

**PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS
IN THE SKILLS-BASED ECONOMY**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD,
ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY EDUCATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE
WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN THE SKILLS-BASED ECONOMY

Thursday, January 18, 2024

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY,
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:15, a.m., 2175 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Aaron Bean [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Bean, Thompson, Owens, McClain, Kiley, Williams, Foxx, Bonamici, Hayes, DeSaulnier, and Norcross.

Staff present: Cyrus Artz, Staff Director; Nick Barley, Deputy Communications Director; Mindy Barry, General Counsel; Hans Bjontegard, Legislative Assistant; Isabel Foster, Press Assistant; Daniel Fuenzalida, Staff Assistant; Sheila Havenner, Director of Information Technology, Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Marek Laco, Professional Staff Member; Georgie Littlefair, RJ Martin, Professional Staff Member; Hannah Matesic, Deputy Staff Director; Hannah Matesic, Deputy Staff Director; Audra McGeorge, Communications Director; Eli Mitchell, Legislative Assistant; Rebecca Powell, Staff Assistant; Brad Thomas, Deputy Director of Education and Human Services Policy; Maura Williams, Director of Operations; Ni'Aisha Banks, Minority Intern; Nekea Brown, Minority Director of Operations; Scott Estrada, Minority Professional Staff; Rashage Green, Minority Director of Education Policy & Counsel; Christian Haines, Minority General Counsel; Stephanie Lalle, Minority Communications Director; Raiyana Malone, Minority Press Secretary; Kota Mizutani, Minority Deputy Communications Director; Veronique Pluviose, Minority Staff Director; Olivia Sawyer, Minority Intern; Maile Sit, Minority Intern; Clinton Spencer IV, Minority Staff Assistant; Jamar Tolbert, Minority Intern; Adrianna Toma, Minority Intern; Banyon Vassar, Minority IT, Natalia Wilson, Minority Intern.

Chairman BEAN. Ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning. Welcome to your nation's capital. This is the Subcommittee on Early Childhood Elementary and Secondary Education. The Committee is now—will come to order. A quorum is present. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to call a recess at any time.

We are glad to have you here, and those in the audience thank you. We are going to have a great hearing today. I think it is a lively topic, something that our Nation is challenged with, a problem that we are going to delve into and see what we can do. We are

going to talk about the critical role of K through 12 career and technical education, CTE, and Preparing Young Students for Success in the Modern Economy.

You know, I serve, and in fact, I am missing a Committee hearing right now on small business, and for the last year we have talked to small business, and medium business, even large business.

If you ask them some of the challenges they are facing in today's economy, the vast majority—the vast majority, hiring. Hiring skilled employees that are ready to go to work, that is a challenge for many of them.

I believe, if we are going to tackle this problem, we have to talk about flux capacitors. Flux capacitors, if you are over 30 you know that is the critical piece of a time machine that was featured in the movie *Back to the Future*. *Back to the Future* was a great, zany movie in the 80's where Marty McFly and Doc Brown had their adventures, but they were trying to get back to the future. I think that is our mantra today, back to the future.

There was a time where there was a heavy focus on career and technical training in schools. This issue is personal to me. My dad was a shop teacher—was an industrial arts teacher. Think about this. He took over a school, his first job out of college was to be a shop teacher.

On his first day at class he finds he has got 45 students, but no money, no budget, no materials, no tools, no anything, and he has got to teach these students. He went to the administration and said you know; how do I teach shop? They said, make do. Make do. What do you do without any money, without anything? Let me tell you what my dad did, and so many people have told me your dad taught me shop, or your dad, you know, was a great influence in my life.

What he did was he brought his own tool kit to school and told each kid to find something that is broken at your house, bring it in, and we will fix it as a class. That had such a lasting impact on so many people, and has prepared the people that do my plumbing, and the people that fix my car, my dad taught them automotive shop.

As a country, we have consistently undervalued the value of this type of education. I think it started, ironically, in the 80's when shop and other classes like that were removed. Here is the truth. Two thirds of Americans do not possess a bachelor's degree. One out of three students who start college never finish. If we do not recognize these realities, and reflect them in the Committee's priorities, employers will in fact change.

They are already changing right now. Employees are moving as we speak, they are removing degree requirements for job applicants and moving toward skills-first hiring. LinkedIn, if you go to them, 2023 skills report found significantly fewer job postings requiring degrees.

More employers are explicitly hiring skills data than in previous years. If we are going to tackle this problem collaboration between educational institution and industry partners will be key. We have established an all-star panel that we are about to hear from.

In closing, I will note that a few years ago Discovery Channel's Dirty Jobs Host, Mike Rowe, you know the man, Mike Rowe, appeared for this Committee and said there is a problem we need to fix, 7 years ago.

He pointed at that time, in 2017, there were 5.6 million open jobs if we just had some skills to fill them. Today that number is 8.8 million jobs. Our all-star panel, I have met with each of you, Richard, we just had a conversation. In just a few minutes we are going to hear from this all-star panel that comes from across the Nation, whose doing it well? Maryland and Florida.

Who is doing great, but what is the industry leaders out there? We will hear from Danny and Brandon, Richard and Kelly in just a few minutes. Our members, thanks for participating. Before we start though, let us turn to our Ranking Member, Representative Bonamici for an opening statement, and her thoughts on today's hearing.

Ms. Bonamici.

[The Statement of Chairman Bean follows:]



COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Aaron Bean (R-FL), Chairman
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Hearing: “Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy”
January 18, 2024**

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you for joining me today to discuss the critical role of K-12 career and technical education (CTE) in preparing young students for success in the modern economy.

I’d like to start off by quoting a man whom I regard as an authority on technical education. A man with perhaps the longest CV to ever exist. A giant of American culture.

Of course, I am referring to the host of Discovery Channel’s hit TV show Dirty Jobs, the great Mike Rowe.

In 2017, Rowe came before the Committee and sat in the very seats our esteemed witnesses sit in today to discuss the value of career and technical education.

He testified, “When we took shop class out of high school, we sent an unmistakable message to an entire generation of students. We told them—no, we showed them—that a whole category of jobs was simply not desirable.”

Rowe was—and still is—spot on. A day in shop class is an invaluable teacher. The curriculum of life requires you to know how to do things such as change a tire. Whether a student is an aspiring doctor or electrician, showing up to high school and learning how to dissect an organ or rewire a circuit can be a spark for a lifelong, successful career.

As a country, we've consistently understated the value of this type of education. It began by removing shop class from school, and it's been perpetuated by the baseless idea that everyone needs a college degree to be successful.

We must do better to reverse the stigmas surrounding career and technical education because these stigmas are reflected in the growing skills gap. Doing so is the only way to reach the large pool of talented but dislocated American workers.

Here's the truth: Two-thirds of Americans do not possess a bachelor's degree. One out of three students who starts college never finishes.

If we don't recognize these realities and reflect them in the Committee's priorities, employers will. In fact, industry is already out ahead changing the way we view education.

Employers are removing degree requirements for job applicants and moving towards skills-first hiring. LinkedIn's 2023 Skills First Report found significantly fewer job postings are requiring degrees, and more employers are explicitly hiring using skills data than in previous years.

If we plan on closing the skills gap, collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners will be key. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses on how we can better promote industry partnerships.

In closing, I'll note that Mike Rowe last appeared before the Committee seven years ago, yet today, the economy still languishes under the same problems he identified. In his testimony, Rowe pointed to 5.6 million open jobs. Try 8.8 million today.

This hearing is an opportunity to have an honest discussion about the many facets of the persistent skills gap and how CTE can help close it.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you so much, Chair Bean, and thank you to the witnesses for joining us today. I am very grateful that we are having this hearing on career and technical education, an issue that has broad bipartisan support. During the last 2 years congressional democrats and the Biden/Harris administration have been working hard on rebuilding the economy from the bottom up and the middle out.

When we think about the Inflation Reduction Act, CHIPS and Science, the bipartisan Infrastructure Law, these are creating millions of new infrastructure, clean energy and STEAM related jobs. I say STEAM intentionally because integrating art and design into science, technology, engineering and math, means more creative and innovative students and workers.

These legislative victories that we are working on now, will create a sustained demand for postsecondary, STEAM and construction based pathways, particularly with an eye on those who historically have been left out of these jobs and these opportunities.

Investing in CTE, career and technical education, can help build a skilled pipeline for students when they get out of high school to meet this new demand. To that end, we need CTE programs that are available to all students, so they can explore careers that interest them. Whether or not they require a 4-year degree, or an industry recognized credential is still beneficial.

Named after Carl D. Perkins, who Chaired this very Committee, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act allows students to learn about competitive careers in information technology, health science, manufacturing, hospitality to name a few.

These opportunities are critical to helping students refine relevant skills, incompetencies which frequently leads to industry recognized credentials and increased earning potential. Under the Perkins Act, funding for CTE courses is commonly offered in public and private high schools with more than 80 percent of students completing at least one CTE credit.

Additional funds are also directed into local, secondary institutions, or specialized high schools that focus on vocational industry specific training. Chairman Bean, I really appreciate the story about your father. I am thinking today about all the CTE equipment, which most people are not likely to have, whether it be, you know, CD printers, or labs, or you know, large industrial equipment.

In recent years, schools and administrators are rethinking the value of CTE and the role it can play in helping students prepare for college or the workforce in keeping students engaged in school.

In the past year CTE was used as an alternative track for students less interested in college, or worse, those who are deemed usually inappropriately, not college eligible, but it is now a much valuable tool to bring much needed career and postsecondary exposure to all students.

CTE is an important part of a well-rounded education, but not a substitute for it. CTE has become essential as students today are looking for hands on learning opportunities, and new rewarding careers while employers are increasingly requiring some type of post-secondary education.

Our data shows that there is a 90 percent CTE student high school graduation rate, versus a 75 percent average nation-wide graduation rate, so we know CTE is valuable to keeping students in school. If students with the lowest profile enroll in a CTE program, they are eight to ten times less likely to drop out of school in the 11th and 12th grades.

The Department of Education under President Biden has made career connected learning through CTE programs a priority. Career connected learning is centered on four evidence-based strategies. It prepares students for career success.

Expanding work based learning opportunities, increasing the use of dual enrollment for CTE courses, strengthening career navigation support, and requiring that CTE programs lead to valuable industry recognized credentials.

For example, the Department of Education has teamed up with the Department of Labor and the Department of Energy for its Raise the Bar initiative, which embeds these strategies into CTE programming and grants, so students are offered robust career exploration opportunities. Taken together, these strategies will help students gain career exposure, and importantly, learn soft skills.

That is what we hear about when we are out talking to employers, responsibility, communication, collaboration, all of those things that those are skills that students will gain regardless of what path they take. It will strengthen local economies, and help employers fill vacancies. With that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to a productive and thoughtful discussion, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[The Statement of Ranking Member Bonamici follows:]



OPENING STATEMENT

House Committee on Education and the Workforce
 Ranking Member Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Bonamici (OR-01)
 Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
"Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy"
 2175 Rayburn House Office Building
 Thursday, January 18, 2024 | 10:15 a.m.

Thank you, Chair Bean, and thank you the witnesses for joining us today. I'm very grateful that we are having this hearing on Career and Technical Education—an issue that has broad bipartisan support.

During the last two years, Congressional Democrats and the Biden-Harris Administration have been working hard on rebuilding the economy from the bottom up and the middle out. When we think about the *Inflation Reduction Act*, *CHIPS & Science*, and the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*—these are creating millions of new infrastructure, clean energy, and STEAM-related jobs. I say STEAM intentionally because integrating art and design into science, technology, engineering, and math means more creative and innovative students and workers.

So, these legislative victories that we're working on will create a sustained demand for postsecondary STEAM and construction-based pathways—particularly with an eye on those who have historically been left out of these jobs and opportunities.

Investing in CTE—Career and Technical Education—can help build a skilled pipeline for students when they get out of high school to meet this new demand. To that end, we need CTE programs that are available to all students so they can explore careers that interest them—whether or not they require a four-year degree or an industry-recognized credential. It is still beneficial.

Named after Carl D. Perkins—who chaired this very Committee, the *Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act* allows students to learn about competitive careers in information technology, health science, manufacturing, and hospitality—to name a few. These opportunities are critical to helping students refine relevant skills and competencies, which frequently leads to industry-recognized credentials and increased earning potential.

Under the *Perkins Act*, funding for CTE courses is commonly offered in public and private high schools with more than 80 percent of students completing at least one CTE credit. Additional funds are also directed into local secondary institutions or specialized high schools that focus on vocational or industry-specific training. And, Chairman Bean, I really appreciate this story about your father and I'm thinking today about all of the CTE equipment, which most people are likely not to have, whether it be large 3D printers or labs or large industrial equipment.

In recent years, schools and administrators are rethinking the value of CTE and the role it can play in helping students prepare for college or the workforce and keeping students engaged in school. In past years, CTE was used as an alternative track for students less interested in college—or worse, those who are deemed, usually inappropriately, not college eligible—but it is now a valuable tool to bring much-needed career and postsecondary exposure to all students. CTE is an important part of a well-rounded education, but not a substitute for it. CTE

has become essential as students today are looking for hands-on learning opportunities and new, rewarding careers while employers are increasingly requiring some amount of postsecondary education.

Now data shows that there is a 90 percent CTE student high school graduation rate versus a 75 percent average nation-wide graduation rate. So, we know CTE is valuable to keeping students in school and, if students with a low-risk profile enroll in a CTE program, they are 8 to 10 times less likely to drop out of school in the 11th and 12th grades.

The Department of Education under President Biden has made career-connected learning through CTE programs a priority. Career-connected learning is centered on four evidence-based strategies that prepare students for career success: expanding work-based learning opportunities, increasing the use of dual enrollment for CTE courses, strengthening career navigation supports, and requiring that CTE programs lead to valuable, industry-recognized credentials.

For example, the Department of Education has teamed up with the Department of Labor and Department of Energy for its Raise the Bar initiative, which embeds these strategies into CTE programming and grants, so students are offered robust career exploration opportunities.

So, taken together, these strategies will help students gain career exposure and, importantly, learn soft skills. That's what we hear about when we are out talking to employers—responsibility, communication, collaboration—all of those are skills that students will gain, regardless of what path they take. It will strengthen local economies, and help employers fill vacancies.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to a productive and thoughtful discussion and I yield back the balance of my time.

Thank you.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you so much. Well done. Let us get to that all-star panel I promised you. Our first witness, Danny Corwin, Executive Director of Harbor Freight Schools—Tools for Schools, located in Calabasas, California. As Executive Director, and we had a little chat this morning, he is in the fight to bring the next generation to jobs where it matters, where they can make a difference.

They can make big bucks. That is the other big thing. Mr. Corwin brings over three decades of leadership, experience dedicated to expanding opportunities for K to 12 public schools, and leader positions over 13 years with the California Charter School Association, including being CFO, Vice President, Senior Vice President of Development, 4 years as the Director of Career Academies. I told you all-star panel, and he is going to be our leadoff hitter.

He serves on the boards for several nonprofit organizations, and received his BA from UC Santa Barbara, and a master's in education from UCLA. Welcome, Danny, we'll get to you in just a second.

Next is Kelly Mosley. Kelly is from a special district in Florida, the 4th congressional District, Clay County. She is the Career and Technical Education Supervisor for the Clay County School District in Northeast Florida, located in Green Cove Springs, Florida, where my wife is from.

