The vision for the Career and Technical Education Division (CTE) of the Arkansas Department of Career Education through 2015 is to modernize **college- and career-readiness** programs through **innovation, collaboration, alignment and accountability** to provide students **technical skills development** and **guidance** toward career opportunities.

The CTE Division has established four Pillars of Transformation upon which each department will establish challenging but attainable goals with objectives (tasks) and performance indicators to support the ACE vision.

The CTE Division will establish guidelines and strategies for implementation of ACT 743 of 2011.

ACT 743 – *AN ACT TO ESTABLISH ARKANSAS COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS; TO DEVELOP CRITERIA TO EVALUATE, SUPPORT, PROMOTE, AND FUND ARKANSAS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.* The intent of this act was to create the Arkansas College and Career Readiness Planning Program; to lower educational costs, shorten a student's time to degree completion, and increase the overall success rate of Arkansas students by reducing the need for remediation; and to ensure that students have the career readiness skills to compete in the global economy.

***Pillars of* *Transformation***

* 1. **Improve the Image**
  2. Promotion
     1. Create competitive public service announcement (PSA) grant opportunities for CTE promotion
     2. Develop new completer reporting system
  3. Professional Development and Leadership Training
     1. Develop new employee orientation and training
     2. Develop communication professional development program

**2.0 Improve and Support Program Development**

2.1 Career Pathway Development

* + 1. Use Arkansas Research Center data for data-driven program improvement
    2. Develop new program approval guidelines
    3. Support and improve existing programs of study
    4. Align courses by pathway
    5. Provide technical assistance for pathway development
    6. Provide incentives to transition to relevant career pathways of study
  1. Career Center Reform
     1. Secure funding through legislation
     2. Investigate funding sources
  2. Development of High-Quality Programs
     1. Target high-demand pathways
     2. Change new program application process
  3. Business/Industry and Education Advisory Partnerships
     1. Incorporate standards defined in Act 743
     2. Strengthen local advisory councils
     3. Provide training to local advisory councils
  4. Arkansas Certified Career Ready Communities Initiative
     1. Encourage schools to commit to achieving career-ready school status

1. **Improve College and Career Readiness**

3.1 (A) College Readiness

* + 1. Revise and align frameworks with the Common Core State Standards
    2. Encourage students to take ACT exams
    3. Collaborate with postsecondary education to improve transition
    4. Establish statewide articulation
    5. Review the Common Core State Standards and the Common Career Technical Core for integration and alignment

3.1 (B) Career Readiness

3.1.6 Integrate college and career readiness standards in programs of study

3.1.7 Encourage students to use KeyTrain curriculum

3.1.8 Rewrite curriculum and assessments to foster high-order thinking

3.1.9 Provide students opportunities to earn industry-driven certifications

3.1.0 Provide students work-based learning opportunities

3.2 Career Guidance

* + 1. Utilize CDFs and career coaches to assist guidance counselors
    2. Ensure students receive current and relevant labor market information

3.3 Work-Based Learning

3.3.1 Promote additional Jobs for Arkansas’s Graduates (JAG) opportunities

3.3.2 Provide youth apprenticeship opportunities

3.3.3 Develop youth apprenticeship standards

3.3.4 Promote adult apprenticeship

3.3.5 Support work-based programs

3.4 Career Coaches

3.4.1 Develop a funding plan for the Career Coach Program

3.5 Increase CTE funding

* + 1. Identify representatives to establish guidelines to implement Act 743
    2. Designate staff person to serve as legislative liaison
    3. Establish a grant-writing component

1. **Improve CTE Instruction**
   1. Improve instruction and rigor
      1. Develop crosswalks across programs of study to create pathways of study
   2. Align standards
      1. Review the Common Core State Standards and the Common Career Technical Core for integration and alignment

4.3 Review permits and endorsement

4.3.1 Provide professional development to meet certification requirements

4.3.2 Provide endorsements and permits for program of study crossover

4.3.3 Provide improved subject specific professional development

* 1. 4.3.4 Create permit for career development facilitators (CDFs)
  2. **Improve the Image**
  3. ***Promotions***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will recruit students into CTE programs of study by emphasizing how programs **align** with college and career opportunities. Increasing student participation in relevant and rigorous programs of study will increase the number of CTE completers from 11,000 to 12,500.

**Action(s)**

**1.1.1** The CTE Division will promote the value of participating in CTE programs. CTE programs will be invited to produce promotional materials that highlight and promote the theme of how high-performance CTE programs prepare students for college and careers in high-demand pathways.

