



# Issues Update

June 2, 2021

*Issues Update* is a report from the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) written by Executive Director Michael R. Stone and shared with members. As needed, *Issues Update* will report on state and federal Career and Technical Education (CTE) policy and legislative developments. KACTE and Stone can be reached at [kmstone1951@gmail.com](mailto:kmstone1951@gmail.com) or 502-223-1823.

## Kentucky Begins Interim; Feds Debate More Funding

Kentucky legislative activity picked up in June with the start of the General Assembly's interim session. The Interim Joint Committee on Education's first meeting was held June 1. It heard testimony on the Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarship (KEES), the Students' Right to Know Act, and how school districts managed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) worked with the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYstats) to develop a web-based, interactive tool to provide students and families with information on which to make decisions regarding postsecondary participation. Included are cost of attendance, time to degree completion, graduation rates, employment rates, salaries, annual job openings, most popular majors and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and apprenticeships. A mobile application is under development.

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### ***KACTE Renews Agreement with Legislative Agent McCarthy Strategic Solutions***

The Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) renewed its agreement with McCarthy Strategic Solutions (MSS) to provide legislative advocacy services on behalf of the association and Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Kentucky.

In announcing the continuation of the agreement, KACTE notes this member benefits serves not only its members but the entire Kentucky CTE system.

With the 2022 Kentucky General Assembly session to determine a 2022-24 biennial budget and consider legislation impacting CTE, MSS is positioned to deliver KACTE's advocacy to all legislators and the Executive Branch, as it did with the 2021 KACTE white paper, ***CTE: A Relevant Education***. Members can review the white paper and accompanying one-page summary at [www.kyacte.org](http://www.kyacte.org) in the Issues Section.

### ***CTE's Impact Evidenced in Enrollment Data, Results***

2020 state profiles released by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) reveal Career and Technical Education (CTE) participants in the 2019-20 school year totaled 11.1 million, with 7.6 million secondary and 3.5 million postsecondary students. Nationwide, there were 3 million secondary and 1.9 million postsecondary CTE concentrators.

Among secondary CTE concentrators, the top four career clusters were: Business Management and Administration; Health Science; Arts, A-V Technology and Communications; and Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

Among postsecondary CTE concentrators, the top four career clusters were Health Science; Business Management and Administration; Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; and Information Technology.

**A REPORT** on high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment among CTE concentrators in Nebraska and South Dakota revealed concentrators are 7 percent more likely to graduate from high school on time and 10 percent more likely to enroll in postsecondary education within two years of graduation compared to non-CTE students.

The results of the report from the Institute of Educational Sciences Regional Laboratory Central are consistent with other reports and studies showing CTE students graduate at a higher percentage and enroll in postsecondary education at a higher percentage than the overall secondary student population.

The Nebraska and South Dakota report also indicated high school CTE concentrators were more likely to earn a postsecondary award within two-five years of graduation. The evidence is CTE concentrators may have a greater likelihood of attaining a certificate, diploma or degree, which dispels misperceptions that CTE is not academically rigorous.

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**CURRENT KENTUCKY TEACHERS** have an opportunity to achieve Rank I or Rank II certification through job-embedded learning experiences in their own classrooms. Approved by the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB), *Foundations of Teaching and Learning* is described as a cost-effective program receiving applause from the 200 current participants.

The Kentucky Educational Development Corporation (KEDC) is partnering with BloomBoard to offer this micro-based rank change program that eliminated required seat time and exams. Instead, it is based on self-paced learning and coached training while demonstrating capability in the classroom.

The deadline to enroll for the summer is June 15.

**THE CPE REPORTED** on two recent developments. In an attempt to make postsecondary education more affordable, it has limited to 3 percent the allowed tuition increase at the state's public universities for the next two years combined. A university can increase tuition no more than 2 percent in any year. The 3 percent ceiling applies to tuition and mandatory fees for resident and undergraduate programs.

The cap on Kentucky Community and Technical College (KCTCS) fees is \$5 per credit hour over the next two years, with no more than a \$3 increase in any year.



***Our Mission: Student Success***

*2021 Career and Technical Education Summer Program  
July 20-23, Galt House Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky*

## **Registration Deadline June 15**

Due to hard logistic deadlines in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Summer Program to be held July 20-23 at the Galt House Hotel, Louisville, must enforce a June 15 registration deadline. More than 200 professional development sessions covering every CTE pathway and teaching discipline are on the agenda.

On June 2, **registrations totaled 1,596**, among which 1,389 (87 percent) will attend in-person. Registration and housing reservations can be completed at [www.kyacte.org](http://www.kyacte.org). A limited, virtual registration is available. With more than 200 presentations, it is not financially or logistically feasible to provide every session virtually. Select sessions dealing with program area updates and critical programmatic issues will be provided through a secure website.

**CPE PRESIDENT AARON THOMPSON** wrote an opinion column published in *Higher Ed Dive* detailing an effort to embed employability skills instruction into all postsecondary coursework. He noted interactions with business leaders consistently stress the need for employees with good communication, leadership and problem-solving skills. The employers say they can teach the specific technical skills if the candidates have employability skills.

"That's why," Thompson wrote, "through a partnership with the nonprofit Quality Assurance Commons, the (CPE) has worked to embed career competencies into a student's educational experience. . . 16 academic programs at six participating schools, along with employers from five key industries, took part in the pilot initiative that started in November 2018 (and) were certified in April 2020."