After graduating from the University of Florida, go Gators, in 2004, she taught agriscience at Wilkinson Junior High School, and Lake Asbury Junior High School.

In 2007, Ms. Mosley was named the—are you ready for this, the Florida Association of Career and Technical Education's New Teacher of the Year. She holds a master's degree in education leadership for the University of North Florida, and I want to explain something to you being from the State of Florida. This white stuff we are seeing outside, they call it snow, so it is new to me too, Kelly, we are glad to have you here.

Our next witness, I will yield to Ms. Bonamici to introduce Mr. Kincaid.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Richard Kincaid is a Senior Executive Director of College and Career Pathways of the Maryland State Department of Education, where he runs the College and Career Pathways Office, and implements the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. A program that increases funding for education by 3.8 billion dollars each year over 10 years.

Prior to joining the Maryland State Department of Education, he was a State Director of Career and Technical Education at the District of Columbia's office of the State Superintendent of Education. He has also served as a Director of K–12 curriculum and instruction, Director of Career and Technical Education in Career Academies, Campus Administrator and High School Debate Teacher, for several school systems in Texas.

He holds a bachelor's in human resources management, a master's in organizational development, and a master's in educational leadership, and is nearing completion of an ED.D. in Education in curriculum and instruction from the University of Virginia. Welcome, Mr. Kincaid.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you, Ms. Bonamici, and welcome. Mr. Kincaid took the Red Line in this morning, so we are glad to have you here. Our last witness, Brandon Mabile, who has got the second-best looking beard here today. He is the Strategic Development Manager for Performance Contractors, Sugarland, Texas.

He is based out of Houston, spent some time in Louisiana as well. Let me tell you he joined Performance Contractors in 2006 and was named Strategic Development Manager in 2021 after serving as the Texas Regional Business Development Manager for 11 years. He represents today Associated Builders and Contractors.

They are the go-to industry for building, building America, and he has got thoughts that he will share with us on what the next generation needs, what he needs, and his contractors all across America are.

Ladies and gentlemen, and member, pursuant to Committee Rule 8(c), all Committee members who wish to insert written statements into the record may do so by submitting them to the Committee Clerk electronically in Microsoft Word, which is taught in Clay County schools, in that format by 5 p.m., after 14 days from the beginning of today's hearing, which is February 1, 2024.

Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days after the date of this hearing to allow such statements and other extraneous materials referenced in the hearing to be submitted for the official record. Let's get to our all-star panel members. I kind of talked to you a little bit. We have this 5-minute—your statements are already—I read them, they are good.

You have got good closing statements and opening statements, but let us hear from you. Danny Corwin, you are recognized. Welcome to the Committee.

STATEMENT OF MR. DANNY CORWIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS, CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA

Mr. CORWIN. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Bean, and Ranking Member Bonamici, and all of the distinguished members of this Subcommittee. My name is Danny Corwin, and I am the Executive Director of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, which is the program of the Smith Foundation.

The Smith Foundation is a private foundation, established by Eric Smith, the owner and founder of Harbor Freight Tools, a national tool retailer with over 1,400 stores and 28,000 employees. Grateful for a shop class that he took in high school and concerned that such programs were no longer available to many students around the country, Eric established Harbor Freight Tools for Schools to increase understanding, support and investment in skill trades education in U.S. public high schools.

Our flagship initiative is the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools prize for teaching excellence, which annually awards 1.5 million dollars to 25 outstanding high school trades teachers across the country. We also created the platinum standard, to outline the elements of excellence in skill trades teaching and learning in U.S. public high schools.

Some elements of particular importance include starting with an excellent teacher, and having a relevant, aligned curriculum within

demand career pathways, opportunities for work-based learning, all resulting in a high school diploma and an industry recognized credential. We know that high school trades education broadly coursework focused on the construction, transportation, electrification and manufacturing sectors, is critical for our Nation's future.

Our economic vitality rests on our ability to create a skilled workforce of highly trained professionals to design, build and repair the very fabric of American life, from the roads we drive on, to the homes we live in, to the electrical grid and energy sources that power it all.

In 2019, we commissioned opinion research to survey students, parents and voters. The results reflected a desire for greater support and access to trades coursework. 83 percent of voters, and 79 percent of parents said that school districts should make skill trades education a high priority.

Skilled trades education also leads to better educational outcomes for high school students. A study by Jobs for the Future showed that students who concentrate on skill trades coursework are more likely to graduate from high school than their national peers.

Why are excellence skill trades classes not available to every American student? Some of the obstacles include a college for all mentality, that has limited student options, and created a stigma around trades careers, while increasing the percentage of students with access to college is laudable and a necessary goal, it has been the unintended effect of closing off options for students who may choose to pursue a different path.

Other obstacles include a lack of alignment among K–12, postsecondary, workforce development and industry sectors, an acute and growing shortage of skill trades teachers, and finally the fact that spending on CTE makes up just 3 percent of the estimated overall funding for high school and middle school education in the United States.

Despite these obstacles, many promising practices have developed across the country, some illustrated by the work of our prize-winning teachers. These include integrating skill trades and traditional academic coursework, as demonstrated in Colorado, where Scott Burke cofounded Geometry and Construction, a program that integrates skill trades and traditional academic coursework.

The program teaches students both trades and geometry, through the process of building affordable homes for families in need. Also, incorporating project-based learning to impart core concepts, and teach professional skills.

In Connecticut, Roxanne Amriott, automotive repair—teachers automotive repair in a classroom that is a live, licensed repair facility, where students work on customer vehicles in teams, learning every aspect of the professional process from repairs to customer interaction and time management.

Also, expanding opportunities for dual enrollment and college credit to give CTE students a head start on postsecondary education and careers. In Arizona, Cesar Gutierrez teaches precision manufacturing, where students can receive up to 25 college credits, nearly a full year of school for their associate degree in industrial

technology, thanks to a dual enrollment partnership with Pima Community College.

Other promising practices include increasing work-based learning experiences to help students build technical and professional skills with workplace mentors, and leveraging out of school hours, flexible schedules and summer learning, to give students more access to hands on skill trades education.

These promising practices can help prepare our students for success in the skill-based economy. Again, thank you for the opportunity to address the importance of skill trades education, and I look forward to your questions.

[The Statement of Mr. Corwin follows:]

United States House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Hearing on "Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy"

January 18, 2024

Written Testimony of Danny Corwin
Executive Director, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools

Good morning, Subcommittee Chairman Bean and Subcommittee Ranking Member Bonamici, and all the distinguished members of this Committee. My name is Danny Corwin, and I am the Executive Director of Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, which is the flagship program of The Smidt Foundation. The Smidt Foundation is a private foundation, established by Eric Smidt – the co-founder, CEO and owner of Harbor Freight Tools, the national tool retailer. The Smidt Foundation supports courageous people building, repairing and making our communities safe.

Eric co-founded Harbor Freight with his father at the age of 17. Their small mail-order tool business established in North Hollywood, California in 1977 now has over 1,400 stores and 27,000 employees across the United States. Grateful for a shop class that he took in high school and concerned that such programs were no longer available to many students around the country, Eric decided to do something about it and established Harbor Freight Tools for Schools.

We focus on skilled trades education, which is a subset of Career and Technical Education, and emphasizes the expert and creative use of tools, materials, and processes to solve a problem, meet a need, or build or repair products or structures, and is focused largely in the construction, transportation, electrification, and manufacturing sectors. Generally, this includes coursework in the study of agricultural mechanics, construction (including carpentry, plumbing and HVAC technologies), electrical, advanced manufacturing, welding, and transportation mechanics (including automotive, small engine, and aviation.)

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools® supports outstanding skilled trades education in our nation's high schools. With a deep respect for the dignity of these fields and for the intelligence and creativity of people who work with their hands, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools aims to drive a greater understanding of and investment in skilled trades education, believing that access to quality skilled trades education gives high school students pathways to graduation, opportunity, good jobs, and a workforce our country needs.

The United States is facing a severe shortage of skilled trades workers. Harbor Freight Tools for Schools is committed to investing in the next generation of tradespeople who will do this important work. We employ three major strategies in doing so: supporting skilled trades teachers, leveraging research and communications, and funding invention and models of excellence.

Our flagship initiative is the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence®, through which we award \$1.5 million to 25 outstanding high school trades teachers across the country annually. The prize shines a light on outstanding skilled trades teachers and their valuable work inspiring students to learn a trade that prepares them for life after graduation. Since 2017, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools has awarded \$7.5 million to 133 deserving teachers and their classrooms. Prizewinners join a national network of skilled trades teachers who convene throughout the year, including at LET'S BUILD ITSM, a four-day summer convening to share best practices and develop new ideas to advance high school skilled trades education.

Using research from the Association of Career and Technical Education Association (ACTE), combined with nearly two dozen sets of success indicators, we created a "Platinum Standard" to outline the elements of excellence in skilled trades teaching and learning in U.S. public high schools.

- At the center is an outstanding teacher:
 - With a love of the subject matter, and a deep belief in young people and their potential,
 - Highly skilled, knowledgeable and able to teach and adapt approved curriculum, with opportunities to learn and refresh their skills,
 - Supported: by colleagues, principal and policy; by competitive compensation; and by a community of practice,
 - Valued by and engaged in their community.
- Matched up with curriculum relevant to a career pathway and future work choices,
- With seamless synergy to next-step options, including employers, community colleges and universities,
- A safe, modern space in which to experiment and build, and with modern equipment and tools,
- Teacher-student ratios enabling hands-on learning by students, in teams and solo, with meaningful supervision and coaching,
- Connecting each student to learning in the world outside of school, with constructive guidance from a skilled tradesperson in that domain, and also connected to a community of practice, with opportunities to showcase skills and knowledge.
- Students have apprenticeships or internships, formal and informal, and optimally, paid.

- Resulting in a high school diploma and an industry recognized credential, and thus, opportunity and choices for the future.

Research on Skilled Trades Education in U.S. High Schools

To establish a deeper understanding of high school skilled trades education and attitudes about it, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools commissioned two research projects with leading experts. We undertook this research because it did not exist; while there were a number of studies of CTE overall and labor market trends, a comprehensive look at the state of skilled trades education in U.S. public high schools had never been done.

First, we commissioned a 50-state landscape study by Jobs for the Future (JFF), based on both qualitative and quantitative data, including course and program information, student and teacher data and demographics, enrollment, and outcomes data, where available.¹ This landscape research yielded key findings, including:

- Our education system is not well aligned with labor market needs (and this is particularly acute in the HVAC, electrical and plumbing fields.)
- High school skilled trades education offers students high-value opportunities, not just in the context of their trade – through technical skills and work experience – but also academically, socially and personally.
- High school trades courses face looming teacher shortages, exacerbated by retirements of an aging workforce – significantly older than the median teaching age of 41.
- There is no clear and comprehensive national data on high school skilled trades education. Many state education departments do not reliably collect basic information that could tell us how many young people enroll in and complete skilled trades programs in high school.
- In spite of these challenges, there are still promising practices and islands of excellence across the country from which we can learn and build.

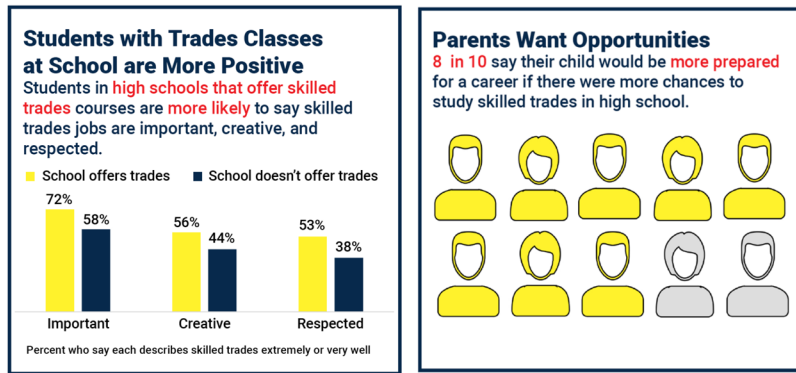
Harbor Freight Tools for Schools also commissioned a companion piece of opinion research from NORC at University of Chicago to survey students, parents and voters on their views on skilled trades education and careers.² The results were overwhelmingly positive and reflected a desire for greater support of and access to trades coursework in our nation's high schools – among all groups. Notable findings in this report included:

- Parents and voters want more skilled trades education in high school.
 - 83% of voters and 79% of parents said that school districts should make the funding of skilled trades education a high priority.

¹ JFF. (May 2020). *Breaking Ground: A First Look at American High School Skilled Trades Education*. https://htfforschools.org/wp-content/uploads/20.05.07-Breaking-Ground_Final-report-by-JFF-revised.pdf

² Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. (May 2020). *Skilled Trades in High School: What Voters, Parents and Students Want from Policymakers and Educators*. <https://htfforschools.org/wp-content/uploads/20.05.08-NORC-poll.pdf>

- 84% of voters think that their elected officials should be doing more to support skilled trades and hands-on learning in school, including 46% who think these officials should be doing “much more.”
- 8 in 10 parents say their children would be better prepared for a career if there were more chances to study skilled trades in high school.
- Students in high schools that offer skilled trades courses are more likely to say that skilled trades jobs are important, creative and respected.



High School Skilled Trades Education benefits our students and our economy.

We know that high school skilled trades education – and all types of high school CTE– are critical to our nation’s future. Our economic vitality rests on our ability to create a skilled workforce – highly-educated professionals to design, build and repair the very fabric of American life, from the roads we drive on to the homes we live in, to the electrical grid and energy sources that power it all. Even the simple act of turning on a light switch would not happen without the work of multiple trades professionals, and these jobs are not going anywhere.

Leaders in these industries will tell you that there is a serious shortage of skilled workers at this time, and the problem is only getting worse. A recent survey by the Association of General Contractors found that 88% of construction firms surveyed had trouble finding skilled workers.³ The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there will

³ Associated General Contractors of America. (2023, September 25). *Survey Shows 88% of Construction Firms are Having a Hard Time Filing Vacancies, Reveals Flaws in Nation's Approach to Preparing Workers for Construction Careers.* [Press Release] <https://www.agc.org/news/2023/09/25/survey-shows-88-construction-firms-are-having-hard-time-filing-vacancies-reveals-flaws-nations>

be 73,500 job openings every year for electricians alone.⁴ Retirements are exacerbating this problem. JFF's landscape research showed that among the 1.3 million annual openings in the trades, for each new job created, there are 15 openings due to replacements. The trades offer many engaging, fulfilling, family-supporting careers, and there are thousands of jobs available to those with cutting-edge skills and education.

Taking a trades class is not just beneficial to a student's future employment potential. High school skilled trades education leads to better educational outcomes and better experiences for high school students. JFF's landscape research showed that students who concentrate in skilled trades coursework are more likely to graduate high school than the national average, and a U.S. Department of Education study showed that CTE concentrators are more likely to enroll in post-secondary education than their peers.⁵

We have also seen that participation in CTE classes offers socio-emotional benefits that enhance students' experience of high school and their enthusiasm for learning. A survey of students in Sonoma County, California by YouthTruth found that students who participate in CTE classes or work-based learning are a full quartile more likely to report taking pride in their school work.⁶ It also found that these students are more than twice as likely as those who don't take such classes to say that there is an adult at school they can talk to when feeling upset, stressed or having problems.

