

# POSSIBILITIES FOR CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRESS IN ILLINOIS

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Dear Readers,

Last year, the legislature adopted HR 582 (West), which urged the P-20 Council to convene a College and Career Readiness (CCR) Funding and Governance Task Force to study and report on issues related to preparing high schoolers for their postsecondary trajectories. The P-20 Council failed to convene such a task force; however, several other groups initiated their own conversations and research about how to advance Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities.

Stand for Children decided to tackle these topics, study other groups' recommendations and approaches, put together a centralized hub to house these ideas, and envision best practices for how Illinois might prepare students to succeed in tomorrow's economy.

You will find within this report a one-stop-spot that links to pertinent resources, and our initial thoughts about next steps for Illinois to effectively utilize the increased resources invested in Career and Technical Education, Workplace Learning, and Dual Credit in the FY24 budget.

We hope you find this information helpful.

Sincerely,



Jessica Handy, Executive Director



Aimee Galvin, Government Affairs Director

# INTRODUCTION

Illinois' vision for its Career and Technical Education System is to "empower and support all students to achieve their life and career goals through an aligned, equitable, and high-quality career pathway system."

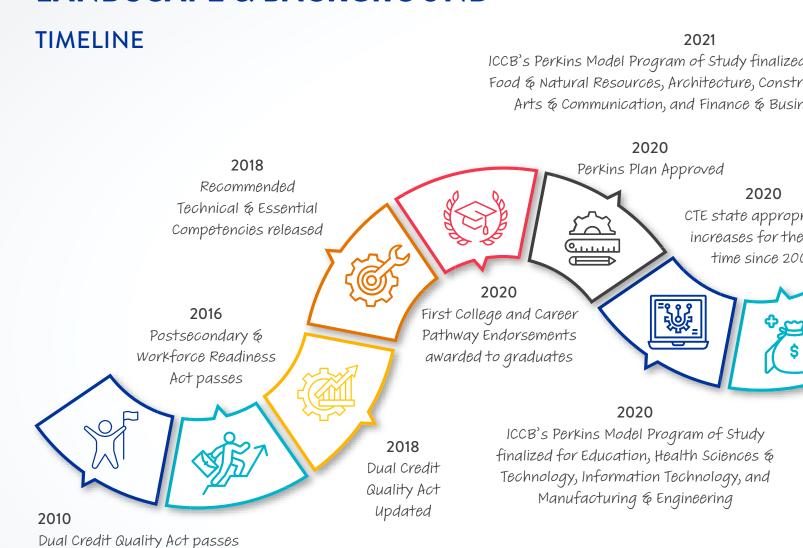
Through pathways, students earn stackable credits and credentials along a continuum of education that begins in middle school, progresses through high school, and leads to college and ultimately a career. Developing high-demand, high-skill, high-wage (H3) pathways provide students opportunities for career exploration, skill development, and a clear progression to and through college with multiple entry and exit points to help keep students in Illinois after graduation.

In service of that vision, the state has implemented policies that encourage districts to reinvent their CTE programs to align with local labor market needs and embed new concepts like industry-informed coursework and workplace learning.

Over the last three years, ISBE has developed eleven high-demand, high-skill, high-wage <u>programs of study</u> <u>models</u> which can be adopted by districts.

The development and introduction of these programs of study presents a unique opportunity for the state to assess the impact of recent policy changes and explore remaining challenges to realizing the state's

### LANDSCAPE & BACKGROUND

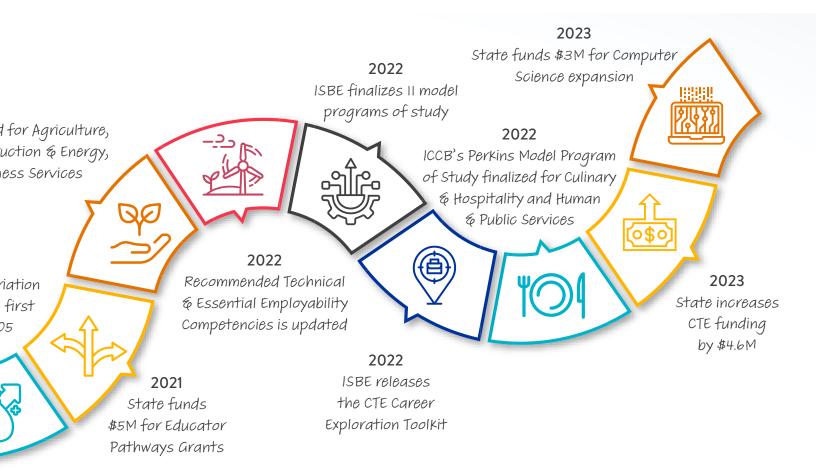


vision for CTE. Based on ongoing conversations with stakeholders, research-based best practices, and <u>ISBE's July 2022 CTE Program Evaluation</u>, we've put together four recommendations to continue to strengthen CTE pathways for Illinois students.

