

Spotlight Strategy: Develop a Standardized and Aligned Curriculum

SUN Area Technical Institute

When Pennsylvania increased state academic standards and PSSA score requirements in the late 1990s, SUN Area Technical Institute (SUN Tech) began the process to standardize and align their entire curriculum. To make this process as comprehensive as possible, the leadership team decided to align the curricula to both Sun Tech and state requirements.

To achieve this objective, the leadership team designed an intricate database to house all standards and competencies to provide instructors with a thorough and straightforward means of preparing an aligned lesson plan. The process of entering and aligning every standard to lesson plans took SUN Tech four years to complete.

Instructors can enter a lesson plan objective into the program which then references the database of standards and competencies. The outcome is a very specific, computer-generated lesson plan that is automatically aligned to the relevant information.

The leadership team also uses the database for a number of other functions. Among its many uses, the database is used as a tool to crosswalk which standards are being taught frequently in the classroom and which standards are not being taught in a particular program. In this manner, it provides a checks-and-balance system to ensure each education program is comprehensive in the material that is covered.

Because the database tracks competencies and ties them to grades and graduation, SUN Tech has already achieved state approval for 13 programs of study. Four additional programs are expected to be approved by summer 2010. SUN Tech was able to readily meet the state requirements for programs of study as the database already contained lists of required competencies and lesson plans in place for the programs.

Contact Information:

Sun Area Technical Institute

815 East Market St., 21st Century Drive

New Berlin, PA 17855

Ph: 570.966.1031

Mr. Dennis Hain, Administrative Director

Email: dhain@sun-tech.org

SUN Area Technical Institute is located in New Berlin, Pennsylvania. As a part-time career and technical center, it enrolls approximately 240 students in grades 9 through 12 and provides 19 career and technical education programs. Students are eligible to attend SUN Tech for one year of study. SUN Area Technical Institute serves five school districts.