CTE | TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER OF NY

ACTE CAREERTECH VISION 2024

REPORT & RESOURCES

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CTE TAC PRESENTATIONS

The CTE TAC of NY was honored to have 2 presentation proposals be selected as part of the session offerings at the 2024 ACTE Vision national conference in San Antonio, Texas in early December.

IDENTIFYING PERCEIVED AND KNOWN BARRIERS: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN CTE

CTE TAC Director Mike Woods and Field Associate from the Catskills and Capital area, Karyn Watt were presenters of the session "Identifying Perceived and Known Barriers: Students with Disabilities in CTE." The session focused on the process, results, and recommended next steps from a statewide research project conducted in partnership with Concepts Systems, Inc.

The Group Concept Mapping (GCM) approach was used to gather, aggregate, and integrate CTE TAC stakeholders' specific knowledge and opinions to inform the process and outcomes. Participants from several stakeholder groups and settings across New York State, such as CTE administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, students, business, and post-secondary institutions were asked to provide a response to a carefully designed and meaningful prompt: ***"One way Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and partners could ensure a successful experience for students with disabilities is to…"***

The process of data collection took place in several distinct steps, with recommendations and next steps suggested based on the needs identified. This presentation focused on the process and results of the study and how schools across all regions in New York State could use the information to inform next steps in their strategic planning for students with disabilities in CTE. The CTE TAC hopes to serve as a model for this type of initiative nationally, with the goal of shedding light on the impact a project like this can have on the success of students with disabilities in CTE. **The full report discussed in this session can be accessed here.**

SUPPORTING SPECIAL POPULATIONS IN CTE THROUGH UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Janine Lalia, Tanner Thompson, and Di Hesler, Field associates from the CTE TAC, presented "Supporting Special Populations in CTE through Universal Design for Learning" to participants from around the nation, who learned about CTE TAC's newest resource guides for incorporating Universal Design For Learning (UDL) in CTE.

Attendees were exposed to the CTE TAC's new resource guide, which explores how UDL can be applied across the 14 career clusters proposed by Advance CTE in their modernized National Career Clusters Framework. In this guide, select lesson plans were used as examples to highlight where UDL exists in the lesson and to provoke critical thinking among educators as it pertains to the teaching and learning of students in their CTE classrooms and laboratories in NYS. During this presentation, participants actively engaged with one another in cooperative groups to discuss how Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a flexible framework designed to create inclusive, accessible, and engaging learning experiences for all students.

The **UDL Guides** are intended for digital use. In each guide, one will find background information about UDL, 5 reasons why UDL works for that particular career cluster, a quick reference guide to UDL for CTE, and the UDL principles of engagement, representation, and action & expression. The sample lesson in each guide highlights where these three UDL Principles are currently found, and then provides examples of other ways that an educator may go even further with UDL in their classroom. Each guide has a "Try-It Activity" for users to apply the framework to a lesson of their choice, as well as other extension activities. Educators can type into the PDF and save it to share with others. **Printable copies of all of the UDL Guides can be accessed here**.

Each guide in the CTE TAC's series builds on the tips shared in previous CTE TAC publications, **Supporting All Students in NYS CTE Programs** (Guide 1) and **Supporting Special Populations in NYS CTE Programs** (Guide 2). Guide 1 provides a holistic overview of best practices, informed by the most current data on CTE enrollments, with a focus on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners. Guide 2 provides a comprehensive overview of strategies for supporting CTE students, tailored specifically to the needs of special populations identified in Perkins V. The UDL Guides collectively serve as the third installment in this series.

SESSIONS AND RESOURCES

In addition to presenting the above sessions to a national audience, our team attended presentations from CTE professionals across the country, seeking information and resources to share with you back home in New York. We hope these resources help guide you as we all strive to improve the rigor and relevance of CTE programming in New York State.

OPENING SESSION: PREPARING THE WORKFORCE TO SOLVE TOMORROW'S PROBLEMS

The Opening General Session featuring Heather McGowan provided valuable insights into how the workforce is transforming in the post-pandemic era and how educators and leaders can adapt. Heather McGowan highlighted the importance of shifting from certainty to curiosity, encouraging attendees to question assumptions and foster continuous learning to prepare for future roles that may not yet exist.

