

Legislative Priorities 2018



CTE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Career and technical education (CTE) prepares students to be college- and career-ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills and technical, job-specific skills. It also fulfills employer needs in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand areas. CTE is delivered flexibly through high schools, area career centers, career academies, community and technical colleges, four-year universities and more. CTE prepares students for a range of career options through 16 Career Clusters® and more than 79 pathways. These Career Clusters include subjects that touch virtually every sector of the economy and are much more diverse than what used to be known as “vocational education.” Students today take CTE classes in subjects ranging from health science and information technology to engineering, construction, business and marketing. These classes lead students to industry certifications and postsecondary certificates and degrees.

Benefits for High School Students

High school students overwhelmingly participate in CTE, with 94 percent earning credit in CTE, and many making a significant investment of time in CTE coursework. Secondary CTE students are more engaged, graduate at higher rates and typically go on to postsecondary education. Among the many benefits that CTE delivers at the secondary level:

- Students who take one CTE class for every two academic classes minimize their risk of dropping out.
- The average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 13 points higher than the average national freshman graduation rate.
- 91 percent of high school graduates who earned 2-3 CTE credits enroll in college.

Opportunities for Postsecondary CTE Students

More than 8 million individuals are seeking postsecondary certificates and associate degrees in CTE fields. Postsecondary CTE prepares students and adults for in-demand careers, and allows them to assume less debt while doing so. Among the many benefits of CTE at the postsecondary level:

- Postsecondary CTE concentrators achieve significantly higher earnings than those who majored in academic fields, particularly those employed in an industry related to their program of study.
- 27 percent of people with less than an associate degree, including those with licenses and certificates, earn more than the average bachelor's degree recipient.
- Students can attend public community and technical colleges for a fraction of the cost of tuition at other institutions. In 2017-18, the average cost of tuition at public two-year colleges (\$3,570) was 36 percent of the average price for a state public four-year institution, 14 percent of the average public four-year out-of-state college and 10 percent of the average private nonprofit four-year college.

Business, Industry and the Economy All Depend on High-Quality CTE

CTE addresses the needs of business and industry and helps close the skills gap by preparing students with high-level skills for in-demand jobs. Among the many benefits of CTE for the economy:

- Skilled trades workers, accounting and finance staff, nurses, and technicians are some of the top careers that employers are having trouble filling in the U.S., and CTE plays a critical role in training workers in these areas.
- Of the 55 million job openings created by 2020, 30 percent will require some college or a two-year associate degree. In fact, the nation's four fastest-growing occupations require education below a bachelor's degree.
- Half of all STEM jobs call for workers with less than a bachelor's degree.
- More than 80 percent of manufacturers report that talent shortages will impact their ability to meet customer demand.
- Investments in CTE yield big returns for state economics. For example, Colorado Community College System alumni in the workforce contribute \$5.1 billion annually to the state, and in Wisconsin, taxpayers receive \$12.20 in benefits for every dollar invested in the technical college system.

For additional information and citations for the facts above, visit acteonline.org/factsheets or contact cimperatore@acteonline.org.



2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Increase Perkins CTE Act Funding to \$1.3 Billion to Restore Recent Cuts

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) is the principal source of dedicated federal funding for CTE and helps build the capacity of secondary and postsecondary institutions to serve millions of students nationwide. The Perkins Basic State Grants are allocated to all 50 states through a formula grant, which is based largely off of a state's population and need, and are designed to help ensure all students have access to high-quality CTE.

Despite the importance of Perkins funding in advancing high-quality CTE programs and addressing the skills gap, federal appropriations have not kept pace with the growing need. From FY 2007, which followed the last reauthorization of Perkins, through FY 2017, total Perkins grant funding to states has been cut by 13 percent—nearly \$170 million less in annual funding to support CTE. Congress must make restoring these cuts, and then increasing funding to address growing needs within CTE, a top priority as it considers upcoming appropriations bills.

2. Finalize a Bipartisan Reauthorization of the Perkins CTE Act

Perkins is essential to ensuring all students have access to high-quality CTE programs. Since 2006, the last time Perkins was reauthorized, key advancements in CTE have been made, and the law should better reflect the rapidly changing educational and economic systems. Congress can build on current law by maintaining key structural elements and reinforcing its successes, while making careful changes to enhance progress.