Obstacles to Widespread Availability of High School Skilled Trades Education

If high school skilled trades education yields such powerful benefits to both students and employers, why are excellent trades classes not available to every American student? A multitude of factors contribute to the shortage of these courses, but key obstacles include the following:

The college-for-all mentality has limited student options and created stigma around trades careers. While increasing the percentage of students with access to college is a laudable and necessary goal, it has had the unintended effect of closing off options for students who may choose to pursue a different path.⁷ Often support for CTE pathways – particularly in the trades – is framed as an either/or proposition relative to college-going, but this is not the case. Many students who take trades and other CTE classes go on to attend college, armed with the technical and professional skills that high-quality CTE coursework provides. Nonetheless, not every young person

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Construction and Extraction. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/electricians.htm#tab-6>

⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (2019 September). *Bridging the skills gap: Career and technical education in high school*. <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/cte/index.html>

⁶ YouthTruth. (2023). *Leading through Listening: Student and Community Voices in Sonoma County*. <https://youthtruth.surveymethods.com/public/#/reports/65797/sections/2041867>

⁷ A recent survey by the ECMC Foundation found that 75% of students felt pressure to pursue a four-year degree, but that 63% were open to pursuing another path. ECMC Group. (June 2023). *"Question the Quo"*. <https://www.questionthequo.org/media/0j5p3gaz/question-the-quo-june-2023-report.pdf>

wants to go to college, and many are worried about the significant debt they may incur by doing so. With such a rigid definition of success, achievement and value baked into our educational system, we miss many talented and creative young people who thrive with hands-on, project-based learning.

There is too little alignment among the K-12, post-secondary, workforce development and industry sectors. Often each of these sectors functions with its own directive: the K-12 system is geared towards traditional academic or “college-prep” coursework; potential industry partners are wary of high school-age apprentices and focus on adult potential employees; the trades are sometimes seen as the domain of the post-secondary education system, and not prioritized as opportunities for dual enrollment. Outstanding high school coursework is a critical part of the larger trades workforce development pipeline, and must be fully included in it.

Too few resources are directed to CTE and career-oriented learning. Decades into the College-for-All effort, six in 10 American adults still do not have a college degree. At the same time, spending on CTE makes up just three percent of the estimated overall funding for high school and middle school education in the United States.⁸ Our state and federal funding frameworks must be significantly re-aligned to serve the nation’s students and their futures.

There is an acute and increasing shortage of high school skilled trades teachers. As noted above, the JFF landscape research showed that a wave of high school trades teacher shortages loom, exacerbated by retirements of an aging workforce. While data on trades teachers is scarce, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools estimates that nearly a quarter of American skilled trades teachers plan to leave teaching or retire in the next three years. Outstanding trades education simply cannot happen without a great teacher, and we must urgently implement strategies to strengthen our nation’s teacher pipeline. Promising practices in this area have included pay scales that honor industry experience, Grow-Your-Own teaching programs, and setting salaries competitive with local industries.

Promising Practices and Solutions

While significant obstacles exist in the quest to provide every U.S public high school student with access to outstanding skilled trades education, many promising practices have developed across the country. We have identified some of our nation’s best teachers through the Harbor Freight Tools for Schools Prize for Teaching Excellence, and many of their programs demonstrate strategies to bring outstanding trades education to a wider audience.

⁸ Wartzman, Rick. “‘College for all’ has failed America. Can the education system be fixed?” Fortune, December 14, 2023, https://fortune.com/2023/12/14/college-for-all-bachelor-degree-income-inequality/?mc_cid=6f517dc043&mc_eid=UNIQID

Integrating skilled trades and “traditional” academic coursework: The Geometry in Construction (GIC) program teaches students both skilled trades and geometry through the process of building affordable homes for families in need. Co-developed by prizewinning teacher Scott Burke in Colorado, the curriculum seamlessly integrates the two subjects through contextualized and project-based learning. Many of the students who take a GIC course have never enrolled in a trades class before, and teachers have reported that students in GIC courses perform better on standardized testing than their peers in traditional geometry classes. Over 700 schools nationwide have adopted the program, and Burke has also co-developed an “AMPED on Algebra” curriculum to apply hands-on learning in the trades to Algebra I.

Incorporating project-based learning to impart core concepts and teach professional skills: Roxanne Amiot has taught automotive repair in Bridgeport, Connecticut for 34 years. Her classroom is a live, licensed repair facility. Students work on customer vehicles in teams, learning every aspect of the professional process, from repairs to customer interaction and time management. Giving more teachers the flexibility to incorporate this type of real-life, work-based learning into their curriculum would give more students access to the experience, expertise, and professional skills they seek.

Work-based learning experiences provide concrete benefits to students and employers not available in school-based CTE programs. The Harbor Freight Fellows Initiative® was created by Big Picture Learning in 2016 to offer high school students interested in the skilled trades the opportunity to learn from professional mentors in authentic and real-world settings. Results of the 120-hour earn-and-learn program have included accelerated acquisition of both trades and professional skills, relationships that lead directly to further educational opportunities, immediate hiring of high school graduates, and a deeply satisfying experience for workplace mentors.

Expanding opportunities for dual enrollment and college credit to give CTE students a head start on post-secondary education and careers: Cesar Gutierrez teaches precision manufacturing at Tucson, Arizona’s Desert View High School, where students can receive up to 25 college credits—nearly a full year of school—toward their associate degree in industrial technology, thanks to a dual enrollment partnership with Pima Community College. Gutierrez’s program was built in part to address local employer concerns that prospective employees in the defense and aerospace industries were in short supply, and many of his former students have continued on into the field.

Leveraging out-of-school hours, flexible schedules and summer learning to give students more access to hands-on learning: Troy Reichert of Guernsey, Wyoming created the “Sunrise Wyoming Project” summer camp to teach high school students construction skills by revitalizing historic sites in Sunrise, once a thriving mining town. Students refurbished the oldest YMCA in Wyoming, earning industry-recognized credentials and meeting construction experts in the process. In Los Angeles County,

Harbor Freight Tools for Schools supports six summer programs where students can earn high school and college credit, valuable industry credentials, and a summer wage. In Phoenix, students at Western Maricopa Career Center (West-MEC) spend half their days taking traditional academic classes at their home high school, and half accessing cutting-edge CTE classes in the trades, public safety, medical and other in-demand fields. While trades coursework should be an integral part of the traditional school day, educators and policymakers should support innovative models that reach students when and where they can.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the pressing need to advance skilled trades education across the country, and I look forward to responding to your questions.

Chairman BEAN. Spot on, Danny Corwin, well done. Thank you so much. I have got a great question for you in just a few moments, but thank you so much. Our next witness, Kelly Mosley, I spent the morning with her showing, looking at her programs, and so Kelly Mosley, welcome. You are recognized.

STATEMENT OF MS. KELLY MOSLEY, CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SUPERVISOR, CLAY COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOLS, GREEN COVE SPRING, FLORIDA

Ms. MOSLEY. Chair Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me here today and giving me the opportunity to share about career and technical education in Clay County, Florida. My name is Kelly Mosley, and I serve as one of two supervisors of career and technical education for Clay County District Schools where our goal is to prepare students for college and careers.

Clay County has nearly 120 career and technical education teachers in secondary schools. We are fortunate to have college and career coaches as part of our CTE team, who work at all seven high schools to support CTE students and teachers. Over 11,000 students are enrolled in CTE programs.

There are 33 different CTE programs across the county, representing 11 career cluster areas. In Clay County, students are on a six-period school day, and they can choose to take CTE courses as their electives, in addition to their academic courses. They can continue to take CTE courses that build upon each other as part of the CTE program of study throughout their high school career, or they can choose to explore another CTE program or elective.

Exploratory CTE courses are offered at the junior high school level, where they can take semester long CTE courses during their 7th and 8th grade school years. These courses relate to the courses offered at the high school level and are an important part of the workforce pipeline.

Students in Clay County CTE programs prepare for a variety of nationally recognized, industry certification exams from the Florida Department of Education's CAPE Funding list. Last year over 1,400 industry certifications were earned by Clay County students.

We offer work-based learning opportunities, such as CTSOs, pre-apprenticeships, school-based enterprises, internships, field trips, career fairs, and clinical experiences. We have 14 advisory boards where business and community partners advise, assist and advocate for CTE programs, and they are the foundation of business partner involvement.

Even though we are constantly trying to overcome the obstacle of the nationwide CTE shortage, our department collaborates with regional workforce partners to determine in demand career fields, as we develop new CTE programs. Recently we had expanded health science, , construction, information technology and communication programs in the county, and we look forward to continuing to expand manufacturing programs in the future.

Please continue to support CTE. CTE programs provide something for every student. CTE programs provide real-world hands-on experiences to prepare students for college and careers, and

CTE classes are the reason that many students come to school every day.

CTE's teachers have the unique opportunity to serve as their student's teacher for their entire high school career, and forge relationships with students that impact student attendance, discipline and academic achievement.

I could share Clay County's CTE student success stories for days. Stories of how a student ended up in a certain career because of a field trip they took, or how they earned a college scholarship because they were well prepared for the interview, due to the mock interviews they had during their CTE program.

Or the job offer they were given because they were able to network with industry professionals, and that job turned into a career that helped them overcome generational poverty. I could share stories of how students who participated in internships were hired as permanent employees, and they're now modeled employees for local businesses, where they're given tuition reimbursement, health benefits, and more.

I will leave you with this one story of a former Clay County student who excelled in two different CTE programs while he was at Middleburg High School. He participated in two different CTSOs, and the ACE Mentoring program where he met various people who would offer him employment in the construction industry.

He was able to serve as the project manager who helped to build the latest hospital in Clay County and was able to experience a full circle moment 10 years later. He shared with current CTE students on a field trip to the construction site provided by business partners about the opportunities Clay County CTE provided him, that led him to the team who was building the 2-million-dollar hospital that will provide services for our entire county.

The numbers and statistics are important, but stories like these are even more important because they represent lives changed, and communities impacted, and I appreciate the opportunity to share our story with you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The Statement of Ms. Kelly Mosley follows:]



Testimony of Kelly Mosley
Career and Technical Education Supervisor, Community and Business Partnerships
Clay County District Schools, Florida

Before the
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives

“Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy”

January 18, 2024

Chair Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici, and members of the subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me here today and giving me the opportunity to share about Career and Technical Education in Clay County, Florida.

My name is Kelly Mosley and I serve as one of two Supervisors of Career and Technical Education for Clay County District Schools where our goal is to prepare students for college and careers.

Overview of Career and Technical Education in Clay County

Clay County has nearly 120 CTE teachers in secondary schools. We are fortunate to have College and Career Coaches as part of our CTE team who work at all 7 high schools to support CTE students and teachers. CTE programs are also offered at Bannerman Learning Center, the alternative school, through Clay Virtual Academy, and the 7 junior high schools. There are over 11,000 students enrolled in CTE programs. There are 33 different CTE programs offered across the county representing the Career Cluster areas of:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Automotive
- Architecture, Construction, and Engineering
- Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Education
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Law, Public Safety, and Security
- Manufacturing

In Clay County, students are on a 6-period school day and they can choose to take CTE courses as their electives, in addition to their academic courses. Students can also take art, Band, Chorus, PE, ROTC, etc as their elective classes as well. They can continue to take CTE courses that build upon each other as part of a CTE program of study throughout their high school career or they can choose to explore another CTE program or elective.

Career Exploration Opportunities

Exploratory CTE courses are offered at the junior high level where students can take semester-long CTE courses during their 7th and 8th grade school years. These courses relate to the courses offered at the high school level and are an important part of the workforce pipeline. College and Career Coaches and School Counselors visit the junior high schools to share with 8th-grade students about the CTE program offerings at the high schools each January before making course selections for 9th grade. Field trips to the high schools and Freshman Expos are also held to showcase CTE programs and allow families to learn about the opportunities each high school has to offer. Business Partners and Post-secondary institutions are part of the Freshman Expos to show students an example of what their entire career

pathway could look like if they choose various CTE courses. Promotional videos and print materials are developed to share with the students, online, and on social media to further engage students and families in making decisions about their high school career.

Industry Certifications

Students in Clay County's Career and Technical Education programs prepare for a variety of nationally recognized industry certification exams from the Florida Department of Education's Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Funding list. Industry certifications earned come from agencies such as the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), American Welding Society, Intuit, Florida Board of Nursing, AutoDesk, CompTIA, Adobe, National Restaurant Association, and more. Last school year, over 1,400 industry certifications were earned by Clay County students. This is a "win-win-win" for everyone - most importantly for the student who now has a nationally recognized credential to give them an advantage when applying for jobs, scholarships, and college. Many of the industry certifications provide students with college credit through statewide articulation agreements with state colleges. It also has a positive impact on the school's grade from the Florida Department of Education because industry certifications have been calculated in the acceleration component of the school's score just like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment, and Cambridge AICE pass rates. Finally, each certification passed generates bonus state funding that must be used by the program in which it was earned. This has allowed our department to provide updated equipment, computer labs, technology, software, and more for our CTE students, teachers, and programs.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Clay County offers several Work-Based Learning opportunities. Students can join Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) and other leadership opportunities such as FBLA - Future Business Leaders of America, HOSA - Future Health Professionals, SkillsUSA, The National FFA Organization, TSA - Technology Students of America, and FCCLA - Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, National Technical Honor Society (NTHS), and Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Mentoring. Students can participate in pre-apprenticeships with the Northeast Florida Builders Association and Electrical Training Alliance Jax. School-based enterprises provide students the opportunity to work in on-campus businesses such as child-care centers for students in the Early Childhood Education programs, catering events for students in the Culinary programs, Floral Design for students in the Horticulture program, Graphic design and production for students in business programs, and more. Students can also apply for short and long-term internships with Garber Automall, VyStar Credit Union, Clay County Utility Authority, Clay County Sheriff's Office, Clay County Emergency Management, and the Town of Orange Park.

Business Partner Involvement

Clay County has 14 Advisory Boards where business and community partners advise, assist, and advocate for CTE programs. The advisory boards represent various industries in the region and they are the foundation of business partner involvement. Business partners support CTE

programs in a variety of ways including providing guest speakers - virtual and in-person, hosting field trips, providing industry/business Hype Videos, participating in the annual Career Fair where students can "Enroll, Enlist, or get Employed", participating in College and Career Night, Mock Job Interviews, giving financial support and sponsoring events, providing internships, hosting Business Clothes Closet drives, serving as judges for competitions, donating equipment, attending High School Community Tours each semester, providing scholarships for CTE students, hosting clinical rotations, offering Dual Enrollment, and providing technical assistance for teachers.

Conclusion

Even though we are constantly trying to overcome the obstacle of the nationwide CTE teacher shortage, our department collaborates with regional workforce partners to determine in-demand career fields as we develop new CTE programs. Recently, we have expanded health science, construction, information technology, and communications programs in the county and we look forward to expanding manufacturing programs in the future. Please continue to support CTE. CTE programs provide something for every student. CTE programs provide real-world hands-on experiences to prepare students for college and careers. CTE classes are the reason many students come to school every day. CTE teachers have the unique opportunity to serve as their students' teacher for their entire high school career and forge great relationships with students that impact attendance, discipline, and academic achievement.

