

Why Should I Care About Student Certification and Credentialing?

This module, *Beyond the Classroom: Marketing FCS Certification and Credential Opportunities*, was developed to provide family and consumer sciences (FCS) teachers with the tools to market the rigorous, skills-based programs of study being offered. An FCS program of study provides students with knowledge, skills, and experiences that will help them become productive employees and family and community members. Providing the opportunity for students to achieve a state or national certification or credential validates the process.

In the past, FCS teachers have validated their programs by teaching skills that will have long-term effects on a student's health, consumerism, service to their communities, and careers. However, in today's workplace environment, employers are seeking the most highly qualified applicants for available positions. As a result, industry-based knowledge and skills certification and credentialing, such as the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Pre-PAC assessments, ServSafe, and Child Development Assistant, are increasingly vital for a career and technical education program (CTE), including FCS programs. National certifications offer CTE students in an FCS program of study the opportunity to showcase and validate the knowledge and skills students have achieved from direct classroom instruction, observation, job shadowing, internships, and laboratory time.

The certification and credentialing of students in FCS provide benefits not only for the student, but also for the school, the FCS department and teachers, parents, employers, and post-secondary institutions. As budgets get tighter in the school systems, more and more administrators will be asking how students benefit from a program of study and what certification and credential opportunities are available to the students. It is the wise FCS teacher who provides courses with a rigorous knowledge and skill base. Student learning that culminates in an industry-based, knowledge and skills assessment, leading to certification or credentialing, is vital to the success of a program of study.

There are many benefits to the student of an industry-recognized skills based assessment. Some of those benefits include

- recognition of technical skills.
- potential for higher pay.
- sense of pride and accomplishment.
- self confidence.
- increased value to the high school diploma.
- money saved during a post-secondary education by not duplicating coursework that has been successfully achieved during high school and validated by a certification or credentialing.

The benefits of an industry-recognized assessment for the school include

- acknowledgement of a rigorous FCS program of study.
- alignment and compliance with Perkins IV guidelines.
- validation that a FCS education is effective for providing a competent, skilled workforce.

Employers benefit from employees who achieve certification and credentialing include

- having better, stronger, and more reliable employees.
- having a link between secondary education and a highly skilled workforce.

Finally, the benefits for post-secondary institutions include

- reducing student duplication of previously mastered coursework.
- facilitating curriculum alignment, relevance, and rigor.
- assisting with student recruitment.
- reducing the attrition rates at both the high school and post-secondary level.

