

K-12 Career and Technical Education

Biographical Information

Mimi Alkire, LWV of Portland, taught middle and high school mathematics for thirty years in Portland Public Schools and math courses at Portland Community College.
In 2004, she began her second career as an independent consultant for national educational policy organizations, state departments of education, and the US Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Adult Education (OCTAE). The focus of her work was on implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics (K-12) and the current and widely used College- and-Career-Readiness Standards (CCRS) for adult education programs across the country. She retired from consulting work in 2025.

Jean Pierce, LWV of Washington Co., served as a Professor of Educational Psychology for 34 years in the Department of Education at Northern Illinois University. She worked with undergraduates, K-12 teachers, and administrators. Jean served on the US League's Consensus study of the Federal Role in Education. Currently, she is Chair of the LWVOR Action Committee.

Josefine Smith, LWV of Marion/Polk Co., graduated from Western Oregon University in 2022 with her bachelor's in psychology, and again in 2024 with her master's in criminal justice. She currently works as a substitute teacher for Polk County. While she has not had direct experience with K-12 CTE, she has observed its positive impact in the schools where she teaches. One aspect that got her interested in CTE was the ways it allows students to explore their interests and different career fields, and she believes CTE has the potential to aid not only students, but educators, school districts, and local businesses.

Maggie VanDame, LWV of Rogue Valley, is an educator and technology professional with 34 years of experience in K–14 education. She holds a Master's degree in Collaborative Educational Leadership from Fielding Graduate University and a certificate in Project Management from UC Berkeley.
In her role as Associate Faculty at Butte-Glenn Community College District, Maggie taught computer applications, workplace communications, and college-to-work transition courses, with an emphasis on Career and Technical Education preparing students for successful entry into the workforce.

Reviewers: Chris Brida, Portland Public Schools Director of CTE and Pathways

Larina Warnock, Medford Schools Assistant Director of Career Learning

The purpose of this report is to share research related to career and technical education which will inform League of Women Voters of Oregon positions that can be used to advocate for or against bills and policies proposed in the state. This is the third of three reports. The first concerned the education of exceptional K-12 learners. The second addressed school health and safety.

Overview

Oregon State Plan for Career and Technical Education[1]:

> *Oregon will reimagine and transform learner experiences to enhance learners' future prospects, empower their communities, and ensure equity in an inclusive, sustainable, innovation-based economy.*

Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce is predicting[2] that by 2031, 72% of all jobs will require postsecondary education or training. Paired with the concern that students are not being properly prepared[3] for entering the workforce, there has been a shift in focus towards providing industry-specific career training for high school students. With major growth in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), healthcare, and community service fields, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs have become the face of the initiative to prepare students for successful employment.

Career and Technical Education is a major component of Career Connected Learning[4] (CCL) in Oregon. The Oregon Department of Education defines CCL as a "framework of career awareness, exploration, preparation, and training." In elementary and middle school, students learn about a variety of jobs, consider how their interests and abilities relate, and identify skills needed for the careers. In elementary school, this is done through guest speakers, career day, surveys, and research. In middle school students participate in career fairs, workplace tours, interviews, simulations, and job shadows. In high school and beyond, through CTE students develop the technical and professional skills needed to become employable in specific careers. They might learn through service learning and a variety of work-based experiences. Most of this report focuses on Career and Technical Education in public high schools.

We begin this report by defining what is meant by Career and Technical Education. Then we discuss partnerships that are essential to delivering needed programs. Next we address issues surrounding equity and teacher certification, which represent challenges to CTE programs. The report concludes by discussing funding, which plays a major role in CTE programs and can greatly impact programming.

NOTE: All hyperlinks included in this report are listed with their full text in Appendix B. Most links will take you to resources outside of this document, but some are links to other sections within the document. The latter will be in [brackets] to help you recognize them.

Background and Definitions

The definition of Career and Technical Education given by the Oregon Department of Education in the Oregon CTE Policy Guidebook[5] is as follows:

"Career and Technical Education (CTE) is content, programs, and instructional strategies based on business and industry skill sets and needs. Instruction incorporates standards-based academic content, technical skills, and workplace behaviors necessary for success in careers of the 21st century. CTE incorporates applied learning that contributes to the individual's development of higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills; work attitudes; general employability skills; technical skills; occupation-specific skills; and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship."

A companion definition from Oregon's CTE Policy Guidebook expands the definition, including six career areas for CTE programs:

"CTE is an educational program for high school and community college learners based on individual interest and industry need. CTE comprises programs offered in six career areas:

- Agriculture, food, and natural resources systems;
- Arts, information, and communications;
- Business and management;
- Health sciences;
- Human resources; and
- Industrial and engineering systems."

Career and Technical Education programs provide students with a practical, hands-on approach to learning and a chance to put their academic knowledge to the test in real-world settings. CTE should be available to all types of K-12 students, including those who have plans to attend college or university and those who hope to join the workforce directly after high school. Programs should address the needs of the community and offer students a viable route to a successful career.

Current CTE programs have evolved from what used to be called "vocational education" programs. They prepare and support learners in acquiring the technical skills, professional practices, and academic knowledge critical for success in high-wage, in-demand careers.

These definitions track closely with the federal Perkins V Act[6], which allocates nationally $1.4 billion each year. In addition to the above definitions, Perkins V calls for rigorous academic content at the secondary level, "aligned with challenging State academic standards." CTE "concentrators" are students who have earned at least 2 credits in a single program of study, with one of the two at the intermediate or advanced level. Two credits represents two years of classes. CTE "participants" take at least one course. At the post-secondary level, CTE concentrators must finish "12 credits of CTE courses or complete a CTE program of study (if less than 12 credits)." Perkins also adds that CTE programs "may include career exploration at the high school level or as early as the middle grades."

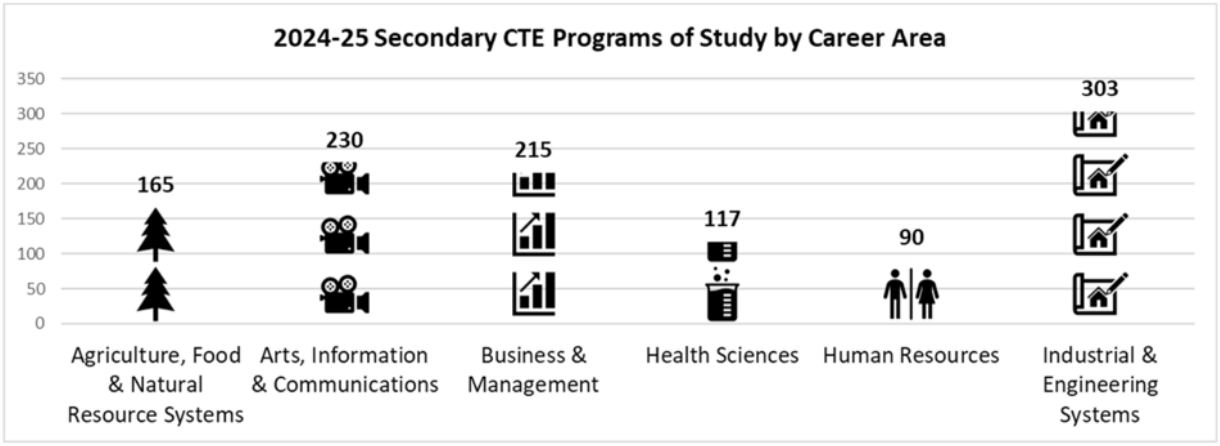
The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is the designated eligible agency responsible for the administration of

Perkins V, and ODE is the fiscal agent for Perkins funding to the state of Oregon. The Secondary-Postsecondary Transitions (SPST) team housed within ODE is responsible for managing the operations of the grant- and subgrant-supported activities to ensure compliance with applicable federal requirements and to confirm that performance goals are being achieved.

ODE also works with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development on postsecondary CTE. This arrangement largely derives from federal Perkins funding for CTE programs, which received more than $17 million[7] in Oregon for 2025-26.

