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Contact: Megan Reiter, (703) 683-9312  
ACTE Media Relations Manager

**ICSPS NTO LOOK PROGRAM EARNS  
“PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THAT WORK” TOP HONORS**

ALEXANDRIA, VA- The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE), and the National Women’s Law Center (NWLC) announced today that the Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS) received the highest recognition in the “Programs and Practices That Work: Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers Project”. ACTE, NASDCTEc, NAPE and NWLC joined together and created the project to recognize local and/or state educational agencies, programs, and/or schools that have improved students’ access to and completion of career and technical education programs that are nontraditional for their gender.

ICSPS was selected for its program “The Nontraditional Look (NTO Look).” The multi-phase program was developed by the ICSPS at Illinois State University to encourage secondary and postsecondary partnerships to respond to local needs for recruitment or retention of students preparing for nontraditional careers by providing resources, consultant assistance and financial assistance. Essential elements of the model include partnering across educational/business boundaries, self-study, research into effective practices, long and short-term measurable goal setting, activity design and implementation, and program evaluation. In the implementation phase of each site’s project, participants are provided professional development, technical support, specialized resources, and financial assistance through “The NTO Look” Program.

Lynn Reha, Co-Director at ICSPS commented, “The NTO Look Program, utilizing Perkins-funded grants from the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Community College Board, was designed to provide resources for Illinois career and technical educators to recruit and support learners in preparing for careers which are nontraditional with respect to gender. ICSPS is pleased that this award will bring recognition to the efforts of Illinois educators and will promote access for all learners to education and training for high-wage, high-skill occupations.”

Honorable Mention went to Minneapolis Public Schools, for its “High Tech Girls’ Society.” The High Tech Girls’ Society was launched in 2003 to increase representation of girls in traditionally male-dominated courses of study, such as aviation, engineering and information technology. The Society provides hands-on learning activities, mentoring and counseling to girls in cooperation with colleges, universities and employer partners; and in conjunction with a rigorous academic and technical curriculum.

“I am honored and thrilled to learn of this recognition. I want to extend my appreciation to those who worked collaboratively to make this program such a success. Many teachers, businesses, community agencies and post-secondary partners have worked hard to provide high tech opportunities for the girls,” said Wendie Palazzo, Grants Coordinator, Career & Technical Education for Minneapolis Public Schools.

Each of the programs will be recognized at ACTE, NASDCTEc, and NAPE conferences as well as during a briefing for the U.S. Congress and media on Capitol Hill. The programs also will be featured in a report that will highlight effective programs and practices for gender equity within career and technical education. The report will serve as a valuable resource for local and

state educational agencies wishing to employ similar strategies to successfully prepare students for nontraditional, economically self-sufficient careers.

It is particularly important to highlight these programs because for the second year in a row, President Bush has proposed to dismantle career and technical education programs that are funded through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Act, along with several other education programs. In his FY 2007 budget request the President asked Congress to eliminate funding for Perkins programs – a request that would result in a substantial loss of funding for successful programs like these. These programs provide students with high-quality skills that prepare them for in-demand jobs and provide business and industry with the skilled workers they need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

For more information about the “Programs that Work: Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers” Project please [click here](#), or contact ACTE, NASDCTEc, NAPE or NWLC.

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*Megan Reiter*  
Media Relations Manager  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
1410 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703) 683-9312 direct  
(703)683-7424 fax  
[mreiter@acteonline.org](mailto:mreiter@acteonline.org)

*Advocate for CTE and Perkins funding! Attend the National Policy Seminar March 6-8, 2006, in Washington, DC. For more information, or to register, go to [www.acteonline.org/nps](http://www.acteonline.org/nps). Don't forget to add the popular Pre-Conference workshop on Math in CTE to your schedule, Sunday, March 5, 2006*