Since Congress first began investing in CTE more than 100 years ago, CTE has always been a bipartisan issue, and Perkins reauthorization should follow this pattern. ACTE urges Congress to reauthorize Perkins and work together to:

- Increase equitable access to high-quality CTE programs.
- Prioritize and strengthen connections between secondary and postsecondary education.
- Emphasize engagement with employers in the design and implementation of programs.
- Streamline the law to increase clarity and consistency and end duplication between and within sections.
- Require greater coordination between planning, spending and accountability.
- Ensure relevant and consistent data.
- Align the law with other federal education and workforce development legislation where appropriate.

3. Ensure Higher Education Act Reauthorization Reflects Today's Diverse Postsecondary Landscape

Labor market demand for a skilled workforce increasingly requires employees to have some type of postsecondary education. CTE is a major and long-standing enterprise within the American higher education system that continually evolves to meet the needs of today's students and employers. In fact, many students who obtain in-demand postsecondary CTE credentials are out earning college graduates with non-CTE credentials.

The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is an opportunity for Congress to strengthen its support of postsecondary CTE programs and students by reducing barriers to high-quality programs and ensuring appropriate data is available about postsecondary options. There is also a nationwide shortage of CTE teachers and a rapidly declining availability of CTE teacher preparation programs that should be addressed in Title II of HEA during reauthorization. As Congress explores reauthorizing HEA, the new law should:

- Reduce barriers to higher education for all.
 - Expand Pell grant eligibility for short-term training courses and programs by incorporating the bipartisan JOBS Act, and eliminate penalties for working students.
 - Reexamine definitions to ensure public non-degree granting institutions like area CTE centers are not arbitrarily penalized.
 - Prioritize employment related to field-of-study for work-study participants and allow related work-study to qualify for required internship or apprenticeship credit, as appropriate.
 - Promote innovative, student-centric models like competency-based education and dual enrollment.
- Ensure program quality and integrity while reducing data collection burden.
 - Eliminate the ban on a federal student unit record data system to ease data collection and reporting burdens.
 - Include program level information in data systems and track employment outcomes, as well as information on certificates, licenses and industry-recognized certifications earned by students.
- Support CTE teacher preparation programs and alternative paths to certification.

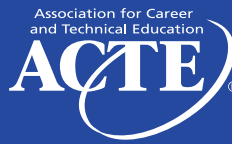
4. Oppose Efforts to Consolidate the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)

The Department of Education recently announced plans to restructure the agency, which reportedly includes merging OCTAE with the Office of Postsecondary Education into a new "Office of Postsecondary and Lifelong Learning." This merger would eliminate the Assistant Secretary position for CTE and significantly reduce the visibility of CTE within the Department of Education.

CTE encompasses far more than just postsecondary education, and an office dedicated to the unique role CTE plays in the nation's education system is critical. Amidst a widening skills gap, shrinking CTE's presence in the Department of Education is a mistake. Some of the Department's consolidation plans will require congressional authorization. ACTE urges lawmakers to oppose all efforts to consolidate OCTAE and to instead support a robust role for CTE within the Administration.

For additional information on ACTE's policy priorities, visit acteonline.org/policy_agenda.





About ACTE

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, school counselors, guidance and career development professionals and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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ACTE Public Policy Staff Contacts

Alisha Hyslop

Director of Public Policy
ahyslop@acteonline.org
(703) 683-9331

Mitch Coppes

Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager
mcoppes@acteonline.org
(703) 683-9316

Jarrod Nagurka

Advocacy and Public Affairs Manager
jnagurka@acteonline.org
(703) 683-9312

Catherine Imperatore

Research Manager
cimperatore@acteonline.org
(703) 683-9324

Join the CTE Caucus

Both the Senate and House have bipartisan CTE caucuses that work in Congress to enhance awareness of CTE's important role in preparing a well-educated and skilled workforce in America. To join the CTE Caucus, contact the office of any of the co-chairs. In the Senate, the co-chairs are Sens. Tim Kaine (D-VA), Rob Portman (R-OH), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Todd Young (R-IN). In the House, the co-chairs are Reps. Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Jim Langevin (D-RI).