I could share Clay County CTE Student success stories for days, stories of how a student ended up going into a certain career because of a field trip they took, or how they earned a college scholarship because they were well prepared for the scholarship interview due to the mock interviews they had during their CTE program, or the job offer they were given because they were able to network with industry professionals and that job turned into a career that helped them overcome generational poverty. I could share stories of how students who participated in internships were hired as permanent employees and are now model employees for local businesses where they are given tuition reimbursement, health benefits, and more, but I will leave you with this one story of a former Clay County student who excelled in 2 different CTE programs while he was at Middleburg High School. He excelled in multiple CTSOs and the ACE Mentoring program and met various people who would offer him employment in the construction industry. He was a project manager who helped to build the latest hospital in Clay County and was able to experience a full-circle moment ten years later. He shared with current CTE students on a field trip to the construction site about the opportunities Clay County CTE provided him that led him to the team who was building the two million dollar hospital that will provide services for our entire county. The numbers and statistics are important, but stories like these are even more important because they represent lives changed and communities impacted and I appreciate the opportunity to share our story today.

Chairman BEAN. Kelly Mosley, well done. Thank you very much. He used to run D.C. Schools, now he is doing it for Maryland, Mr. Kincaid, you are recognized my friend, welcome.

STATEMENT OF MR. RICHARD KINCAID, SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS, MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Mr. KINCAID. Chairman Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is an honor to testify before you today. My name is Richard Kincaid, and I am testifying on behalf of the Maryland State Department of Education, led by our interim State Superintendent, Dr. Carey Wright.

In my role I lead the Office of College and Career Pathways, a team that is responsible for ensuring that all students have access to high-quality career and technical education programming. While the State of Maryland is making excellent progress toward developing an educational system that is connected to the world of work, we still have not done enough to communicate that career is the destination, and college is one of the many pathways to get there.

Today I want to introduce you to a piece of groundbreaking legislation known as the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Second, I want to share with you a competitive grant program called Maryland Works. Third, I want to emphasize the importance of rigor, quality and cross sector collaboration in the apprenticeship space.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is a significant shift in the state's approach to education policy, governance and accountability. This multi-billion-dollar State and local investment intends to transform Maryland's public education system into a worldclass education model.

For the purpose of my testimony today I will highlight pillar three of the blueprint, which requires that all students have equitable access to rigorous education that prepares them for college, career and life, and more specifically to our work in CTE, mandates that all high school graduates earn an industry recognized credential, and/or complete the high school level of a registered apprenticeship program by the 2030–2031 school year.

This mandate requires a rapid state-wide scaling of industry recognized apprenticeship opportunities, both on the industry side, and for our school systems. To achieve this, Maryland has implemented various strategies, including significant investment in expanding and improving CTE programming.

Pillar three of the blueprint parallels the intentionality of the Biden administration's four keys to unlocking career success, dual enrollment, work-based learning, workforce credentials, and career advising and navigation via career counselors. Each of these elements become a critical piece of Maryland's CTE redesign over the next few years.

To seat and skill the apprenticeship and industry recognized credential elements of the blueprint, MSDE developed and launched Maryland Works, a competitive grant that leverages remaining ESSR III funding to make a substantial investment in establishing industry aligned apprenticeship infrastructure across our State for all Maryland schools and business sectors.

The Maryland Works grant allocates 12.2 million dollars to nine entities, including six local education agencies, and three intermediaries, showcasing a national model for using recovery funds to build a talent pipeline, in key workforce sectors. The grant emphasizes innovative transportation, unique high school scheduling, and diverse youth apprenticeships in career fields not traditionally associated with apprenticeships.

Fields such as finance, IT, biotechnology, life sciences and education, and then also broadens the traditional intern or apprenticeship space in construction, hospitality and healthcare. By the end of the current school year, Maryland is on track to nearly double the number of students in youth apprenticeship programs, with estimated counts exceeding 1,000 students by the end of the school year.

Both large government agencies like the National Security Agency and NASA, are hiring Maryland youth apprentices alongside small rural businesses like Westminster Automotive, all who recognize the value add our programs and apprenticeships bring to economic development within our State. In Maryland, the landscape of youth apprenticeship is evolving dynamically as well, shaped by the ambitious goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and innovative approaches of programs like Apprenticeship Maryland, and school to apprenticeship initiatives.

The Blueprint's goals underline the state's commitment to creating pathways that lead to good jobs, and Apprenticeship Maryland is a significant component of the effort, offering a framework that integrates academic and practical learning through on-the-job experiences.

Following a similar route to approval as registered apprenticeships, Apprenticeship Maryland opportunities must be paid, aligned with the student's career pathway, must include concurrent and ongoing related instruction, and must be approved by The American Apprenticeship Training Council.

Regardless of the specific model of apprenticeship that's developed and implemented, several quality assurance elements must be in place. First, collaboration among industry partners, educational institutions and government agencies. Two, a review board to formally approve the apprenticeship.

Three, continuous evaluation of the apprenticeship program and individual experiences. In closing, I want to thank each of you for the commitment to develop meaningful national policy that strengthens CTE education, industry recognized credentials, and apprenticeship programs for the youth of our country. Our work in Maryland is both exciting and critical, as we collectively work to prepare all students for success in the skills-based economy. Thank you.

[The Statement of Mr. Kincaid follows.]

Written Testimony of Richard W. Kincaid, Maryland State Department of Education
Prepared for Delivery Before the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce's
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education
"Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy"
January 18, 2024

Introduction

Chairman Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to testify before you today. My name is Richard Kincaid, and I lead the [Office of College and Career Pathways](#) at the [Maryland State Department of Education](#), also known as MSDE. My team and I are responsible for ensuring that all students, especially those who are historically under-represented, have access to high quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs which include the opportunity to earn an industry-recognized credential, postsecondary credit, and participate in a work-based learning experience such as apprenticeship. Maryland is dedicated to enhancing access and equity in CTE programs, ensuring diverse and historically underserved students can equally benefit from comprehensive career pathways. The state is committed to preventing systemic tracking by offering flexible and inclusive CTE options that honor each student's unique choices and potential, rather than assigning tracks based on background or academic history.

For too long, both college and career have been treated as a destination for students. In Maryland, we are changing the narrative: career is *the* destination, and college, internship, national service, military service, and apprenticeships are some of the many pathways to get there.

To foster meaningful policy discussion and to support national benchmarking against programs that work and are working - today, I want to first, introduce you to a piece of groundbreaking legislation, known as the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#); second, I want to

share with you a highly competitive grant program named [Maryland Works](#), which brings together school systems and intermediary partners to develop a career-connected ecosystem; and third, I want to emphasize the importance of rigor, quality, and cross-sector collaboration in the apprenticeship space, and ensuring our decisions are responsive to and influenced by local, regional, and state workforce needs.

#1: Blueprint for Maryland's Future

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is a significant shift in the state's approach to education policy, governance, and accountability. This multi-billion-dollar state and local investment intends to transform Maryland's public education system into a world-class education model. The Blueprint comprehensively spans various education policy areas, including [early childhood education](#) and [teacher career pathways](#). For the purpose of my testimony today, I'll highlight [Pillar 3](#) of the Blueprint, which requires all students have equitable access to rigorous education that prepares them for college, career, and life—and more specifically to our work in CTE, mandates that all high school graduates earn an industry-recognized credential and/or completes the high school level of a registered apprenticeship program by the 2030-31 school year. This mandate requires a rapid, statewide scaling of industry-aligned apprenticeship opportunities both on the industry side, and in our schools.

To achieve this, Maryland has implemented various strategies, including significant investment in expanding and improving CTE programs. Pillar 3 of the Blueprint parallels the intentionality of the Biden Administration's [Four Keys to Unlock Career Success](#): dual enrollment, work-based learning, workforce credentials, and career advising and navigation via career counselors--each of these elements becoming a critical element of Maryland CTE redesign over the next few years. To seed and scale the apprenticeship and industry-recognized

credential elements of the Blueprint, MSDE recently launched a grant program called Maryland Works.

#2: Maryland Works

Maryland Works is a highly competitive MSDE-developed grant opportunity that leverages remaining one-time American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Relief Funds, known as ESSER III, to make a substantial investment in establishing an industry-aligned apprenticeship infrastructure for all Maryland's schools and business sectors that will last.

The Maryland Works grant allocates [\\$12.2 million to nine entities](#), including six local education agencies and three intermediaries, showcasing a national model for using recovery funds to build a talent pipeline in key workforce sectors. This initiative creates career paths for high school students leading to family-sustaining wages. It emphasizes innovative transportation, unique high-school scheduling, and diverse youth apprenticeships in career fields not traditionally associated with apprenticeship: finance, IT, biotechnology, life sciences, and education. Additionally, Maryland Works broadens traditional apprenticeships in construction, hospitality, and healthcare.

Does it work? In the last 90 days, the state of Maryland has almost doubled the number of students in youth apprenticeships. Both large government agencies like the National Security Agency and NASA are hiring Maryland youth apprentices alongside small rural businesses like Westminster Automotive, all who recognize the value-add our programs and apprenticeships bring to economic development. The State of Maryland and our apprentices will be ready to serve Maryland's future economic demand, and that of the nation's, as our state serves as one of five Workforce Hubs designated by the White House to quickly mobilize jobs and provide multiple opportunities to up-skill and re-skill our labor force.

#3: Ensuring Rigor, Quality, and Cross-Sector Collaboration in the Apprenticeship Space

In Maryland, the landscape of youth apprenticeship is evolving dynamically, shaped by the ambitious goals of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the innovative approaches of programs like [Apprenticeship Maryland](#) and School-to-Apprenticeship (STA) initiatives. These efforts are guided by a shared vision of equipping high school students with practical, career-oriented skills that align with the state's workforce needs.

The Blueprint's goals underline the state's commitment to creating pathways that lead to good jobs, and Apprenticeship Maryland is a significant component of this effort, offering a framework that integrates academic and practical learning, and requires 450 hours of on-the-job experience. Historically, this program focuses on juniors and seniors, primarily in the fields of Manufacturing, STEM, and traditional trades. It allows students to "earn and learn," gaining valuable work experience while being compensated. Following a similar route to approval as a Registered Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship Maryland opportunities must be paid, aligned with the student's career pathway, must include concurrent and ongoing related instruction, and must be approved by the Maryland Apprenticeship Training Council. Future youth apprenticeship programs must broaden their focus beyond traditional trades and STEM fields, encompassing a wider range of industries. The STA model can address these scalability needs and provide the additional benefit of creating seamless transitions from school to the workforce.

Regardless of the specific model of apprenticeship that's developed and implemented, several quality assurance elements must be in place:

1. Collaboration among industry partners, educational institutions, and government agencies. Educational partners, such as local school systems, community colleges,

and universities, play a pivotal role in curriculum development and alignment with academic standards. They ensure that the apprenticeship programs not only provide practical skills relevant to industry needs but also adhere to educational standards that facilitate seamless integration with traditional academic pathways.

2. A review board to formally approve the apprenticeship. In Maryland, the [Apprenticeship and Training Council](#) (MATC) plays a crucial role in approving and overseeing all apprenticeship programs, including youth apprenticeships, ensuring they meet established standards of quality and effectiveness.
3. Continuous evaluation of the apprenticeship program and individual experiences. Programs must be subject to ongoing review and adjustment, incorporating feedback from students, educators, and industry partners to maintain relevance and quality.

Conclusion

In closing, I want to thank each of you for making the commitment to develop meaningful national policy that strengthens career and technical education, industry-recognized credentials, and apprenticeship programs for the youth of our country. Our work in Maryland is both exciting and critical as we collectively work to prepare all students for success in the skills-based economy. We are eager to lead and to be a partner in that broader national effort – from which we and our children all stand to benefit.

I am now happy to answer any questions you may have.

Chairman BEAN. Richard Kincaid, thank you so much. Right on time, my friend, well done, and you have got a much healthier, or lengthier testimony printed, and so thank you for summarizing it and bringing it in. Mr. Brandon Mabile, thank you, is coming in from Texas, and you all get snow in Texas, so you are no stranger to what is on the ground up here, but we are glad to have you here. You are recognized, welcome.

STATEMENT OF MR. BRANDON MABILE, STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, PERFORMANCE CONTRACTORS, INC., SUGARLAND, TEXAS

Mr. MABILE. Chairman Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify this morning, and for the opportunity to discuss the construction workforce and policies to expand critical career pathways for high school students across the country.

My name is Brandon Mabile, and I am the Strategic Development Manager for Performance Contractors, headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a member of Associated Builders and Contractors, better known as ABC.

Today I am testifying on behalf of ABC, a national construction trade association with 68 chapters, representing more than 22,000 members. One of the key issues facing Performance and contractors throughout the construction industry is the severe workforce shortage that threatens our ability to thrive and build critical construction projects on time and on budget.

To ensure the success of our business and the industry as a whole, Performance knows that we must locate, encourage and educate a new generation of skilled American workers, and ensure these hardworking and determined individuals are able to participate in the American workforce, and make a living right out of high school, if they so choose, at a time when they are most needed.

Part of my role at Performance Contractors has been working with high schools and school districts to provide students with important exposure to the rewarding careers available through the skilled trades. While still facing outdated and inaccurate stigmas, a job in the skilled trades is vital work that requires a high skill level, intense focus, and a healthy work ethic.

In the construction industry, highly skilled craft professionals are also able to obtain high-paying, high-demand jobs that are necessary in most every community throughout the country. We work to ensure that students are aware of the opportunities available to them, and the worthwhile skills education that Performance Contractors can provide them if they choose to take this career pathway.

To provide these services to our high schools, Performance Contractors has joined with contractors and construction users throughout the country, but particularly in the greater Houston area to support and fund the Construction and Maintenance Education Foundation, a 501(c)(3) education foundation. CMEF provides education to current and aspiring craft workers, both at its own facility, and through partnerships with local area high schools and community colleges.

CMEF sponsors 62 area high schools, giving them access to the National Center for Construction Education and Research Curriculum. Additionally, CMEF connects high schools with contractor sponsors who provide personal protective equipment, construction materials, guest speakers and mentors to the high school programs, providing vital resources and important contacts and guidance to the students interested in the skills trades.

CMEF has a current operating budget of \$270,000 a year for its high school program, which has allowed us to serve our students. We are always looking for new partnerships and roads to let students, teachers and parents know about these important opportunities, and successful careers the skilled trades can provide.

As a member of ABC, along with its 68 chapters, and its 22,000 plus members, we continue to do our part to educate, craft, and management professionals using innovative and flexible learning models to build a safe, skilled, and productive workforce.

A 2023 survey of ABC members indicated that 79 percent of ABC contractors have targeted outreach to high school students, high school graduates, and individuals with GED diplomas, and 65 percent have targeted programs to community college students and graduates.

ABC members partner with and offer internships for college, university and high school students, 74 percent and 62 percent respectively. 84 percent of ABC contractors offer paid internships to college universities and high school students. The construction industry must attract more than half a million additional workers on top of our normal pace of hiring in order to meet the demand for labor, according to a 2023 model developed by ABC.

With nearly one in four construction workers over the age of 55, retirements continue to whittle away at our construction workforce. Simply put, our industry cannot afford to miss this opportunity to expand critical career pathways for the future of construction workers across the country.

I look forward to discussing this important issue with the Committee today, and hopefully provide insight into the successful programs we have offered, and the lives we have enriched through our high school programs. Thank you.

[The Statement of Mr. Mabile follows:]



Testimony of:
Brandon Mabile
Strategic Development Manager
Performance Contractors Inc.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

**U.S. House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and
Secondary Education**

Jan. 18, 2024

Chairman Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici and members of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education:

Thank you for the invitation to testify this morning and for the opportunity to discuss the construction workforce and policies to expand critical career pathways for high school students across the country.