The session addressed the decline in social capital and the increasing need for connection and empathy in leadership. McGowan explored generational shifts, particularly the unique values and challenges faced by Gen Z, and emphasized the importance of creating inclusive environments that resonate with today's workforce. She also discussed the transition to an "augmented era," where AI is positioned as a tool to enhance, not replace, human potential.

McGowan offered actionable takeaways: focus on fostering growth, autonomy, and respect within teams; embrace collaboration with new technologies; and adopt leadership styles rooted in empathy, authenticity, and adaptability. These strategies are critical to navigating rapid changes in work and education while maintaining unity and optimism in the face of uncertainty. McGowan's message was clear: the future of work demands a mindset shift toward innovation, resilience, and shared success. **View the presentation slides here.**

MEGA SESSIONS

BURNOUT TO BALANCE: CONVERSATIONS ON SELF-CARE FROM EDUCATORS, FOR EDUCATORS

This session shared practical strategies to sustain passion and manage stress in teaching. Panelists highlighted the importance of strong relationships with students and the community while setting clear boundaries to protect personal time and energy. Key strategies included creating a "happy folder" of positive feedback for motivation, joining professional associations for support, and developing a personal mission statement to guide decisions.

Practical advice emphasized balancing faith, family, and work through small daily rituals, like quiet moments for reflection. Panelists underscored the immediate impact educators have on students and encouraged celebrating these successes to counter burnout.

Personal stories illustrated the power of connection, showing how even small gestures can profoundly shape students' lives. Teachers were encouraged to approach their careers as a marathon, aligning efforts with clear purpose and cultivating resilience through support networks. This session left educators inspired to balance their professional dedication with self-care.

CTSO-SO IMPORTANT!

A strong career and technical student organization (CTSO) can make a huge difference in program quality, recruitment, retention, and student success. Building a culture where CTSOs are central to every CTE program can be challenging. This session emphasized the importance of understanding the specifics of each CTSO and the need to gain support from both teachers and students for successful implementation. Led by national CTSO leaders, the session provided a wider perspective on managing CTSOs and shared valuable updates to improve the

implementation of CTSO activities nationwide. The CTE TAC provides several generic resources for developing CTE Student Leadership Organizations. For specific resources, it is recommended to refer to the appropriate state and national organization websites. Click here to **learn more about the CTE TAC's Listing of CTSO Organizations in New York State, NYS Contacts, and NYS Success Stories.**

DIVERSE MINDS, SUCCESSFUL FUTURES: NEURODIVERSITY IN CAREER EDUCATION

This session addressed the importance of embracing neurological diversity and moving beyond stereotypes to create an environment where all students — including those with ADHD, dyslexia, sensory processing variations and other neurological profiles — can explore their strengths and pursue career success. Attendees left with ideas on how to implement adaptable strategies to support and champion every learner's potential. Ideas included strength based approaches, like differentiating instruction and providing student choices, creating sensory-friendly environments with lighting, audio, scents, and seating, and implementing universal design for learning strategies so all students can succeed. **View the presentation slides from this session here.**

GENERAL SESSIONS

ANALYZING CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT DATA AMONG STUDENT GROUPS

This session highlighted the critical role of credentialing in addressing talent shortages and promoting equity in North Carolina's CTE programs. Presenters emphasized the importance of industry-recognized credentials for preparing students for the workforce and boosting economic momentum. Credential tiers were explained, with tier one as foundational, tier two as employment springboards, and tier three as advanced credentials tied to higher salaries.

Equity was a key focus of the presentation, with data analysis methods like percentage point gap analysis showcasing disparities in credential attainment among student groups, particularly for economically disadvantaged and minority students. Attendees were encouraged to examine data at state and district levels to ensure representation reflects community demographics.

Next steps included appointing "credential champions" to drive district-level efforts, supporting female student enrollment in credential-bearing courses, and ensuring all students have access to exams. The presenters urged CTE programs to address underrepresentation in higher-tier credentials and provide professional development on opportunity gap analysis.

This session underscored the need for actionable strategies to improve equitable access to credentialing opportunities, ensuring all students benefit from high-quality CTE programs.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE FCS CLASSROOM: THE FUTURE AWAITS

This session explored the integration of AI in the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) classroom, emphasizing its transformative potential for education. Presenters gave an overview of AI and its common uses in daily life, such as navigation, text editing, and chatbots to set the stage for discussions. Then, participants examined why teaching AI literacy is crucial in the context of Gen Z and Gen Alpha learners, the Education 4.0 movement, and Industry 4.0 advancements. Practical applications of AI tools were showcased, from using ChatGPT for personalized student feedback to using AI tools for creating quizzes, podcasts, and leveling educational content.

