

Putting Learner Success First & Industry Leaders

About Putting Learner Success First: A Shared Vision for the Future of CTE

Putting Learner Success First: A Shared Vision for the Future of CTE – released in May 2016 and supported by Advance CTE and 11 other national organizations – calls for a re-imagined education system where all learners have access to high-quality experiences that put them on a path to career success. *Putting Learner Success First* boldly challenges the status quo and calls for a transformation of the education system while also defining CTE’s role in igniting and achieving this goal.

The vision is anchored in five inter-related and equally important principles:

- **All Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are held to the highest standards of excellence.**
- **All learners are empowered to choose a meaningful education and career.**
- **All learning is personalized and flexible.**
- **All learning is facilitated by knowledgeable experts.**
- **All systems work together to put learner success first.**

Putting Learner Success First was developed through a collaborative process, bringing together leaders from K-12, postsecondary, workforce development and business and industry. It has garnered support from many national organizations, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Why this Matters to Industry Leaders

About 40 percent of employers cite difficulties finding talent, particularly in key industries such as information technology, health science, manufacturing and other leading fields. At the same time, a similar percentage of CEOs believe the U.S. workforce lacks employability or professional skills. Career Technical Education (CTE) is the answer to these challenges and the key to a strong talent pipeline. CTE programs arm learners with the technical, academic and employability skills they need to be successful. CTE programs also provide opportunities for learners and employers to interact and build relationships, bridging the divide between classroom and careers.

Industry is not only the recipient of CTE’s benefits, but they are also a critical partner in the success of CTE. High schools and postsecondary institutions need employer and industry partners help to develop, validate and implement CTE programs to ensure they are high quality, engaging and aligned with real-world demands. CTE programs need to be dynamic and responsive, which requires business and industry’s ongoing involvement, input and support.

The bottom line is that it is in the best interest of industry to have a vibrant and quality CTE system. And, for industry to continue to have skilled talent who not only possess technical skills, but are adaptable and can evolve with technological and business innovations, they need the CTE system that is envisioned in *Putting Learner Success First*.

Putting Learner Success First: A Shared Vision for the Future of CTE

How Industry Leaders Can Help Advance Putting Learning Success First

Take stock of what your organization or company is doing to advance the vision and its principles

The first step industry leaders can take is to identify how they are currently or can be supporting the principles and actions at the national, state or local levels. Such existing support may happen through a company's corporate social responsibility or philanthropic arm, a chamber of commerce's advocacy efforts, or a business' local partnerships with districts and community colleges or an industry association's support for a Career Technical Student Organization. Regardless of the scope of the involvement, industry leaders should consider whether the programs, policies and practices they are supporting align with the key principles of the vision and, if not, where they can make that alignment happen.

Engage and partner with state and local leaders to implement the vision

This vision was developed collaboratively by a wide array of stakeholders and, as such, must be implemented by many individuals representing postsecondary, K-12, workforce development, and business and industry. *Putting Learner Success First* identifies many specific actions that require support from business, industry and chambers of commerce – from validating programs and offering work-based learning experiences to augmenting classroom instruction with real-world lessons and serving as an intermediary between schools, institutions and other employers.

However, while state and local leaders recognize the critical role industry plays in a CTE system, many within the education system often cite employer engagement as an ongoing challenge. The shared vision can serve as a conversation starter or a way to ground existing partnerships in the future of CTE and learner success.

Support states to support only the highest quality of CTE programs and pathways

While all of the principles and actions are critical to building a strong talent pipeline, the first principle – *All CTE programs are held to the highest standard of excellence* – simply cannot be achieved without support from industry leaders. This vision pushes state-level leaders to promote, fund and scale those programs that are truly and demonstrably high quality – while phasing out or transforming programs that are not meeting learners' or industry's needs.

Not only does this require industry to be at the table in creating criteria for quality programs and on the ground supporting such programs, it may also require industry to lend their voices and bully pulpits to state leaders and policymakers who have to make difficult decisions about which programs to fund moving forward.

Get the message out

Business and industry leaders are one of the most critical voices and should be at the forefront of sharing *Putting Learner Success First* with CTE and workforce development communities, practitioners and partners. You can start by sharing the sign on campaign with your colleagues, partners and networks: <https://careertech.org/shared-vision-sign-on>