



LEVERAGING CTE
TO **STRENGTHEN**
COLORADO COMMUNITIES

A dark grey horizontal banner with a geometric pattern of overlapping grey shapes on the left side. The text "2019-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN" is centered in white, bold, sans-serif font.

2019-2024
STRATEGIC PLAN

Colorado Career & Technical Education





2019-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Colorado's Strategic Plan for Career & Technical Education (CTE) will ultimately serve secondary and postsecondary learners in their preparation for meaningful careers, provide the state's employers with better prepared talent, and lend to the development of stronger communities. The CTE Strategic Plan will effectively guide the state's efforts over the next five years and will:

- **Highlight opportunities to engage stakeholders.**
- **Establish clear and consistent goals for the education and workforce systems.**
- **Provide the platform to communicate Colorado's CTE vision publicly.**

Development of the CTE strategic plan was a collaborative process, garnering insights from partners and stakeholders with a wide variety of experiences and perspectives. The process included voices from secondary and postsecondary education, workforce development, individual businesses, industry associations, philanthropic organizations, parents, and learners.



COLORADO CTE TODAY

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

FACTS & FIGURES FOR THE 2017/2018 ACADEMIC YEAR

6TH-12TH GRADE

37% High School Students enrolled in at least one CTE Class

106,720 High School CTE Students

29,741 Middle School CTE Students

2018 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

89% Colorado CTE Students High School Graduation Rate

81% Colorado High School Graduation Rate

31,500+ CTE Students Participating in Leadership Development in a CTE Student Organization

POSTSECONDARY

34,535 CTE Student Enrollment

21,615 Postsecondary CTE Certificates and Associate Degrees Awarded in the 2017/2018 Academic Year

49,935 Postsecondary Students That Completed Six CTE Credits or More

76% Employed Graduates Working in an Occupation Related to the CTE Program They Completed

COLORADO CTE TODAY

Opportunities

Colorado works with many partners and stakeholders involved in career education and workforce development initiatives. This creates an opportunity to enhance CTE programs and advance education, economic, and workforce systems by leveraging their experience and expertise.

Advisory committees and sector partnerships are valuable partners in the CTE system. Partnering with these entities provides the opportunity to more effectively align CTE programs with the needs of business and industry. There is also the opportunity for increased collaboration between middle school, secondary, and postsecondary partners in order to align CTE programs across the education spectrum.

Challenges

Ongoing misperceptions of CTE programs create challenges for the system. The CTE community must continue to communicate the value of CTE for our learners, businesses, and communities in order to combat the historical perception of CTE programs as only serving particular students. Participation in a CTE program does not limit a learner's options for career or postsecondary education — it enhances those options.

Additionally, funding for CTE programs has not kept pace with the costs of programs including costs related to ensuring competitive wages for instructors coming from industry into the education profession.

Vision for Colorado CTE

CTE Stakeholders in the state developed a compelling statewide vision to position CTE as a driver in the state's education, workforce, and economic priorities.

Vision Statement

Colorado Career & Technical Education (CTE) leverages workforce and education systems so that each learner has quality CTE experiences leading to lifelong career success.

Foundational Elements

Foundational elements are internal imperatives that foster an environment of health, growth, and progress within the CTE system. These elements promote continuous improvement by identifying key concepts inherent within CTE programs, institutions, and partnerships. There are two foundational elements for the CTE Strategic Plan: Equity & Access and Inclusivity.

Equity & Access

Equity & Access is about creating opportunities for each learner to access quality CTE programs. The distribution of CTE programs throughout the state and the ability of learners to actively participate in those programs and classes is an important element of CTE.

Target populations are another focus area for Equity & Access. The intent is to identify opportunities to reach, engage, and serve these target populations by tailoring outreach efforts to their needs. Target populations include, but are not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, individuals with disabilities, foster youth, active military/veterans, and English Language Learners (ELL). Rural service delivery is also an area of focus for Equity & Access in order to provide CTE opportunities to each learner throughout the state.

Inclusivity

Inclusivity seeks to provide each learner with the opportunity to participate in a CTE program. Cultural elements (e.g., racial, ethnic, social, economic, geographic, etc.) should be considered and addressed when seeking out and working with learners and their families. We will know success around inclusivity when we see a decrease in the gaps of CTE participation for target populations, non-traditional industries and occupations, and geographic areas.

GOALS

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Skills

PWR skills help learners navigate the education and workforce systems by creating a foundation for learners to build upon regardless of their chosen path forward: postsecondary education, direct entry into the workforce, or entry into the military. CTE programs reinforce PWR skills through direct education of these skills and by modeling and promoting the skills with individual learners. Examples of PWR skills include critical thinking and problem solving; personal responsibility and self-management; communication; and work ethic.

Goals in this Strategic Plan have been identified and addressed separately, however there is the expectation that strategies and key indicators within each goal can and should impact other goals. The identified goals are inclusive and should involve all relevant partners, stakeholders, and information pertinent to Colorado's education and workforce systems.