My name is Brandon Mabile, and I am a strategic development manager for Performance Contractors Inc., headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and a member of Associated Builders and Contractors. Founded in 1979, Performance Contractors provides full-service construction services through all phases of the industrial construction process—from site prep through start-up. Performance serves a variety of industries—from chemical and power to automotive and refinery—with construction, turnaround and maintenance services that put safety and quality at the forefront of every project and decision. Today, I am testifying on behalf of Associated Builders and Contractors, a national construction trade association with 68 chapters representing more than 22,000 members.

One of the key issues currently facing Performance and contractors throughout the construction industry is the severe workforce shortage that threatens our ability to thrive and build critical construction projects on time and on budget. To ensure the success of our business and the industry as a whole, Performance knows that we must locate, encourage and educate a new generation of skilled American workers and ensure these hardworking and determined individuals are able to participate in the American workforce and make a living right out of high school, if they so choose, at a time when they are most needed.

Part of my role at Performance Contractors has been working with high schools and school districts to provide students with important exposure to the rewarding careers

available through the skilled trades. While still facing outdated and inaccurate stigmas, a job in the skilled trades is vital work that requires a high skill level, intense focus and a healthy work ethic. In the construction industry, highly skilled craft professionals are also able to obtain high-paying, high-demand jobs that are necessary in most every community throughout the country. We work to ensure that students are aware of the opportunities available to them and the worthwhile skills education that Performance Contractors can provide them if they choose to take this career pathway.

To provide these services to our high schools, Performance Contractors has joined with contractors and construction users in the greater Houston area to support and fund the Construction and Maintenance Education Foundation, a 501(c)3 education foundation. CMEF provides education to current and aspiring craft workers both at its own facility and through partnerships with local area high schools and community colleges. CMEF sponsors 62 area high schools, giving them access to the National Center for Construction Education and Research curriculum. This includes low-cost or no-cost access to NCCER curriculum. NCCER is a widely recognized source for craft education, assessment and certification in the construction industry. Today, NCCER develops standardized curricula and industry-recognized, portable credentials for more than 70 crafts that have been used in all 50 states and in 20 countries.

Additionally, CMEF connects high schools with contractor sponsors who provide personal protective equipment, construction materials, guest speakers and mentors to the high school programs, providing vital resources and important contacts and guidance to students interested in the skilled trades. CMEF has a current operating budget of \$270,000 for its high school program, which has allowed us to serve our students. We are always looking for new partnerships and inroads to let students, teachers and parents know about these important opportunities and successful careers the skilled trades can provide.

As a member of ABC, along with its 68 chapters and its 22,000+ members, we continue to do our part to educate craft and management professionals using innovative and

flexible learning models to build a safe, skilled and productive workforce. This all-of-the-above approach to workforce development has produced a network of ABC chapters and affiliates across the country that offer more than 800 apprenticeship, craft, safety and management education programs to build the people who build America. In 2022, ABC members invested [\\$1.5 billion](#) to educate 1.3 million course attendees to build a construction workforce that is safe, skilled and productive. Additionally, a 2023 survey of ABC members indicated that 79% of ABC contractors have targeted outreach to high school students, high school graduates and individuals with GED diplomas and 65% have targeted programs to community college students and graduates. ABC members partner with and offer internships for college/university and high school students 74% and 62% respectively, and 84% of ABC contractors offer paid internships to college/university and high school students.

The construction industry must attract more than half a million additional workers on top of the normal pace of hiring in order to meet the demand for labor, according to a 2023 model developed by ABC. With nearly 1 in 4 construction workers older than 55, retirements will continue to whittle away at the construction workforce. Simply put, our industry can't afford to miss this opportunity to expand critical career pathways for the future construction workforce across the country.

I look forward to discussing this important issue with the committee today and hopefully provide insight into the successful programs we have offered and the lives we have enriched through our high school programs. Thank you.

Chairman BEAN. Mr. Mabile, thank you very much. It is now the members turn to question our all-star panel. Put the clock on me as I will start the questioning. Bonamici is on deck. Mr. Corwin, thank you for coming forward, and your credentials are on the front lines of recruiting and putting up programs.

We talked a little bit, and it is in your statement that we are only spending 3 percent of school district's generally across America are focused on these types of vocational programs. Where did we go wrong? Why is that such an imbalance, and why is it so important to partner with industry to make things happen?

Mr. CORWIN. Thank you, Chairman Bean. Especially for your leadership on this critical issue. I think we reference in our written testimony, recent research on the college for all mentality, and its connection to funding of CTE historically, and kind of the history of vocational education, which we know is fraught with—complicated it—has a complicated history.

You know, I think the current moment that we're in right now, and from this, you know, esteemed panel, we know that there is great public support for CTE and skilled trades education. We also know that the students that participate have great success, both completing high school, and also attending college.

I think when I consider priorities in terms of budgets and you look at that 3 percent figure, budgets are aligned with values, and that is a question that we really have to ask ourselves. It is unfortunately that you look at the 3 percent figure, and it would equate that our school systems and our educational leaders who are hard at work every day are not providing the same value to students who participate in skilled trades and CTE.

Chairman BEAN. We do have work to do, and that is why Ms. Bonamici brought up that we cannot afford everything, but the partnering with industry, it is truly a big deal. Ms. Mosley, thank you so much for the hospitality. A few months ago, we spent a better part of the day together touring Clay County schools.

I have been blown away by how many programs from vet tech programs to paralegal, to we were building tiny houses, we were rebuilding engines of all the different classes today, and your success is truly amazing. I want to elevate what you have been doing.

We had a conversation about how early is too early. You have a program of exposing 7th graders. Talk about that.

Ms. MOSLEY. In Clay County we have our 7th and 8th grade students who are in junior high schools, and we offer exploratory CTE courses that are semester long courses that students can take as their electives, in addition to their academic courses. They can choose up to four of those by the time that they are in 7th and 8th grade.

Those courses expose them to different careers, and they also expose them to the opportunities that are at each high school, and so we make sure that the courses that are offered at feeder junior high schools are the same ones that are offered at the high schools. We make sure that those students are able to go to the high schools and visit those programs, and we also share with them when they are in 8th grade, we have freshman expos that the parents can come to the high schools, and they can see all of the different programs at the high schools.

As well as we have business partners and our postsecondary partners as well, so that the families can see the entire pipeline from junior high school through high school, and then career opportunities for them, and postsecondary opportunities for them as well.

Chairman BEAN. Very good. I think that introduction is helping breakdown the stigma that there are so many options, and your story about one of your former students building the hospital is truly a big deal. The stigma is something that ABC has been worried about.

We talked a little about this, Brandon, earlier, and you say it is a real problem. Talk about, are we breaking down the stigma? Are we making progress?

Mr. MABILE. We are trying, and part of the reason I am here today is hopefully to further breakdown that stigma. Everybody thinks construction is dirty. It is hot, or it is cold, it is unsafe. One of the things we are doing with ABC is our STEP safety management program, and STEP, platinum and diamond, which are the highest levels of STEP participants are actually now 800 percent safer than the construction industry average, and so bringing those safety numbers down, making it you know, using technology to introduce students to new ways of doing the construction work is very important to break those stigmas.

Even things as simple as providing new B roll to local news stations, because when they talk about construction, they tend to use outdated workers doing unsafe things that are really no longer acceptable. Things as simple as that are steps that we are taking as an organization to reduce that stigma, and really trying to get in front of the guidance counselors, the parents, and the students to talk about the rewarding careers in the industry.

Chairman BEAN. 10-4. I think what will break that stigma too is money. There is big money in these jobs, including—I just met with a dealership that repairs trucks, and kids, young people, can make big money, \$80,000.00 to \$100,000.00, \$120,000.00 repairing trucks, if they will just invest a few years there. Thank you all for kicking things off.

I now will recognize Mr. Norcross from New Jersey, who is recognized for a series of questions or thoughts.

Mr. Norcross.

Mr. NORCROSS. Thank you, Chairman, and certainly to you and the Ranking member for this hearing, preparing students for success. I started my apprenticeship in 1979, and it does not happen very often that you go from the construction site to Congress, so this is near and dear to me, and certainly, more importantly than that, it is to our Nation, and what we need to do.

The one thing that comes to mind typically when we look about the next generation of worker, I call it the big three. First and foremost, is the interest of the student, whether it is 7th grade or earlier. How do we know what is available to you? The second one is information on what is available, whether it is construction, machinist, auto mechanic, the list goes on and on.

The third, and probably in many ways, the most significant is the educational stigma that goes along with this. The idea that college for all, or the only way to make it in America is through col-

lege. You know that stigma is incredibly difficult, and quite frankly, there are three areas that I guess contribute to this, it is so often teachers, counselors who tend to push people into the college mode because that is the way we do it.

It is also society, and what we value. What we do here in the United States is very different than the German model, the model that we have in Switzerland. I just was on my way down to christen a ship in Key West. I was sitting next to the young lady who started a conversation, and she was a teacher. Talking about her children, and somehow, we started talking about what they are going to do.

She told me the story, you know, her one son is going to college and the second one, he is not sure what he wants to do. She said to me, we have to give our children permission to look at what they consider non-traditional areas. Like going to a vo-tech school was for losers.

Mr. Kincaid, how do we start to address those three big issues? First off, let students know that there is something else out there, get them the right information, and most importantly, how do we address mom and dad, who think the only way is through college?

Mr. KINCAID. I appreciate your question, and I think this is something that we need to highlight nationally. Those three areas that you talked about, you know, the student and information to parents, and then also the sort of national stigma, all sort of go hand in hand.

We did not enter this world of college as the only option overnight. It was an investment in that particular strategy, widespread on a national scale, and it was also you know, an incredible marketing campaign, right? To really shift us and our mindset into that direction. I think it would be wise for us, as a community of career and technical education professionals, to model that very similar strategy.

Where are we investing our dollars, and is it enough to make sure that we are creating the workforce that we need, and that our students and families deserve, and also at the same time, are we being incredibly clear and leading on the messaging that we are providing to all of the stakeholders, families, communities across the country?

From the student and the parent perspective, this is where schools and State agencies like the one that I work for, can do a better job. We need to be communicating the benefits of career and technical education, and talk about the value that apprenticeship can bring as a pathway to a job. Unfortunately, a number of companies have started to lead this effort when it really should have been a partnership to lead the effort of communicating that not every job requires a 4-year degree.

Most jobs you can learn and earn through an apprenticeship model, and so it is on us to communicate that information as early as middle school, and perhaps even earlier in upper elementary school, so that students can begin seeing what they can become in the world of work. Career counselors is something in the State of Maryland that we have doubled down on to help make this connection and this communication to those families.

Mr. NORCROSS. I certainly appreciate that. Our Department of Defense is literally spending tens of millions of dollars to attract and educate that next generation of ship building, so the idea that those, instead of college, now it is those and college, whichever way you want to go, but give them your permission, the idea that it is not worth it.

I have three kids. A doctor, a lawyer, and an electrician. Only one of them has his house paid for and has a retirement fund that we all would be proud of. Anybody want to guess which one that is? It is the electrician. With that, I yield back.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Norcross. Up next is going to be McClain from Michigan, she will be followed by Ms. Bonamici. From the great State of Michigan, Representative McClain, you are recognized.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you, Chairman Bean, always a pleasure to serve on your Committee, and thank you all for being here today. I think it is a critical topic for the Nation, for our children, for everyone, so I really appreciate you being here.

Mr. Mabile, I have seen firsthand the work conducted by Associated Builders and Contractors when I visited Florida. Your east coast chapter. The concerning part, I think for me, when I spoke with some of your educators and whatnot, and apprentices there, the average age was about 28, which is not necessarily bad, but if we could get that average age down, and we could begin to incentivize earlier, I think that would help.

If Congress incentivized middle school, high school, to create skilled trades programs, so to speak, for students, do you think that would obviously have a positive effect on our workforce in the future? I would like you to talk about if so, the criticalness and importance of incentivizing to these high school and middle schools and how we do that.

Mr. MABILE. Yes, I think it would have a huge effect, and thank you, Congresswoman McClain. You really cannot understate how important it is, and some of the most impactful programs we have are things like we just did a middle school girls construction camp, where they got to come in and actually put their hands on some tools and introduce those things.

Like I said in my opening statement, we need to hire a half million more construction workers a year on top of our replacement rate, and so every available worker is important to us. Giving those opportunities to high schools students, and to middle school students can only help.

I can tell you in the State of Texas where before Senate Bill 5 was passed in 2012, high school students would not get graduating credit for vocational training. We only had three high schools that would work with us in the greater Houston area. Once Senate Bill 5 was passed in 2012, we now have 62 high schools and a waiting list because we are simply out of people and resources to provide services to more high schools.

When you incentivize it, when you build it they will come. The CTE directors are changing course on this, and they really want our input and our help.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. What are the obstacles and hurdles that are not allowing incentives? What do you see that we can have an impact

on to remove those obstacles and hurdles? One, what are they, and two, how do we fix them?

Mr. MABILE. The biggest obstacle for a high school, or a school district is going to be financial. It is expensive to start a training program, and that is why we provide so much in the way of materials and personal protective equipment, and construction equipment, because it is very expensive to start this type of program, and so I think that is where the most impactful incentives would be for high schools to really get into CTE and craft education.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Okay. Can education providers be nimble and responsive like business and industry, right? I come from the business background. We have to be able to change on a dime. Let us just look at what happened during COVID. We had to adapt and adjust, and we had to do it rather rapidly. Do you believe that they can do the same thing, and especially collaborative with companies and trade schools?

Mr. MABILE. Some of them absolutely can, and we see it time and time again. We have some great school districts in the Houston area that work with industry, and that are very quick to respond to changes in the industry, changes in technology, and they want our feedback. They want to hear what is going on because they want to graduate students that we can hire, and so I think they absolutely can.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. In your opinion you believe that schools and educators can adapt quickly, right?

Mr. MABILE. Yes. Yes, ma'am. Absolutely.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Ms. Mosley, first to develop programs that leave high school students with credentials to enter trades have proven to be efficient getting, and effective, getting students into lifelong careers, right? We have talked about that, but there is a supply, there is a demand, there is a need, right?

How have you developed the CTE pipeline in your schools to get students with marketable credentials into registered apprenticeship programs?

Ms. MOSLEY. In the Clay County School District, we actually have—

Mrs. MCCLAIN. I am sorry, I cannot—

Ms. MOSLEY. In the Clay County School District, we have two different pre-apprenticeship programs with the Northeast Board of Builders Association and the Electrical Training Alliance JATC. Those students take part of that, and then they are able to get preferential entry into the registered apprenticeship program, and they are actually those business partners work very closely with our schools, and so that is one of the things that we are doing is to participate in the pre-apprenticeship program, and we have also received grants from the State through the Pathways to a Career Opportunity.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. The business education partnership has worked?

Ms. MOSLEY. Absolutely.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much. Up next will be our Ranking Member Bonamici, followed by Mr. Thompson. Our Ranking Member from Oregon, Ms. Bonamici, you are recognized.

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses. I am glad you are back, Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson and I co-chair the CTE caucus, and certainly understand the value of preparing students today for the industries of tomorrow. CTE programs offer a strong bridge between the classroom and good paying in demand careers, and I mentioned in my opening statement, and I know Mr. Corwin did as well, that they also help students stay in school.

