



## Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

*The need for CTE in CO:* The primary goal of Career & 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 employment. CTE serves ALL learners in their preparation for meaningful careers, providing the state’s employers with a prepared workforce that contributes to strengthening our state economy.

In the 21st century, 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 outcomes. 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.

### **STUDENT PERFORMANCE (2019)**

- 92% of secondary CTE concentrators graduated.

-98% of secondary CTE concentrators went on to postsecondary education, the workforce, the military or an apprenticeship.

-98% of postsecondary CTE concentrators went on to postsecondary education, the workforce, the military or an apprenticeship.

*Data from the US Department of Education Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (Perkins IV)*

### **LABOR MARKET TRENDS**

-50% of Colorado’s labor market consists of middle-skill jobs, but only 40% of the state’s workers are trained at the middle-skill level.

-The top 5 industries for “good jobs” that pay a median annual income of \$55,000+ without a bachelor’s degree are management, office & administrative support, construction & extraction, and installation/maintenance/repair.

*Data from National Skills Coalition Middle-Skill Job Fact Sheets and the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce’s “Good Jobs Project”*

Career & Technical Education has always evolved in response to economic and workforce needs in our communities. Today, CTE is a major part of the solution to a myriad of national, state and local economic and workforce problems. COVID-19 has led to a weakened economy, created shortages in the healthcare field, and caused massive layoffs and a seismic shift in industry sectors. The Career & Technical Education system plays a large role in the development and implementation of targeted up-skilling programs that are increasingly vital to align Colorado’s workforce needs with in-demand industry sectors and occupations closing the 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 Colorado:*

**EDUCATION FUNDING: K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION**

- Funding for K-12 and higher education should be prioritized to support current challenges facing the education community related to instruction and delivery methods and to account for past inequities in funding.
- Ensure adequate funding is available for programs that build the capacity of educational institutions to develop and offer Career & Technical Education programs from middle school to high school to postsecondary options.

**CTE TEACHER/INSTRUCTOR PIPELINE**

- CTE teachers are critical to improving outcomes for all students and play a powerful role in career counseling through meaningful career conversations about postsecondary certificates, degrees, and employment.
- Increased student and employer demand for CTE programming results in an increased demand for CTE educators.
- Declines in many CTE teacher preparation programs, coupled with private industry salaries in high-demand fields, has led to a decreased supply of qualified instructors.
- Include CTE teachers and instructors when examining the overall teacher shortages data and reporting, methods for licensure and entry into the profession.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION**

- The Career and Technical Education system plays a large role in the development of training programs that are vital for those in need of skills essential for the Colorado economy.
- It is imperative that the connections between workforce preparation efforts and work-based learning experiences within all state departments, agencies, and delivery models of education or training be coordinated across the continuum and not siloed.
- Support underemployed or unemployed individuals to attend postsecondary institutions to 'up-skill' by attaining new or additional skills, certificates or degrees.
- Maintain support of the Career Development Initiative Program (CDIP) that ties secondary CTE programs to critical workforce needs, by aligning secondary CTE curriculum to industry recognized certifications and implementing meaningful work-based learning experiences in partnership with industry.

For more information, please contact:

Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education - [visit the CACTE website](#)

*The professional association for Colorado Career & Technical Educators whose mission is to provide educational leadership in developing a competitive workforce.*

CACTE Executive Director: Debbie Nelson, [cacte@cacte.org](mailto:cacte@cacte.org)

Strategies360 Legislative Specialist: Tonette Salazar, [tonettes@strategies360.com](mailto:tonettes@strategies360.com)