- Conduct a return-on-investment analysis to better understand CTE's economic impact on individuals and the state economy.
- Commit to funding secondary CTE at a sustainable rate indexed to inflation and use funds to strengthen alignment across policies and institutions.

- 3. Conduct a capital needs assessment to determine how current infrastructure and facilities are meeting the state's CTE needs.
- Review high school graduation requirements to ensure coursework serves each student's unique college and career goals and supports alignment across policies.

But first, some background about CTE in Illinois....



Amid a national trend of declining postsecondary enrollments, the Illinois Community College System has **increased** enrollments. In FY22, CTE accounted for the largest number of graduates.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.iccb.org/wp-content/pdfs/data/Annual%20Enroll%20Comp%202022%20Final.pdf

# LANDSCAPE & BACKGROUND (CONTINUED)



# STATE CTE APPROPRIATION

CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS (1%)

EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS (99%)

SECONDARY CTE PROGRAMS
(82%)

ELEMENTARY CAREER
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (3%)

REGIONAL SAFE SCHOOL COOPERATIVE (3%)

EDUCATION CAREER PATHWAYS (12%)

SOURCE	FY 24 APPROPRIATION	ADMINISTRATION	STATE LEADERSHIP & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	TARGETED GRANTS	DISTRIBUTION
Federal Perkins Funds-Secondary	\$30,234,040	\$2,393,723	\$1,809,699	-	\$25,698,935
Federal Perkins Funds- Postsecondary	\$20,156,025	\$1,007,800	\$2,015,602	-	\$17,132,623
State CTE Funds-Secondary	\$47,726,400	-	\$209,566	\$3,591,385	\$43,947,002
State CTE Funds- Postsecondary	\$18,972,900	-	\$2,519,400	-	\$16,453,500

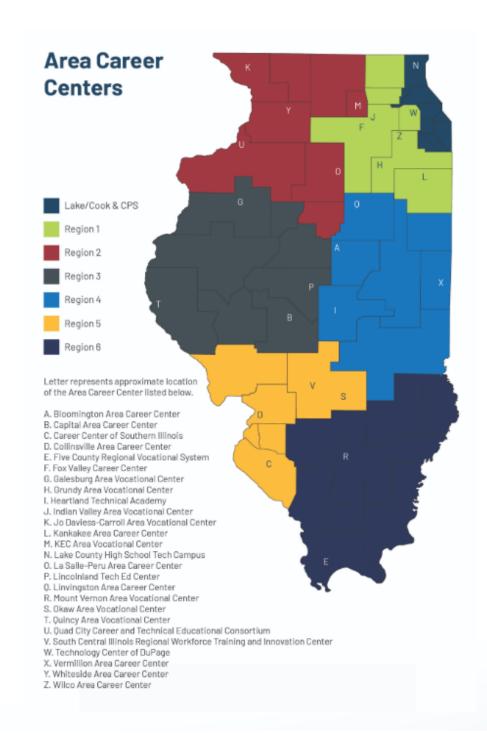
# **CTE DELIVERY SYSTEMS**



#### **AREA CAREER CENTERS (ACC)**

ACCs operate standalone CTE campuses for participating schools allowing multiple schools to share resources and avoid duplication of services. There are 24 ACCs throughout Illinois with an average of 3 full time staff and 2 part-time staff. ISBE's <u>July 2022 evaluation of Illinois CTE programs</u> found that ACC's routinely followed CTE best practices,

including embedding employer skill standards into the curriculum, implementing project-based learning, aligning curriculum to industry standards, and using formative and summative assessments to validate student learning gains. The evaluation also gave ACCs high marks for communication with districts and relationship building with participating high schools.