My home State of Oregon is a leader in making CTE programs accessible, in fact we have very high rates of students participating. CTE is in nearly every one of our high schools and is in every single one of our community colleges. I will give you a couple of examples that I am proud of.

In St. Helen's, St. Helen's High School, which is in rural Columbia County, Oregon. They have seven different programs, including early childhood education, culinary arts, auto repairs, people from town bring their cars to this high school to get fixed. They also have a manufacturing class, which is great because they are very close geographically to the Oregon Manufacturing Innovation Center, which has research and development as well as advanced and additive manufacturing.

Talk about exposure. This year Ulmick had 700 high school students from the region come through on Manufacturing Day to see what manufacturing really looks like. Then over on the Oregon coast, the Warrenton High School, I have spoken with educators and students there about CTE. They are really excited because they have classes in fisheries, in fish hatchery management.

They appreciate the Perkins funding to help with equipment. Then in Hillsboro, Oregon, this is exciting because they have the first in the State registered youth apprenticeship program, where students earn and learn advanced manufacturing in partnership with the city of Hillsboro, and the semiconductor industry.

We are doing some really great things. We just need to expand those opportunities. Mr. Kincaid, in your testimony you mentioned the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and the five pillars of that program. The third pillar, college and career readiness, aims to prepare all students for both college and the workplace.

How does Maryland use CTE programming to meet these goals, and why is CTE a useful approach to preparing students, not only for a job out of high school, but also for college?

Mr. KINCAID. Yes. I appreciate that question, and it is something that I think Maryland, in particular, but a number of states nationally really grapple with to make sure that all students have access to CTE for all of the benefits that we have been talking about already today.

Within the State of Maryland, the Blueprint becomes a critical sort of north star for us because we recognize that every student deserves an opportunity to move into the world of work and have a good job. It is our job as educators, to make sure that we have provided them with every opportunity and knowledge of every pathway in order to get there.

One of the unique things about the Blueprint is it removes sort of this notion that CTE and apprenticeship is locked into some of

the more traditional fields that have already been mentioned this morning. Things collectively known as the trades, right?

When we think about apprenticeship and CTE, oftentimes it is the trades that are sort of elevated within that field, and Maryland is really taking a different approach to that in making apprenticeships available in many of the non-traditional areas that I spoke about in my testimony.

We want to make sure that students, regardless of what field they want to go into know how to get to that field through a number of different pathways available to them.

Ms. BONAMICI. Okay. I do not want to cut you off, Mr. Kincaid, but I have another question, and the clock is ticking.

Mr. KINCAID. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. BONAMICI. We know this is a popular topic, for most members, regardless of their party support CTE programming, especially for high school students, but despite that support we have seen Federal funding through the Perkins Act decline over the past four decades.

I had mentioned earlier some of the equipment is very expensive, and you know, some of us who came from State legislatures or local government, or school boards know there is often not extra funding in the school district budget for this kind of equipment. It really makes a difference. In 1980, for example, funding for CTE was at 2.6 billion after adjusting for inflation in 2021 dollars.

Today it is 1.3 billion. Right? About a half of what it once was, even though the number of students in secondary schools has increased. What would it mean to have additional Perkins funding, and what would Maryland do if an increase of funding in CTE through the Perkins program?

Mr. KINCAID. Yes. I am really glad that you highlighted that statistic going all the way back to 1980 because we have seen a dramatic reduction in funding for these programs, even as interest in enrollment into these programs has increased in particular over the last couple of years.

What this requires states to do like Maryland, and larger states like my home State of Texas, is to use State money to backfill, to create these level of experiences that are expected not only as our families, but also for our business partners and our economy in general.

Using Perkins as a lever to reinvest additional funding into these programs would be a game changer for places like Maryland that rely not only on Federal funds to move this agenda forward, but also to make sure that we are well aligned with business and industry.

Ms. BONAMICI. It is a tremendous investment, but my time has expired, so I am going to have to yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BEAN. It is a great question. Thank you, Ms. Bonamici. Our lineup is Thompson then Hayes. Let us go to the great State of Pennsylvania, Chair Thompson, you are recognized.

Mr. THOMPSON. Chairman, thanks so much. Thanks for calling this hearing today. As Co-Chair of the bipartisan congressional Career and Technical Education Caucus, alongside Ranking Member Bonamici, I have seen firsthand how Federal CTE programs suc-

cessfully help jobseekers find the next rung on the ladder of opportunity, from agriculture to the arts, and that is why I spell STEAM, S-T-E-A-A-M. I throw agriculture in there.

From marketing to manufacturing, CTE programs work to develop America's most valuable resource, its people. With more than 12 million students currently enrolled in CTE programs across the country, the nearly 9 million vacant jobs, we must continue to strengthen Federal investments, CTE programs, to connect educators with industry stakeholders.

Ms. Mosley, thank you very much for being here today, and for all the work you do ensuring the success of CTE programs in Clay County. In your testimony I could not help but notice as the Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, that you offer CTE programs in agriculture.

I have seen many of these CTE based agriculture programs succeed throughout the country, including in my district. Can you talk a little more about these programs that you oversee, and what more can we be doing from a CTE perspective to inspire the next generation of American agriculturalists.

Ms. MOSLEY. Thank you for your questions, Representative Thompson, and I am sitting here actually with an agriculture education FFA portfolio because agriculture is my background, I actually my family, I am raising my daughter on our sixth-generation family farm. I was an agriculture teacher before I came to the county office.

In our—whenever I first started teaching agriculture in Clay County, there was only three of us. Now we have 11 agriculture programs across the county, and we have them in places like Oakleaf High School, where we teach agriculture biotechnology, and we also teach agribusiness management and leadership.

That high school is actually a suburban high school, and whenever we built that high school, the director at the time people questioned him like you are going to be an agriculture program in a suburban area, and he said absolutely. Every student needs to have the opportunity to explore an industry that meets the most basic needs of our people of food, clothing and shelter.

Whenever I was at Oakleaf High School, I actually had the opportunity to serve on a committee for selecting their FFA officers last year, and over and over in there whenever I would ask him what has FFA, and agriculture education meant to you, they would talk about I had no idea all the different careers that were out there.

Through field trips, and their work with their CTSO, FFA. It has exposed them to all kinds of different careers. They also talked about how they found a home in their FFA chapter, in their agriculture program because Oakleaf High School is a very big school, and many of them were 9th and 10th grade students who like didn't have their place in high school, but once they joined that agriculture program, they were very, very—they found a place, and they were excited to be there.

We are also very fortunate in Clay County to have a lot of support from our agriculture organizations, like our country fair, our Farm Bureau. In fact, our county fair has a livestock auction where the students can take their supervised agriculture experiences

there to the auction, and they generate over a half a million dollars through our livestock auction, through our country fair, that students are able to use for their future education.

Those are just a few ways in Clay County that we have supported agriculture education

Mr. THOMPSON. Very good. Well, thank you very much. Those youth livestock auctions are—I buy a lot of critters to support those kids, that is really important. I always like to say that one of the reasons CTE programs are so successful is because students complete them with a certificate or diploma in one hand, and multiple job offers in the other.

The only way to make that a reality, however, is by ensuring that those who sign the front of a paycheck, local employers and businesses are involved in these programs. Ms. Mosley, if local business want to get involved with CTE programs to address their workforce needs, what steps should they take to establish a connection?

Ms. MOSLEY. They should reach out to their local CTE leadership, and or their high schools, and they should get involved in advisory boards. We have 14 different advisory boards, and their job is to advise, assist and advocate for CTE, and that is really the foundation of business partnerships for Clay County.

Through those advisory boards we talked about the trends and issues that they are seeing in their industry, and how we can address them in the school district, and through our teachers. Part of that advisory board also has postsecondary.

It also has those teachers, and so they should become part of an advisory board because they help direct that work of mock job interviews, guest speakers, field trips and a lot of those work-based learning opportunities that we are able to provide.

Mr. THOMPSON. Well thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, my time is about to expire.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much. Well done. Well done. Our lineup will be Hayes, then Miller. Let us go to Connecticut, where Representative Hayes is recognized for questions. Good morning.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I would first like to say congratulations to Ms. Mosley on being Florida New Teacher of the Year for CTE. It is kind of a big deal, and also you have no idea what you just did for the Chairman's heart by speaking to Ag. I brought him to my district to visit our Vo-Ag school, and I have been pushing for those same things, so thank you so much for articulating that so beautifully.

I am pleased to be here with all of you today discussing how this Committee can expand access to career and technical education. I am a teacher by profession, and I am the biggest champion for CTE training for allowing students multiple pathways to achieve the American dream because 15 years in the classroom talking to thousands of students, I know that college is not for everyone.

Last Congress, we passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which together are expected to add millions of new infrastructure, clean energy and manufacturing jobs.

These high wage, high skilled jobs will require a robust pipeline of talented workers graduating from our high schools, so it is imperative that we make the investments and do this work.

Mr. Kincaid, we have heard a lot about CTE staffing shortages, and the most common concern we hear is that qualified experienced technical instructors have a high turnover rate because of the salaries and competing with the private sector. I can also tell you from my personal experience it was always very difficult to bring in experienced business partners to teach in the classrooms because we had the barriers with certification and credentialing them to be in a classroom.

We cannot just have people standing in front of students who have read about these things, we need some people with real world experience who have led factories, who have led automotive shops, who have actually worked in the business world to really teach students what to expect when they enter these professions.

Can you address what you have learned about how to address those staffing shortages, and just the barriers to credentialing certified professionals to stand in front of students?

Mr. KINCAID. Yes. Thank you for the question. It is no secret there is a national shortage, particularly within CTE of high qualified teachers. What it is going to require us to do is to think differently about how we staff classrooms, particularly in skilled areas like CTE.

Leaning into my past experience in the District of Columbia competing with a hospital trying to hire a nurse to teach in the nursing program is problematic. We will never be able to meet the salary requirements, but that skill that that particular person would bring to the table, students would benefit from immensely.

We had to create a partnership with Trinity Washington University at the area technical center that was recently opened in D.C. where teachers in front of high school students come from the university, the postsecondary space. That partnership has generated numerous benefits, not only for you know, D.C. and the students, but also in honing that faculty's sort of, you know, grooming the future.

States have to begin looking at valuing work experience of people coming from industry, and figuring out different ways and pathways to certification so that these highly experienced folks can be in our classrooms.

In the meantime, it is teachers and administrators reaching out to those in industry and making sure that they are involved in the classroom, making sure that they are integrated very intentionally into the work that we are doing, within the CTE space.

Mrs. HAYES. That is actually a terrific model because students would benefit from someone who has one foot in the classroom and one foot in the field who is continually updating their skillset, and seeing the challenges that are facing the world today.

I heard the Chairman mention Microsoft Word, and computer programming. I can tell you that at my high school generally the students knew more about programming than any of the teachers who were teaching those classes because they were literally in real time experiencing it.

Finally, you talked about some barriers for underserved students who access pathways. In the last 30 seconds, can you tell us how you have addressed helping minorities, girls, students from communities that would historically be underserved.

Mr. KINCAID. Absolutely, in the CTE space we have looked almost ad nauseum at gender and race gaps, and we are guiding students into pathways. I would say that as we think about apprenticeships and retooling students for the skills-based future, things like transportation and economics become the equity issues that we are going to have to solve next.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, thank you so much. Lunch is another one, I appreciate your testimony. I yield back.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you, and for the record Ms. Hayes was recognized as the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, how about that? Our lineup will be Miller, DeSaulnier, and then Foxx. Let us go to the State of Illinois where Representative Miller is recognized for questions.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you, Chairman. Mr. Mabile, you mentioned in your testimony that Associated Building and Contractors chapters offer more than 800 work-based learning programs across the country. Could you say more about how employers support CTE students seeking to move from high school into careers, in the skilled trades with the skills and education they need to build thriving careers.

Mr. MABILE. Yes, So some of the things that we are doing is providing mentorship, both to the instructors, and to the students, and showing them pathways, helping them to develop the soft skills that they need to get into a career in the industry. We do things like construction boot camps that are really focused on getting to work on time and learning the things that you are going to need to know on day one.

One of the funnest things we are doing now are national signing days whereas these high school students are graduating. We have a bunch of contractors come up, and we put the hats on the table, and they get to put the hat on and say I am going to performance contractors, or I am going to wherever.

Just showing them the path, and then also teaching them about the path from once they get in to the many different career paths that exist for an entry level construction worker, depending on where they choose to pursue further education.

Mrs. MILLER. I love that. Ms. Mosley, could you tell us more about how schools in Clay County establish businesses that give students hands on experience, which align with career and technical education programs?

Ms. MOSLEY. In Clay County we have several school-based enterprises. For example, in our early childhood education programs, for students who want to become teachers. We have childcare centers where there are actually preschools on campus, and our CTE teachers teach our high school students how to work with those students. We also, for example, have Five Star Credit Union and Garber Auto Mall, that they have businesses there in our school.

We actually have four Five Star Credit Unions that have branches inside of our schools that students as part of the business program could apply to be interns, and then they can work in that

on school credit union branch. Garber Auto Mall came to us a couple of years ago, and they said we have a need for technicians, and the age of our employee, they are going to retire, and we have this need, and so they said but we need them to have manufacture specific certifications.

We explained to them that the industry certifications that we offer our students have to come off the Florida Department of Education CAPE funding list. They said well, what if we send somebody after school to work with the students on those manufacture specific certifications, so we have students that applied to that, and they work there after school with Garber Auto Mall employees.

Here, when we talk about barriers for students, they also take them to Garber, and there were some students, so they will work a couple days a week at the school, and then a couple days at Garber, but that they found that there was some students that did not have access there, so they actually we worked with them to help shuttle them, they provided a Garber shuttle after school, and the parents could pick them up from Garber.

We also have culinary programs that operate onsite restaurants, and catering programs as well as our agriculture program has a floral design business, and we have a lot of business programs that have graphic designs that business partners can give them projects, like hey, we need a new logo, or something like that, as well as printing different materials.

Those are just a few of the school-based enterprises that we have in the Clay County School District.

Mrs. MILLER. I commend you for the work you are doing, thinking outside the box, and looking for solutions for students and for our businesses to help fill the needs that they have. Do you have early dismissal for students that want to actually go work somewhere?

Ms. MOSLEY. If students have like room in their schedule where they can, then and they already have their credits, then they can leave, and they can use of the internships like for example, with Clay County Utility Authority they came to us and they said we have an issue, again similar to Garber, where we have an aging workforce, and we do not have water treatment operators, wastewater treatment, a lot of our programs.

We actually have an internship program with them where they can where the students apply to work at the utility, and they are actually earning hours that they can get toward their license for the water and wastewater treatment plant, and so a lot of our students when they are seniors, they only have a couple of credits left, and the school counselors and our college and career coaches work closely with them to have those classes at the beginning of the day, so then they could leave and go work with their business partners, like Clay County Utility Authority.

Mrs. MILLER. That is fantastic. I love to hear how flexible you are. Do you know if these opportunities are common in schools across the rest of the State and country?

Ms. MOSLEY. I think they are very common in Florida for sure. There is a lot of examples around the State of where business partners have worked with a different school district to provide internships in different work-based learning opportunities.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much. Let us go to California where Mr. DeSaulnier is recognized for thoughts or questions.

