Vision Statement Exercise

Creating a clear vision of the future is the first step toward achieving improvement in any endeavor. Peter Block, quoted in Fullan, (Change Forces, 1993, p.13) states that “creating a vision forces us to take a stand for a preferred future” and “come out of the closet with our doubts about the organization and the way it operates.” Fullan goes on, “Teachers are in one of the most natural occupations for working on purpose and vision, because underneath that is what teaching is all about.”

As part of strategic planning for Tech Prep and CTE in Illinois, we are committed to gathering input from all leaders so that the vision statement we arrive at is one that represents a consensus of our desired future. This exercise is one in which we can abandon the reality of the present and create the future we prefer. You are encouraged to dream big; it is not important that you have all the answers about how we will get there. Determining those strategies will follow this important step and be carried out at both the state and local levels, and will, by necessity, be aligned with the vision we are about to create. We begin by reflecting on our ideals, experiences, and our reality as experts in CTE and Tech Prep implementation in Illinois.

In your small group, discuss the following three questions in the time allotted. (Be sure you monitor your time to cover all three.) We will discuss your responses as a group.

1. What is the reason for Tech Prep in Illinois?

2. How does it align with new visions of education – high school reform, etc.?

3. What are the components/elements of current CTE programs that must be included in the future in order to achieve the results we desire for our students?
In one sentence, capture the important elements discussed in answering the 3 previous questions.

Below are two other states’ vision statements. You will notice a difference in their scope.

Ohio’s Tech Prep vision statement: *College Tech Prep will prepare students for high-skill, high-wage careers demanded by an increasingly competitive world economy.* The vision, along with six “Guiding Principles” (Systemic Change, Expanded Student Opportunities, Partnerships, Early Individual Career Education, Employment Competencies, and Advanced Skills) formed the framework under which they placed five goals and over 36 strategies to reach the goals.

Missouri’s Tech Prep’s vision statement: *Tech Prep, in partnership among business, industry, labor, secondary and higher education, is a primary strategy for systemic educational change in Missouri that prepares students for technology based careers demanded by the increasingly competitive global economic community.* In addition, Missouri adds four (4) mission statements and two to four objectives statements for each.