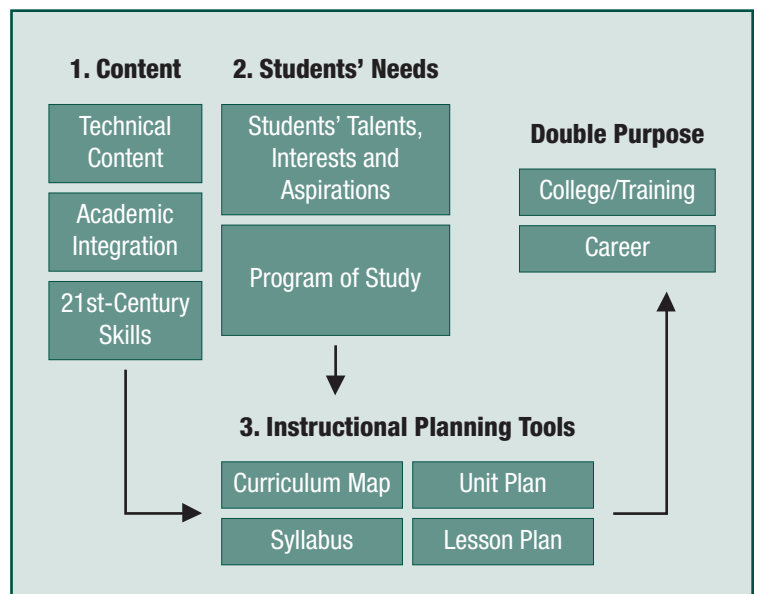
- Establish a system to analyze student progress on technology center standards and provide remediation focused on CT skills to ensure students can pass both hands-on performance and written certification exams.
- Identify 11th-grade CT students not ready for postsecondary studies and employment. Implement special strategies and courses in the senior year to prepare these students for their planned next step — further study, work or both.
- **Culture of continuous improvement** — Use a variety of data (student assessments, program evaluation data, technology center performance reports, program enrollment, retention and placement reports, college remediation reports, student follow-up reports and advisory committee input) to continuously improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning.

## TCTW Key Conditions for Accelerating Student Achievement

The *TCTW* Key Conditions assist state and district leaders, school administrators and teachers in working together to align policies, resources, initiatives and accountability efforts to support technology centers as they implement a comprehensive school improvement design.

- **A clear, functional mission statement:** Technology centers have a clear, functional mission to prepare students for employment, advanced career training and postsecondary studies.
- **Strong leadership:** Technology center and home high school leaders are committed to aligning and benchmarking curricula to high standards, improving the quality of instruction, and raising academic and technical achievement. The leadership team at each technology center includes the campus director, assistant director, counselors and teacher leaders. School and district teams participate in annual leadership development workshops aimed at more fully implementing the *TCTW* design.
- **Plan for continuous improvement:** Technology center leaders create an organizational structure and process that ensures continuous faculty involvement in determining what to teach; how to teach it; what students are expected to learn; how to assess what they have learned; and how faculty members relate to each other, to the students, to the home high school, to families and to the community.
- **Qualified teachers:** Technology center teachers have in-depth knowledge of their CT field and of the most essential academic skills needed for continued learning and training. Further, they have knowledge of the 21st-century skills their students will need for success in careers and postsecondary studies and of all aspects of industry related to their CT field. Technology center teachers must be able to plan and deliver effective instruction and, to do so, must understand not only their CT field, but their students' talents, interests and aspirations. They must be equipped with instructional planning tools for developing course syllabi, mapping curricula, and planning effective project-based units and lessons.

## Essential Concepts in High-Quality Instructional Planning and Delivery



- **Commitment to goals:** School leaders and teachers are committed to achieving the *TCTW* Goals and implementing the Key Practices. School boards are committed to having all students complete a CT concentration and a ready academic core. Continuous review of local policies and practices ensures that a strong message of high expectations is sent to the school administration, faculty, staff and the home high school(s).
- **Flexible scheduling:** Technology center leaders and school boards work with home high schools to adopt flexible schedules enabling students to attend technology centers, complete a ready academic core, and earn college credit and industry certifications.
- **Support for professional development:** Technology center leaders provide teachers with instructional materials, planning time and professional development for implementing new curricula and research-based instructional methods.