Mr. DeSaulnier.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are always welcome in California where the temperature is considerably higher right now. Mr. Kincaid, I want to talk to you about your youth apprenticeship programs. In California, historically 50's, 60's, when we had an aerospace industry, and a lot of infrastructure for that, part of the culture in high school was career tech.

We moved away from that like the rest of the country. Somewhat I think because our UCs, CSUs, and community colleges were so successful, but also because those degrees were the knowledge-based economy. Now we find ourselves sort of we want to do both. I was recently talking to my friends in the California building trades, and my local building trades. They told me a lot of their members are college graduates who are actually going back.

I wanted you to talk to me a little bit about your youth apprenticeship programs in Maryland. In my area that I represent, it is the industrial area of Northern California. You have got five oil refineries who are transitioning as we want to move our energy sources. But one of we have been very successful with the republican and democratic Governors, well back when we had those, Governor Schwarzenegger in particular, where we were opening academies.

In a lot of the lower income schools where the industrial belt is, I found when I visited those that the whole school knew about these 25 kids who were getting apprenticeship standards, or where companies like Chevron was working with the building trades.

Can you speak to your experience about the value of people who are young and trying to decide what kind of careers to be in, but also in disadvantaged communities where it is more of a challenge?

Mr. KINCAID. Yes. In Maryland, we really launched headfirst into youth apprenticeships, really around 2016, with the launch of Apprenticeship Maryland, and the focus was the youth apprenticeship model. I feel like we are making great progress in making sure that students know that this is a pathway available to them.

I mentioned in my testimony earlier in the year with about 1,000 students, which has nearly doubled what we had a year ago at this point. With youth apprenticeship programs, one of the things that we have been very particular about in Maryland is we do not want it to be sort of an elevated internship, nor do we want it to be a watered-down apprenticeship program.

It is sort of finding the balance between making sure it is a valuable experience that industry also values because that is where students are moving toward, right? Also giving students a flexibility to still be high school kids. We hear a lot about the German and Swiss models, and you know, we are modeled differently in our education system.

While we still value sort of the same direction that those other countries are heading toward, you know, we need to really make sure that the apprenticeship programs that we develop help kids get to the world of work, knowing that they are still students.

I would speculate that moving forward in Maryland we put some guardrails up. Youth apprenticeship typically ends at graduation. We want to make sure that there is some commitment with employers post-graduation, so that students have the ability to continue on within that craft, within that, you know, vocation post-graduation.

Really leading into what are some of the best characteristics of a full registered apprenticeship, while still valuing the fact that a lot of these kids are 16 and 17 years old.

Mr. DESAULNIER. An interesting part is when I was in the legislature in California, and we had we went and talked to the Germans and the Swiss, and one of the Germans said to me, you know, it is funny you are asking us how we do this because we copied you in many ways, post World War II.

It is interesting how these things change. In the energy field it is important these young people get the training, but the continuous training. Again, the German model where people are going back to work, so somebody who is working in an oil refinery gets a good paying job right now in California, but they have got to be prepared to maybe move out, or at least the next generation.

How do you get that flexibility? Dual enrollment also was a question I wanted to ask you about where young people are trying to decide in the dynamic that I mentioned where people with bachelor's degrees are going back in the trade like work. Being flexible, but also realizing this is continuous education for this workforce.

Mr. KINCAID. High-quality, CTE programs integrate things like an industry credential, and work-based learning experience, like internship or apprenticeship and college credit, right? In Maryland we lean into all of those things with the Blueprint, and we want to make sure that students when they graduate have the ability to move into any one of the pathways, and they are well-equipped to do so, right?

I do, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that in order for an apprenticeship, or any other sort of CTE program to function effectively, there has to be a, you know, a demolishing of silos right? Education and industry must work hand in hand.

All of these players have to be at the table so that we can make sure that education is responsive to the very quick needs of industry, but also industry knows the importance of the education that students are receiving, and that education is being crafted in such a way that it is going to make a successful student going into the world of work.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you, Mr. DeSaulnier. Our lineup is Foxx then Owens, it is a pleasure always to welcome the big Chair of Education and Workforce, face it she has got just a tremendous education background herself. Dr. Foxx, you are recognized.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you. I know you mean that metaphorically, so thank you Mr. Chairman. I appreciate our witnesses being here today, this is a topic that is always near and dear to my heart. Mr. Corwin, you mentioned how high school skilled trades education leads to better educational outcomes.

As schools continue to confront COVID related learning loss, can you discuss how high-quality CTE programs can reengage students in their learning, particularly for students who may have fallen off track during the pandemic?

Mr. CORWIN. Thank you for your question, Chair Foxx. I think it is a really critical one. We have heard a little bit about the educational outcomes that CTE students achieve, but we have also heard that often times high school students—

Mrs. FOXX. Will you pull the mic closer to yourself?

Mr. CORWIN. Certainly. We have also heard that high school students often come to school for their CTE class because it is engaging their relationship with their teacher, and it is hands on, and that is what so many of our talented students want to do. We have surfaced some research on the socio-emotional benefits for skilled trades that you reference in terms of COVID.

A recent study of high school students in Sonoma County, by Youth Truth, found that students who participate in CTE classes or work based-learning are full cortile more likely to report being—taking pride in their school work, and also more than twice as likely as those who do not take such classes, to say that there is an adult at school that they can talk to when feeling upset, stressed, or having problems.

As a program of a foundation, Harbor Freight Tools for Schools, one of the things that we take pride in doing is making small grants to teachers and especially during the time of COVID, we were looking for ways to—we asked teachers how can we help in terms of bringing kids back into the fold, and making them feel like they are a meaningful part of their coursework.

They came up with ideas to engage their students using their skills and their talents in their communities. One example was from Freedom, Wisconsin, where the students actually refurbished a trailer for a veteran to have that as a space where he could live.

That process of giving students and empowering them to design programs, you know, our Gen Z population really want to find meaning in their schoolwork, and that type of community impact is really critical as well.

Mrs. FOXX. Yes. These are principles that I think we have always known, but they do not always get applied. Ms. Mosley, I have been fighting my whole career to breakdown stigmas associated with skills education. Could you talk about how your school district is integrating skills education into the general high school curriculum, and promoting skills education as a viable pathway?

Ms. MOSLEY. Thank you for your question, Chair Foxx. In Clay County school districts, industry certifications are incredibly important to the school's grade from the Florida Department of Education, and they are a win/win/win for everybody because it impacts the school's grade, it is great credential for the students after they graduate high school, and it brings back bonus money to the schools.

With those industry certifications, many of our schools highlight students who have completed a career pathway, or they have earned an industry certification at graduation with cords that the students are so excited to wear. They are recognized at senior awards. We even have one high school, Middleburg High School,

where they have the CTE student of the week, as well as they have the scholar of the week, the citizen of the week, and athlete of the week.

Career and technical education students are held in the same regard as students in the other venues within the school. We believe that that is one of the ways that it is held in the high regard, and that we are promoting the pathways for those students.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you very much. Mr. Mabile, many skills education programs offer students an opportunity to earn industry recognized credentials, along with their high school diploma. Can you discuss some of the credential's students are able to earn through the National Center for Construction Education and Research, and how this impacts their career opportunities postgraduation.

Mr. MABILE. Yes, Dr. Foxx. The NCCR offers credentials for most construction trades, and the beauty of the NCCR credential is that it is portable, and that it is stackable. It is recognized throughout the country, and it really helps a student because the construction workforce is often transient. They go from job to job, and from area to area.

But because of the NCCR, and the way the training is set up, they could take a semester with my company. They could move on to one of my competitors and take their second semester, move on again and take their third semester, and really take that credential anywhere through the country, so it really opens up avenues for their future career growth, because it is such a portable credential.

Mrs. FOXX. Thank you very much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Foxx. Our final presenter, unless somebody else sneaks in—is a friend, a colleague, he is also the Chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee. Mr. Owens from Utah, you are recognized.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, it is crazy that sometimes Congress seems to be—this is one area it looks like we are all on the same page. It has really been very rewarding to hear how as a bipartisan process we are going to address this. I thank you for what you are doing. It is such an important piece to make sure our kids have a great future.

I have long been a supporter of educational choice and freedom and allowing children or students to excel in fields of study that are most in line with their interests. I am proud to be a proponent of the career and technical education, and as one of the multiple pathways of future success.

I have submitted for the record a document from the Western Governor's Association that highlights the importance of CTE, especially in the western states, and encourage Congress to take action to strengthen the workforce through a robust support of CTE. I have a unique background.

My dad was a college professor, and Ms. Mosley, he was actually an educator in agriculture. He got his Ph.D. in Iowa State, forty years. I know how exciting it is when you can actually work with your hands and have the ability to move forward and then have a career.

I do appreciate being in that environment. One of the things that was talked about before is how did we get here, where we have to have now try to change the way we consider careers. We have

spent decades of investments and marketing that has been one way to make this all happen. Part of this is what we are doing in the K through 12.

If we have counselors that are coming out and not teaching these options, or counselors that without a school would not allow these options to be even taught or discussed, it causes a problem. I guess I want to start with you, Mr. Corwin. How do we address that? We talked about schools being nimble because of the supply and demand.

We all know that we have such a great sector of opportunities of kids who are not being trained or taught. How do we make sure that in K through 12, what are the incentives that we might think of that we could have these counselors begin to show that there are other options other than a 4-year college?

Mr. CORWIN. Thank you, Congressman Owens. It is a great question. I think, you know, our role in this work has been to shine a light on excellence. We have been honored to award 133 skill trades teachers with this prize for teaching excellence. I think you were able to attend one of those celebrations in Utah.

It is our hope that we can share the best practices that we are seeing from these educators across the country. The counselor role needs to be lifted up in terms of the importance that they play in helping students to get to college and connect with careers.

We have found that a dedicated counselor, or sometimes an intermediary organization that can make those connections between high school and work base learning opportunities is critical to success. Those folks as well. The counselors need to be recognized for the incredible work that they are doing. They need to be lifted up. They need to be supported by non-profits and other community organizations, and business needs to be at the table.

We have really got to break down those barriers between K-12, workforce development, and industry and higher ed.

Mr. OWENS. Thank you. And Ms. Mosley, you actually mentioned how early your program starts, and that's so important. We talked about the dual enrollment program that's becoming increasingly popular. How can we encourage more schools and colleges to have that understanding of the dual enrollment? Being able to, as young people come through high school, have actual credit in a college they may go into later on? How could we encourage that, and maybe what are some of the challenges that you are seeing so far?

Ms. MOSLEY. Some of the challenges for us would be that the transportation barrier. If the course cannot be taught on the high school campus, there are going to be a lot of barriers for some students that do not have transportation to actually get to the college campus where they are taught.

The conversation needs to be between the postsecondary institution and the high school is either to figure out the transportation issue, or to similarly like he was saying with the health science program, to have adjunct professors that are able to come onto the high school campus, and to teach them there, to break down that barrier for students.

Mr. OWENS. Now is that something you would be able to do with your—in your training facilities, in which some of my colleagues have had a chance to see so far?

Ms. MOSLEY. Yes. I believe in many of our CTE programs thanks to the funding that we have had from the Perkins Act that we have a lot of great equipment and programs, and we would be able to teach them. I think that we would probably have to have additional funding to be able to upgrade some of those programs.

Mr. OWENS. I had questions for the other two. I really appreciate what you guys are doing, seriously. This is probably one of the more important conversations we can have as a nation to make sure our kids can supply that workforce, give it the supply we all need right now, so thanks so much. I appreciate your efforts. I yield back.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you, Mr. Owens. Let us go to New York, Mr. Williams, Brandon Williams you are recognized for thoughts or questions.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Bean, thank you for bringing this topic to the forefront. It is absolutely critical in my district. Workforce development at all levels is critical to the economic success of our area. We are very fortunate to be anticipating the single largest CHIPS Act grant for chip fabrication in the entire country, and we need the workforce to get us there, and that involves everyone in our district.

Have any of you are any of you familiar with the term industry 4.0? Have you heard that term? The industrial revolution that began 160 years ago or so, really was a transformation of labor to a form of machines. The machines performing labor, and that had this migration off the farms and into the factories. We have all studied the industrial revolution.

That continued into the 70's and 80's when computers and automation really began to augment what humans could do, but it also increased the sophistication of the machines that were involved in every level of what we do. Today we are on the verge and are entering, what is called the fourth industrial revolution, which is digitally enabled technologies that permeate things that are in the trades in construction and manufacturing, and all the things that are involved in this next generation workforce.

It is digital technologies, it is robotics, it is artificial intelligence, all of these things are actually allowing what historically we think of as blue-collar jobs to be able to add much greater value in their labor, and therefore command much higher wages.

In many ways it is not exactly true, but it is almost like inverting the pyramid of what we grew up with that the traditional education path puts you on an increasing pyramid to have and be able to command a higher and higher premium for your labor. Today because of the fourth industrial revolution, that pyramid is inverted that in order to install, maintain an HVAC system requires a tremendous amount of technical knowledge and skills to operate a refinery.

We are in the process of increasing the technology, the compute technology in our refineries and chemical plants by 1,000 fold. Not 1,000 percent, 1,000 fold so that we are actually running artificial intelligence in the control loops or the production systems in our economy.

What does that mean for what you do? Is that you are preparing an extraordinarily important and talented group of workers that

will and are going to be well paid, that are entirely out of line with the education system that we have grown up with. I am very excited about it, and have been involved in that, and you are a critical part, and critical to our district.

One question I would like to address, it is not a got you question, it is a genuine question. We are fortunate to have great STEM education in my district. I like drawing attention to Dr. DeSiato who was the New York State Superintendent of the Year for the entire State, and she runs an excellent K through 12 system, the Minoa East Syracuse System, and does a great job with STEM.

Is STEM competing with CTE? Are these mutually exclusive? Are they complimentary? How can we make these two important initiatives work together to achieve a desired outcome? Can anybody help me out with that? Mr. Kincaid, we are going to go to you, sir.

Mr. KINCAID. Great. Thank you. The hard question, right AI? My grandma thinks the machines are taking over, so you know, there is certainly a shift in how we are educating students in the future. In order to get students to where they need to be in the workforce, it requires educators to work very directly with these emerging industries like what you are talking about.

This is not your grandma's Oldsmobile anymore, right? We have to be nimble. We have to be connected to the industry and the emerging technologies, and more importantly, the folks that are leading this innovation with an industry need to be highly responsive and involved in schools so that we are making sure that we are teaching the right components.

I would also that—this highlights the need for teacher externships as well, making sure that those folks that are in our classrooms understand how the technologies is changing, even within that workforce, so they can bring that knowledge back to their students. It is going to require a much different level of collaboration than what we have ever experienced, in order to make sure that we are prepared and can drive this economy in the direction that it needs to go.

Mr. WILLIAMS. That is a fantastic answer, and a really solid and good connection. My time is expired. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you, Mr. Williams. Let us go to California. The Sub Chairman of Workforce Protections has just slipped in, and he is recognized for thoughts or questions, Mr. Kiley of California.

Mr. KILEY. Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you for convening this hearing on a really important topic, and I think an underappreciated topic, and one that probably does not get enough focus when it comes to public policy. I was really struck, Mr. Corwin, by a statistic from your testimony that spending on CTE makes up just 3 percent of the estimated overall funding for high school and middle school education in the United States.