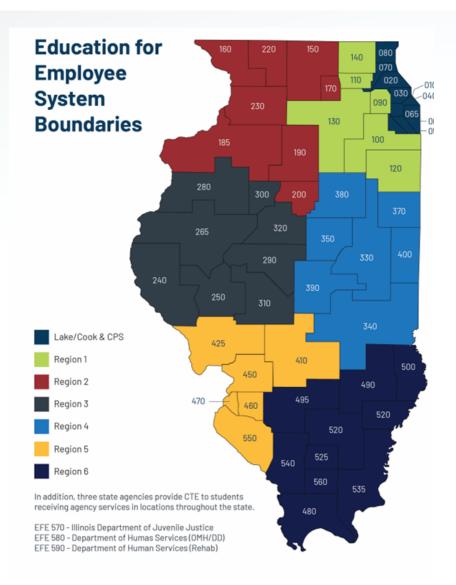
#### EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT SYSTEMS (EFEs)

Education for Employment Systems (EFEs) are regional consortia of local districts, schools, and Area Career Centers (ACCs) that support and deliver high-quality CTE to students within their systems. To qualify for federal Perkins funding, recipients must qualify for a minimum grant of \$15,000 based on a formula driven by population and poverty. But since some districts were too small qualify for the minimum grant, EFEs were created to ensure all districts were eligible.

There are 56 EFEs throughout Illinois that each serve a region of the state with an average of 1.9

full time staff and 1.7 part time staff.2 The 56 EFE systems are further consolidated into 6 EFE regions, which are distinct from other regional divisions, such as community college districts, regional education offices, or Local Workforce Boards. Three EFEs are housed within state agencies that serve secondary student populations-Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Mental Health Services, and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division for Rehabilitation Services. The remaining 53 EFEs each have an EFE Director and a Board of Control. EFE Directors must possess a principal or general administrative endorsement with a Professional Educators License or CTE Educator License.

A little over 60% of EFE Directors serve solely in that role, while almost 40% also act as the ACC Director or high school CTE Director. The July 2022 CTE evaluation of the Illinois CTE delivery system found CTE staff with a single-role EFE Director received more capacity-building supports than EFE Directors serving dual roles.<sup>3</sup>



(For instance, survey participants said 81% of single-role EFEs provided professional development, compared to just 33% of dual-role EFEs. Single-role EFEs reportedly were more likely to build business partnerships (73%) than dual-role EFEs (49%).) Single role EFE Directors brought significant value to high schools and districts serving as a liaison between education and industry partners, acting as a chef advocate for CTE, and providing programmatic and technical assistance to CTE programs.

The evaluation found few members on the EFE Boards of Control and only 61% of district superintendents included themselves as members. Additionally, few school and district staff understood the roles and responsibilities of EFE Boards of Control.

<sup>2</sup> https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-CTE-eval-report.pdf

<sup>3</sup> https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-CTE-eval-report.pdf

# **ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD (ICCB)**

Thirty-nine community college districts receive funds from ICCB to support postsecondary CTE programs and all community colleges offer dual credit courses, 36.4% of which are CTE dual credit courses.4 The highest enrollments for dual credit CTE in 2021 were in Medical Office Assistant/Specialist, Nursing Assistant/Aide and Patient Care Assistant/Aid, Welding Technology/Welder, Business/Office Automation/ Technology/Data Entry, and Computer Programming/ Programmer. The enrollments in these five courses accounted for 9% of all dual credit enrollments in

2021 and represent high-demand pathways in Health Sciences and Technology, Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology and Trade, and Information Technology. Dual credit CTE courses offer students a clear path to local community college programs and, in fact, dual credit courses accounted for 16.5% of all credit enrollment at Illinois community colleges.6

The July 2022 CTE Evaluation

report found that while community colleges play a vital role in offering dual credit CTE, "there is variability in their course requirements and educator qualifications, both of which create barriers for dual credit offerings at the high school" and "there is no formal policy or procedure for communication and collaboration on dual credit articulation, which contradicts state legislation regarding dual credit."7 Since 2020, the ICCB—in coordination with Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University and ISBE-has published 11 CTE program of study guides that provide guidance for program development. These guides identify priority dual credit courses relevant to the industry and provide links for articulation to postsecondary. Strategic dual credit can offer a jump-start on foundational college credit and outline a clear next step for students graduating high school, which allows students to stay in their communities while continuing their studies.