**1.1.2** The CTE Division will develop technical assistance for schools and consortia on accurately reporting completers of programs of study.

* 1. ***Professional Development and Leadership Training***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will create an atmosphere of professional leadership by developing strategies and best practices that communicate effectively and demonstrate a consistent message to all staff, school system personnel and the public.

**Action(s)**

**1.2.1** The CTE Division will develop ongoing and mandatory employee training for all CTE staff.

**1.2.2** The CTE Division will develop and present a professional development program to CTE staff on strategies and best practices to communicate effectively with legislators, school system personnel and the public.

1. **Improve and Support Program Development**
   1. ***Career Pathway Development***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will implement new practices and models to increase the emphasis on **innovation** by increasing the number of high-skill, high-wage, high-demand pathways and reducing low-performing pathways, which will lead to increased family-sustaining wage employment as measured by data provided by the Arkansas Research Center. The number of high-demand pathways will be increased by 10 percent per year, and the number of low-demand pathways will be reduced by 5 percent per year, thereby increasing opportunities for students to achieve positive placement after graduation.

**Actions(s)**

**2.1.1** The CTE Assessment Department will annually collect data from the Arkansas Research Center, the Department of Workforce Services, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and appropriate national sources to identify in-demand occupations in high-growth industry sectors.

**2.1.2** The CTE Division will develop and communicate new program approval process guidelines and policies to all staff and grant writers to improve the focus and quality of applications.

**2.1.3** The CTE Division will provide resources to support the development of new programs and improve existing programs.

**2.1.4** The CTE Division will encourage alignment of courses between areas and crossover of courses for electives in career pathways.

**2.1.5** The CTE Division will provide technical assistance to secondary technical centers and single local education agencies (LEAs) annually to encourage more rigorous, relevant and results-driven career pathways.

**2.1.6** The CTE Division will develop incentives to transition low-performing traditional programs of study to relevant “career pathways of study” with multiple exit points leading to further education and training opportunities.

* 1. ***Career Center Reform***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will support systemic reforms to increase the number of high-skill, high-wage, high-demand pathways through the creation of secondary technical centers accessible to every high school student in Arkansas.

**Action(s)**

**2.2.1** The CTE Division will work with legislators to secure additional funding for secondary career centers, particularly in the categorical funding of $3,250 per full-time equivalent (FTE) that is sent to all participating high schools.

**2.2.2** The CTE Division will investigate funding avenues to enhance the development of high-demand, high-skill, high-wage career pathways in secondary career centers through competitive and innovative proposals that incorporate seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary and industry partnerships.

* 1. ***Developing High Quality Programs***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will develop mechanisms to select and fund high-quality career pathways responsive to regional labor-market needs. Performance will be measured by increased business and education partnerships and industry certifications. Results will be measured by increases in job placement rates, postsecondary enrollment and certificates and/or degrees.

**Action(s)**

**2.3.1 The** CTE Division will target high-demand career pathways determined by the state CTE business and industry advisory council (See 2.4).

**2.3.2** The CTE Division will change the new program application so that it is based on defined quality standards and **aligned** with relevant and rigorous career pathways that equip students with 21st-century skills.

* 1. ***Business/Industry and Education Advisory Partnerships***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will facilitate **collaboration** by developing a statewide business and industry advisory council with representatives from identified career pathways. Outcomes include **collaboration** on training needs, recommendations for technology-based programs in high-demand sectors and training partnerships.

**Action(s)**

**2.4.1** The current program application will be revised to incorporate the 10 quality standards defined in Act 743 of 2011, the College and Career Readiness Act, the Common Career Technical Core- and the U.S. Department of Education’s white paper entitled, “Investing in America’s Future: *A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education*.”

**2.4.2 Local a**dvisory councils will be restructured to strengthen the development of partnerships among stakeholders.

**2.4.3** The CTE Division will annually provide training and assistance to secondary educators and consortium coordinators to develop local and regional business and industry partnerships within each career cluster located in the 15 education service cooperatives.

***2.5 Arkansas Certified Career Ready Communities Initiative***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will promote the Certified Career Ready Communities Initiative at the secondary level by offering school districts and secondary technical centers incentives and support to become college- and career-ready schools as defined in the initiative.

**Action(s)**

**2.5.1** The CTE Division will encourage schools to  commit to earning “Certified Career Ready School” status, a designation demonstrating that they have made efforts to produce proficient college- and career-ready students.

1. **Improve College and Career Readiness**

***3.1 (A) College Readiness***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will ensure **accountability** for improving college-ready outcomes through the integration of the Common Core State Standards. Improvements will be documented by the following:

* ACT composite scores will increase from 20.3 to 20.6.
* High school benchmark literacy scores of CTE completers will meet the state average. The benchmark scores of completers are currently 2.87 percent below the state average.