Just 3 percent, and that is despite the manifold benefits of career education in schools, just to sort of reiterate some from your testimony, as well as some of our other witnesses, you know. This is something that is overwhelmingly desired by parents and by students.

You cite in your research that 80 percent of parents favor greater offerings of career educations in schools. Frankly, that sounds low to me. I do not think I have ever talked to a parent who does not think it is a good idea to have more opportunities for students to engage here.

From the perspective of academic achievement, there are so many benefits to having career education offerings in our schools. In fact, your research shows that when students engage in career education, they are actually more likely to graduate, and from high school they are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education.

There are social emotional benefits. Their enthusiasm for learning increases, their pride in their schoolwork increases. I can affirm this from my own experience, having been a high school teacher. I can tell you how much pride and excitement students had for these sort of classes where they could really do hands on work, and how that has sort of spilled over into their broader course work.

It made them excited to come to school. It gave them hope and a sense of purpose. Beyond that, the pathways that we are creating here are to really good jobs that can pay well, that young people can build a career around, and then more than that it is filling critical workforce needs.

Mr. Corwin, in your research you cite one statistic that 88 percent of construction firms have trouble finding skilled workers. There are over 73,000 openings for electricians every single year. It just makes all the sense in the world to focus more, to invest more in this area, yet still just 3 percent of resources are being spent specifically on career education.

This is a question for Mr. Corwin, or for any of our other witnesses as well. That you have cited a lot of very successful programs which do exist all across the country, and we have also discussed barriers such as a lack of trained teachers and other resources. Can you kind of highlight some jurisdictions that have managed to not just offer sort of isolated, successful programs, but have been able to offer these opportunities to students at scale?

What has it taken to sort of awaken the political will to make the investments, and to take the steps that are necessary to not just have a successful program here and there to make it fundamentally part of the offerings available to all students within those jurisdictions.

Mr. CORWIN. Sure. I mean I think where we have seen the greatest success, and students and schools flourish around CTE. That has been where there has been the collaboration and the partnership between K-12 and industry and workforce development.

As we have talked about breaking down those barriers, I mean one that comes to mind is in Colorado, in Denver. There is a combination of comprehensive high schools that are doing phenomenal CTE work, career technical centers, and industry is at the table.

There is support by elected officials across the board, and that is what our students deserve—that type of partnership having their backs and providing these opportunities. I think one of the reasons we were really excited to be included today is part of our role is to raise attention to this issue with other funders, and with industry, and with other sectors.

When our founder heard that CTE did not have much financial support, there were not many other foundations supporting the work, it really was not much of a power behind the work. He said that is where I want to go. That is where I want to kind of be a spark and see if we can be a model, and have other folks follow, and just by today's discussion I am really excited to hear that this is beginning to happen, so thank you.

Mr. KILEY. Well, thank you, and thanks very much for the work that you are doing. I yield back.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much. We are nearing the end of our Committee. I am really proud of this, the members, we had great conversation. We had great—we came together, I think. I want to thank Ranking Member Bonamici. I am about to yield to you, Ranking Member, for your final thoughts, but I want to thank you personally.

I think we both illustrated that both sides of the aisle can come together and elevate that we have work to do. We have work to do to let everybody know there are choices out there, that there is not a one pathway, or a one size fits all. Ms. Bonamici, you have sold me on joining the CTE Caucus, which I am looking forward to coming and being a part of that. What are your final thoughts before we adjourn?

Ms. BONAMICI. Well, we appreciate that, Mr. Chairman, and I have often said as a senior member of this Committee that we need to make sure everyone has a path, and not everyone is on the same path. I think this is an important conversation. We know that career and technical education is a way for students to explore those career pathways, gain relevant and competitive skills.

That hands-on learning that we talked about is so important. I have to emphasize that CTE benefits students regardless of what path they take. Whether they go into college or a workforce program and directly into a career as we mentioned, and I know Mr. Corwin has continued to mention, CTE courses help keep students in school.

They increase graduation rates, but also they are beneficial for students to learn those very, very, important soft skills that I hear about, and I know you do as well when we talk to employers. They are really helpful programs.

We discussed today how schools and administrators use career and technical education and programs and courses to expand work base learning, such as youth apprenticeship, the dual enrollment courses, which is important, and that is to help strengthen the support, but also leveraging industry recognized credentials.

It is also important to emphasize that all students should have access to CTE courses. They should have this opportunity to explore careers and prepare for the next step after high school graduation because we know that these courses, through a career in technical education. Regardless, I know Mr. Williams asked a question about AI and technology, and CTE competing with STEM, which I say STEAM, or Mr. Thompson says with two A's.

There are a lot of CTE programs that involve a lot of technology and a lot of STEM or STEAM, and those are all important, and important for students to have those choices. When we see students in a culinary program, yes, they are learning skills, but they are

also learning science and nutrition, and so there is just a lot of benefit, regardless of what program it is.

I also, I want to emphasize that we need to make sure that all of the students get this benefit, and students from all backgrounds should have access to programs that prepare them for life, for college, for a job, for a long-term sustainable career. That is not going to happen if we do not do this properly, if there is some outdated and, in some ways, inequitable practices that continue to funnel some students into more low wage jobs.

I hope we can turn the page on that chapter and recognize that every student has tremendous potential and should have those options. I remain committed to working together, Mr. Chairman and Committee members on this to support CTE as a very important part of well-rounded education. I hope that we can update the funding as I mentioned, which over the past four decades has decreased.

I certainly appreciate the foundations and the private industry, and everyone else who is helping, but that Perkins funding really makes a difference because we have a lot of schools and a lot of districts across the country, and with the value of this investment I hope this is something we can accomplish to update that funding to today.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, thank you to our witnesses, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman BEAN. Thank you very much Ranking Member, well done, well said. I think we are definitely on the same team. Thank you everybody that helped put the hearing together. I want to give and recognize the Clay County School Superintendent, David Brosky, who sent Kelly, and Kelly, thank you for coming.

Superintendent Brosky is in Tallahassee today at Clay County Day in the State of Florida. I want to wish your daughter the best and thank your daughter for letting you come. She is at an Ag competition in Clay County, so it is truly a big deal. To all our panelists, I did something that I probably should not have done. I bragged how good you guys were going to be. I said this all-star panel—it is among the best.

Let me tell you what you did. You exceeded expectations today, each of you, and you will always get to tell everybody you testified before Congress. We are about to adjourn, but if you could stick around, I would love to take a picture of you guys before we leave. There being no further business to come before us unless I have to say something official. Do I have to say something official?

Hopefully we can submit questions and let everybody know the record is open. Without objection, there being no further business, this Subcommittee stands adjourned.



MARK GORDON
GOVERNOR OF WYOMING
CHAIR

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO
VICE CHAIR

JACK WALDORF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 18, 2024

The Honorable Aaron Bean
Chair
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary Education
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Bean and Ranking Member Bonamici:

In light of the Subcommittee's January 18, 2024, hearing, Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy, attached please find Western Governors' Association (WGA) Policy Resolution 2022-03, Workforce Development in the Western United States. In the resolution, Western Governors call for expanding work-based learning and supporting high-quality career and technical education.

I request that you include this document in the permanent record of the hearing, as it articulates Western Governors' collective and bipartisan policy positions and recommendations on this important issue.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,


Jack Waldorf
Executive Director

Attachment



Policy Resolution 2022-03

Workforce Development in the Western United States

A. **BACKGROUND**

1. Workforce development efforts contribute to the economic well-being of western states by enabling people to find fulfilling, well-paying jobs, fostering economic mobility and equity, and ensuring that businesses have access to the skilled employees they need to thrive.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has had widespread effects on the labor market in the United States, including periods of record-high unemployment and higher than average churn in and out of the workforce and across occupations. The pandemic also accelerated trends in the nature of work, such as increasing automation and growth of remote work, and laid bare existing inequities in the workforce. The pandemic had a disparate effect on low-wage workers in essential jobs, with job loss concentrated in industries with large low-wage workforces, such as retail, hospitality and tourism. Remote work has fueled increased migration to fast-growing states in the West. Demand for reskilling opportunities has also increased.
3. The United States had over 10 million unfilled jobs in July 2021, a record high.¹ Many businesses report that they cannot find qualified candidates for open positions. At the same time, many jobseekers are unable to find good jobs for which they are qualified.
4. Workforce development challenges are particularly acute in rural communities, which are commonly characterized by higher rates of unemployment, a lack of economic diversity, geographic isolation, and limited infrastructure, including access to broadband.
5. Economic equity continues to be a problem across states, with people of color and people with disabilities, regardless of career preparation and credential levels, seeing poorer rates of employment and earnings than majority populations.
6. Postsecondary education and training is critical in today's economy. Higher levels of educational attainment correlate to higher median earnings and lower unemployment rates.
7. Many Americans start a college degree but do not complete it, leaving them with the burdensome costs of higher education but no wage benefit – 33 million people over 25 have some college credits but no degree.²
8. As students increasingly pursue indirect routes to higher education, over 70 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary education are now “nontraditional students” who may be older, working full or part time, or caring for children.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary, July 2021.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Educational Attainment in the United States: 2020, April 21, 2021.

9. Technology will continue to be a disruptive force in the labor market, driving potentially drastic changes in the labor demands of certain industries. It is expected that many jobs that will be in demand in 2030 do not yet exist. Workers will need to be able to acquire new skills over their careers to adapt to change.
10. Many western states are taking on an influx of refugees from Afghanistan and will need to accommodate their needs in traditional refugee and workforce development programs. Online training modalities, with access to broadband and support for online learning, as well as partnerships with other systems, such as local libraries, can stretch the capacity of traditional refugee and workforce development programs. New Afghan arrivals can bring transferable skills and experience into local economies experiencing labor shortages.
11. To address these issues, Western Governors have prioritized a variety of workforce development efforts, from better aligning education with labor market demands, to expanding workforce services and training opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed, to attracting more skilled workers.
12. Western states are also leading the way on expanding work-based learning opportunities for both students and adults. Work-based learning programs, including registered apprenticeships, allow people to acquire in-demand skills while earning a salary. Apprenticeship programs in European countries are more widespread and established. These programs offer a useful model for increasing and diversifying the occupations for which apprenticeships are available.
13. Employer leadership is critical to ensure that workforce development efforts are satisfying the needs of an ever-changing economy. Businesses in the West have taken an active role in working with educational institutions and workforce agencies but increasing industry participation, as partners in workforce planning, program design and work-based learning, will remain critical.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. Western Governors recognize that there are many pathways that students can take to a successful career, including short-term education and skills training or work-based learning programs such as registered apprenticeships.
2. Education and workforce development policies should facilitate lifelong learning. Western Governors encourage Congress to expand student access to skills training programs, including through extending Pell Grant program eligibility to high-quality, short-term training programs leading to industry-recognized credentials, to increase access and completion for adult learners. These flexible workforce oriented funds should be coupled with plans to adopt and report outcomes metrics tied to employment and earnings to maximize the success of this policy in equipping workers for high-opportunity jobs and careers.
3. Western Governors also support the expansion of work-based learning programs, including registered apprenticeships. Western Governors encourage Congress and federal agencies to support and incentivize state-, local-, and industry-led partnerships to create and scale work-based learning and apprenticeship programs, including by providing states technical assistance to strengthen partnerships between workforce and apprenticeship entities.

Western Governors recommend that new federal investments be provided through line-item formula funding and aligned with existing efforts to foster a coherent system that expands work-based learning and registered apprenticeship with minimal duplication at the federal, state, and local level.

4. Career and technical education (CTE) helps expose students to their career options and develop skills they will need in the workforce. Western Governors call on Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Reauthorization of the act should take into consideration the following principles:
 - Governors and states are in the best position to determine how to use federal CTE funding to meet the unique needs of their economies.
 - High-quality CTE programs should lead to in-demand, high wage careers; include career and academic advising; include pathways to four-year degrees, for example through articulation agreements or stackable credentials; provide credit for prior learning; and develop employability skills through integrated education and training, work-based learning or leadership opportunities.
5. Western Governors note that federal funding for workforce development through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) supports economic growth and job creation in the states. Congress should grant states more flexibility under the current WIOA funding streams to better anticipate coming labor market disruptions and help workers who are not traditionally eligible for assistance or at-risk incumbent workers prepare for displacement. That flexibility should include allowing Governors to fund outreach and marketing of services in an effort to reach more people, especially in states with a large rural population. Western Governors request that the 15 percent reserve for statewide activities be maintained. This funding allows Governors to be flexible in addressing state needs and supports innovation.
6. Western Governors call for enhanced federal investments and more state flexibility to transform the career services and skills development system. Short term and competitive funding for innovative programs is inefficient and creates unintended obstacles for small states with limited grant-writing resources.
7. Western Governors call for enhanced federal investments and an expanded WIOA funding stream for youth, targeted toward youth who are disconnected from school and work, as well as a carve-out of Carl Perkins funding directed to the workforce system to support stronger linkages to K-12 and higher education. Western Governors also call for the establishment of a Youth Employment Taskforce to make further recommendations on effective workforce strategies to address the crisis in youth employment.
8. Western Governors also call for matching incentives to encourage states to fund workforce efforts outside of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other current mechanisms. State funds matched by federal funds would allow for the creative solutions and conditional flexibility states need to pivot with changing economic forces in real time and through situation specific needs assessment and program adaptation.

9. Western Governors encourage federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Department of Education, to coordinate their efforts to better align federal workforce development, career and technical education, and higher education programs.
10. Greater alignment of policies, performance metrics, regulations and reporting requirements across federal workforce, human services, housing and education agencies would support better outcomes for program participants, with focus on outreach and support services and attention to community-based organizations and employer partnerships.
11. Western Governors recognize the benefits of measuring and reporting outcomes by institution and program. Reporting completion rates, employment and earnings will provide useful information for students and their families and help promote the success of these programs to prepare students for in-demand jobs and careers in their regions. Western Governors encourage Congress to include the College Transparency Act in reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to facilitate reporting on earnings, employment, and credential attainment metrics by education provider and individual program in a manner that protects student privacy and ensures data security.
12. Employers play an important role in state workforce development efforts. Western Governors support efforts to incentivize employers to play a more active role in talent development through partnership with state workforce development agencies and educational institutions or investments in the skills and training of their employees, including apprenticeship and other earn and learn strategies.
13. Rural communities are at risk of falling further behind in skills necessary for the economy of the future due to a lack of broadband access and digital skills. Western Governors encourage federal agencies and Congress to continue to deploy resources to solve this urgent need including funding for digital skills pilots and online training.
14. Professional licensing requirements vary by state and can create a barrier to mobility for professionals in western states. Where possible, Western Governors should work together to minimize this barrier and to establish reciprocity across states.
15. Automation could potentially help alleviate some of the workforce shortages affecting businesses in the West. Western Governors support efforts to help businesses and workers take advantage of these new technologies while also investing in skills training so that workers are not left behind.
16. Western Governors call on the federal government to work with states in revising temporary work visa programs to meet state needs. J1 visas were curtailed during the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbating worker shortages in certain occupations. Additionally, some highly-skilled occupations in high demand in the West require post-secondary credentials other than college degrees. Western Governors are interested in exploring foreign worker visa programs that allows consideration of alternative credentials.
17. Workplaces welcoming of the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, are critical to build an inclusive and strong economy. Workforce development programs and policies should be inclusive of people with disabilities. Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor should provide additional training and funding for states to conduct outreach and

[Whereupon, at 11:59 a.m, the committee was adjourned.]