GOAL 1

Career Advisement & Development

Ensure each Colorado learner has access to ongoing career advisement and development.

Each Colorado learner deserves the opportunity to explore career options and receive guidance in planning for their future careers. Career advisement and development should be a systemic process that starts with a broad understanding of what work is and what is required to be successful in a career. It should narrow as learners move through middle school, secondary, and postsecondary education. A systems approach that brings together advisors, CTE instructors, and community members is most effective and allows for the alignment of activities that can build throughout a learner's education experience.

KEY INDICATORS

- Cross-training occurs between programs, partners, and initiatives to develop and maintain an informed system for partners.
- An increased number of educators are trained as career coaches.

STRATEGIES

- **Advisors, student services, and CTE instructors** **ALIGN EFFORTS** in order to have meaningful career conversations with students.
- **Instructors** are **EQUIPPED WITH THE SKILLS** to have meaningful career conversations with students about their skillsets and career choices.
- **Instructors, staff, and counselors** **HAVE ACCESS** to current and relevant workforce data to guide learners to careers that provide a quality standard of living and future opportunities.
- **Learners** are **PROVIDED OPPORTUNITIES** for the development of Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) skills.
- **State and local entities** will **CONTINUE TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS** with advisors and the Colorado School Counselor Association (CSCA).

GOAL 2

Instructor Recruitment & Retention

Develop and ensure a viable pipeline of CTE instructors to fill the educator positions at the middle school, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

CTE can help meet the talent development needs of Colorado's workforce and economic priorities with a viable pipeline of CTE teachers/faculty. Efforts for recruitment and retention of instructors will likely differ between the secondary and postsecondary levels. Secondary and postsecondary institutions are responsible for the recruitment and retention of their instructors. This requires local actions that address the needs of CTE learners and instructors. System partners at the state and local levels can also provide insights on recruitment and retention efforts.

KEY INDICATORS

- Alternative licensing methods are developed and refined to allow industry professionals to leverage their experience as a CTE instructor.
- A five to ten-year projection of CTE instructor retirements is developed to inform the future needs for recruitment and retention efforts.

STRATEGIES

- **CCCS and local areas SHARE RESPONSIBILITY** for talent development including resources and opportunities for professional development and technical assistance.
- **CCCS COLLABORATES WITH** teacher preparation institutions and alternative licensure programs to ensure teachers are prepared to provide instruction aligned to Colorado CTE program standards, curriculum course standards, and CTSO advisement.
- **Local areas PARTNER WITH** organizations to provide ongoing personal support for instructors in areas of stress management, financial planning, time management, and other areas of personal effectiveness and management.
- **Local areas PERFORM EXIT INTERVIEWS** with retirees and instructors leaving their institution as well as **RETENTION INTERVIEWS** with existing instructors.
- **Local areas REVIEW AND DEVELOP** policies and practices that address CTE teacher/faculty recruitment and retention.

GOAL 3

Partnerships

Prepare Colorado's future workforce through transformational partnerships.

Partnerships between CTE and industries, agencies, and organizations are critical in order to align with industry needs and the skills required for success. Partnerships also provide opportunities to leverage resources and minimize duplication of efforts to reach and engage learners and other stakeholders in the CTE system. Conveners and leaders among partners should be identified based on needs within the system and should shift depending on the area of focus to help the system grow and progress.

KEY INDICATORS

- An increased number of partnerships with industry associations, advisory committees, and sector partnerships.
- An increased number of educators participating in externships.
- At least 51% of CTE program advisory committee members are business and industry representatives.

STRATEGIES

- **Business and industry partners** **ADVISE ON THE DEVELOPMENT** of CTE programs, standards, and sequencing.
- **Business and industry partners** **PROVIDE INPUT AND OPPORTUNITIES** for real world application of PWR skills through direct workplace experiences, guest speakers, and career exploration opportunities.
- **Educators and staff** **DEVELOP LOCAL RESOURCES AND METHODS** to better engage partners.
- **Partners** **ALIGN THEIR INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS** with priorities for the CTE system.
- **Partners** ensure relevant stakeholders **ARE INCLUDED AND AGREE** on shared priorities and action items.
- **Secondary and postsecondary partners** **SEEK OPPORTUNITIES** to align programs of study.

GOAL 4

Quality Programs

Elevate the quality of CTE programs to support each learner’s skill development and meet industry needs.

Quality CTE programs are a vital component of the education, workforce, and economic system in Colorado and are essential in preparing the workforce needed for Colorado’s growing economy. The definition of quality should be developed in consultation with stakeholders across the CTE spectrum. Components of a quality CTE program include quality instruction that:

- Aligns to workforce needs and economic priorities.
- Aligns with secondary/postsecondary program of study.
- Integrates with career and technical student organizations.
- Provides career advisement and development.
- Provides equity and access to CTE programs.
- Integrates work-based learning.
- Reviews and reflects on program data to make informed decisions.