### *The TCTW-Recommended Ready Curriculum*

The centerpiece of *TCTW* is a challenging curriculum focused on preparing high school students for further education and the workplace. The difference between this and the *HSTW*-recommended curriculum is that students completing the *TCTW*-recommended curriculum will complete many, if not all, academic courses at the home high school while taking CT courses at the technology center. The recommended ready curriculum includes:

- at least **four college-preparatory English courses** that emphasize reading, writing and presentation skills. Students should read the equivalent of eight books annually, write short papers weekly and write one or more research papers annually.
- at least **four mathematics courses**, including Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and a higher-level mathematics course. A fourth higher-level mathematics course or a specially developed mathematics course designed to prepare students for postsecondary studies will help 12th-graders avoid remedial college mathematics. Technology centers should show evidence of increasing annually the number of students completing Algebra II — a gateway course for success in postsecondary studies — and consider giving special recognition to CT completers who complete Algebra II.
- at least **three college-preparatory science courses**, such as biology, chemistry, physics or applied physics, or anatomy/physiology. Students conduct lab experiments and investigative studies; read, critique and discuss three to five books or equivalent articles about scientific discoveries and how science is used in the real world; keep lab notebooks; make presentations; and complete research projects and written reports. Students design and conduct group or individual projects. *TCTW* recommends that schools using block schedules require four years of science.
- at least **three college-preparatory social studies courses** emphasizing reading and writing to learn. Students will read five to eight books or equivalent articles, write weekly, make presentations, complete research projects and prepare at least one major research paper in each course.
- at least **one computer course**, which students should take early in high school to be prepared to use computer-based technical skills in other classes, or demonstrated proficiency in computer technology beyond simple keyboarding.
- at least **four credits in a concentration** that consists of an approved sequence of CT courses. Each student will have a choice from at least four CT concentrations in career cluster pathways or a blended concentration, such as mathematics/science/technology or humanities and business studies. All CT courses include embedded numeracy and literacy skills.

## Making Career/Technical Education Intellectually Demanding

To support broader high school reform that improves both student achievement and graduation rates, technology centers must provide students with intellectually demanding CT studies that prepare them for a full range of postsecondary options: two- and four-year college programs, advanced career training and full-time employment. Intellectually demanding CT courses require students to:

- do substantial reading and reflective writing in the career field.
- describe orally what they have learned through class projects, problem-solving activities and laboratory work.
- develop their analytical-thinking, trouble-shooting and problem-solving skills.
- use research and organizational skills to address a problem or task.
- use mathematics to support decisions and to complete a class project or authentic work outside the school.

Tech center leaders and teachers can ensure CT courses are intellectually demanding by embedding the reading, writing and mathematics standards that are most essential success in further study or careers. Intellectually demanding CT studies must expose students not only to academic content in the context of real-world activities, but also to the habits of the mind for invention, experimentation and design.

### Essential College- and Career-Readiness Academic Skills

Whether they plan to enroll in postsecondary studies or enter a career immediately after high school, graduates need to meet a set of essential readiness standards in reading, writing and mathematics — the skills students need to transition successfully into work or further learning.

#### Essential Reading and Writing Skills:

- Develop vocabulary appropriate to reading, writing and speaking in academic and CT courses.
- Summarize, paraphrase and categorize information.
- Make inferences and predictions.
- Compose writing that conveys a clear main point with logical support.
- Use research skills to locate, gather, evaluate and organize information for different purposes.

#### Essential Mathematics Skills:

- Solve real-world problems using appropriate solution strategies.
- Use the language of mathematics to explain thinking processes and communicate solutions within a context.
- Use a variety of techniques to recognize correct answers, check for reasonableness, and identify mistakes.
- Formulate conclusions, construct arguments and make conjectures based on observations.
- Use technology (including software and graphing calculators) to enhance understanding of mathematical ideas and concepts.

