



Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education

2018 Legislative Priorities

- **Support Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness & Career Pathways**

With the new standards-based performance measurements and Colorado's persistent achievement gap, support is essential for programs and pathways that assist students with planning and preparation for postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR).

- Continue funding programs that assist students in career preparation and college planning.
- Ensure access to quality career guidance and counseling services and career exploration activities for all students.
- Support access to postsecondary options for all Colorado students.
- Support Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) career pathways and student transitions into these areas, including building interest in STEM and STEM-related careers by making math and science content more relevant and tangible through integration and helping grow the STEM workforce pipeline by encouraging more students from underrepresented populations to enter these career fields.

- **Align Career & Technical Education to ESSA**

Career & Technical Education should be considered a valuable and viable part of each school district's performance framework.

- Raising the profile of CTE in Colorado can improve student outcomes and help bridge the historic divide between academic and career & technical education by promoting their greater integration to benefit all students. Students with greater exposure to CTE are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in a two-year college, be employed, and earn higher wages.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) opens the door for a more holistic approach to accountability that can enhance career readiness. ESSA calls for adding a measure of school quality and student success, known as the 'fifth indicator'. By articulating college and career pathways as equal means for student success, Colorado can build on earlier career pathway efforts to strengthen programs and enhance the state's measures of accountability.

- **Address Colorado's Growing CTE Educator Shortage**

Several factors contribute to overall teacher shortages across Colorado, including a decline in teacher preparation program enrollments, increasing student enrollments, and high teacher attrition rates. Other factors are more specific to the CTE teacher shortage, such as increased student demand for CTE programming in some occupational areas, an increased state focus on CTE as a mechanism for teaching key competencies and skills as part of an integrated PWR strategy, declines in many CTE teacher preparation programs, and teacher salaries that cannot compete with private industry salaries in high-tech fields.

- Support is critical for programs focused on increasing the supply, including recruitment and retention strategies, of high school CTE teachers available to teach students in CTE programs that align to In-Demand Industry Sectors or Occupations.
 - If left unaddressed, the high school CTE teacher shortage will limit state and local capacity to deliver CTE programs for In-demand Industry Sectors or Occupations.
 - Rural districts often struggle with teacher shortages across many subject areas, but shortages in CTE often result in a lack of access to CTE programming connected to local or regional labor demands.
 - CTE teachers are crucial change agents for the success of improving outcomes for all students. CTE teachers are critical to improving students' college and career readiness. CTE teachers play a powerful role in preventing students from dropping out and providing a variety of opportunities for PWR and employment, including pathways to postsecondary certificates and degrees. CTE also helps all students achieve the objectives of Colorado's academic standards through authentic, applied learning experiences.
- **Strengthen Career & Technical Education and Training Partnerships**
The US economy depends on an appropriately skilled workforce. As current employment opportunities are phased out and new ones are developed, it is imperative that the connections between education and workforce development systems are strengthened. The Career and Technical Education system plays a large role in the development and implementation of targeting training programs that have become increasingly vital to closing Colorado's Job Skills Gap.
- Enhance linkages between middle and high school programs, higher education institutions, job training programs, and the business community.
 - Support programs that offer students a wide variety of workplace-based opportunities to develop career-ready skills and knowledge while concurrently obtaining the necessary certificate or degree for desired employment.
- **Prioritize School Funding**
Since 2009 state funding has been consistently reduced for public school funding and school programs due to the economic downturn.
- Prevent further education funding cuts.
 - Prioritize the restoration of funding for school districts, instructional support personnel, and career and technical education programs.
 - Maximize the CTA line item and ensure that funding is distributed to maximize as many programmatic reimbursements as possible, which is a core concept of funding within the CTA line item.