CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
POLICY BRIEF

Restoration of Funding for CTE Work-Based Learning

Career and Technical Education (CTE) employs a unique delivery system as depicted in the graphic below. The delivery system includes four core elements: classroom instruction, hands-on instruction, leadership development, and career-based experience. Classroom instruction involves the presentation of theory related to various best practices in the aligned industry whether it be medical assisting, automotive mechanics or any of the 73 CTE content areas. Hands-on learning involves the direct application of these same theories to actual practice. This may involve drawing blood in a phlebotomy lab, building a rafter in a building trades laboratory or applying Excel formulas in a computer laboratory. The point is that students do not just *talk* about a subject. They actually engage in applying the learning. The third component is leadership development. Fully embedded in every CTE program is a student organization. These organizations include FFA—the national youth organization for students enrolled in agricultural education, DECA—the national youth organization for students enrolled in marketing education programs; FBLA—the organization associated with business education, FCCLA—the organization associated with family and consumer sciences, Educators Rising—the organization associated with education professions, HOSA—the student organization associated with health related occupations and SkillsUSA—the organization associated with the many skilled trades programs such as welding and construction. Through these organizations students learn the leadership and personal development skills so critical to success in the workplace and in life. The final component of the CTE delivery system is career-based experience or what many know as work-based learning. Typical examples of work-based learning include job shadowing, internships, clinicals and cooperative education. Through work-based learning, students have the opportunity to bridge the gap between school and life and to work with an adult mentor in the community. Work-based learning is an essential component to ensuring that students are truly work-ready. Employers also report that it is an ideal way for them to screen potential employees and to introduce those future employees to the culture and standard operating procedures associated with their business.

When this model is implemented with fidelity it results in the outcomes much heralded by CTE supporters. Students are far more likely to graduate from high school. Students do better academically. Students are more likely to be employed or involved in continuing education immediately after high school.

Unfortunately, during the last legislative session (2016) Joint Technical Education District (JTED) funding for work-based learning was cut. It is believed that the reason for this cut is because legislators believed there are no "additional" costs associated with work-based learning. This is not true. While there may not be required specialized equipment, there are considerable additional costs. Teachers must work through the summer establishing work sites and visiting with employers. During the school year, teachers need to regularly visit students at the work site. This often occurs after school and on weekends. As a consequence, there is the added cost of stipends, extended contracts and mileage reimbursement.

Therefore, it is requested that JTED funding for work-based learning be restored to enable CTE educators to continue to employ the total CTE delivery system.