



# Busting CTE Myths

Over time, CTE has evolved from a narrow focus on short-term job training to embrace career exploration, high-quality standards and curriculum, and opportunities to earn credits and credentials. Today's CTE prepares students for college AND further education through pathways that enable learners to meet their goals in a variety of high-wage, in-demand career areas.

The vast majority of Americans realize CTE is a pathway to a successful future.<sup>1</sup> However, misconceptions and stigma remain.

## Myth

✘ CTE is for low-performing students.

✘ CTE is for students not going to college.

✘ CTE is the same as job training.

✘ CTE is only about the skilled trades.

✘ Employers don't care about CTE experience or credentials.

✘ CTE programs and institutions contribute little to the economy.

## Reality

✓ CTE programs are academically rigorous and aligned to college and career readiness standards, with 97% of CTE students graduating high school.<sup>2</sup>

✓ Students who take CTE courses are more likely to attend a two-year college and equally likely as their peers to attend a four-year college.<sup>3</sup>

✓ CTE programs are about exploring careers, gaining real-world experience, and building academic and technical knowledge and skills that become more targeted over time.

✓ CTE programs prepare students for careers not only in manufacturing, construction and transportation but also in health care, IT, arts and media, business and much more.

✓ More than three-quarters<sup>4</sup> of employers from in-demand industries report hiring an employee for their CTE knowledge and skills, while a growing number<sup>5</sup> of job postings ask for short-term credentials.

✓ CTE generates positive returns to state and local economies. For instance, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System contributes \$3.9 billion<sup>6</sup> annually in added income to the state's economy while CTE programs in Oklahoma generate nearly \$1 billion<sup>7</sup> per year.



# Who Benefits from CTE?

CTE has statistically significant positive impacts on academic achievement, employability skills, high school completion and college readiness – for all learners.<sup>8</sup> However, research shows that certain groups may benefit the most.

## Students With Disabilities

- Students with disabilities in CTE programs are more likely to graduate on-time<sup>9</sup> and earn industry-recognized credentials.<sup>10</sup>
- CTE concentrators with disabilities are more likely to be employed full-time after high school than other students with disabilities.<sup>11</sup>

## Young Men

- Boys are more likely to concentrate in CTE<sup>12</sup> and those who do have higher graduation rates.<sup>13</sup>
- Young men engaged in CTE are more likely to enroll in two-year colleges<sup>14</sup> and make higher wages.<sup>15</sup>
- Girls, on average, benefit equally from CTE and non-CTE programs.<sup>16</sup>

## Students of Color

- Black and Latino students are more likely to graduate from CTE-focused schools than from traditional high schools.<sup>17</sup>

## Citations

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