The extent and growth of CTE programs in Oregon can be seen in various statistics. According to the State Library of Oregon's Digital Collections[8], Oregon's secondary CTE offerings continue to grow, reflecting both statewide investment and renewed momentum following pandemic-era declines. From the 2023-24 to 2024-25 school years, the number of approved Programs of Study increased by 34 programs—a 3.13% gain, representing the largest year-over-year increase since 2019-20, when implementation of the High School Success Initiative began to positively impact CTE expansion. After the dip in 2021-22 due to COVID-related disruptions, Oregon has now surpassed pre-pandemic totals for two consecutive years. A breakdown of CTE Program of Study totals by career area is shown here:

Figure #2 - *2024-25 Secondary CTE Programs of Study by Career Area*



According to Advance CTE[9] in 2023 there were 184,360 high school participants in Oregon and 44,581 concentrators. The programs are making a difference. In 2025, the on-time graduation rate[10] for concentrators was 97% compared to 83% overall.

At the post-secondary level, there were 42,150 participants and 14,562 concentrators receiving 7,185 associate degrees and certificates. Eighty-one percent of the post-secondary graduates were employed six months after program completion.

Further, the attendance rate in 23-24 for CTE concentrators was 68.0%, compared to 55.4% for non-CTE students. It should be noted that SB 141, passed in 2025, requires all districts to measure and report on student attendance.

In comparison to non-CTE students, these statistics show substantial effects, including for some under-represented groups. While these figures do not necessarily suggest a causal relationship, there is a strong association between sustained CTE participation, engagement, and students success.

A 2025 article published by the American Federation of Teachers[11] states that the investment in career education programs pays off for states. Nationally, students who complete at least three CTE credits graduate at a higher rate than their classmates, and states receive $10 in economic output for every dollar they spend on CTE programs.

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The Perkins V legislation, the Oregon CTE Policy Guidebook[5], and the State Plan[1] spell out in some detail further features of CTE programs of study. These include substantial requirements concerning equity among underserved populations including gender, tribes, disabled students, etc. The relation of CTE programs to local industry and partnerships along with other administrative details are extensively described in these sources. Variations in CTE Programs of Study across Oregon school districts are to be expected, but this background and these definitions provide a reasonable framework to discuss best practices and research concerning CTE.

CTE Program Evaluation

CTE programs should be regularly evaluated for success using data gathered from student test results, successful completion of academic and technical courses, acceptance to post-secondary accredited programs, placement in apprenticeships or internships, career opportunities offered, goals reached, and professional advancement. This should be a long-term evaluation based on the success of the program's students, but with checkpoints along the way.

Oregon CTE program evaluation uses the High Quality Program of Study Rubric[12] as a tool for educators and administrators to assess existing CTE Programs of Study and to create goals for continuous program improvement. Part of the rubric addresses the umbrella term, Career Connected Learning, which was discussed above. Other sections of this rubric are used as an organization model for this report.

- *Standards and Content:* [See CTE Standards for Oregon Students]
    - Rigorous Integrated Content: Appropriately licensed secondary teachers, and postsecondary instructors meeting institution requirements integrate rigorous technical and academic content.
    - Engaged Learning: Engages students through instructional strategies that are relevant, authentic, and meet the needs and interests of all students.
    - Coherent Curriculum: Aligns to industry-identified standards and sequences to prepare students for their next steps.
- *Alignment and Articulation:* [See Partnerships]
    - Partnerships: Actively engages employer and educator partners to develop, enhance, and support the CTE program in a manner that is sustainable.
    - Credentials: Links instruction to meaningful college credit or industry credentials that can lead to high skill, high wage, and in-demand occupations.
    - Facilities and Equipment: Provides students with safe access to facilities and equipment that are appropriate to the type of instruction and reflect workforce needs.
- *Professional Development:* [See Teacher Certification]
    - Promotes instructor professional growth that aligns with long term program goals.
- *Access and Equity:* [See Equity]
    - Provides all students and their families with appropriate knowledge and experiences to help make informed education and career decisions.

The rubrics also align with the twelve elements of quality described in the 2018 ACTE Quality CTE Program of Study Framework[13]: Standards Aligned and Integrated Curriculum; Sequencing and Articulation; Student Assessment; Prepared and Effective Program Staff; Engaging Instruction; Access and Equity; Facilities, Equipment, Technology, and Materials; Business and Community Partnerships; Student Career Development; Work-based Learning; and Data and Program Improvement.

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance was charged with leading the current national evaluation of Perkins V. Their report was due in 2025, but with recent

cutbacks of IES staff and funding[14], there is a question about when, or if, the report will be completed.



CTE Standards for Oregon Students

CTE is an educational program, not simply job training. High-quality CTE should help young people understand industries, develop transferable technical and professional skills, pursue further education and training, explore entrepreneurship, and make informed choices about their futures.

High school CTE courses are taken as elective credits which are required for an Oregon high school diploma [15].

Below is a table describing electives:

Elective Credits Required (6)	
CTE or Fine Arts or World Language	2
Higher Education and Career Path Skills	0.5
Personal Finance	0.5
Students' Choice	3

According to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act[16] (WIOA), career programs for adult learners are required to address the same standards as their K-12 counterparts. Federal law stipulates that the Oregon K-12 Common Core Standards[17] must be addressed in all career education programs across the state. The Common Core State Standards for English and Language Arts[18] are addressed in all public Oregon high schools for all four years. These include an emphasis on College and Career Readiness for reading, writing, speaking, and listening, including using some texts that come from, and relate to, technical career pathways.

While students in CTE classes must complete the same rigorous core academic coursework as non-CTE students. Career and Technical Education programs have a responsibility not to neglect the "Career" part of their title. This necessarily means that attention to K-12 standards in English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics should be emphasized along with technical training. CTE instructors should collaborate with core academic content teachers so that, while core standards are being met, the student learning experience is a natural blend of academic and technical instruction.

While CTE course credits are earned in high school and community college, career education for Oregon students starts even before students enter Grade 9. For example, the current Oregon State Social Studies Standards[19] include career exploration as early as fifth grade and continues in middle school:

- **Grade 5.E.IC.7** Analyze career choices with consideration of necessary qualifications, income potential, and time commitment
- **Grades 6/7.E.ES.1** Compare the education and training requirements for at least two student-selected career choices. Examples include: CTE programs, licensing and certification, two- and four-year degrees, and graduate school.
- **Grade 8.E.ES.1** Compare the education and training requirements, income potential, and primary duties of at least two jobs available to high school students.

In addition to addressing core learning standards, successful CTE programs rely on a variety of partnerships.

Partnerships

Partnerships within Career and Technical Education programs (CTE) are considered a best practice, as seen in the 2025 brief by EdResearch for Action[20], which evaluated decades of research to identify what factors make a high-quality CTE program. Among other features, strong partnerships were found to be a significant indicator of success. In order to be effective, CTE programs require partnerships among school districts, colleges, communities, businesses, and industries. When these different entities are committed to building and maintaining partnerships, the Oregon Department of Education[21] (ODE) states that everyone stands to gain. In the 2025 Oregon CTE Policy Guidebook[5], the ODE reported that, to meet the federal definition of a High Quality Program of Study, a CTE program must have formalized partnerships, "...including secondary and postsecondary education institutions, businesses and industry, and workforce development - around program development, design, implementation, and evaluation."

Furthermore, coordination between state and local operations is vital to ensure regional programs are aligning with the State's CTE guidelines. While local leaders can work directly with students, families, and other partners, state leaders can form the necessary foundation and support to aid in program success.

Partnering State Agencies

Since 2017, the Oregon Department of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (collectively, the Partnering State Agencies) have been working in collaboration with educators, employers, regional leaders, and learners to expand access to high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs of Study and to strengthen alignment between education, registered apprenticeship, and workforce systems. They have set seven goals, and each year they publish annual reports[23] describing their progress towards those goals:

1. Ensure that well-funded CTE programs with partnerships are available.
2. Establish regional centers that create partnerships.
3. Encourage the establishment of joint high school and community college advisory committees.
4. Address academic requirements and regulatory barriers.
5. Implement accelerated college credit programs that allow students to move seamlessly from public schools to postsecondary education or from training to the workforce.
6. Increase professional development opportunities for teachers and learning opportunities for students.
7. Establish partnerships between public and private entities that promote CTE.