The session stressed the importance of teaching students to question effectively, think critically, and evaluate AI-generated content for accuracy and bias. Discussions addressed defining acceptable uses of AI in classrooms, distinguishing between helpful tools and academic dishonesty. Presenters also addressed the benefits and challenges of using AI, noting that while AI offers personalized learning and reduces teacher workload, it also raises concerns about data privacy, bias, and ethical implications.

This session underscored the importance of AI as both a tool and a subject of instruction to prepare students for a tech-driven future. **View session resources here.**

BUILDING A POSTSECONDARY ADVISING SYSTEM: PARTNERSHIPS, DATA, AND RESOURCES

This session offered valuable insights into Kentucky's comprehensive approach to enhancing postsecondary advising. Presenters Mitzi Holland and Kelli Norman shared the Kentucky Advising Academy's (KAA) efforts to empower educators with professional learning, networking opportunities, and equitable advising resources.

The discussion highlighted the Commonwealth Education Continuum's collaborative framework, emphasizing partnerships across secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and national organizations. Attendees learned about tools like the Postsecondary Advising Toolkit, which offers a roadmap for advisors to align efforts and promote equitable access to career pathways. Examples from Christian County Schools showcased effective practices in data usage, strategic planning, and specialized career academies. This session underscored the importance of partnerships, data-driven decisions, and resource alignment to improve student outcomes statewide. **View session resources here.**

CCR FOR ALL: A FRAMEWORK FOR CAREER PATHWAYS AND PARTNERSHIPS

This session provided an in-depth look at Sourcewell's approach to empowering rural Minnesota schools in building career readiness systems. Dr. Maggie Velasco and Brianna Erickson presented strategies to ensure students graduate equipped with the skills and tools needed for college and career success.

The session emphasized the importance of a regional collective vision to create equitable, personalized learning experiences for all students. Key components of the Career Pathways program included a robust framework supported by data-informed decision-making, industry-aligned pathways, and strong partnerships with businesses, educators, and community stakeholders. Tools like the SchooLinks management system were highlighted as vital for tracking progress and enabling meaningful student engagement.

Attendees also learned about the critical role of professional development, feedback loops, and a three-year rollout plan for systemic implementation. The presenters provided practical insights into addressing biases, aligning vision with strategic plans, and engaging

student voices in shaping educational pathways. This session showcased the power of collaboration and intentional planning to redefine readiness and foster successful transitions for students in rural communities. **Access the session resource folder here.**

CO-CREATING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS TO DESIGN EQUITABLE CLASSROOMS AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Learning environments are often designed without considering the input or experience of the people they are meant to serve, which can lead to unmet needs. Co-creating community agreements is a culturally responsive and restorative practice that allows everyone in the learning community to have a say. In this session, participants learned about co-creating community agreements and participated in team building activities to engage with youth, colleagues, and other community members. The session provided new tools and built confidence to implement this practice, helping to advance equity through innovation. **Click here for Co-creating Community Agreement Slides** and **here for the Community Agreements Planning Guide.**

CONNECT WITH LOCAL TALENT: CHAMPION A HANDS-ON TRADE EVENT

A classroom speaker or industry tour can be a good starting point for students to learn about careers, but many don't connect these work-based learning activities to their future. CTE students prefer hands-on experiences, and a well-planned skilled trades event can have students, educators, and businesses talking for months. This session focused on how to facilitate networking between businesses and their future talent pool by becoming a skilled trades event champion. It provided all of the information needed to get started, including two models designed to meet the needs of individual rural communities. **Click here to view the presentation slides** and **here to view the event planning checklist.**

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

This session emphasized strategies for fostering inclusive and supportive environments for LGBTQ+ professionals, allies, and students within CTE. Participants discussed the importance of creating safe spaces that encourage authenticity and understanding while addressing challenges faced by marginalized communities, especially in less inclusive settings.

Key initiatives included reinstating the "This is a Safe Space" poster for members to display, adding pronoun options to conference name tags, and establishing affinity groups for LGBTQ+ professionals to build community and provide ongoing support. Participants also highlighted using inclusive educational materials, interrupting discriminatory language, and modeling acceptance to promote a welcoming atmosphere.

