Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education
2020 Legislative Priorities

*The need for CTE in CO*

The primary goal of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Colorado is to provide quality educational programs emphasizing core academic content, post-secondary and workforce competencies, technical skills, and seamless transitions to further education and/or employment. CTE prepares learners, including special populations, to meet the challenges of the 21st century workforce, with a focus on emerging occupations.

CTE used to be viewed as classes for those who were not going to college; now CTE is a rigorous academic and technical system that prepares learners for both employment and postsecondary education. Increasing access to and funding for CTE for learners at all levels in Colorado—middle school, high school, and post-secondary—can improve learner outcomes and promote greater integration of CTE coursework to benefit all learners. Learners with greater exposure to CTE are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in two-year colleges, be employed, and earn higher wages.

CTE has always evolved in response to economic and workforce needs in our communities. Today, CTE is a major part of the solution to myriad national, state and local economic and workforce problems, such as high school dropout rates, a weakened economy, global competitiveness and massive layoffs. The Career and Technical Education system plays a large role in the development and implementation of targeted training programs that have become increasingly vital to align Colorado’s workforce needs with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, thus closing Colorado’s Job Skills Gap. CTE programming ensures a thriving Colorado economy by providing relevant and rigorous education that is connected, responsive and real.

For detailed information on Colorado’s CTE programs, please go to http://coloradostateplan.com.

**CACTE’s policy and funding priorities for CTE in CO:**

- **Equitable learner access to high quality CTE programs**
  - Maintain CTE funding as a priority in K-12 and higher education funding.
  - Fully fund the Career & Technical Act to continue access as early as middle school to quality CTE programs, engaging learners at an early age.
  - Create a funding stream that incentivizes and/or recognizes start-up costs for new programs, equipment and capital needs, and optimum class sizes for enhanced learner training.
  - Ensure access to and support for quality career advisement and development for all learners at all levels, middle school through post-secondary.
  - Expand resources and eliminate barriers, such as transportation, insurance and age/work laws, to ensure all learners have access to a wide variety of work-based learning (WBL).
- **Support learner access to high quality CTE teachers**
  - Recognize the shortage of CTE teachers and leaders preventing more learners from accessing CTE training in all efforts addressing this critical issue at the state and local levels.
  - Acknowledge the flexibility permitted under federal law and/or regulations to allow individuals who qualify for a CTE credential to teach in a CTE program.
  - Create incentives and opportunities for prospective CTE educators that include the continuum of licensing/credentialing, professional development, and leadership training that will maximize the benefits received by CTE learners.

For more information, please contact:
Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education - [visit the CACTE website](http://www.cacte.org)
*The professional association for Colorado Career & Technical Educators whose mission is to provide educational leadership in developing a competitive workforce.*

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