Regional Partnerships

According to Chris Brida, Portland Public Schools CTE director,
“For many students, the most equitable and accessible CTE experience is a coherent program of study embedded within their comprehensive high school, where technical learning is connected to academics, student relationships, extracurricular opportunities, and the rest of their school experience. Regional structures can be extraordinarily valuable when they strengthen, supplement, and extend what schools can provide, especially for opportunities that cannot reasonably exist in every building”.

Regional partnerships is a broad term used to reference the various strategic and collaborative frameworks between those involved in regional CTE programs including schools, colleges, and industries. These partnerships make up the coordinated network seen in consortia, help ensure CTE programs align with workforce needs, and improve access to CTE programming throughout the state.

Among other forms of CTE partnerships between members of a certain region, three types are frequently confused: regional consortia, regional centers, and educational service districts. While sharing similarities, in the context of Oregon's CTE structure, they are functionally different.

Regional Consortia:
Regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) consortia join school districts to apply for Perkins funding and are typically administered by an Educational Service District (ESD) or regional coordinator, who oversees grant compliance, funding distribution, and reporting. Member school districts collaborate on a shared regional plan based on a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) that

identifies workforce needs and program priorities. Consortium participation allows districts to pool resources and leverage funding for specialized equipment, instructor professional development, work-based learning opportunities, and initiatives that expand equitable access to high-quality CTE programs, including support for students pursuing nontraditional career pathways. (Oregon Department of Education & Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 2024).

In Oregon, these activities are guided by the Oregon CTE State Plan[1], which serves as the state's implementation framework for Perkins V. Oversight of Career and Technical Education is shared by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) CTE Funding Program and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to ensure alignment between secondary and postsecondary CTE systems and workforce development goals.

Southern Oregon Example:
According to Pam Ruddock, administrative assistant at the Southern Oregon Career and Technical Education Consortium[23] (SOCTEC), that facility serves as a regional support structure coordinated by Southern Oregon ESD (SOESD). While districts such as Medford and Central Point receive Perkins funds directly, many neighboring districts participate in SOCTEC. The consortium works in cooperation with both regional community colleges—Rogue Community College and Klamath Community College. Through the consortium, participating districts gain access to shared equipment purchases, professional development opportunities, grant management support, and regional workforce partnerships that would be difficult to sustain independently.

Each Career and Technical Education (CTE) program is required to maintain an advisory committee that includes industry representatives, workforce partners, and partners from community colleges. These partnerships help ensure that instructors throughout the region remain informed about current industry standards and workforce expectations, allowing programs to better prepare students for employment opportunities.

Benefits of Consortia Membership

Benefit	Consortia Member Districts	Direct Recipients
Grant Administration	Shared through consortium staff	Managed by district staff
Compliance & Reporting	Consortium support provided	District responsibility
Equipment Purchases	Shared purchasing power	Limited to district allocation
Professional Development	Regional opportunities	District-funded opportunities
Program Development	Collaborative planning	Independent planning
CLNA & Workforce Alignment	Conducted regionally	Conducted locally
Funding Capacity	Leverages pooled resources	Limited to district allocation

Regional Centers:
Regional centers, or regional career centers, provide localized, direct instruction to students. Their main focus is providing career-connected learning, and they often partner with Education Service Districts (ESDs) when individual districts cannot independently support specialized equipment, employer relationships, professional development, transportation, work-based learning coordination, or highly specialized programs. Regional Centers are supported by their region's consortia, as well as their partnerships with industry leaders.

Education Service Districts: Operational entities that provide educational support, special education, technology, and administrative services to local school districts, aimed at creating cost-effective, equitable learning opportunities (Willamette ESD, n.d.).

They act as intermediaries that help both small and large districts access specialized programs. One of the ways they provide this is through supporting CTE program development, however CTE is only one of the many services they assist with including special education, technology and data services, and early learning.

Feature	CTE Consortia (e.g., Perkins Consortium)	Regional Centers	Education Service Districts
Primary Focus	Funding/Compliance	Workforce Development/Learning	Equity/Cost-Effective Support
Purpose	To pool federal Perkins funds and meet grant requirements	To build student's skills and to smooth their transition into the work force or higher education	To ensure equity and cost-efficiency and implement state initiatives

Key Members	School districts, community colleges, ESDs, industry partners	CTE regional coordinators, program administrators, CTE instructors	Public school districts within a specific region
Structure	Formal, geographically-organized group often facilitated by an ESD or community college	Localized facilities following a collaborative framework with ESDs, local schools, and industry members	Governed by locally elected Boards of Directors and led by a Superintendent following state guidelines and laws

Regional consortia, accountability requirements, and equity goals are central to Oregon's CTE Plan[1]. However, achieving these goals depends on stable, predictable funding. Without it, districts - particularly those in rural areas - struggle to maintain high-cost equipment, retain qualified instructors, and sustain industry-aligned curricula.

While this vision sounds very promising and having regional centers was mandated by law, the state has a history of not funding them. An Oregon Department of Education report from December 2025[22] noted, "*Progress toward regional CTE centers continues slowly across Oregon as local and regional leaders pursue partnerships to expand student access to high-quality, hands-on career learning. These efforts consistently reveal both the systemic challenges that limit progress and what it takes to overcome them*."

An interview with Andrew McGough[24], Executive Director of Worksystems Inc, which is a regional center for CTE in Multnomah and Washington Counties, confirmed the need for more coordination. He noted that across the state there were 1000 CTE programs of study (POS) which he felt needed to be more standardized and centralized in development. He felt that the POS should be more strongly aligned with industries with job shortages in each region.

According to Oregon's CTE Policy Guidebook[5], CTE Regional Coordinators work with consortia, regional centers, and ESDs, and are employed by a local community college, Education Service District, or school district to manage the Perkins Consortia Basic and Reserve grants. They work closely with regional districts to develop budgets, facilitate program approval, and provide a bridge between the consortia and various stakeholders. According to the Lane Education Service District Handbook[25], each CTE region in Oregon has a CTE Regional Coordinator, and while their job duties may vary, they are considered the 'primary leadership lever in the field'.

During 2025, there were 14 CTE Consortia in Oregon with regional coordinators[26] dealing with Perkins consortia grants (See Appendix A). However, in the spring of 2026, several organizations hosting CTE Regional Coordinators cut those positions and redistributed responsibilities to other members of their staff. When institutions are selected for review, coordinators serve as a liaison between the Oregon Department of Education, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the institution's CTE programs. The Mid-Willamette Education Consortium Handbook[27] notes that they gather and report information for needs assessments, thereby ensuring regional priorities are being met and that students are properly supported through the local partnerships.

Work-Based Learning

A crucial component of comprehensive CTE programs is work-based learning (WBL). Work-based learning was defined in 2020 by the Oregon State Board of Education[28] as, "Structured learning in the workplace or simulated environment that provides opportunities for sustained interactions with industry or community professionals that foster in-depth, firsthand experience of the expectations and application of knowledge and skills required in a given career field."

WBL is one of the instructional methods used to bridge the gap between classroom and the workplace. It also requires sustained partnerships with professionals in communities, industries, and businesses to be effective.

A 2025 publication by Salem-Keizer Public Schools[29] provides an example of the variety of programming that could be available, depending on resources. The career and college opportunities offered in three or more schools within the district include: Automotive Technology, Computer Programming, Culinary Arts, Graphic Design, Marketing, and Media Production.

Other programming offered ranges from Aviation where students work alongside professionals and even work on airplane systems, to Video and Game Design Animation that prepares students for employment and certifications through helping them develop and collaborate on animation, virtual worlds, and computer graphics.

Within Oregon, the Portland Area Career Technical Education Consortium's [30] (PACTEC) website highlights types of work-based learning approved by Perkins V, including:

- Workplace Simulation: hands-on and virtual learning opportunities, which must align with current demands of the labor market, and include business and industry mentorship;
- Service Learning: service-learning projects that are designed collaboratively with students and community partners;
- Cooperative Work Experience: structured experience directly

related to class studies that leads to earning academic credit;

- School-based Enterprise Experience: can take place in or out of the school and follows the same requirements as workplace simulations;
- Pre-Apprenticeship: Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Counsel approved program that must have a partnership with at least one registered apprenticeship community, to prepare students for entering a Registered Apprenticeship Program;
- And a Clinical/Internship/ Practicum: structured experience that includes specific occupational skills and development goals, may or may not result in academic credit.