The College Express program in Vermillion County offers a prime example of collaboration across

institutions to deliver high-quality, strategic dual credit courses. Open to all juniors and seniors, College Express courses are taught at the Danville Area Community College (DACC) every weekday for 16 CTE areas that lead to an Associate's degree or industryrecognized credential.

Nick Chatterton, the EFE Director for the Vermillion Vocational Education Delivery System, manages the program, which has doubled its participation since its founding. Local districts, DACC, and the community

> at large all recognize the value the program brings to the community, Chatterton says. "It's not even a conversation if College Express is worthwhile or not; everyone wants to see more students get involved." Chatterton serves as a conduit connecting DACC and local high schools to foster a mutually being the real winners. Tuition, fees, books, and most transportation are completely free to students and well

over half of College Express students go on to enroll at DACC to continue their studies. Looking ahead, College Express hopes to grow the program by extending work-based learning opportunities to more programs and continue to work with DACC and local districts to shield students from high tuition costs. Federal Perkins dollars are prohibited from being used to offset tuition for programs like College Express, so each district uses its own funding to cover the costs for students. Keeping the program affordable for students is key to its success and for ensuring equitable access.

The state recently appropriated \$3.3 million in new funds to the ICCB for dual credit grants and administration.8 This is a ripe opportunity for ICCB to provide more support for dual credit programs by offering more technical and administrative support, granting assistance to students to lower costs and fees, expanding programs in high need areas, reducing credentialing barriers, and extending wraparound services to ensure student success.

foundational college credit and outline

a clear next step for students—but

only if it is strategic. 'Random acts

of dual credit' that are disconnected

from a CTE program or foundational

with the student's bigger picture

are not the best use of resources.

college courses, or that are not aligned

Thoughtful program design is essential to fulfilling the promise of dual credit.

beneficial partnership, with students

<sup>5</sup> http://www.iccb.org/wp-content/pdfs/reports/2021\_Dual\_Credit\_Report\_Final.pdf 7 https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-CTE-eval-report.pdf

#### DEPT. OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY (DCEO)

DCEO created Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIB) to oversee the delivery of workforce development for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. These LWIB are intended to ensure programs, like CTE, make investments that are "evidence-based, data-driven, and meet the businesses needs for a skilled workforce." Membership of LWIB should include leaders from state, business, industry, labor, and education.

DCEO's work is guided by the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which lays out a four-year strategy for workforce development and shares a vision with ISBE and ICCB's Perkins Plan of an integrated P-20 system defined by clear on- and off-ramps that allow individuals to further their education as it suits their life and career goals. Crafting these plans to be complementary has improved communication across agencies and their shared vision has worked to break down work silos to identify places for collaboration and coordination.

The recently approved FY24 budget included new funds for DCEO to fund apprenticeship programs and a clean energy pilot program. These funds will be available to industry partners to expand apprenticeship programs with an emphasis on people of color, women, and veterans. Here are the appropriations:

PURPOSE	FY24 APPROPRIATION		
IL Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program	\$46,636,990		
Journeymen Apprenticeship Training Fund	\$5,000,000		
Clean Energy & EV CTE Pilot Program	\$10,000,000		

#### **WHAT'S NEXT?**

Illinois has undoubtedly made progress in CTE over the last decade—both in expanding opportunities for students and in collecting disaggregated data to support equity. Here are our four recommendations to further strengthen CTE.

#### CONDUCT A RETURN-ON-INVESTMENT ANALYSIS

After years of restructuring CTE programs to support high-demand, high-skill, high-wage (H3) career pathways, it's time to review available data to ensure the state's investments are positioning students for success and leading to positive outcomes for the state's economy.

- Are programs of study aligned to the state's workforce needs?
- Does access to H3 career pathways provide a solid foundation for long-term advancement and economic mobility?
- Does CTE coursework incorporate industryinformed standards?
- ► Are the credentials earned in CTE programs valued by employers and postsecondary institutions?
- ▶ Do CTE programs demonstrate a clear continuum from secondary, to postsecondary, to career?
- Do CTE pathways improve college-readiness for students?
- ► How many students graduate high school with an industry-recognized credential?

The answers to these questions will require an analysis of available data to determine student access, participation, completion, and outcomes data by

student groups, schools, institutions, pathways, and regions to determine inequities, success stories, and places where more resources are needed.

