

Pirrong, Randa

<b>Page: Basic Information</b>
<b>Name of Program/ Project</b> Project HOPE: Pathways to Graduation and Career Readiness
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<b>Page: Support</b>
<b>Letter of Introduction</b> <p>Randa Pirrong has demonstrated leadership in advancing the mission of the Oklahoma CareerTech system through her involvement in OkACTE (Administration, FCS, and ESSP divisions), Region IV, and ACTE. Serving her 27th year in CareerTech education, Randa began her career as a Family and Consumer Science Teacher with OKCPS and has also served in various roles in administration, curriculum, instruction, and professional development at Metro Tech and Francis Tuttle Technology Centers. She has served as the OkACTE FCS division President and as a member of the Membership, PAC, and CTAC committees. Randa is an OkACTE Fellow and ACTE Fellow Alum. She has also served as the President of the Administration Division of Instructional Leaders section. Randa currently serves on the OkACTE Kaleidoscope Committee, Region IV Bylaws Committee, and ACTE Administration Division Policy Committee, and ACTE Bylaws Committee.</p> <p>Randa has led districtwide initiatives to improve staff training, curriculum development, and student support services throughout her career. Her oversight of Perkins grants, coordination of accreditation visits, and implementation of learning management systems directly contributed to the system's operational success and instructional innovation.</p> <p>Randa's tenure and current position as the Administrator of Project HOPE, a high school dropout-prevention program serving at-risk students, reflect her commitment to CareerTech, particularly in promoting career readiness among underserved populations. She has presented at OkACTE, Region IV, ACTE, and the National Alternative Education Association conferences. Randa has connected and collaborated with dropout recovery programs across Oklahoma and the U.S. Through these partnerships, she has increased awareness of how CareerTech can provide a seamless plan for students finishing high school. Students at risk of not graduating are rarely chosen for career training programs at their area tech centers. Randa and the HOPE team at Francis Tuttle have created a pathway for these students to not only complete high school graduation but also a career training program of their choice. This pathway has increased the educational and occupational success of hundreds of students. These students come from impoverished, traumatic, and often unstable environments. HOPE gives them the support needed, food, counseling, love, and structure to succeed.</p>

## Support

Randa has been instrumental in transforming HOPE as a pathway for Francis Tuttle's six sending school districts (Cashion, Crescent, Deer Creek, Edmond, Putnam City, and Western Heights) and ten area high schools. Through collaboration and relationships built with these high schools' counselors and principals, HOPE's capacity, enrollment, and graduation rates have grown. For example, the student graduation rate has grown 59% from 2022 to 2026.

The target population for HOPE is 16-19-year-old students who have dropped out, are at risk of dropping out, or are credit deficient. Students who need an alternative environment to a traditional school setting may also be referred. Students must have completed at least 7 credits to apply. Students must also strongly desire to grow and learn in their chosen career program.

Randa has worked with ODCTE and SDE to increase services and funding. She has increased the alignment with career training programs allowing for consistent monitoring, and intentional transition planning to ensure students are not only graduating but are fully prepared for postsecondary success. 96% of HOPE completers say they would recommend HOPE to other students.

Project HOPE is a student-centered program designed to meet learners where they are and support them in reaching their full academic and career training potential. Students complete academic credits at HOPE and elective credits in their career training program. At the heart of HOPE is an intentional focus on academic, social, and emotional development, recognizing that student success requires more than classroom instruction alone. Every student enrolled in HOPE receives individualized support tailored to their unique needs, strengths, and goals. Each student has a personalized academic plan of study that guides their path toward graduation and postsecondary readiness.

Quote from one of our 89 graduates this year, "Before my mom brought me to meet Mrs. Pirrong, I was not expecting much. I figured HOPE would be more of the same, just in a different building. After meeting Mrs. Pirrong at my interview and touring Francis Tuttle and the HOPE building, I told my mom, 'I think I'm going to like school again.' And I meant it. Project HOPE is different in ways that are hard to explain unless you've been here. The smaller class sizes made a huge difference for me. I wasn't just a face in a crowded room. The built-in breaks help me reset instead of feeling overwhelmed all day. It gave me space to breathe, to think, and to come back to class ready to focus. The teachers at HOPE truly care, and not in a 'they have to because it's their job' kind of way. They care about who we are, what we're dealing with, and where we're headed. They pay attention. They notice if something is off, and they know when to step in and help, and more importantly, they know when we need space."

Instruction within HOPE is delivered through a blended learning model that combines direct instruction, small-group learning, project-based experiences, and individualized online coursework. This flexible approach allows students to engage with content in multiple ways, ensuring accessibility and relevance while earning credits. Through this model, students complete required standards aligned to the credits they need, enabling both recovery and accelerated learning opportunities.

Certified teachers in all core subject areas play a vital role in delivering high-quality, personalized instruction. HOPE educators intentionally accommodate learning deficiencies, diverse learning styles, and student preferences while utilizing best instructional practices to support student growth. Teachers work closely with students to adapt lessons, provide targeted feedback, and create meaningful learning experiences that build confidence and academic momentum.

Equally important, HOPE teachers prioritize building trusting, supportive relationships with students. Through consistent encouragement and connection, HOPE helps students rediscover their purpose for learning, strengthens resilience, and empowers them to succeed both in and beyond the classroom.

Project HOPE teachers serve as homeroom teachers for a small core group of students. This teacher serves as an anchor for the students. "Science shows that children who do well despite serious hardship have had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult. These relationships buffer children from developmental disruption and help them develop resilience or the skills needed to respond to adversity and thrive." National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2015).

This quote from a HOPE student's mother reinforces the impact of the program: "He is actually sad about missing school. He has never cared before. Heartfelt thanks to you and everyone at HOPE for providing an environment in which he feels he can learn and be successful."

By aligning academic achievement with career readiness, Project HOPE: Pathways to Graduation and Career Readiness is closing opportunity gaps, increasing graduation rates, and equipping students with the skills, confidence, and direction needed to thrive in the workforce.

## Page: Photo

Please submit a photo/headshot of the program/project. The photo should be digital, high resolution (at least 300dpi), and submitted in .jpg format. Files 2MB or larger are preferred. Photographs will be used for publicity purposes only.

## Photo

Download File (<https://acte.secure-platform.com/file/83054/eyJ0eXAI0iJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJtZWVpYUlkIjo4MzA1NCwiYWxsbn3dOb3RTaWduZWRVcmwiOiJGYWxzZSIsImNm9oqx3vsKBJYj2eHJQ?Randa-2026%20Headshot.jpg>)