PACTEC's website describes criteria that must be included within all work-based learning experiences tied to larger CTE programs. The importance of partnerships is seen in criteria 2 which states it must include sustained interaction with industry, business, or community professionals. Sustained interaction is defined as "a prolonged or extended period…that includes direct, ongoing interactions between the student and the industry, business, or community professional in the form of back and forth feedback on student progress and growth."

Partnerships are required to keep programs running and effective, however coordinators often face hurdles in getting employers to invest initially in developing a relationship with schools, and in convincing students to fill the available work-based learning positions available. As mentioned above, one avenue to incentivize students might be to provide academic credit in return for the student's work, however this may depend on the program itself and the types of work-based learning it provides.

Brida cautions, "High quality Work-based learning requires significant coordination behind the scenes: developing employer relationships, preparing students and employers, solving transportation and scheduling issues, connecting experiences back to curriculum, and ensuring that opportunities are accessible to students who may not already have professional networks. That is another place where regional capacity can be especially powerful without removing the educational experience from the student's home school."

State Departments of Education and Local Partnerships

State and local partnerships are vital to setting a program up for success early, and easing the process of forming local partnerships. There can often be tension between these groups, as state leaders take a large-scale approach, while local leaders often work for the specific needs of their communities. State leaders should prioritize forming strong relationships with local partners and stakeholders to build new curricula as needs in the labor market change. Through leveraging their own unique strengths, state and local leaders can both achieve their goals through partnering together. While local leaders are better able to work directly with communities and students and represent their needs, states can create the structure needed to support local initiatives.

A brief published by Advance CTE, the Education Strategy Group and New Skills Ready Network in 2021[31] discusses five key components to having strong state and local partnerships:

- building partnership by deepening trusted relationships,
- funding innovation through strategic local pilots,
- providing meaningful technical assistance,
- equipping locals with support and space for cross-sector partnerships,
- aligning visions and definitions.

In 2023, the Advance CTE again partnered with the Education Strategy Group and New Skills Ready Network[32] when they observed that relationships between state Departments of Education and businesses are vital for success. States are able to support local engagement through designing and maintaining the infrastructure required for CTE program participation, and both can work together to benefit each other by developing a talented group of hireable individuals. State agencies are in a unique position with their resources to guide and offer tools for various local stakeholders. Strong partnerships between state agencies and local organizations also would aid in data collection and sharing, to allow for effective monitoring of program quality.

One way to start building these partnerships is through states building trust with local partners, understanding their challenges, what is working for them, and providing targeted support. Nebraska offers an example of this according to the Advance CTE brief; from 2016 to 2018 the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) had state leaders travel to each region, where conversations were held with business and education leaders about what was and was not working in their CTE programming. These relationships allow for new insights from both state and local stakeholders, ensuring programs are consistently being realigned to meet the changing needs of our workforce.



Analyses of the Value of Partnerships in CTE

Students, schools, businesses, industries, and their broader communities experience the positive effects of strong CTE partnerships in various ways. Partnerships at every level are crucial to creating and implementing a successful CTE program, however the value of this collaboration is fully seen within the outcomes for the parties involved.

Benefits for Students and Schools

Students are able to be better prepared when making decisions regarding their future through working closely with experienced professionals, developing skills, gaining industry credentials, networking with new social groups, and learning to apply what they have learned in school to work-related tasks.

Professional skills: According to Tennie's (2025) dissertation[33] evaluating the benefits of partnerships in CTE, students develop employability and professional skills including self-confidence, responsibility, and time management. In their comprehensive guide of industry recognized credentials that may be earned, the Oregon Department of Education highlights the credentials[34] that can be earned in each field, which verify to businesses that students are capable and knowledgeable in a particular trade or skill.

Employability: Ross et al., 2018[35] found that participating in mentoring, internships, and apprenticeships has been found to increase an individual's job quality and to increase the chance of employment after high school. Brunner et al. (2022)[36] reported that participation in industry-specific work-based learning had a direct impact on students' earnings and job placements. However, this study also highlights one of the current weaknesses of CTE outcome research, as many studies focus on technical high schools to gather their data. These schools are heavily-focused on preparing students for specific career tracks, thus results may not be generalizable to schools that are not CTE-centered.

Dual Credit: Connections between school districts and colleges in CTE help aid students' transitions into postsecondary education. When high schools and local colleges have a close partnership, they can aid in developing class curriculum and creating dual credit courses, easing the process of transferring college credit earned in high school to postsecondary institutions. Dual credit CTE programs allow students to earn college credit while in high school, often at no cost, and to gain experience with the expectations of college-level work. When local colleges share their facilities, this expands the

opportunities available to high school students.

Achievement Goals: Dougherty (2025)[37] found that among schools with strong educational partnerships, students who took more than one CTE course were more likely to both graduate from high school and complete an associate's degree in comparison to students who took only one course. According to Ross et al. (2018), individuals with postsecondary degrees are also more likely to have a higher job quality (as measured by wages, benefits, hours, and job satisfaction) by age 29, than those without a GED or a high school diploma.

Successfully easing the transition from high school to college and professional careers benefits all those involved. Students are taught the skills and knowledge to be successful in later roles, and employers as well as postsecondary institutions gain individuals that are more prepared, diverse, and confident in their goals. Furthermore, school districts benefit from increased student engagement and graduation rates, as well as from building strong local partnerships that will allow for future collaboration and assistance.



Benefits for Businesses and Industries

Through working with CTE programs, businesses and industries are able to access pools of trained future employees, who are gaining the experience and skills necessary to be successful in their settings. The Career Connected Learning Guide for Industry Partners states[38] observes that through connecting industries with schools, businesses can experience an increase in productivity, job retention and satisfaction, job performance, and social capital and goodwill among the community. Conducting qualitative interviews with organization partners in the major CTE career clusters who conducted high-school WBL, Tennie (2025)[33] reported a common finding was that CTE increased the organization's access to skilled potential employees.

An Advance CTE 2021 survey[39] of 315 employers from in-demand industries identified CTE as a valuable way to find trusted sources of employees that can meet hiring needs and face work-related challenges. Opportunities like apprenticeships allow businesses to tailor an individual's development to their needs, with employers reporting that hired candidates with CTE experience had qualifications that closely aligned with attributes the business sought.

This, like many of the other benefits of partnerships, reinforces the value of CTE for investors and employers, and motivates more interaction and investment into programs, creating a positive cycle.

When businesses work with educators and students to develop a curriculum focusing on relevant skills and then teach said skills, there is a positive impact on costs. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2021)[40] stated that when hiring processes are more successful, businesses will ultimately save money through improved employee retention and reduced costs related to training and recruitment. CTE programs have been found to produce a higher return on investment. Career Connected Learning's *Guide for Industry Partners*[38] states that apprenticeships have a particular benefit for industries with the National Apprenticeship Program[41] reporting a $1.47 return for every $1 invested in CTE apprenticeships.

Industries report a $1.47 return for every $1 invested in CTE apprenticeships

Career Connect Washington provides an example of the value of partnerships for businesses. Through focusing on partnership development they now have nine regional networks that connect all parties together. In their first five years, Advance CTE (2025)[42] states these unique partnerships led to over 115 career launch programs. This increase in programming attracted $30 million in federal grants that allowed Career Connect Washington to reinvest in CTE and create a statewide system.

Strong partnerships among stakeholders allow for the use of needs-based assessments, ensuring that CTE programs are aligning their curricula with the needs of local businesses and industries. According to the Oregon Department of Education (2021)[43] , these assessments are conducted at the state, regional, and local level. Conducting these assessments gives districts the ability to offer effective programs that set students up for success, by ensuring programs align with economic and workforce needs at each level. As a result, students are better prepared to find employment and succeed in postsecondary programs, and employers can hire individuals who bridge skills gaps within the industry.