Personal stories underscored the need for confidentiality, compassion, and allyship in creating safe spaces for staff and students alike. Participants proposed launching an online group and hosting future affinity gatherings to expand these efforts. The session concluded with actionable strategies to create inclusive environments, balancing free speech with the responsibility to address harm and support equity.

CTE INFLUENCERS: BUILDING YOUR LEADERSHIP FANBASE

This session focused on how to build a leadership following and become a CTE influencer. A common challenge faced by CTE Professionals is that campus leaders often say they “just don’t know CTE.” Most administrators and counselors haven’t been CTE teachers, so they don’t fully understand the "brand" or the "products" that make CTE programs successful. Participants were provided with templates and samples successfully used by the fourth-largest school district in Texas. The team shared strategies for building strong relationships with campus leadership through meaningful interactions and activities. This approach led to a loyal CTE following and significant improvements in their programs. **Click here to view the presentation slides.**

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING IN THE CTE CLASSROOM

This session covered culturally responsive teaching and how it can be applied in CTE classrooms to support diversity and inclusion. The key concepts of the Culturally Responsive Teaching theory were explored, along with relevant themes and practical examples. By the end of the session, participants gained a better understanding of the topic and built confidence in using these skills to create positive changes in their teaching. **The Culturally Responsive Teaching in CTE Classroom Worksheet** provides reflection questions that an educator may consider while planning a lesson as well as examples for how to be more culturally responsive across the CTE content areas.

DEEPER LEARNING THROUGH CTE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRATION

This session focused on the goal for academic subject teachers and CTE teachers to work together to support students. Presenters highlighted the best ways to build a schoolwide curriculum that prepares students for a challenging world beyond high school, and to connect academic courses and CTE. This convergence helps students improve performance and transition to postsecondary education and careers. Many options for fostering teacher collaboration were shared. High school leaders were challenged to consider not whether to connect academic and technical skills, but which collaboration model works best with existing staff and school organization. The presenters shared their published resource, showcasing 17 models of successful examples to stimulate thinking about adding relevance to academics and more thinking skills to career and technical education. This session reiterated why CTE academic integration is essential and discussed existing models. **View the presentation slides here.**

ELECTRICAL PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

This session focused on bridging CTE and apprenticeship pathways to fast-track students into skilled trades. Offered by TRIO, a manufacturing company in Texas, the program utilizes the Electrical Trio Curriculum, covering topics like the National Electrical Code, OSHA standards, personal finance, and employable skills, taught by an electrician within the TRIO company. The hands-on component of the curriculum is done through TransfrVR. Students can transfer credits to the third year of apprenticeship programs, aligning with DOL standards and state-recognized industry certifications.

The program enables students to complete classroom portions of journeyman studies two years early, provided they transition directly to employer-led apprenticeships. Challenges include potential resistance from groups like IBEW and negotiation of test-out procedures. Innovations like business-led "train-the-trainer" initiatives and virtual reality tools (TransfrVR) enhance hands-on learning. With 779,800 electrical job openings, a median salary of $61,590, and just a high school diploma as the primary requirement, this program positions students for success in the electrical trade and guarantees them a job upon completion. **View the presentation slides from this session here.**

EMPOWERING EDUCATION: INTEGRATING AI INTO CTE CLASSROOM PRACTICES

The presenters of this session were a mother/daughter team who are both currently CTE teachers. Their presentation explored the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in daily CTE classroom operations, focusing on innovative strategies for lesson planning, activity creation, and student engagement. Attendees learned practical applications that emphasized efficiency and personalized learning experiences. The presenters provided insights and hands-on demonstrations of AI-driven tools. Educators left equipped with practical

knowledge and resources to seamlessly integrate AI into teaching methodologies, ways to foster collaboration, and enhance digital literacy. The goal of the session was to aid educators in creating dynamic learning environments that empower students through the use of AI. Session resources include an **AI Frequently Asked Questions sheet** and a list of **AI Tools and Resources for educators**.

ENGAGING LEARNERS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND SYSTEMS

Building effective recruitment and program communications goes beyond catchy phrases and bright colors. To make sure CTE program and recruitment messages connect with learners and families, especially those underrepresented in CTE, it's important to involve learners in creating these systems. In this interactive session, participants explored a new, easy-to-use tool from Advance CTE designed to help develop communications, build knowledge, and create action plans. This tool is meant to empower CTE leaders to engage learners and craft recruitment messages that inspire change in behavior and opinions. Participants also looked at real-life examples from states and local areas showing how involving learners in recruitment communications has led to positive results. The **toolkit for effectively communicating CTE to engage every learner** can be a great starting point for CTE leaders and includes videos, information on building meaningful relationships, maximizing communication, and tailoring messages.

ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH IBC IN HIGH SCHOOLS

This session outlined the implementation of Industry-Based Credentials (IBCs) in Texas high schools to better prepare students for the workforce. Schools select IBCs from a state-approved list, with teachers determining which students take the exams and which credentials to offer. Initially, this was optional for the teachers, however, it is now mandatory that each teacher offer at least one IBC. Districts cover the cost of the first exiting credential exam, and students must pay for subsequent attempts, though the state reimburses districts for exam fees if students pass. To ensure inclusivity, students requiring accommodations must request them through state education authorities. View the **presentation slides from this session** and the **Enhance Student Success Worksheet here.**

FRAMEWORK FOR STANDING UP & GROWING A WORK-BASED LEARNING/INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This session provided a comprehensive overview of developing and scaling a work-based learning (WBL) and internship program, emphasizing Naperville Community Unit School District 203's approach. The district emphasized equipping students with academic, workplace, and wellness skills for postsecondary success. This includes a focus on dual credit opportunities, career pathways, and experiential learning. They outlined a five-pillar strategy: creating intentional experiences where students gain workplace skills through internships tied to pathway endorsements; leveraging resources through the use of tools like SchooLinks and Conover Online to enhance career development; incorporating professional learning to build team capacity for supporting WBL; engaging stakeholders via digital platforms and alumni networks to build awareness around programs; and developing relationships with businesses to support internships and career opportunities.

Starting with a small pilot in 2022, the program now supports 40 students across diverse career areas, including IT, marketing, and healthcare. The team emphasized starting small, clearly defining goals, leveraging networks, and addressing scalability challenges like transportation and AI integration. The session concluded with practical advice to build momentum, focus on "why," and celebrate successes to sustain and grow impactful WBL programs. **View presentation slides from this session here.**

INNOVATION: PERKINS & SPECIAL POPULATIONS

This session explored creative ways to use Perkins V funding to support equity and innovation in CTE programs for special populations. Participants learned about leveraging Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to create inclusive environments and strategies for addressing challenges faced by multi-language learners, students with disabilities, and those pursuing non-traditional fields.

The session emphasized using Perkins V funds for impactful initiatives like translating materials, creating multilingual safety protocols, and funding resources to reduce barriers for economically disadvantaged students. Examples included hosting parent CTE nights, developing drone curricula to engage girls in STEM fields, and training internship sites to better support students with disabilities.

A key tool presented was a reflection rubric designed to help educators evaluate their programs' inclusivity for non-traditional learners. The rubric encourages educators to assess their outreach efforts, support structures, and opportunities for underrepresented students, providing actionable insights for improvement.

Attendees were encouraged to apply these strategies within their districts, emphasizing collaboration and evidence-based practices to foster equity and innovation in CTE programs. The session underscored the importance of inclusivity and strategic planning in ensuring all

students benefit from high-quality career and technical education opportunities.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CTE EDUCATORS

This session focused on quality CTE instruction and how it can increase student engagement and impact student achievement. Presenters emphasized the idea that the instructional strategies teachers use must match the CTE concepts and skills being taught. A variety of instructional strategies were discussed, including PBL, explicit teaching, cooperative learning, and inquiry based, how to apply those strategies within CTE classrooms, and analyze ways to teach content to engage all learners. The presenters shared their published resource Instructional Strategies for CTE Educators, edited by Michelle Conrad and Larae Watkins, with foreword by Sarah Brown Wessling. **View the slides from this presentation here.**

PATHWAY TO INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

This session highlighted the opportunities and benefits of the ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program, focusing on its integration of education, leadership, and military training. The ROTC develops scholars, athletes, and leaders through comprehensive training in ethics, fitness, communication, team building, and resource management. The program offers a Basic Course (2 years with no military obligation) covering leadership, first aid, and practical exercises such as obstacle courses and rifle marksmanship. Advanced ROTC (another 2 years, followed by a military obligation) includes small-unit leadership, military law and logistics, with options for specialized training in airborne, air assault, and mountain warfare. Scholarships are available for committed cadets, covering tuition, fees, books, stipends, and in some cases, room and board. Candidates must meet academic, physical, and medical criteria,

with career paths in STEM fields, healthcare, intelligence, aviation, and more. Completing ROTC leads to an officer commission, with options for further education in law, medicine, or pharmacy.

