
AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR TRENDS IN TECH PREP IMPLEMENTATION FOR FY03

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This summary presents findings for the 41 Tech Prep consortia in Illinois for fiscal year 2002-03 (FY03). Results suggest numerous areas of Tech Prep implementation were stable over the past four years; though often modest, the following changes were observed in implementation over the previous two or more years:

- The number of secondary Tech Prep programs offered by consortia showed a slight increase from FY02 with an average of 29.1 and a median of 22 programs per consortium.
- For all consortia other than Chicago, the mean percentage of secondary students who were identified as Tech Prep graduates remained virtually the same over the 4-year period.
- The remediation rate for matriculating high school Tech Prep students continues to demonstrate stability and was estimated by consortium directors at 35%, the same estimate as reported in FY02.
- The retention rate for postsecondary Tech Prep students from first to second year remains consistently high, at about 60%, the same as reported in FY02.
- Results showed an overall increase in the percent of business representative participation in professional development activities over time. Other institution type participation remained the same, with secondary personnel comprising three-fourths of total attendance over the five years data were collected.
- Postsecondary vocational-technical instructors continued to surpass academic instructors' involvement at Tech Prep funded activities; at the secondary level, the two instructor types demonstrate more equal participation, similar to previous years.
- Consortium directors again reported the same three barriers to implementation at a high level of importance; they include difficulties with joint planning time, paperwork, and lack of substitute teachers.

Areas where significant change was noted over the past two years or more include:

- The percentage of secondary Tech Prep students in FY03 increased to comprise 11% of all students in Illinois, up from 10% in FY01 and 02.
- State mean and median enrollment of first-year postsecondary Tech Prep students increased dramatically from FY02 to FY03. The mean rose from 67.2 to 92.9, and the median rose from 50 to 69.
- The mean percentage of consortia having Tech Prep students with credits in escrow, dual credit, or other college credit options increased dramatically over the past four years, from 45% in FY00 to 68% in FY03.
- FY03 results continue to show a decline in the mean number of paid cooperative education programs offered by local consortia, from 8 in FY00 to 5.2 in FY03.

Whereas many results are undoubtedly an accurate reflection of implementation practices, some appear to be the result of questionable reporting on the Final Report form. Even so, cautious interpretation leads us to surmise that numerous activities have reached a plateau. Based on this conclusion, we offer the following recommendations:

- New ideas need to be infused into implementation activities to enhance the essential elements of the reform and create additional positive change. Strategies that stand out as potential candidates include the creation of new articulated course sequences and dissemination of new Tech Prep pathways.
- Continued effort should be made to improve data collection related to Tech Prep implementation, both in enhancing reporting to the state via the Final Tech Prep Report form and in supporting improvements in evaluation at the local level. These efforts should begin by conducting an annual training session with consortium leaders that focuses on how to provide accurate information on the report form, with periodic training and communication to support a more systematic evaluation effort.
- The state should aggressively pursue linkages between the Final Tech Prep Report form and other evaluation tools, including the cross-case analysis reports from on-site reviews and various datasets maintained by the ICCB and ISBE. Monitoring results on implementation and student enrollment across multiple data sources would increase confidence in statewide results.