Having a strong focus on building and maintaining partnerships is essential to the success of Career and Technical Education programs. Creating more valuable experiences for students, promoting involvement with colleges, investing in local communities, and closing the skills gap for employees and within the job market produces a range of favorable outcomes that then promote further investment and research into CTE.

Teacher Certification

A number of CTE teachers have held successful careers in business or industry. There are several types of licenses for CTE teachers in Oregon:

A **Restricted CTE license** permits someone to teach in an approved program for up to 3 years in Oregon if they have a substantial amount of relevant, documented experience in an industry (typically at least 2000 hours) but they lack traditional teacher training. Restricted licenses must be renewed annually. They receive mentoring and create a Professional Development Plan leading to a preliminary license. They must hold at least an associate's degree unless the requirement is waived by an Instructor Appraisal Committee. Their Professional Development Plan must include six required college classes (18 credits) in education unless they can demonstrate they already have those courses. In addition to Introduction to Career and Technical Education in Oregon a restricted license requires:

- Classroom Management;
- Culturally Responsive Practices, including responsiveness to the instructional needs of students from historically underrepresented, under-served communities; students from all socio-economic situations; and students who require special education services;
- Human Development for adolescent and older children;
- Curriculum Design, Instructional Strategies and Assessment;

AND

- At least three quarter hours or two semester hours of Instructional Methodology in how to teach mathematics to secondary learners;

OR

- At least three quarter hours or two semester hours in Instructional Methodology in how to teach reading or writing and literacy to secondary learners.

A **Preliminary CTE license** permits new teachers to work in an approved CTE program in Oregon. This license is good for 3 years, but it is renewable. Requirements include having

- at least an associate's degree (this can be waived by an Instructor Appraisal Committee)
- completed a CTE Professional Development Plan,
- passed an approved test of civil rights laws and professional ethics, (this requirement has been on pause since COVID).
- completed a background check.

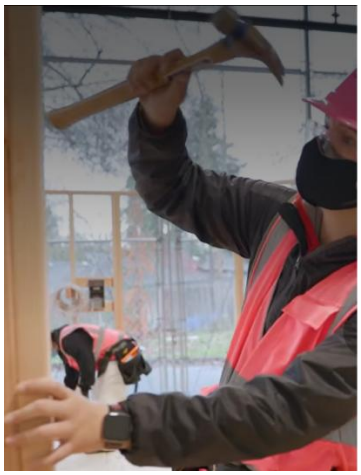
A **Professional CTE teaching license** permits someone to teach in an approved CTE program. The license can be renewed every five years. In addition to a preliminary license or its equivalent, applicants must complete

advanced professional education which might be

- Individually tailored to their performance goals
- A degree program
- Advanced license
- National Board of Professional Teaching Standards certification in CTE
- Another CTE Professional Certification program approved by the Oregon Department of Education
- Other advanced coursework approved by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission Executive Director or the Director of Licensure.
- Four years of full-time teaching experience or six years of part-time
- Background check

Ongoing professional development is required to keep a CTE license.

People with a current teaching license may apply for a **CTE endorsement** in a specialized field. The endorsement is added to a license to show that a teacher has deeper experience in an area based on a combination of education, work experience, and professional development. Until they have completed a Professional Development Plan created by their Instructor Appraisal Committee and taken a 3-credit college course titled Introduction to CTE in Oregon, they teach on a License for Conditional Assignment.



Analyses of Types of Certification for CTE Teachers

According to CTE Policy Watch[44], nationally, roughly 38% of public school CTE teachers enter with alternative certification (a restricted license). This is twice as high as the overall rate. Further, 10.9% of CTE teachers have an associate degree or less, compared to 1% of teachers overall.

In 2024, Blazar et al[45] observed that – not only do licensure policies of CTE teachers differ significantly from those of non-CTE teachers - but there is also much inconsistency from one state to another in certification requirements. Further, there is an absence of academic scholarship analyzing which of the approaches is most effective. Programs differ in the degree to which teachers are prepared to understand why students act as they do, how to manage a classroom, how to teach students with special needs, etc.

Not surprisingly, when Ruhland and Bremer (2003)[46] asked CTE teachers how prepared they felt, those who had completed a traditional certification program felt better prepared to teach, while those with alternative certification felt they had a firmer grasp of the subject matter. Chen et al.(2023)[47] reported that CTE teachers with greater knowledge of their subject area tended to have students earning higher incomes in the long term.

CTE Teacher Shortage

Oregon is not keeping up with the demand for skilled workers. There is a growing shortage. In 2025 testimony presented to the Oregon Legislature[48] the Superintendent of the Willamette Educational Service District reported, "This year alone, the healthcare sector requires 27,000 additional skilled professionals just to meet current demand. By 2029, our state will see an average of 52,000 new job openings annually that require technical expertise. The need is undeniable, and the pipeline to fill those jobs is at a trickle."

A major factor causing this problem is a significant shortage of CTE teachers. According to Kistler and Dougherty (2024)[49] schools have had difficulty filling positions in CTE subjects 57% of the time, compared to 39% for openings in academic subjects. Some attribute part of the problem to certification requirements.

Another possible reason for the difficulty in recruiting CTE teachers is the discrepancy in salaries earned in some industries compared to education.

According to career salary data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics[50], business professionals earn on average $78,130 compared to $57,710 for teachers. In contrast, a study conducted in Washington State by the Calder Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Date in Educational Research [51] found that, "previously employed CTE teachers see substantial pay increases, about $13,000 in annual earnings on average, upon first entering teaching. This increase is widely felt, with the median teacher from every industry group receiving increased annual earnings, but earnings increases were particularly large for CTE teachers entering through traditional pathways and, among teachers entering through the state's Business and Industry pathway, for CTE teachers coming from industries with lower average pay."

Typically, the pay scale for teachers is based on years of teaching experience as well as years of college education. For some people transitioning from industry, this means they would take a substantial pay cut. To address this problem, the Education Commission of the States[52] reported that in 2020, Idaho passed a law permitting CTE teachers to get credit on the pay scale for the time they worked in industry. Alternatively, in 2021, Maine increased the minimum salary of CTE teachers $2500 over the minimum salary for other beginning teachers.

Meeting the CTE Teacher Shortage

In 2017 Carver-Thompson and Darling-Hammond[53] observed that teacher

shortages frequently prompt districts to hire teachers with alternative certification. Having less coursework and student teaching, 25% more of these teachers tend to leave the profession compared to teachers with traditional certification.

Further, in 2000 Darling-Hammond[54] reported that hiring well-qualified (i.e. fully certified) teachers was strongly related to student achievement in reading and mathematics, prompting her to observe, "It stands to reason that student learning should be enhanced by the efforts of teachers who are more knowledgeable in their field and are skillful at teaching it to others."

However, Darling-Hammond was focused on teachers of core subjects. Very little research has addressed the merits of having traditional certification as opposed to alternative certification for CTE teachers.

There is some evidence that holding an alternative certificate may be less problematic for CTE teachers, but it is commonly recognized that this issue requires further study. Nguyen et al. (2023)[55] reported finding no greater turnover for teachers with CTE qualification compared to those with traditional certificates. Theobold et al.(2023)[56] found that CTE teachers in Washington who had Business and Industry (B&I) certification had students with better attendance, fewer discipline problems, and higher on-time graduation rates than teachers with traditional certification. This held true even for students with special needs. Unfortunately, course requirements for B&I certification vary widely from one school to another within the state, so it is impossible to generalize about the pedagogical training these students had.

According to Brida, "Alternative pathways into teaching matter, but attracting and retaining industry professionals also involves compensation, credit for prior industry experience, strong mentoring, accessible pedagogical preparation, ongoing industry learning, and professional communities for CTE educators."

Certification of Career Counselors

According to a New Skills for Youth Initiative survey in 2018[57], only 42% of the states certified full- or part-time career counselors in high schools, and yet 79% of the respondents rated this practice as effective. Forty-seven percent of the states reported purchasing and using ready-made computerized tools to help students explore their career interests. However, Salimi et al (2025)[58] observed that these tools do not replace teachers. In fact, teachers or counselors must supervise the tools and interpret the results.

