



364 South Park Street * Walla Walla WA 99362-3293 * (509) 527-3000 * FAX (509) 529-7713

Career Technical Education

For several generations, the term “vocational education” referred to a number of programs primarily in secondary schools and community colleges that concentrated on preparing students for production and trades jobs. In many cases those programs were seen as less valuable and less rigorous than college preparatory programs. In fact, vocational programs in the worst cases were seen as second-rate programs to place students who either could not, or would not, find success in school. In the years since, vocational education has transformed and evolved into what is now known as career technical education or CTE.

CTE programs now lead to employment in many of the most respected and highly paid careers in the country. CTE has been organized into 16 career clusters that have been aligned with all of the academic areas. A Career Cluster is a grouping of occupations and broad industries based on commonalities. They represent the knowledge and skills, both academic and technical, that all students within the cluster should achieve regardless of their career field. The CTE programs within each cluster typically do not result in a bachelor degree, but instead have been aligned with the job market where 80% of the jobs do not require bachelor degrees. The clusters are:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Education and Training
- Government and Public Administration
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Human Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Health Science
- Art, Audio-Visual Technology, and Communications
- Finance,
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Information Technology
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources

For students, CTE brings relevancy their education and opportunities to explore multiple careers. Because CTE provides a durable technical preparation, the world of work is more connected and transitions between careers are seamless. For employers, CTE programs build pipeline of workers that are well qualified and able to adapt to the changing needs. It requires a meaningful engagement with the school system and develops a framework for cross-training or re-tooling the workforce. In summary, CTE

- Reduces the need for remedial studies in college,
- Increases enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education,
- Raises academic and technical achievement in high school and college,
- Increases the percentages of students receiving postsecondary degrees, certificates or other recognized credentials, and
- Improves students’ chances of getting good jobs and pursuing further education.