POST-SECONDARY CTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This session, led by Amanda Bastoni from CAST, went over the professional development needs of post-secondary CTE educators. The presentation highlighted the critical importance of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a framework for inclusivity and its alignment with federal legislation like Perkins V.

Key takeaways included findings from a gap analysis in Michigan's CTE programs, which revealed challenges such as limited onboarding, the need for curriculum design training, and accessibility issues in rural areas. The session underscored the role of teacher self-efficacy in improving both educator retention and student outcomes. Attendees explored effective strategies for supporting diverse learners, including students with disabilities, and learned how UDL principles can empower educators to create proactive, adaptable learning environments.

Overall, the session emphasized the necessity of relevant, research-based professional development tailored to the unique needs of CTE educators, fostering better teaching practices and ultimately enhancing student success. **View session resources here.**

POWER OF CTE AMBASSADORS

In this session, participants learned about the impactful role of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Ambassador Programs in promoting CTE pathways. The session highlighted how these programs empower high school students to act as representatives of their CTE centers, engaging with peers, families, and the community to showcase the value of technical education.

Key components discussed included the nomination process, onboarding, and professional development opportunities for ambassadors. Participants explored strategies for training students in leadership, presentation, and networking skills. The session also emphasized the importance of professional attire and creating a sense of pride through uniforms and recognition ceremonies.

Through practical examples, the session demonstrated how CTE ambassadors foster awareness by leading tours, supporting career fairs, and facilitating community presentations. This leadership experience not only strengthens ambassadors' career readiness but also builds stronger connections between CTE programs and their stakeholders. Overall, the session underscored the transformative potential of ambassador programs in elevating the profile and impact of CTE initiatives. **View session resources here.**

QUESTIONS, NOT ANSWERS: BUILDING A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR CAREER COUNSELING

This session highlighted Calvert County Public Schools' district-wide career advising program, aligned with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future mandate, requiring individualized career counseling for all students.

Key takeaways included the importance of transitioning from transactional to transformational career advising, focusing on relevance and personal development. The session also emphasized the RIASEC framework, a tool used for aligning career exploration with individual interests, introduced consistently across all stakeholders for widespread adoption.

Emerging trends like the gig economy, automation, and the need for lifelong learning were discussed, stressing the evolving role of career counselors in preparing students for dynamic workforce demands. The session concluded with strategies for integrating RIASEC into daily operations to foster "career curious" schools, encouraging collaboration

among educators, students, and community partners. **View session resources here.**

SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS: TODAY'S GLOBAL CURRENCY

This session, hosted by Certiport, highlighted the growing emphasis on skills over degrees in the job market. Companies like Walmart are moving away from requiring college degrees for corporate roles, and states like New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Colorado are prioritizing credentials over formal education. Globally, skills and certifications are valued for their return on investment, fostering confidence, equity, and opportunities, especially for those who may have limited chances. Emerging certifications include agriscience tech, hospitality, culinary arts, health sciences (such as medical assistant), and Meta-AI. Tools like LearnKey offer video-based instruction, while platforms like Bulb provide digital portfolios that students can retain indefinitely.

SMALL PROJECT-BASED ASSESSMENTS IN FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

Culinary Arts and Fashion Design CTE educators presented short and quick project-based learning ideas for family and consumer sciences classes. The session emphasized strategies and project ideas that provide students with choices that align with their strengths and relevance to the world of work. They shared **ways to build and implement small projects** that take a short amount of time and give students the ability to choose what they create. They shared a wealth of specific ideas in all areas of FACS to get students engaged with course materials and meet unit goals.

THE POWER OF INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS

This session emphasized the growing shift toward skills-based hiring as a solution to workforce challenges. Employers adopting this approach, such as Google and IBM, focus on certifications and demonstrable skills rather than degrees or prior work experience, significantly broadening their talent pool and increasing job applications by 36% when degree requirements are removed. This strategy, often referred to as building a "new collar workforce," aligns with trends in talent acquisition to enhance employee retention and diversify candidates. Platforms like LinkedIn play a key role in identifying and highlighting skills, demonstrating the value of certifications in today's job market. **View the presentation slides from this session here.**

UNLOCKING PHILANTHROPIC IMPACT IN CTE

This session was hosted by Alice Ruhnke from Grant Station, an organization that will assist schools and programs in finding CTE grants for a nominal fee. The presentation explored the contributions of various organizations to Career and Technical Education (CTE), focusing on underserved learners and skill-based training. With only 3% of educational funding targeting CTE, it is important to find other funding streams. For an annual nominal fee, Grant Station will connect you with grants to assist with your CTE Programs.