The first step in conducting an ROI analysis will be to establish the priorities and quality indicators for the analysis. The Governor's Office, ISBE, or ICCB should convene stakeholders across the education and employment continuum to articulate the goals of the audit, and establish data-sharing agreements at the outset of the process, which are absolutely critical to ensuring access to data collected and managed across several entities. Cross-agency cooperation and trust is essential.

ROI analyses are being adopted by states across the country, but the methodology and outcomes are different depending on each state's rationale for the analysis and statewide vision for CTE. Some states have charged their board of higher education or their workforce readiness agency to lead the work. Illinois is fortunate to have several entities with experience in this area that could capably complete this work.

Finally, a report should be made publicly available that summarizes findings and makes recommendations for improved CTE delivery. This process should occur regularly to establish a culture of continuous improvement for CTE and foster greater collaboration across state agencies.

Colorado, funded by a grant from the US Dept. of Ed., studied the ROI on concurrent enrollment. The study found that completers of concurrent enrollment programs, like dual credit, "generate a lifetime increase in income of \$2,890 million, state government taxes and savings of \$274 million, and federal taxes and savings of \$472 million" and concluded the ROI for Colorado to be over 600%.

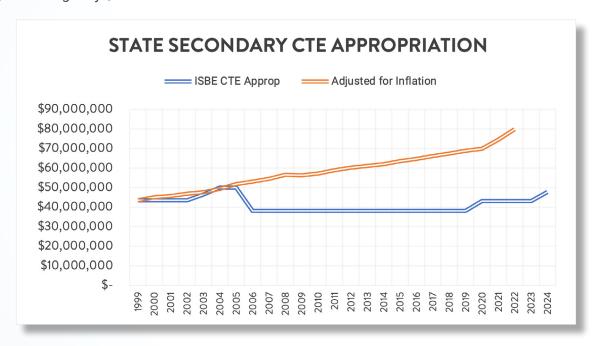


Washington's Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board conducts a Net Impact Study every two years to answer the question of "how much the program affected the employment and the earnings of participants". The study found Community and Technical College Professional Technical Education has a 10-year economic impact of \$16 million and yielded \$2.2 dollars for every \$1 invested.

#### COMMIT TO SUSTAINABLE STATE FUNDING

State funding for secondary CTE was stagnant for well over a decade. In 2020, there was a small increase of \$5 million dollars, bringing the state appropriation for secondary CTE to \$43 million. The state maintained that funding level until this year, when the appropriation was increased by \$4.6 million to bring the state's total investment in secondary CTE to \$47 million for FY24.<sup>10</sup> If state investments had kept up with inflation, the state appropriation would be over \$80 million. Meanwhile, CTE enrollments continue to grow, increasing by 14,000 from 2017 to 2023.<sup>11</sup> This leaves districts doing more with less funding. To support the increase in enrollments and new CTE policies, the state should increase the secondary CTE budget by \$10 million in FY25.

The recently approved FY24 budget also included new funds for computer science and dual credit grants and continued support for agricultural CTE programs. These investments will help emerging programs grow and connect students to employers for work-based learning opportunities. While critically important, these funds should not replace secondary CTE funding which funds the facilities, teachers, and curricula that serve as the foundation for all CTE programs.



AGENCY	PURPOSE	FY24 APPROPRIATION	
ICCB	Postsecondary CTE Funding	40,972,90	
ICCB Dual Credit Grants		3,150,000	
ISBE	Secondary CTE Funding	47,726,400	
ISBE	Computer Science Equity Program	3,000,000	
ISBE Agriculture CTE Programs		7,050,000	

<sup>10</sup> https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/103/SB/PDF/10300SB0250lv.pdf

<sup>11</sup> https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/

#### CONDUCT A CAPITAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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The federal government contributed \$48 million for FY22: 40% of those funds are allocated to postsecondary CTE and the remaining 60% are allocated to secondary CTE.12 The federal appropriation contains a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) provision that requires equal or greater state CTE investments in subsequent years. For FY22, ISBE's target MOE was \$38 million and ICCB's MOE was \$18 million.<sup>13</sup> Given this provision, any increase in state CTE funds should be done incrementally to preserve funding stability across Illinois' CTE system. However, some funds are exempt from the MOE and growing those investments with one-time infusions would assist districts in meeting the needs and challenges of a 21st Century CTE system. Capital funds are one such investment.