KEY INDICATORS

- Continuous improvement is fostered by on-going professional development opportunities.
- Increased number of CTE programs with demonstrated PWR skills embedded in the CTE program.
- Improved CTE learner outcomes based on Perkins performance measures.

STRATEGIES

- **Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) ALIGN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES** to PWR skills.
- **CCCS ALIGNS** program approval criteria for state funds and federal Perkins funds.
- **CCCS DEVELOPS** a rubric for evaluation of CTE program performance.
- **CTE programs INCLUDE INTENTIONAL INSTRUCTION** of PWR skills.
- **CTE programs PROVIDE LEARNERS** with technical training aligned to industry and academic standards.
- **CTE programs USE DATA** related to in-demand occupations and student outcomes to create and sustain CTE programs of study.
- **Educators and staff RECEIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE** to implement quality programs that qualify for approval.
- **Secondary and postsecondary institutions USE CREATIVE APPROACHES** to deliver CTE programs and work-based learning (WBL) opportunities in underserved locations.

GOAL 5

Work-Based Learning

Ensure access to meaningful work-based learning opportunities for each CTE learner.

Work-based Learning (WBL) is an opportunity to bridge classroom learning with the world of work. WBL experiences and programs should help meet the workforce needs of business and industry while providing opportunities for learners to gain real and relevant experiences within an industry or occupation.

KEY INDICATORS

- Documentation (e.g., work plans, reporting, etc.) identifies a learner's ability to demonstrate proficiency and application of PWR skills through their WBL experience.
- Increase by five percentage points the share of secondary students in CTE programs who have participated in an in-depth WBL experience by graduation.

STRATEGIES

- **CCCS and local areas INFORM INSTRUCTORS AND STAFF** about WBL resources such as the WBL toolkit.
- **CTE instructors and worksite supervisors PROVIDE HOLISTIC SUPPORTS** to learners participating in WBL experiences.
- **CTE programs intentionally CONNECT CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND ACTIVITIES** with workplace skills, duties, and responsibilities.
- **CTE programs USE WORKFORCE DATA** related to wages, in-demand occupations, growing industries, and other information to help identify opportunities for WBL activities.
- **Key stakeholders LEAD WBL INITIATIVES** by collaborating with education and workforce partners.
- **Local areas and state partners COLLABORATE AND PROVIDE CLEARLY DEFINED AND READILY AVAILABLE** resources for learners, employer worksites, and educational institutions.
- **Local areas DETERMINE THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS** required to engage business and industry in order to increase the number of WBL experiences.

What's Next?

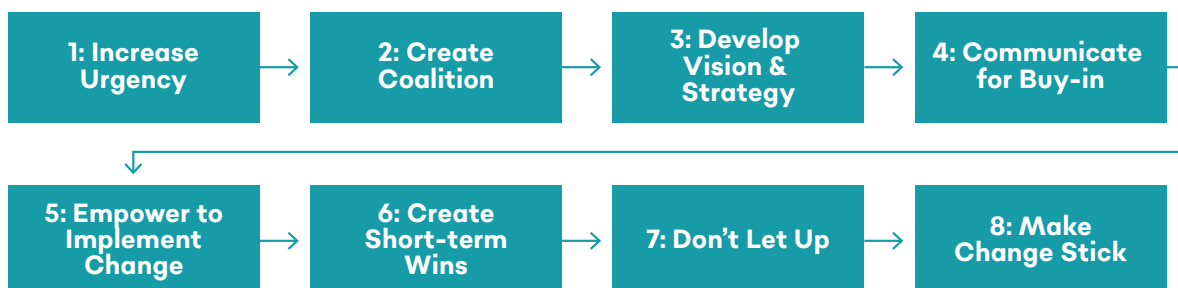
WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN CTE? An action plan can help you identify opportunities to work with CTE learners, instructors, and partners. As you develop an action plan at the local or state level, consider and document how you can:

1. Engage diverse stakeholders.
2. Establish priorities and goals for your local education and workforce system.
3. Evaluate the success of your CTE programs.
4. Focus on shared priorities, relevant and quality data, talent development, PWR skills, and policy review and development.
5. Identify barriers to success including misalignment and policy and procedural related barriers.
6. Target state and federal CTE funding to support quality CTE programs in your area.

Context

With the passage of the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, also known as Perkins V, the opportunity presented itself to refresh the Strategic Plan for Colorado Career & Technical Education so that a strong and innovative state Perkins plan can be developed and implemented. The resulting CTE Strategic Plan is aligned with the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) Strategic Plan.

Woven throughout the visioning and strategic planning process were change management strategies adapted from John Kotter's work on "Leading Change" (1988). Careful thought and consideration were given to building support and buy-in early in the process resulting in a strategic plan that addresses real needs and has lasting power to make needed changes over time. Kotter's steps for leading change include:





TO GET INVOLVED, contact Colorado CTE at the Colorado Community College System.

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