Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education
2022 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. To achieve this goal, CTE serves all learners, including those identified as special populations, in their preparation for meaningful careers, providing the state’s employers with a prepared workforce that strengthens our state's economy.

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. CTE programming ensures a thriving Colorado economy by providing relevant and rigorous education that is connected, responsive and real.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE (2020)
- 89% of secondary CTE concentrators* graduated compared to 82% statewide graduation rate.
- 98% of secondary and 98% of postsecondary CTE concentrators went on to continuing education or training, the workforce, the military or an apprenticeship.

*Concentrator has taken 240 hours (or ~4 semesters) of coursework in a pathway

LABOR MARKET TRENDS
The Colorado economy is experiencing a skills gap...
- 49% of jobs in Colorado require skills training - more education than high school but less than a four-year degree.
- 39% of Colorado workers are trained at this level.
- Career & Technical Education programs can fill these gaps, particularly in Colorado's key industries like advanced manufacturing, food & agriculture and health & wellness


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. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a weakened economy, created shortages in numerous fields, 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.
CACTE’s 2022 policy and funding priorities for CTE in Colorado:

ECONOMIC RECOVERY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Create incentives for Work-Based Learning opportunities for students.
  - Incentivize on-site Work-Based Learning opportunities for industries and occupations that align with the talent pipeline report and where students need work-based learning for certification.
  - Targeted incentives can reduce barriers that include pay, age, and transportation. An example is to provide clarity around business processes to get state exemption for 15-17 year old CTE students to work.

CTE TEACHER/INSTRUCTOR EMERGENCY

- Schools across the state are facing teacher and employee shortages. CTE is not immune to these shortages and they often are exacerbated because there isn’t an incentive to go into teaching when one can make more money working in the industry. It is difficult to train the workforce of the future without CTE instructors.
- Possible solutions include encouraging districts to use CTE authorizations as alternative licensure, creating a teacher recruitment pipeline to leverage industry experience.

EDUCATION FUNDING: K-12 & HIGHER EDUCATION

- Funding for K-12 and higher education should be sustained to support challenges facing the education community specifically related to instruction, delivery methods, and to account for past inequities in funding.
- Currently the State of Colorado has significant financial resources available to make investments in both K-12 and Higher Education funding. It is imperative that Colorado make these investments by providing additional general fund dollars for education and CTE. This will benefit all students across the state in making up for the learning of academic skills and essential skills lost during the pandemic.

For more information:
Colorado Association for Career and Technical Education - visit the CACTE website
For detailed information on Colorado’s CTE programs, please go to http://coloradostateplan.com.

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

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