## Building Bridges to the Technology Center

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Building a strong bridge from the middle grades to the technology center is essential to raising student achievement and keeping students in school. Many eighth-, ninth- and 10th-grade students need to find a reason to complete high school and to understand how high school studies can help them meet their personal goals. Technology centers should take purposeful actions to help more students transition to the center prepared for challenging programs of study:

- **Inform seventh- and eighth-grade students about how career-focused programs of academic and CT courses can prepare them to accomplish their career and educational goals.**
  - Provide students with opportunities to visit the tech center and learn about the center’s mission and offerings.
  - Offer a summer technology camp for seventh- and eighth-grade students to help them learn how to use various technologies in a given career field and to complete projects with a strong literacy and mathematics base.
  - Work with guidance counselors to help middle grades students and parents understand how the technology center programs of study can prepare students for further study and careers.
- **Work with high schools to introduce the center and career/technical studies to students who are at risk of failing or dropping out of high school before they have a chance to attend the center.** Some students, particularly those at risk of dropping out, need opportunities in grades nine and 10 to explore career options and to find a real-world purpose for their studies. The technology center can collaborate with high schools to implement opportunities for ninth- and 10th-grade students to connect their studies to career interests earlier in high school. Such opportunities include:
  - foundational CT courses designed to help low-performing students improve their reading, mathematics and science achievement.
  - a four- to six-week summer learning experience for students planning to enter the technology center who have major deficiencies in reading or mathematics. Integrate study skills, time management, relationship skills and other habits of success into this summer curriculum to enable students to become independent learners and to meet high school graduation standards.
  - a formalized a plan for extra help for CT students who enter the center unprepared for challenging CT studies.
- **Work with high schools and community leaders to develop a dropout recovery program that helps dropouts return to school to earn an employer certification and a diploma.** The center can develop alternative programs — including evening classes and flexible schedules — to accommodate students who must work to support themselves or their families.



## Building Bridges to Postsecondary Studies and Careers

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Just as the middle grades have the responsibility to prepare students for challenging secondary studies, high schools and technology centers must prepare students for the next step: postsecondary studies, work or both. A key to being prepared for this next step is a productive senior year. Emphasis should be placed on helping students understand that most jobs will ultimately require some level of education or advanced training beyond high school.

To prepare students for their post-high school goals, technology centers must identify 11th-grade students who plan to enroll in postsecondary studies, determine their readiness, and assist less-prepared students in modifying their senior year programs of study to become better-prepared for postsecondary studies or advanced training. Technology centers can work with home high schools and postsecondary institutions to design 12th-grade reading and mathematics courses that help students master essential college- and career-readiness standards and prepare them for continued learning in either advanced training or postsecondary credit-bearing courses.

Students who have demonstrated readiness for postsecondary studies should have opportunities to earn college credit through a variety of strategies — Advanced Placement courses, dual credit courses, joint enrollment courses, learning experiences on college campuses and virtual college courses.

Students who do not plan to pursue formal postsecondary studies need to use their senior year to prepare for success in a career. Technology centers can provide students with access to work-study programs, employer certification examinations, internships and apprenticeships.

Regardless of their planned next step, all technology center students should complete a senior project that ties their CT and academic studies to their goals. The senior project represents a culmination of the technology center's efforts to teach students the habits of successful, independent learners — organization, problem-solving, researching and communication skills. Ideally, the effort should be coordinated between the technology center and the home high school.

## Measuring and Reporting Progress

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The primary tool used for measuring high school and technology center students' achievement and schools' progress is the *HSTW* Assessment. This assessment includes three subject tests — reading, mathematics and science — along with student and teacher surveys. The student survey measures high school students' experiences, what and how they are taught, and what is expected of them in CT and academic courses. The *TCTW* Teacher Survey, designed specifically for teachers at technology centers, indicates what teachers think about school culture and the quality of instruction.