The program's foundation is communication not only among campus faculty and administration, but also with the community and employers. More than 3,000 students have been served, and the pilot campuses indicate a number of resulting benefits. Thompson wrote the hireable graduate is adept at communications, problem-solving, inquiry and collaborations, and who is adaptable, principled, professional and always willing to learn.

**THE PUBLIC PENSION** Oversight Board met May 24 and received updates on the status of the state's managed pension funds. The Kentucky Teachers Retirement System had net assets of \$24.7 billion as of March 31, 2021, which is 58.4 percent of its projected obligations. The insurance trust fund is at 61.7 percent of its projected obligations.

The fund managers reported investment gains; however, there was a negative \$435 million cash flow in the previous fiscal year.

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**Previous Issues Updates may be found at [www.kyacte.org](http://www.kyacte.org) in the Issues Section. The April 2 edition recapped the 2020 Kentucky General Assembly session.**

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## **Federal Issues**

If the budget proposed by President Joe Biden is enacted, CTE and education in general will receive a significant increase in funding. But the negotiations among the administration, congressional Democrats and congressional Republicans are just beginning. Republicans, particularly Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, has indicated opposition to large spending increases, especially if they are paid for with increased taxes.

President Biden's budget proposal would restore non-defense, discretionary funding to 3.3 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), \$769 billion, which is the historical average of the last 30 years. The Department of Education (DOE) would see a 41 percent increase in funding

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over Fiscal Year 2021, almost \$30 billion, to \$102.8 billion. Elements of the President's proposed American Jobs Plan would increase education spending even more.

The **Perkins Act** basic state grant was proposed for a \$20 million increase to \$1.354 billion, but that increase is less than what was adopted for the current fiscal year. It does propose a \$108 million increase in **Perkins Act** national programs, to \$115.4 million, to fund competitive grants for middle and high school CTE innovation projects, technical assistance, and evaluation.

For CTE, the American Jobs Plan, which has been described at the administration's initiative to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, proposes \$1 billion per year for the next 10 years to fund a new CTE program. It will be introduced separately and follow a different legislative path than the appropriations process.

The \$10 billion is to be spent for development and implementation of high-quality career pathway programs in middle and high schools, with a priority on program that connect underrepresented students to STEM and in-demand sectors and help increase the capacity of community colleges to offer high-quality workforce training programs.

**THE DOE SUMMARY** of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget includes three mentions of CTE, including supporting an **In-Demand Credentials for Teachers** proposal. This proposes \$1.6 billion to support additional teacher certifications at no cost to 100,000 participating teachers. The funds for the credential proposal are in the administration's American Families Plan. As with the \$10 billion for CTE proposed in the American Job Plan, it will be introduced separately and follow a different legislative path than the appropriations process.

At the start of the DOE budget summary, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona wrote: "This budget ensures all students have access to high-quality, affordable postsecondary education while also improving career pathways for students of all ages and levels."

The biggest recipients of proposed increases in the administration budget proposal are Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Pell Grants are proposed for a \$400 increase, but the big increase in Pell Grants, \$1,475, is in the American Jobs Plan. If both proposals are enacted, the maximum Pell Grant would be \$8,370.

The budget proposal adds \$100 million for registered apprenticeship programs, to \$285 million. It holds federal work study at the existing level, \$1.19 billion. Adult education state grants also would be level funded at \$675 million.

Within the Department of Labor, which would benefit from a 14 percent, or \$1.7 billion, increase to \$14.2 billion, is a \$203 million proposed increase in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to \$3.7 billion. Kentucky's Perkins Act funding is approved through the state WIOA board.

**KENTUCKY'S CONGRESSIONAL** delegation provided some support for increased CTE funding. Representatives Brett Guthrie, John Yarmuth and Andy Barr signed a "Dear Colleague" letter to the chair and ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Labor-Health and Human Services-Education. The letter pointed out the importance of strong CTE program in developing a skilled workforce. It asked for consideration of increased funding.

Representatives James Comer, Thomas Massie and Harold Rogers did not sign the letter. In Rogers defense, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, he does not believe in sending letters to himself. Kentucky's congressmen have consistently voted to approve CTE spending.

The Senate has not yet circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter. Senator Rand Paul never has signed such a letter in support of CTE funding. Senator McConnell, much like Representative Rogers, is a member of the Appropriations Committee and Minority Leader. He does not send letters regarding topics on which he may have to decide. Both senators supported CTE funding in the past.

**ALTHOUGH NOT DIRECTLY** education funding, it is notable that the American Jobs Plan proposes establishing a nationwide broadband network to give every citizen the opportunity to connect to the internet. Studies and reports during the pandemic indicate that a challenge facing education implementing non-traditional instruction is the lack of internet access for a number of students. Many schools provide devices for student use, but they are useless without connectivity.

One study on understanding student home internet connectivity needs found that video learning is essential for education; that students are mobile and rely on WiFi; that some communities, specifically in rural areas, require more support and resources; and that device quality significantly impacts remote learning.

The **BUILDS Act (Building U.S. Infrastructure by Leveraging Demands for Skills)** was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH). The legislation seeks sector partnerships of local business and industry organizations, workforce boards, labor representatives, and education and training providers to support workforce training programs in infrastructure-related jobs. CTE provides the educational foundation for many of these jobs.

Kaine and Sen. Todd Young (R-IN), co-chairs of the Senate CTE Caucus, re-introduced the **ACCESS Act (Assisting Community Colleges in Educating Skilled Students)**. It would establish a community college career training grant program to fund increased student success and career readiness. It envisions increasing work-based learning opportunities, ensuring students have support services, and creating career pathways for in-demand jobs.