Anna Fontus from ECMC highlighted funding initiatives available to support postsecondary education, work-based learning, and stackable credentials through internships and apprenticeships. Tara Havlicek of Mitsubishi Electric Foundation discussed programs aiding students with disabilities in transitioning from school to work, including manufacturing grants like "Nuts, Bolts, and Thingamajigs." Danny Corwin from Harbor Freight Tools for Schools shared the company's focus on high school trade skills, recognizing excellent teaching through prizes and community-driven projects, and building a networking group of all the

winners of the grant. Harbor Freight is working to fill gaps, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement in grant proposals.

USING PERFORMANCE RUBRICS TO ELEVATE CTE STUDENT THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

This session focused on how CTE teachers can identify successful students by observing their performance and inquiring about their work. Discussion followed around the question, when employers indicate they seek workers who can think critically and solve problems, how can teachers effectively judge thinking as a performance? The presentation discussed how critical thinking and problem solving can be addressed by introducing academic standards and designing experiences for students to demonstrate proficiency. They emphasized the idea that evaluation of these standards is not done using academic style, multiple choice tests, or written assignments. Participants learned about ways to develop student thinking performance by selecting appropriate academic standards and developing rubrics that give students feedback on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Click here to **view the presentation slides** and here to **read more about performance rubrics.**

USING VIRTUAL CREDENTIALING TO EMPOWER STUDENTS FOR FUTURE-READY OPPORTUNITIES

This session highlighted innovative tools and strategies to prepare students for success. Putnam County Schools in Tennessee have required online financial literacy for graduation since 2013, showcasing a commitment to future-ready education. Platforms like iCEV support large-scale credential testing, while tools such as Lumi offer free interactive educational content. Adobe's animal character feature, Google resources, and Canva’s free images for educators enhance creativity and learning. Learning management systems, YouTube, and

Edpuzzle enable engaging content delivery, with Edpuzzle allowing students to retake assessments until they achieve mastery, emphasizing skill development and personalized learning.

CLOSING SESSION PRESENTED BY STEVE GILLILAND

The closing session was a touching and inspiring way to wrap up the event. Through personal stories and heartfelt anecdotes, presenter and author Steve Gilliland reminded everyone of the incredible impact a positive mindset and meaningful connections can have on our lives.

One of the key takeaways was the importance of recognizing and appreciating the people around us—especially those whose efforts often go unnoticed. Gilliland encouraged the audience to think about the five people who have made the biggest difference in their lives and to take the time to acknowledge them. Stories about figures like Captain Denny Flanagan, who used kindness and optimism to transform challenging situations, and Tony Dungy, who shared wisdom about purposeful actions, reinforced the power of small but meaningful choices.

Gilliland's message wasn't just about positivity; it was about being present and intentional in how we live and interact with others. He left attendees with a powerful challenge: take control of your life, focus on what truly matters, and create ripples of kindness and impact wherever you go.

THANK YOU!

New York State was proudly represented at ACTE's CareerTech VISION conference, where the CTE TAC team had the privilege of participating in this premier professional learning event for CTE educators and leaders. Our team took full advantage of the opportunity to gather insights and resources aimed at advancing the quality and impact of CTE programs in New York State.

CTE TAC staff collaborated with the leadership team of the New York State Association for Career and Technical Education (NYSACTE) at the annual ACTE state leadership meeting. This gathering brought together leaders from all 50 states and U.S. territories to exchange best practices and share inspiring CTE success stories from across the country.

We are grateful for the opportunity to attend and contribute to this national event and look forward to applying the knowledge gained to strengthen CTE initiatives in New York State.

Michael K. Woods
CTE TAC Director

Pictured (L-R): Kelley Earley, Tanner Thompson, Rami Joudeh, Mindy McCarthy, Di Hesler, Karyn Watt, Mike Woods, Erin Smith, Janine Lalia, Peter Harris

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