The results of the *HSTW* Assessment assist schools in analyzing student achievement, determining their level of implementation of the *TCTW* design, and measuring how school and classroom practices affect student achievement. The results also indicate to technology centers how they have improved and what areas require greater improvement.

*TCTW* also conducts a follow-up survey of students one year after high school graduation. This survey allows graduates to report on how well their high school and technology center prepared them for postsecondary education and work.

Every school site prepares an annual site progress report in the spring to document accomplishments and challenges in their efforts to implement the *TCTW* Key Practices. The annual report is part of a reflection and planning process through which schools note accomplishments from the previous school year and outline improvement priorities for the upcoming year.

## Joining *Technology Centers That Work*

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### *What TCTW Agrees to Do*

*Technology Centers That Work (TCTW)* agrees to provide leadership, guidance, information and assistance to support schools, districts and states in improving student achievement. School participation in *TCTW* can take one of two forms: joining a state *TCTW* network or contracting independently with *TCTW*.

#### **For schools participating in a state network, *TCTW* priority services include the following:**

- Train state-level personnel to provide *TCTW* services and provide consultation to the state and its network schools.
- Provide information and services to support state and site efforts, using print, video and Internet resources.
- Evaluate sites' progress in implementing the *TCTW* design and raising student achievement in reading, mathematics and science through the biennial *HSTW* Assessment, the *TCTW* Teacher Survey and a follow-up study of graduates. Provide state and site reports of findings.
- Provide a statewide Site Development Workshops to introduce teams from new sites to the *TCTW* framework.
- Manage and help states lead on-site Technical Assistance Visits (TAVs).
- Provide professional development opportunities for states and sites through national professional development, including the Annual *HSTW* Staff Development Conference for all network sites and state leaders.
- Create networking opportunities for sites to share strategies and resources.
- Support creation of site-focused professional development plans.
- Conduct annual leadership forums for teams and district leaders from all *TCTW* states.
- Seek support from the private sector and foundations for delivery of *TCTW* services.
- Disseminate information and publications about *TCTW* best practices to state organizations.

#### **For individual schools contracting with *TCTW*, priority services include the following:**

- Manage and lead a Site Development Workshop at each participating school.
- Conduct initial TAVs and prepare the resulting TAV report.
- Conduct Technical Review Visits (TRVs) at least once every three years.
- Provide school improvement consultants to deliver technical assistance and coordinate services for schools.
- Work with schools to determine professional development needs and support site-specific professional development to assist teachers in changing what and how they teach.
- Evaluate sites' progress in implementing the *TCTW* design and raising student achievement in reading, mathematics and science through the biennial *HSTW* Assessment, the *TCTW* Teacher Survey and a follow-up study of graduates. Provide state and site reports of findings.

### *What Participating Sites Agree to Do*

- Have site leaders — superintendents, school board members, the principal/director and a core group of teachers — examine the Goals and Key Practices and decide if *TCTW* is viable for the school and the community. If so, they commit to at least a five-year implementation effort to work toward meeting the *TCTW* Goals.
- Appoint someone at the district level and at the school site to coordinate *TCTW* action planning, professional development and technical assistance; coordinate data collection; monitor progress; foster communication; and integrate the *TCTW* Goals and Key Practices with other school improvement efforts.

- Support academic and CT teachers with professional development, materials and time to work together to implement the Key Practices.
- Promote student participation in a system of school- and work-based learning that integrates academics with applied learning.
- Organize a school leadership team composed of academic and CT teachers; administrators; guidance counselors; parents; and representatives of business, industry and postsecondary education. Establish focus teams aligned with the leadership team to address curriculum, guidance, evaluation, professional development and transitions.
- Prepare an action plan for implementing the Key Practices and a site-specific staff development plan to help teachers carry out the action steps.
- Participate in the biennial *HSTW* Assessment, *TCTW* Teacher Survey and follow-up study of graduates to measure progress in raising student achievement.
- Host a TAV involving a team led by SREB or the state to review progress made and determine challenges to address to raise student achievement.
- Participate in district leadership activities, state staff development activities and the Annual *HSTW* Staff Development Conference.
- Become an active member of a state and multi-state network for sharing information and ideas.
- Give students access to modern CT courses that are connected to school-based academic and CT studies. Site leaders will work closely with employers and two-year postsecondary institutions.
- Designate staff members to coach all teachers in getting students to use reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum to improve achievement in all content areas.
- Promote a vision of high achievement for all students among faculty and staff, parents, students, and the community.

