

The Local Role in Advancing CTE Without Limits

Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education, developed by Advance CTE and supported by an additional 38 national organizations, puts forth a bold vision for a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem that will close equity gaps in educational outcomes and workforce readiness and leverage Career Technical Education (CTE) as a catalyst for ensuring that each learner can reach success in the career of their choice.

Given the scope and ambition of this vision and the need to not only shift policy but also practice, school district leaders, community and technical college leaders, workforce development leaders, instructors, counseling professionals and other community partners each have a critical role in bringing this vision to life.

Transforming Education Starts Local

From the classroom to the workplace, expanding the career preparation ecosystem benefits an entire community. When learners have access to more equitable and meaningful education connected to career pathways, graduation and completion rates rise, learners are empowered to access and succeed in fulfilling careers, and business and industries thrive.

Local leaders and practitioners directly affect learners across the preschool through workforce (PreK-20W) continuum. True systems change cannot occur without the leadership and commitment of local leaders and practitioners to work directly and collaboratively with CTE learners, industry partners and other key stakeholders, including the learners themselves.

CTE Without Limits lays out five inter-connected and equally critical principles:



Each learner engages in a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem.



Each learner feels welcome in, is supported by and has the means to succeed in the career preparation ecosystem.



Each learner skillfully navigates their own career journey.



Each learner's skills are counted, valued and portable.



Each learner can access CTE without borders.

How Local Leaders Can Support the Career Preparation Ecosystem

This vision requires commitment from leadership at all levels and cannot happen without community support to drive changes in CTE programs, practice and partnerships. CTE Without Limits outlines specific actions local leaders and practitioners can take to improve CTE:

Offer integrated PreK-20W advisement systems

Local CTE systems, with support from state CTE leaders, must align career advising and career navigation support systems, including individual career and academic plans at the K-12 level, guided pathways at the postsecondary level, and career services offered through organizations that serve adults seeking upskilling or reskilling opportunities. By connecting the dots between career advisement and wraparound supports, learners will be fully supported on their pathways to success.

Invest the necessary resources to support integrated advisement systems

We cannot support each learner without dedicated local investments (supported by federal and state investments) in counseling professionals, training for any and all individuals working directly with learners (including counselors, instructors and industry partners), integrated data systems and the wraparound supports themselves.

Recruit, retain and support a diverse and culturally competent workforce

Strong cultural competency within the career preparation ecosystem at the state, local and classroom levels and across K-12, postsecondary and workforce development is critical to ensure that CTE instructors, leaders and partners can understand, communicate with and effectively interact with learners across cultures and of different backgrounds. Districts and institutions must commit to designing recruitment strategies and talent pipeline programs that attract diverse CTE instructors, administrators and leaders who are demographically representative of the learners they teach and who also have strong industry expertise.

Design CTE programs and interventions on the margin while maintaining a commitment to quality

Interventions and services should be designed to meet the needs of learners who face the greatest barriers to access and success. States and communities need to meaningfully engage marginalized populations — such as learners of color, justice-connected youth and adults, students with disabilities and students experiencing homelessness — as they are often not involved in the development of education and workforce programs or policies. Throughout this process, state and local leaders must maintain a strong commitment to the quality of CTE programs.

Capture and value all learning that occurs, wherever and whenever it occurs

Local institutions, with support and flexibility from states and the federal government, should continue to support, expand and scale competency-based programs to capture skills attainment

where and when it happens. Competency-based programs, along with integrated education/training programs, can remove silos between academic and CTE instruction and capture knowledge and skills gained across content areas

Explore the Vision

These actions represent some of the most essential steps local leaders can take to ensure that CTE becomes more equitable, accessible and meaningful, enabling each learner to achieve career success. When learners succeed, entire communities succeed, building a stronger, more equitable future for all

To read the full vision, access additional resources and sign up to stay engaged, please visit www.careertech.org/without-limits.