Having well-trained career counselors is important. The Association for Career and Technical Education[59] reported that unconscious biases and negative stereotypes can cause counselors to mislead students.

Equity

Equity in access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs has long been recognized as an issue of concern. This issue is addressed within this report in terms of:

- [Gender]
- [Poverty]
- [Race]
- [Geography]
- [Exceptional Learners]

Gender

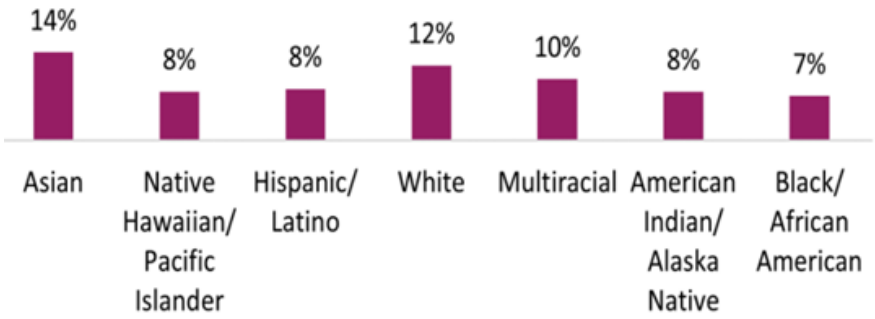
According to Oregon's **CTE State Plan 2024-28**[1], "participation rates vary by gender in specific programs of study. For example, female-identifying students are underrepresented in computer science and manufacturing programs, and male-identifying students are underrepresented in education programs." In general, more males have participated in CTE than females. Data from Arneson et al. [60] found that the gap between male and female participation rates widened over time, from a 4% difference in 2013 to 8% in the class of 2018.

Poverty

Seventy percent of the Perkins V allocation is based on the districts' population of individuals aged 5-17 living in poverty, compared to the state population of the same age group living in poverty. According to Arneson et al. [60] economically disadvantaged students were far more likely to be CTE concentrators than were economically advantaged students.

Race

Oregon Data for the 2021-22 and 22-23 school years from the **CTE State Plan 2024-28**[1], suggests some racial disparities, with higher percentages of White and Asian students compared to their populations enrolled as concentrators than students from other races:



Geography

As noted above, Oregon uses a regional consortia model to try to ensure that funding is available for CTE programs and professional development throughout the state.

Nevertheless, Arneson et al. [60] reported that in 2017-18, urban high schools in Oregon were offering an average of 4.6 CTE programs, compared to 1.9 in rural schools.

Urban and Goldring (2025) have identified various barriers preventing rural students from getting the most out of career and technical education. These include:

- Less access to qualified teachers specializing in certain careers
- Fewer opportunities for employer partnerships
- Limited school district financial resources to invest in equipment and instructional materials.

The CTE State Plan 2024-28[1] reported, "The state consulted with over 1,000 CTE partners—including students and families/caregivers, tribal leaders, educators, administrators, regional coordinators and grant managers, advisory council/board members, and business, industry, and workforce development partners and community-based organizations—to help develop the new four-year CTE strategic plan. Below is a summary of the (equity) responses:

- Tribes, caregivers, and families wanted more career exploration offered in middle schools and targeted marketing campaigns to increase exposure and opportunities for students and families, particularly in underserved populations.
- Oregon tribes indicated a need for more CTE access (especially in remote rural locations) and better ways to connect with families and communities about those opportunities. They also wanted a voice in the development of these programs.
- Across the board, partners and tribes expressed the need for more funding to support a strong CTE regional coordination and leadership structure, targeted resources for small/rural schools, more communication and marketing of CTE and the opportunities available for students, and the ability to effectively support the growth and maintenance of CTE programs, pathways, and opportunities that lead to high-wage, in-demand careers in Oregon."

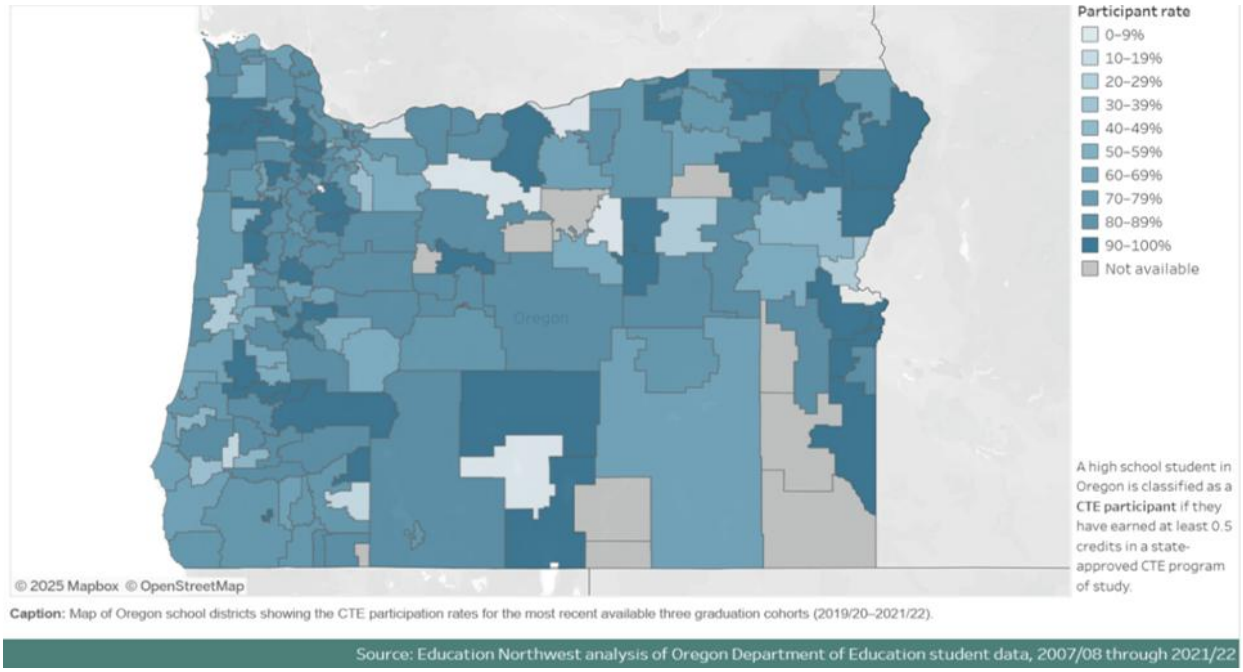
In 2025, HB3552[61] was proposed to create Regional Career Centers facilitated by Educational Service Districts to provide CTE support and coordination with an appropriation of $3.6 Million. Presumably, this could have improved access to CTE programs in rural areas. The bill did not pass despite the following testimony in support:

- A fact sheet from Oregon Regional Career Centers in 2025[62] mentioned, "Oregon remains one of the few states without dedicated Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding for all schools. Investing in CTE is essential to address the state's workforce needs and ensure Oregon remains competitive with its neighbors."

- Testimony from the Chief Academic Officer of the NW Regional Education Service District (ESD) [63] observed, “In Tillamook County three districts have begun having students participate in hybrid CTE labs across district boundaries - allowing them to engage in hands-on learning at their home district while connecting virtually with expert instructors across the county. Because of resource and geographic limitations, only one program in construction trades can be offered this way despite a host of other industry needs in the area”.

- Testimony from the Superintendent of the WIllamette Educational Service District [64] noted, “Oregon already has a law—ORS 344.125—that mandates regional career centers at the K-12 level, but it has never been meaningfully funded. RCCs offer a cost-effective, community-driven solution. By leveraging Oregon’s 19 ESDs as regional hubs, we can efficiently provide high-quality, career-connected learning to students statewide, develop the critical coordination between programs across the state to ensure quality and accountability, and open the doors to world-class workforce development opportunities regardless of zip code.”

The following graphic shows CTE Participation Rates by School District (2025)[65]



Exceptional Learners

The Oregon State Plan[1] reported that lower percentages of special education students with Individual Educational Plans participated in CTE programs (56% compared to 68% of all students), while 7% of special education students were concentrators compared to 11% of all students.

