CTE Expert Review Team Focus Group Protocol and Interview Questions for Phase 1

Purpose

This document includes the questions the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Expert Review Team (ERT) facilitator asks stakeholders during focus groups, interviews, *etc*. Every focus group asks the same questions, but there is space for CTE ERT members to ask follow-up questions. Every stakeholder group has a different set of questions, but they all start with "Priority Questions" that serve as a warm-up and get focus group participants prepared for the "Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left". If there is time left in the focus group, facilitators ask "Additional Questions".

Questions for CTE Teachers

Instructions for focus group lead: Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask "Important Questions".

Priority Questions:

1. What program do you teach in and how long have you been in your role? What is your background in this area?
2. For newer teachers, what was your recruitment like? What were important factors for your decision to work here?
   For senior teachers, what factors influence your decision to stay here?
3. Do you have contact with employers in your industry? If so, what partnerships have been most beneficial for students?
4. Where do students from your program go after graduating (i.e., further training, work, college, etc.)?
5. What support do you and/or the school provide to help CTE students develop post-graduation plans? Are your students getting time with a Career Coach as part of that support?
6. How do you measure the effectiveness of your CTE program, and what data or feedback informs changes or improvements?
7. If you could redesign your subject's program of study, what would you change?
8. What professional learning opportunities are available for you?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

9. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your school's CTE programs?
10. What do you need as a CTE teacher that you feel you may not be getting?
11. What do you see as the key CTE challenges facing your school now?

Additional Questions:

12. How do you collaborate with your colleagues (CTE and academic teachers)? How do you collaborate with other colleagues within this LEA?
13. Do any of your programs have school-based businesses that serve the school community and/or local clients?
14. Do you think the certification requirements for CTE teachers are well-aligned to what is needed to teach in the area you teach in?
15. What CTSOs (Career and Technical Student Organizations) do you all participate in? What clubs/programs/sports do you all participate in? Can you speak to those and how they help students?
16. What do you see as the biggest hurdles in expanding CTE at your school?

Questions for CTE Students

Instructions for focus group lead: Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask "Important Questions".

Priority Questions:

1. What year are you, what program are you enrolled in, and why did you choose the program you're in?
2. How did you learn about the program you are enrolled in now? What was the process of getting enrolled into the program?
3. How has your experience in the classroom been for your CTE classes? How is it different from your other classes?
4. Have you had any work experience as part of your program?
5. If you have a different home school, how do you get to your CTE program and / or to your job (if applicable)?
6. Will you graduate with any certifications/credentials or college credits?
7. What is your plan post-graduation, and how did you develop it? Did you work with a career coach or career counselor to help with this plan?
8. How much do you know about careers in your industry (salary, training paths)? How did you get this information?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

9. What would you say is the best thing about your program? What are some of your CTE program's strengths?
10. If you could change anything in your program, what would it be? What challenges have you faced in your CTE program?
11. Looking back on when you first enrolled in your CTE program, what advice would you give to students who are currently considering CTE as an option?

Additional Questions:

12. Are there any CTE programs you think the school/LEA should offer that it does not now?
13. Have you participated in any competitions or extracurricular activities related to your CTE program? If so, what was your experience like?
14. How well do you feel your CTE program is preparing you for the workforce or further education in your chosen field?
15. How do your family and friends perceive your enrollment in a CTE program, and has their perception changed since you started?

16. How does your school promote CTE programs to students, and what improvements would you suggest to increase awareness and interest?

Questions for Career Counselors/Coaches

Instructions for focus group lead: Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask "Important Questions."

Priority Questions:

1. How long have you been in your role? What is your background in this role? What is your title? Career Coach? Career Counselor? Something else?
2. How is career counseling organized at your school, and in this district? How do professional school counselors and career coaches work together in your district?
3. Is there a work-based learning coordinator and if so what is their scope of work and how do they interact with career counselors/coaches?
4. How does the career counseling staff stay up-to-date with CTE programming and workforce trends in the LEA and the state?
5. How are students introduced to and informed of CTE programs? Who leads this introduction? How are parents informed about CTE offerings?
6. How are students who change their minds about a program/career path supported?
7. What opportunities are there for career exploration/education in middle school? In high school?
8. How are CTE students supported in planning for post-CCR pathways?
9. How are CTE students supported in making post-graduation plans?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

10. What do you see as the strengths of career coaching/career counseling in this school/district? What is going well? What are you celebrating?
11. What do you see as the challenges of career coaching/career counseling in this school/district? What has been a challenge?

Additional Questions:

12. Do you track post-graduation outcomes, such as enrolling in further education /training or entering the workforce?
13. In what ways does the school involve parents and the community in the CTE program?
14. How do you think the CTE guidance could be improved? Is feedback on guidance and support collected from students?
15. Are there issues with students being able to access CTE programs? If so, what are the reasons and what are current strategies to address access issues from your perspective?
16. What do you see as the biggest hurdles in expanding CTE at this LEA?

Questions for School/LEA Leadership

Instructions for focus group lead: Focus groups with School/LEA Leadership are rare since we receive most of this information through the Brief and Orientation. Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions,

asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask "Important Questions".

Priority Questions:

1. How long have you been in your role? What is your background in CTE?
2. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your LEA/school's CTE program, and what have you made the most progress on recently?
3. Can you give us an overview of the structure of CTE programs in your school / LEA? If not addressed, ask about: Dual enrollment, WBL, Range of programs, Application process, Transportation
4. Is there capacity for all interested students to participate in CTE programs? Are there any barriers to enrollment?
5. For those students who are not able to enroll and stay on a waitlist, what's the process for those students? What happens if they don't get off the waitlist?
6. How does the LEA/district update CTE programs? What are some current plans you have for adding new programs, expanding existing programs or eliminating current programs?
7. What are your district's strategies for increasing CTE enrollment and WBL opportunities, particularly apprenticeships?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

8. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your LEA/school's CTE program, and what have you made the most progress on recently?
9. What do you see as the key challenges facing your LEA/school now in CTE?
10. Where would you like the LEA to be in five years in regards to CTE?

Additional Questions:

11. Are any CTE teachers earning National Board Certification? If so, have they been able to move into differentiated roles?
12. How do you collaborate with local business and industry and community colleges?
13. Do you have sufficient teachers for current programs? If not, what are the issues in recruiting them?
14. What measures are in place to assess the long-term impact of CTE programs on students' career trajectories and contributions to the local economy?
15. Do certain programs have higher completion rates than others?
16. Are there clear pathways from current CTE programs to community college certificate and degree programs?
17. What strategies are employed to raise awareness and improve perceptions of CTE programs among students, parents, and the broader community?
18. In your opinion, how well does the programming at your school align with key (high-growth, high-wage) industries in your community and statewide?