

## **Overcoming Barriers to Nontraditional Occupation Career Paths for Girls Nebraska Department of Education**

(Note: this survey was online through Survey Monkey, and this print version approximates the layout of the online version. The questions are listed in this document only for Barrier 1. For the other Barriers, the questions were in the same format, but are not repeated here)

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) requires Nebraska to continue to focus on the performance of Special Populations in career education. This questionnaire seeks input from educators about the resources needed by schools to help overcome the barriers that limit the participation of females in career education programs that are nontraditional for their gender. These programs are those that prepare students for occupations in which women represent 25 percent or less of total employment. Nontraditional occupations for women include, among others, automobile mechanic, construction worker, firefighter, truck driver, welder, engineer, law enforcement officer, architect, and computer scientist.

The reasons for girls' low participation in nontraditional career education programs are well documented and effective strategies for encouraging their participation have been identified. Nevertheless, little progress has been shown in girls' nontraditional program participation and completion. Although we are also concerned about boys' low levels of participation, the situation is particularly harmful for girls because it seriously limits their career choices and keeps them from many high-wage, high-demand occupations.

The purpose of this questionnaire is not to evaluate how well individual schools are addressing the barriers to nontraditional career education for girls, but to identify the resources schools need to be more effective. The questions below identify barriers and general strategies, and ask you to describe your school's current efforts, and what resources you think are needed to be more effective in overcoming the barriers to nontraditional career education for girls.

1. What is your position in the school district?

- Superintendent
- Principal, high school
- Principal, middle school
- Principal, elementary school
- other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What size is your school district (K-12)  
(options?)

**Barrier 1. Early and sustained exposure to gender stereotypes in terms of aptitudes and occupations, through family, community, schools and media.**

**Strategies:**

- begin exposing students to nontraditional career options and related experiences in elementary school, and sustain that exposure throughout their school years
- ensure curriculum materials and instructional practices are free of gender biases and stereotypes
- provide nontraditional role models in teachers and other staff
- partner with community organizations to help provide nontraditional career exposure, role models and experiences.

*What is your school district currently doing to provide early and sustained exposure to nontraditional career options for girls?*

*Please describe any changes that have occurred as a result of those efforts.*

*How effective do you believe those efforts are in overcoming the gender stereotype barrier for girls? (circle a number)*

not effective at all 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6 very effective

*What strategies do you think could increase your schools' effectiveness in overcoming this barrier?*

*What resources do you believe would be needed to successfully implement the strategy or strategies you have identified in the preceding question?*

**Barrier 2. Girls are discouraged from considering nontraditional careers by family, peers, counselors and other educators**

**Strategies:**

- Ensure that guidance counselors, other educators and career materials encourage, rather than discourage, girls from considering non traditional careers
- Educate parents about the values of nontraditional career options
- Collaborate with community organizations and businesses to provide groups of girls with substantive exposure to nontraditional careers and hands-on, pre-technical training
- Provide role mentors and models for girls in nontraditional fields

*(insert questions, adapted from Barrier 1 question)*

**Barrier 3. Girls begin to lose their interest and confidence in math and science in middle school.**

**Strategies:**

- Educate teachers about the subtle ways teachers frequently favor boys in math and science classrooms, and ways to ensure gender equity
- Educate parents on ways to encourage and sustain girls interests in math and physical science
- Ensure that counselors and teachers encourage girls to take advanced math, science and technology classes

*(insert questions, adapted from Barrier 1 question)*

**Barrier 4. The climate of the nontraditional classroom is not inviting to girls**

**Strategies:**

- Specifically recruit girls to participate in nontraditional classes and activities
- Recruit groups of girls to take nontraditional classes to reduce girls' isolation
- Ensure that teachers in nontraditional classrooms welcome and support girls participation and prevent sexual harassment
- Remove gender biases from curriculum materials and practices
- Educate both boys and girls to break down gender stereotypes about aptitudes and careers
- Provide support groups for girls in nontraditional career programs

*(insert questions, adapted from Barrier 1 question)*

**Please identify any other barrier to girls' participation in career education programs that are nontraditional for their gender.**

*(insert questions, adapted from Barrier 1 question)*

**Please include any other comments you may have about overcoming the barriers to girls' participation and completion of career education programs that are nontraditional for their gender.**

**May we contact you if we need information about any model program you may have identified, to ask for elaboration on any of your responses, or to ask for additional input into this study?**

**If Yes:**

*name*                                      *school district*                      *phone number*                      *email*