



**Career & Technical Association of Texas
Legislative and Policy Priorities**

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CTE IN THE 21st CENTURY

Career and technical education (CTE) prepares student to be college- and career-ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills and technical, job-specific skills. It also provides early access to career exploration and college credit and is uniquely positioned to help develop a skilled workforce.

In Texas, numerous CTE courses satisfy academic graduation requirements including science, math and English, allowing students to learn academic content through rigorous and relevant coursework. Advanced practicum courses incorporate work-based learning including paid employment that allow students to gain essential workplace skills transferable among occupations. CTE programs include articulation agreements that allow students to earn college credit. Students served through early college high school programs such as Texas Innovative Industry Academies and P-TECH have the opportunity to earn credentials and two-year associate degrees.

Postsecondary CTE is delivered through 57 community, state and technical colleges, including 10 Texas State Technical College campuses. In school year 2014-2015, Texas served 1,210,587 high school students and 245,653 postsecondary students. In **Fiscal Year 2015**, Texas received \$91,909,431 in Perkins funding—about \$100,000 less than in 2014 and \$9.2 million less than in 2010.

Business, Industry and the Economy All Depend on High-Quality CTE

CTE is uniquely positioned to help close the skills gap and help Texas achieve the goal of 60x30 – by 2030, at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree. An increasing number of jobs will require a postsecondary certificate or degree. More than 80 percent of manufacturers report that talent shortages will impact their ability to meet customer demand. Skilled trade workers, accounting and finance staff, nurses, and technicians are some of the top careers that employers are having trouble filling in the U.S., and CTE plays a critical role in training workers for these areas.

Academic Results of CTE In School Year 2014-2015:

- 97 % of CTE concentrators graduated from high school
- 93% met performance goals for mathematics
- 96 % met performance goals for reading/language arts
- 90% of postsecondary students met performance goals for technical skills

CTAT urges members of the Texas Legislature to work together to:

- Insure equitable access to high-quality CTE programs through consistent funding.
- Expand accountability requirements to evaluate additional indicators for CTE.
- Strengthen connections between secondary and postsecondary education.
- Increase engagement with employers in the design and implementation of programs.

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Accountability

Recommendation: In Domain I, Student Achievement, award a full point indefinitely for students that complete a coherent sequence of CTE courses through an approved CTE program.

- TEA will soon reduce performance indicators for career readiness to include earning industry-based certifications or enrollment in a post-secondary certificate program.
- The unintended consequence of this action has resulted in school administrators seeking to limit programs of study available through CTE to only those courses aligned with certification.
- Early access to academic and technical skills for a variety of occupational areas is critical to increasing entry into high-demand fields and addressing the skills gap.
- Limiting courses to only those courses aligned with certifications available to individuals under age 18 translates to fewer students gaining early access to programs that lead to certificates and degrees available beyond high school.
- Secondary CTE programs begin with entry-level academic and technical skills and progress to advanced academic and technical skills, dual credit and employment experience for a variety of occupations in areas such as construction, engineering, health science, education, and finance that require baccalaureate degrees or licensure for entry. While public school accountability indicators recognize that students must demonstrate college readiness in order to pursue employment in these areas, districts have little incentive other than weighted funding to offer them.
- An accountability system that supports investment in programs aligned with a wide variety of post-secondary and workforce opportunities is critical to achieving a greater number of adults that hold a post-secondary degree or certificate by 2030.

Fiscal Note: None.

Finance

Recommendation: Incentivize computer science and cybersecurity programs of study. Move 19 TAC 126 Technology Applications Courses to 19 TAC 130 CTE.

- By moving Technical Applications courses into the CTE chapter, districts would be incentivized to offer computer science and cybersecurity related courses in non-duplicative CTE coherent sequences eligible for state weighted funding for approved grade levels and supported by federal Carl D. Perkins grant funds.
- The SBOE should review the Technical Applications and CTE curriculum to develop rigorous, non-duplicative courses aligned to appropriate certifications and post-secondary pathways.
- Participation in Computer Science courses is measured in Domain I of the public school accountability system.
- Computer Science courses satisfy academic graduation requirements.

Fiscal Note: TBD

Recommendation: Oppose efforts to limit state weighted funding to CTE courses through which a certification is available.

- Academic and technical skill attainment at the secondary level includes more than certification. Fewer than 1% of students enrolled in secondary CTE earn an industry-recognized credential due to the

limited availability of credentials available to individuals under the age of 18 compared with thousands available to those aged 18 and above, many with prerequisites such as hours of employment in the occupational area.

- Secondary CTE programs include programs of study that progress from entry-level concepts to advanced academic and technical skills, dual credit and employment experiences for a variety of occupational areas that require baccalaureate degrees for employment such as engineering, health science, computer science, and business.
- The state's public school accountability indicators recognize that students must demonstrate college readiness to pursue post-secondary studies in these and other areas. To focus programs solely on certifications available to individuals up to age 18 would limit participation in pathways that require a degree or credential attainable at the post-secondary level and prepare students for high-wage, high-demand occupations.
- The state should focus on aligning programs of study to increase the number of dual credits, certificates, and degrees earned in support of the goals included in 60x30.

Fiscal Note: None

Recommendation: Reimburse ISDs for student certification exam fees.

- Every year, high school students earn around 35,000 end of program industry-recognized credentials. This proposal seeks to reimburse districts for the fees associated with certification exams for students that earn a passing score.
- Industry-based certification exams allow students to demonstrate content and skill mastery to current and potential employers.

Fiscal Note: \$1,000,000

Recommendation: Expand TWC Skills Development Fund grantees to include school districts and workforce boards.

- Current statute excludes school districts and workforce boards as eligible recipients for grants from the Skills Development Fund.
- School districts and workforce boards contribute to the skilled workforce in Texas and should be incentivized to establish and measure goals for pathways that prepare students for regional workforce opportunities.
- Expanding eligibility would support the state's long-term goal of 60x30.

Fiscal Note: None

Recommendation: Incentivize career-based programs of study by extending weighted funding for CTE courses taken in grade eight.

- By taking college and career readiness/career exploration courses in grade eight, students will be better prepared to select endorsements and pursue additional academic, enrichment and dual credit courses in high school.
- Districts are more likely to offer CTE courses in grade eight if weighted funding supports instructional settings and materials.

Fiscal Note: \$90,000,000

Recommendation: Expand internship and pre-apprentice opportunities for high school students. Amend the Texas Education Code to establish 'Summer Internship' course that draws CTE weight.

- There is no credit bearing course available to support paid or unpaid internships completed by students during the summer.

- The transportation allotment supports transporting students to and from a work site as part of an approved CTE course. Funds should be available for this activity during the summer months with the addition of a summer course.
- Work-based learning assists students with acquisition of employability skills.

Fiscal Note: \$1,000,000

About CTAT

Career and Technical Association of Texas is the state's largest non-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth for successful careers. CTAT represents the community of CTE professionals including educators, administrators, school counselors and others. CTAT is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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