Plans for Enhancing Equity

The State Plan[1] lists 3 desired outcomes. The second one addresses equity. This is noteworthy in light of the inequities cited above and the lack of funding for regional centers.

- Outcome 1: Career connected learning that is systemically integrated with education and workforce development. In addition to CTE, this involves career awareness in the elementary grades and career exploration in middle school.
- Outcome 2: Increased equitable participation in high-quality CTE and career connected learning.
- Outcome 3: Expanded communication, transparency, and diversity of voices and contributors connected to education and workforce development partnerships.

"The State Plan includes action steps to provide many resources and strategies to help build and maintain equity in high-quality CTE Programs of Study.

- Strategy 1 - Center equity and learner experience in decision-making, resource distribution, policies, and practices.
- Strategy 2 - Strengthen the quality and consistency of CTE Programs of Study by developing resources and training educators, administrators, and partners to improve instruction.
- Strategy 3 - Create clear CTE educator retention and recruitment systems, resources, and supportive spaces.
- Strategy 4 – Develop innovative policies and models to ensure CTE programs have the flexibility needed to provide access for all students while meeting the demands of today and tomorrow."

These steps are not described in detail in the plan, although, as noted earlier, there is a rubric for addressing equity in high quality programs of study.

Funding

Providing funding for equipment, partnerships, staffing, and addressing issues of equity is a major concern for CTE. According to Advance CTE's *State-by-State Table on CTE Funding*[66] states use a variety of approaches to fund secondary Career and Technical Education, including categorical formulas, dedicated state grants, and foundational models embedded within general education funding. Oregon is classified as a **foundational funding state**, meaning it does not provide a permanent, categorical CTE funding formula separate from its general K–12 funding

system. As a result, Oregon districts rely heavily on federal Perkins funding and a collection of state incentive and grant programs to support CTE. This structural choice places Oregon among a smaller group of states where CTE funding is less predictable and more dependent on competitive or biennial funding decisions, creating challenges for long-term planning and program sustainability.

In November, 2025, an interview with Larina Warnock[67], Assistant Director of Career Learning for the Medford School District and Co-chair of the Advocacy Committee of Oregon ACTE. revealed that secondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Oregon rely on a patchwork of federal, state, and incentive-based funding sources. While Oregon's approach blends flexible base funding with targeted grants and aligns with the state's CTE Plan[1], the overall funding structure is increasingly unstable. Program costs continue to rise, while major funding sources show signs of stagnation, reduction, or uncertainty. As a result, districts face growing difficulty sustaining high-quality CTE opportunities without significant funding increases or structural reform.

Federal Funding

According to the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE)[68], Perkins V has three funding streams: the Basic State Grant, National Activities and Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Institutions.

- The Basic State Grant[69] is the largest funding stream within the Perkins Act and was funded at $1.44 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. Funding is allocated to each state by a formula based on population aged 15-6695 and per-capita income. Within each state allocation, a state may hold up to 15% for state administrative costs, required set-asides that promote access to CTE for specific learner groups, and other leadership activities. The remaining at least 85% is allocated to local recipients, which are primarily school districts and postsecondary institutions.)
- Funding under National Activities supports research and evaluation of CTE
- The third funding stream directs money to postsecondary career and technical institutions that are controlled by Tribes or Tribal organizations."

According to L. Warnock[67] Oregon receives approximately $18 million annually through the Carl D. Perkins Grant, with roughly half allocated to secondary education. While this funding is critical, it represents only a small fraction of what districts need to operate modern, high-quality CTE programs. In addition, because Perkins funding is distributed by district or consortia, individual allocations are often modest.

Perkins Reserve Grants provide additional two-year funding for regional

work-based learning initiatives, but these grants are competitive and limited in scope.

The ACTE overview notes, “Within the at least 85% of the state allocation that goes to local recipients, states may reserve up to 15% for alternative distribution. This enables states to provide additional supports to particular types of local recipients, such as rural CTE programs, or to incentivize local recipients to address specific goals such as strengthening programs of study or closing gaps among learner groups.” .

Perkins funds are also highly restricted: These restrictions limit districts’ ability to address core operational needs such as staffing, ongoing maintenance, and program sustainability.

Perkins V Funding: Restrictions

Restriction	Description
No Supplanting	Funds must be used to expand or add to CTE offerings, and cannot replace existing state, local, or other federal funds used for standard school operations.
Building Operations	Funds cannot be used for routine maintenance of school facilities or paying for basic utilities and construction.
General Ed & Remediation	You cannot use these grants to pay for remedial academic courses (like basic reading or math), scholarships, or non-CTE academic teacher salaries.
Administrative Caps	No more than 5% of a local subgrant can be used for administrative costs.
Student Costs	Funds cannot cover individual student expenses such as tuition, personal equipment/clothing kept by the student, or individual membership dues for professional organizations.
Personal & Social Items	Purchases like food, drinks, prizes, and entertainment are universally unallowable.
Level of Instruction	Perkins secondary funds generally cannot be used for courses prior to the 7th grade or for postsecondary/adult programs.

Table created based on information provided by the Portland Area Career Technical Education Consortium[70]

Pursuant to an Executive Order[71] and subsequent interagency actions, the President has transferred many administrative responsibilities for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V) from the Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Labor[72]. However, the Perkins V Act remains under the statutory authority of the U.S. Department of Education, which continues to be responsible for policy, legal oversight, and compliance. While the law has not changed, Congress has the authority to amend Perkins V at any time and could formally reassign these responsibilities through future legislation.

The current administration and its supporters argue the change better aligns education with workforce needs, while ACTE contends[73] it fragments oversight and risks weakening the educational mission of K-12 Career and Technical Education.

The biggest concern expressed by many state CTE leaders[74], school districts, community colleges, and organizations: “The Perkins Act and the CTE programs it supports are not merely job training programs; these programs are comprehensive educational and career preparation programs that prepare secondary and postsecondary learners for lifelong success by connecting academic and technical learning with the real world skills that learners need to thrive.”. Also, Perkins V could gradually shift from being an education program to being primarily a workforce training program under the Dept. of Labor.

State Funding:

1) *High School Success (Measure 98*[75])

The High School Success Act (HSS) was established in 2016 but did not have a fully dedicated funding stream until 2019 when it was funded under the "Statewide Education Initiatives Account" of the broader Student Success Act. In that year, the Corporate Activity tax was created to fund career education and other programs.

While local school districts receive separate non-competitive grants from the Student Investment Account (SSA) to use on things like lowering class sizes or improving mental health, the High School Success money is specifically directed toward high school programs. HSS is considered dedicated funding[76] and cannot supplant District General Funds.

Funding is used to establish or expand programs in three key areas:

- Dropout prevention
- Career and technical education (CTE)
- College-level education opportunities,

Problems with HSS Funding

Part of the funding problem is that available funding from Oregon focuses on expansion or enhancement of CTE programs while inflation has driven the cost of consumables for CTE programs up far more than districts can adapt to. Warnock[67] contends that districts need funding that can be used to maintain CTE programs. “A manufacturing program with beautiful new machines isn’t going to teach much without metal to use on it.”

In her interview, L. Warnock also noted[67] that when the funds are received by schools they must allocate money for buckets. For low-income schools under 100K per year the district must put some money in CTE and some in one other bucket. But the percentage of dollar amount is not designated. If even $1 goes towards CTE the district has met the requirement. This creates a huge disparity in CTE access. As income

increases the buckets increase but the allocation remains the same. Several smaller grant programs supplement CTE funding, but none is sufficient to offset rising costs or instability in Perkins and HSS funding.

At the same time, as noted in a recent Capitol Chronicle article[77], Oregon's broader K–12 budget is tightening, placing High School Success (HSS / Measure 98)—one of the state's primary CTE funding sources—at risk. Although the current funding structure remains in place, districts are planning for possible reductions.

2) Combined Federal and State Grants

According to L.Warnock[67], several smaller grant programs supplement CTE funding, but none is sufficient to offset rising costs or instability in Perkins and HSS funding:

3) Secondary Career Pathway Funding (HB 3072[78]).