Unlike a traditional classroom, many CTE pathways require access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities. To defray costs, districts often rely on Area Career Centers (ACC) or Community Colleges to maintain these facilities, but even with pooled resources, the rate of new technologies and commitment to teaching industry-aligned standards can create significant financial burdens on secondary and postsecondary programs alike. Furthermore,

approximately half of the state's CTE funding comes from the federal government as Perkins funds. These funds cannot be used for facility construction or renovation or to purchase facilities.

ISBE and ICCB should conduct a joint study to determine 1) how the current CTE facilities are meeting the needs of districts looking to scale up pathways, 2) what kind of updates would be necessary to expand access to H3 pathways, particularly in under-resourced districts, and 3) places for collaboration across the many regional CTE actors such as Regional Offices of Education, Education for Employment districts, high school districts, and community college districts. The recommendations should focus on capital improvements that guarantee access to H3 pathways in all regions of the state, address logistical challenges like transportation, stress collaboration and shared resources across actors, and prioritize the needs of districts furthest from adequate funding. Such an analysis is a critical first step in a campaign to secure more CTE capital funding.

<sup>12</sup> https://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/file/Program\_Memo-Estimated\_FY\_2022\_Perkins\_State\_Allocations.pdf

<sup>13</sup> https://www.isbe.net/Documents/2022-IL-CTE-Annual-Report.pdf

#### PROVIDE CTE COURSE PARITY

Nearly half of all Illinois high school students take at least one CTE course. 14 Students who complete two or more upper-level CTE courses within a program of study have a higher rate of graduation than students who do not. 15 CTE courses offer transferable college credit and industry-recognized credentials that can help students land a job after high school or serve as prerequisites for more advanced postsecondary

coursework. CTE courses often require significant time commitments from students to participate in work-based learning opportunities like apprenticeships or workplace challenges.

Despite their value, CTE courses are treated as electives in Illinois high school graduation requirements. Students may take only one CTE course as a required elective course, which undermines the importance of CTE pathways that culminate in a credential or college credit. According to ISBE's July 2022 CTE Program Evaluation, "most students do

not have room in their schedules to enroll in CTE. In fact, many academically advanced students are discouraged from enrolling in CTE in favor of an AP program."<sup>16</sup> The report goes on to recommend that the state advocate for giving CTE parity with AP in high school graduation policy.

The question is: how do we create that parity? Here are a few examples to consider:

Creative course design. Existing ISBE guidance addresses integrating academic skills into CTE courses to consider cross competencies across CTE courses and required courses. For instance, several courses within the Information Technology pathway are designed to satisfy science or math requirements, but it is up to the local school boards to allow substitution. "Geometry for Construction" is an innovative approach that enables students to fulfill a math requirement. The state should explicitly support these approaches.

► Career concentration alternatives. A new graduation requirement on the horizon will mandate two years of foreign language. This

was a policy goal designed to ensure students had equitable access to world languages, which is a college entrance requirement for the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Daily physical education is required under state law. But what if the graduation requirements were narrowly amended to allow exemptions for students who complete a College and Career Pathway Endorsement (CCPE)? The CCPE requires students to complete six hours of early college credit in career-focused courses and to place out of

remedial math and English. These requirements ensure that students that receive a CCPE are college ready. This approach complements the goals of the world language policy but acknowledges each student's unique college and career goals.

#### ► CTE as college-preparatory coursework.

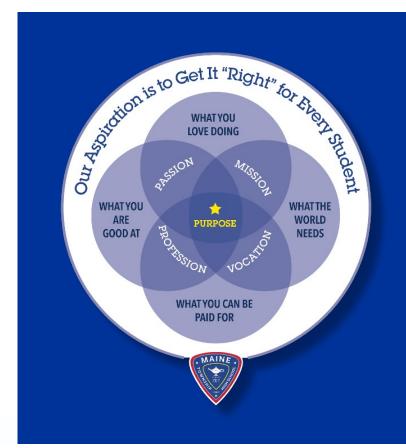
The state should be explicit in its graduation requirements that CTE courses teach academic skills with practical application, and students should be encouraged to pursue CTE coursework as a college-preparatory path. The state should require CTE programs of study to incorporate postsecondary alignment and feature college credit, either through dual, articulated, or prior learning credit.



