

CARL D. PERKINS CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT

Congress has begun efforts to reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, exploring options to expand the capacity of programs in school districts throughout the country. Last reauthorized in 2006, this law provides states with more than \$1 billion annually in federal funding for programs designed to prepare students in technical careers. Since the law expired in 2012, education advocates and business leaders have highlighted the importance of aligning career and technical education programs with current and future workforce demands to help prepare students for both college and careers.

NSBA Priority: NSBA urges Congress to provide the necessary support to school districts to ensure that students have access to high-quality career and technical education programs with a strong academic component and credentialing. Modernizing CTE will help our nation's school districts continue efforts to advance curricula that provide 21st Century skills and knowledge to meet the needs of both students and employers and provide practical training through apprenticeships and other opportunities.

Status

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is now the focus of both the House and Senate education committees.

House: On July 7, the House Education and the Workforce Committee approved H.R. 5587, the [Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act](#), by a unanimous vote of 37 to 0. H.R. 5587 would modernize and Career and Technical Education (CTE) to equip our students with the academic and workforce skills they need to compete for high-skilled, in-demand jobs. The bill would align CTE with provisions for college- and career-readiness in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); encourage greater public-private partnerships among school districts, employers and institutions of higher education; increase opportunities for apprenticeships and credentialing; retain current formula grant funding; and, strengthen support for career guidance and academic counseling, as well as professional development for educators.

The Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) is drafting a companion bill that is expected to be announced soon. NSBA's letter of support for H.R. 5587 is [posted online](#). Education and the Workforce Committee leaders and staff are preparing for potential House floor vote on H.R. 5587 this fall.

The Education and the Workforce Committee and its Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education have conducted hearings on “Helping Students Succeed by Strengthening the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act” on May 17, 2016, and “Improving Career and Technical Education to Help Students Succeed in the Workforce” in October 2015.

“Technological advances and the growth of a global economy have significantly changed the kinds of jobs available and the skills required to do them, making quality education and training vital ingredients to success in today’s workplaces,” said Subcommittee Chairman Todd Rokita (R-IN) during the hearing. “This new reality has been painfully evident in the wake of the recent recession. We are more than six years into the so-called recovery, yet millions of Americans continue to struggle with finding a good-paying job. Meanwhile, industries critical to our economy – health care, engineering, and manufacturing, for example – have jobs to fill and not enough qualified applicants to fill them; a problem we have come to know as ‘the skills gap.’”

According to the Congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus, co-chaired by Representatives Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (R-PA) and Jim Langevin (D-RI), skilled trades are the hardest jobs to fill in the United States, with recent data citing 550,000 jobs open in the trade, transportation and utilities sectors and 246,000 jobs open in manufacturing.

Senate: Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee are drafting bipartisan legislation for CTE reauthorization. Committee members announced the following principles for CTE reauthorization last year:

- Provide greater flexibility for state and local Career and Technical Education programs to serve all students who desire to gain access to CTE coursework, including students with disabilities;
- Increase access to, and support of, career counseling for all CTE students;
- Maintain CTE as a formula program;
- Align with ESEA [the Every Student Succeeds Act] and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (where applicable) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the education and workforce development programs;
- Support the expansion of public/private collaborations with secondary and post-secondary programs, including alignment with state or locally determined in-demand industries and occupations;
- Support efforts to integrate into and strengthen career pathways at the state and local levels;
- Address unfunded programs (such as programs to increase participation in STEM related programs of study); and,
- Improve evaluation and research to support innovation and best practices.

Conclusion: As Congress moves forward to modernize CTE, NSBA advocates for priorities to align skills with the 21st Century economy, facilitate partnerships with industry and other stakeholders, strengthen accountability, and promote innovation (such as the program described above in Gwinnett County Public Schools).

NSBA’s Center for Public Education has published research about CTE and the opportunities provided to students in a series titled “[The Path Least Taken: Preparing Non-College Goers for](#)

Success.” Findings show that advanced courses with an occupational focus make a difference in student outcomes.

In the second report of the series, the Center found that what students do in high school can be as important for non-college goers as it is for college goers: At age 26, college goers, on average, are more likely than non-college goers to have a good job and engage in society. But a more rigorous high school preparation that includes high-level math and vocational courses in an occupational concentration improves those chances considerably for non-college goers. Add professional certification to the mix and non-college goers are more likely to be employed and earn good wages than the average college-goer; and, they are as likely to vote.

This series also examined credentials that matter most for non-college goers, and found that students who have achieved the following are more prepared for success in careers:

- Completed Algebra 2 as highest math course and Advanced biology as highest science;
- Earned a cumulative GPA between 2.51 and 3.0;
- Completed an occupational concentration in high school (three or more vocational courses in a specific labor market area); and
- Earned a professional certification or license.

This research series is [available online](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org) at www.centerforpubliceducation.org.

CTE Success Story from *American School Board Journal* (excerpt below): [Georgia district exposes students to real-world challenges of business ownership](#)

Some career and tech programs have students cook, build, or design something. Others have them do that and jump into a shark tank. The real-world challenges of business ownership, including trying to win the approval of local investment “sharks,” are at the heart of a CTE program in entrepreneurship taught in several of Georgia’s Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Students take a personal interest, hobby, or skill and attempt to turn it into a profitable business that can be quickly started and at minimal cost, says Cindy Quinlan, the work-based learning coordinator and marketing instructor at Brookwood High School in Snellville, who oversees the program. “If they are really into computer programming or social media, or video broadcasting, they can start a business related to that. I had a student start a business where he filed highlight reels for high school athletes trying to get college scholarships,” says Quinlan, noting that learning what it takes to start and operate a business “is career tech as well.”

Lessons in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity also come into play in the course, says Quinlan, who in November was named National Teacher of the Year by the Association for Career and Technical Education. Through an alliance with the city of Snellville, local businesses, and other area high schools, each student business is provided local entrepreneur mentorship, a specially issued business license, and a chance to earn startup funding by pitching their business to a judging panel modeled after the ABC TV show, Shark Tank. The program is now replicated in eight high schools in the district. It also has been revamped as a ninth-grade entrepreneurship class with an

embedded language arts component, and it was used to help design the curriculum for the Academy of Business and Entrepreneurship at the district's new career-focused Discovery High School. - *American School Board Journal*

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