Through HB 3072, incentive-based funding rewards districts for student progress in intensive CTE Programs of Study. According to ODE[79], career pathway funding is intended to increase the number and diversity of students who earn three or more credits in a high-quality CTE pathway aligned with high-wage, in-demand occupations.

Secondary Career Pathway Funding (HB 3072)	
Student Achievement	**Points Earned**
A student who completes 0.5 credits in a semester in one class earns no points	0 points
A student who completes 3 credits in a single area of study (6 semesters) earns 1 point	1 point
A student who completes an Industry Recognized Credential (IRC) earns 1 point	1 point

At the high school level, these Secondary Career Pathway[80] funds often support dual enrollment, instructional supplies, certifications, transportation for work-based learning, tutoring, and the development of new CTE programs. District-level awards typically range from approximately $2,000 to $45,000 per qualifying program, based on a point system tied to student participation. While helpful, these amounts are limited and often short-term.

According to L.Warnock[67],

- Each year as the CTE programs increase student participation there are more points to divide into the grant funds. The amount of points increases per student participation in CTE programs but the grant funds remain the same. Districts are receiving less per point. When the program started, each point was worth a substantial amount. Currently, points are worth about

30 dollars. Each year the funding for the Career Pathways grant is less for school districts since the funding remains the same. A big push to increase this funding is being discussed at the State level and also the importance of educating Administrators of the importance of CTE.

- CTE curriculum is designated as an elective class. In many districts students are scheduled into CTE classes when there are no other electives available. In this case, students may not complete the 3 credits (6 semesters) the district needs to create a point for the district.

4) State Grants:

CTE Revitalization Grants[81]**:** These competitive grants support the creation or expansion of CTE Programs of Study aligned with workforce needs, high-skill and high-wage occupations, and equity goals. While impactful, L.Warnock[67] notes that grants are not ongoing funding sources and cannot be relied upon for long-term program sustainability,

Concerns About Funding

The unstable sources of funding are a serious concern. According to Brida, "State dollars must address a variety of needs:

- Stable operating support for staffing, instructional materials, maintenance, coordination, and sustaining high-quality Programs of Study;
- Capital and equipment investment for expensive programs and modernization;
- Innovation/start-up funding for developing new programs and approaches; and
- Regional/shared infrastructure for work-based learning, employer engagement, transportation, specialized facilities, professional learning, and opportunities that individual districts cannot efficiently provide alone.

Competitive grants can be excellent tools for innovation, but they are much less effective as the foundation for sustaining programs year after year. Predictable funding tied to high-quality programs of study would give districts much greater ability to make thoughtful, long-term decisions about staffing, facilities, equipment, partnerships, and student access."

Regional consortia, accountability requirements, and equity goals are central to Oregon's CTE Plan. However, achieving these goals depends on stable, predictable funding. Without it, districts struggle to maintain high-cost equipment, retain qualified instructors, and sustain industry-aligned curricula.

The Oregon Association for Career and Technical Education has voiced their concern[82] over budget reductions proposed during the 2026 session that would have significantly impacted Career and Technical Education across Oregon. These included reductions to several key CTE funding streams:

- Agricultural Summer Programs Grants- these programs offer students immersive, real-world agricultural education. Reductions will limit student access to hands-on learning critical to Oregon's agricultural economy.
- CTE Career Pathway Fund: Cuts will reduce schools' ability to develop and maintain specialized pathways in areas such as health sciences, advanced manufacturing, and IT.
- CTE Revitalization Grants. These grants modernize classrooms with updated technology, curriculum and equipment.
- High School Success (Measure 98). HSS funding supports dropout prevention, CTE and college-level learning.
- STEM Innovation and Regional Network Grants. This will restrict schools' ability to build innovative programs and regional partnerships that integrate STEM into CTE.
- FFA (Future Farmers of America). Cuts to FFA jeopardize Oregon's future agricultural leadership.

Warnock[67] reported a conundrum around SB 141[83] known as the 2025 Education Accountability Act, the bill establishes a unified statewide framework to monitor, support, and improve K-12 student outcomes across all 197 of the state's school districts. But this Bill inadvertently could have the potential of reducing funding for CTE programs if the school district does not choose CTE as their local measure. Currently Medford and Grants Pass have done this, but other districts in the state have not

Conclusion

Career and Technical Education refers to high school and community college programs designed to prepare students in Oregon for careers in

- Agriculture, food, and natural resources systems;
- Arts, information, and communications;
- Business and management;
- Health sciences;
- Human resources; and
- Industrial and engineering systems

There are a variety of types of partnerships which have developed over time to coordinate these efforts.

At the state level, the Oregon Department of Education, the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries oversee and work with schools, employers, regional leaders, and students. At the regional level, CTE consortia, regional centers, and education service districts each contribute to the efforts and work with regional coordinators. Beyond this bureaucracy, partnerships with business

and industry provide work-based learning through which students acquire professional skills that make them more employable.

Teacher licensure requirements for CTE differ widely from requirements for other types of teachers and differ widely among states. Unfortunately, there is a lack of research examining which types of teacher certification are most effective for CTE. Since there is a serious shortage of CTE teachers, many educators have alternative teaching certificates. While this poses problems for teachers of core academic content, it may not be as much of an issue for CTE teachers.

While Oregon has prioritized addressing equity in access to CTE programs, there are still major inequities, particularly geographic. Students in rural schools who would like to enroll in CTE face problems such as transportation, scheduling, lack of teachers and equipment, and fewer career options.

Oregon's secondary Career and Technical Education programs rely on a mix of federal and state funding that is increasingly unstable and insufficient. Federal funding through the Carl D. Perkins Act is essential but limited, subject to strict spending requirements, and unable to cover the full cost of modern CTE programs. State funding through High School Success (Measure 98) depends on the broader Student Success funds that are dependent on the Corporate Activity Tax and must be shared among multiple priorities. Also Career Pathways funds are strained as more students move into popular CTE programs.

Unlike many states, Oregon does not provide a dedicated, permanent funding stream for secondary CTE. Instead, districts depend on fluctuating Corporate Activity Tax revenues, competitive grants, and biennial legislative appropriations, making long-term planning for staffing, equipment, facilities, and program expansion difficult. Budget reductions can result in the loss of instructors, support staff, and administrative resources, while temporary grants cannot address ongoing operational needs. Rural districts often face additional challenges because limited resources and geographic isolation restrict the range of CTE opportunities available to students.

Although Oregon has established strong goals for college and career readiness, the current funding structure creates ongoing challenges to maintaining equitable, high-quality CTE programs statewide.

As Brida noted, policy can provide “an exciting opportunity for Oregon: a system in which students have access to coherent, high-quality CTE pathways as an integrated part of their education; districts have predictable resources to sustain those pathways; industry and postsecondary partners meaningfully shape and extend student learning; and regional organizations provide the infrastructure and specialized opportunities that individual schools cannot efficiently build alone.”

Appendix A

Oregon's 14 Regional Perkins V Consortia

Consortium	Geographic Area / Typical Members
Central Oregon Perkins Alliance (COPA)	Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson County districts
Clackamas Technical Education Consortium (C-TEC)	Most Clackamas County districts working with Clackamas Community College
Douglas CTE Consortium	Smaller Douglas County districts and schools
Eastern Oregon CTE Consortium	Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Union, and Wallowa County districts
InterMountain CTE Consortium	Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Sherman, Wheeler, and neighboring districts
Lane CTE Consortium	Lane County districts partnering with Lane Community College
Linn-Benton CTE Consortium	Linn and Benton County districts working with Linn-Benton Community College
Mt. Hood CTE Consortium	East Multnomah County districts and regional partners
Mid-Willamette Education Consortium (MWEC)	Districts in Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Lincoln, and portions of Linn County
North Coast Educational Consortium	Clatsop, Columbia, and surrounding coastal districts
Portland Area CTE Consortium (PACTEC)	Banks, Forest Grove, Gaston, Scappoose, Sherwood, St. Helens, Tigard-Tualatin, Vernonia, and partners
Southern Oregon CTE Consortium (SOCTEC)	Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath County districts
South Coast CTE Consortium	Coos, Curry, and coastal Douglas County districts
Tillamook Education Consortium	Tillamook County districts and regional partners

Appendix B

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