<sup>15</sup> https://www.isbe.net/Documents/2022-IL-CTE-Annual-Report.pdf

- ► CTE-focused advising. School counselors should have access to professional development and training on CTE within their district. CTE offers unique opportunities for early college credit and can help students explore careers through workbased learning and hands-on skills training. These experiences not only prepare students for college (and award low-cost college credit) but also help students better understand the day-to-day work in a career. CTE can give students a head start or help them rule out options before they enroll in costly postsecondary courses or begin a career that isn't for them. Many community colleges have a dedicated CTE advisor; high schools should coordinate with their local community college to ensure students are being advised on all available academic options so they can take courses that support their individual college and career goals.
- ► Flexible scheduling. Unique CTE experiences, like work-based learning or courses at an area career center, require students to travel off campus. Consequently, CTE students need flexible scheduling that gives students more learning options.

#### MAINE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



Maine Township High School District 207 centers their counseling model on career selection and employment rather than college and course selections. They put the "why" before the "where" according to Superintendent Ken Wallace. This helps students realize that all careers require an education after high school, whether that is a certificate, apprenticeship, four-year university, or community college. Students complete an individualized career plan to help match their passion to a career. They are supported by a dedicated career coordinator who advises them on pathways, career exploration, and postsecondary planning. Students attend 30-minute weekly advisory meetings to check on their progress and plan next steps. To measure success, the district uses software to track student life after high school including employment statistics, salary data, and postsecondary achievement.

#### LITCHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Litchfield High School is leading the way in providing individualized scheduling that offers core classes in the morning followed by electives in the afternoon. The last period of the day is called "Pathway Hour" and it encourages students to take CTE courses and experiences off-campus which often stretch beyond the traditional school day. Students with "overload" schedules can elect a "late start" to give them more time in the morning. Students choose a Pathway class first, then their other classes. To help students and parents better understand the impact of Pathways,

Litchfield recently redesigned their course selection guide to present courses by Pathway including Agriculture, Automotive Technology, Education, Fine Arts, Health Sciences, Hospitality and Food Management, and Manufacturing and Construction. With the new guide, parents were often surprised by the number of options available to students. Conversations within the school began to change as students identified by their Pathway and expressed excitement about their new schedules.

HOUR	UNDER- CLASSMAN	UPPER- CLASSMAN	SCI <sup>17</sup> STUDENT	COLLEGE NOW18 STUDENT
1st	Elective	Band	Late Start <b>or</b> Extra Elective	Band
2nd	Elective	Math		Study Hall
3rd	Elective	Science	English	Math
4th	Math	English	Math	English
5th	English	PE	PE	Science
6th	Science	Elective	Elective	PE
7th	PE	Elective	Elective	Elective
Lunch Break	Lunch	Grab & Go Hot Lunch	Grab & Go Hot Lunch	Lunch
Pathway 1	imPACT <sup>19</sup>	Workplace Internship	SCI Auto Mechanics	Lunch
Pathway 2	RTI/Tutoring			College Now

<sup>17</sup> SCI is the South Central Illinois Training & Innovation Center which functions as Litchfield's Area Career Center that provides CTE for school districts in Montgomery & Macoupin Counties. The center received a \$8.6 million grant from DCEO to build the center.

# **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

# YOUR ONE-STOP-SPOT FOR CTE REPORTS, FRAMEWORKS, & OTHER RESOURCES

- Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act
- ► PaCE Framework
- Career Pathways Dictionary
- ► 2020-2024 Perkins Plan
- ISBE 2022 CTE Report

# **AVAILABLE DATASETS**

DATASET	AGENCY
Illinois Report Card CTE data	ISBE
Illinois College2Career completion dataset	IBHE, ICCB, IDES, ISAC
Illinois WorkNet Center dataset	DCEO
Illinois Career Information System	IDES
CTE secondary program data	ISBE
CTE postsecondary program data	ICCB

<sup>18</sup> College Now is a partnership between Lincolnland Community College and area high schools to offer dual credit courses that will transfer to Illinois four-year universities.

<sup>19</sup> imPACT courses give students the opportunity to build soft skills through team building, social-emotional learning, work time, and individualized study.



Possibilities for Career Pathways Progress in Illinois

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