### ***What Participating States Agree to Do***

- Appoint a representative to the *TCTW* Board.
- Designate a state *TCTW* coordinator and dedicate the equivalent of a full-time staff person for every 40 *TCTW* sites.
- Allocate discretionary funds to help sites implement their school improvement plans.
- Conduct TAVs to new sites during their first year in the network and provide each site with a report of challenges the school faces and actions it must take to achieve the *TCTW* Goals.
- Conduct TRVs to one-third of sites annually to monitor progress and to offer recommendations to help existing sites further implement the *TCTW* design and advance student learning.
- Provide new *TCTW* with sites technical assistance for developing action plans during year one.
- Support *TCTW* sites annually with professional development.
- Foster networking of sites through meetings, visits and electronic communication to allow them to share resources and solve common problems.
- Encourage sites to attend the Annual *HSTW* Summer Staff Development Conference and identify site participants to serve as presenters and presiders.
- Encourage sites to send leaders to the National *TCTW* Forum.
- Link staff development to sites' school improvement plans and create opportunities for teachers and administrators to participate in state-sponsored institutes and *TCTW* workshops and conferences.
- Support sites in participating in the biennial *HSTW* Assessment, *TCTW* Teacher Survey and follow-up survey and help them use the data in improving their action plans.

## How to Become a TCTW Site

A technology center can become a *TCTW* site by joining its state *TCTW* network or contracting directly with SREB. Each state uses its own process for selecting school sites to participate in *TCTW*. In most states, schools wishing to join the state network must submit an application. *TCTW* recommends that states require annual progress reports that include proposed improvement actions for the next year. Schools or districts seeking *TCTW* network information should contact the *TCTW* state coordinator at the state agency that administers CT education. Centers wishing to request services directly from SREB can contact SREB for more information.

## Benefits of Becoming a TCTW Site

**Participation in *TCTW* benefits all stakeholders in the educational process: students and parents, teachers, administrators and the broader community.**

**Benefits to students:** *TCTW* improves students' academic and career/technical knowledge and skills. It shows students the connection between high school studies and their futures and encourages them to prepare for the next step, which often combines work and further study.

**Benefits to parents:** Parents become partners in students' education as they participate in planning students' programs of study, are informed to assist in making decisions about postsecondary and career options, and are updated regularly about students' progress to keep them on track to meet academic and career goals.

**Benefits to teachers:** Teachers gain confidence in their abilities to help all students complete challenging studies. They work together to create more rigorous instruction and plan professional development activities aimed at raising student achievement.

**Benefits to principals/center directors:** School administrators strengthen their leadership skills as they deal with scheduling, staffing and curriculum design issues resulting from offering a high-quality curriculum to all students. They become more adept at using the incremental process — planning, doing, reviewing, making new plans and revising old ones — to improve student learning.

**Benefits to schools:** Schools receive data about students' strengths and weaknesses in reading, mathematics, science and career/technical studies. Teachers, administrators and community members base action plans on this information. The result is improved communication among faculty and staff, students, parents, employers and postsecondary institutions.

**Benefits to educational reform:** States adopt new long-term strategies for working with the shared-time centers to support local school systems as they strive to improve the middle grades and high schools. School leaders and teachers in all locations discover that they can raise the achievement of all students, including those previously underserved.

**Benefits to the community and nation:** Challenging programs of study raise students' communication, mathematics, science and technical skills; they increase students' earning potential and raise the bar of achievement for everyone.

## For More Information

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