**Actions(s)**

* + 1. Beginning in October 2012, curriculum frameworks will be rewritten to incorporate the Common Core State Standards and the Common Career Technical Core. Frameworks will be completed in a five-year rotation.
    2. CTE students will be encouraged to take the ACT assessment and complete career and technical education programs of study at proficiency levels.
    3. The CTE Division will establish a collaborative partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and other stakeholders to ensure seamless career pathways and transitions between secondary/postsecondary and the workplace.

**3.1.4** The CTE Division will work with the Department of Higher Education to develop a statewide articulation agreement to give postsecondary course credit hours for CTE courses.

**3.1.5** The CTE Division will review the Common Core State Standards and the Common Career Technical Core to determine areas for academic integration and alignment. CTE courses will be reviewed to determine which courses would allow for core academic credit.

***3.1 (B) Career Readiness***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will improve career guidance, planning and development strategies to increase retention, completion and proficiency in career pathways. The CTE Division will provide incentives to school districts to meet state goals for completion and skill attainment. Success will be measured by improvements in student postsecondary placement, pathway completion, proficiency and concurrent or articulated credit.

**Action(s)**

**3.1.6** College- and career-readiness standards will be integrated into CTE programs, creating seamless transitions from middle school through high school and into postsecondary education and training.

**3.1.7** All CTE students will be encouraged to complete the KeyTrain curriculum as preparation for the ACT WorkKeys assessments, which will allow them to earn the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate (CRC).

**3.1.8** CTE curricula and end-of-course assessments will be rewritten with depth-of-knowledge skills aligned with the Common Career Technical Core standards, and students will be encouraged to become proficient in order to increase their opportunities for employment and career advancement.

**3.1.9** CTE students will be provided opportunities to receive independent, nationally recognized industry certifications to improve their employability.

**3.1.10** CTE students will be provided opportunities to develop on-the-job employment skills through work-based learning opportunities.

* 1. ***Career Guidance***

**Goal:** By 2015, The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will provide consistent and continual guidance, planning and **alignment** between high-quality CTE pathways and labor-market needs to equip and prepare students for postsecondary education and training for in-demand occupations in high-growth industry sectors. Positive placement in higher-paying occupations will be determined by tracking CTE completers who have earned a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). Data from the Arkansas Research Center will be used to track completers

**Action(s)**

* + 1. Career development facilitators (CDFs) and career coaches will assist guidance counselors to create more time devoted to students for self-realization, assessment, and career portfolio development.
    2. CTE students will be given current and relevant labor market information to assist them in making informed decisions about various career pathways.
  1. ***Work-Based Learning***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will promote the development of quality work-based learning opportunities for high school students across the state through the involvement of a state business and industry advisory council and local councils.

**Action(s)**

**3.3.1** The CTE Division will promote additional Jobs for Arkansas’s Graduates (JAG) programs in alternative learning environment (ALE) sites in grades 7-12, as well as in traditional high-school-based sites in grades 11-12.

**3.3.2** The CTE State Apprenticeship Office (SAO) will offer youth apprenticeship opportunities for high-school and secondary-career-center students through nontraditional programs of study.

**3.3.3** The CTE SAO will develop new youth apprenticeship operational policies to strengthen the justification for grant awards and continuation.

**3.3.4** The CTE SAO will develop strategies to promote adult apprenticeship through involvement with the state business and industry advisory council and local councils.

**3.3.5** The CTE Division will promote work-based learning programs in all career pathways.

* 1. ***Career Coaches***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career Technical Education (CTE) Division will expand the College and Career Coach Program beyond the currently served 21 counties and three Little Rock high schools in order to ensure that every middle- and high-school student, beginning in grade 7, has access to a college and career coach. The number of college and career coaches will increase by 33 percent each year. Results will be measured by increased student participation in college and career preparatory activities, pursuit of college and career opportunities and placements that **align** with the student’s skills, abilities and interests.

**3.4.1** CTE will develop a funding plan inclusive of state, local and nonprofit support to allow the expansion of the College and Career Coach Program. The College and Career Coach Bill (HB1860) will be rewritten to include results from the Interim Study Committee. The bill will be introduced during the Arkansas General Assembly Session 2013 in an effort to secure state funding and encourage school districts statewide to participate in the College and Career Coach Program.

***3.5 Increase CTE Funding***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will form a committee of stakeholders to establish guidelines for implementation of ACT 743 of 2011 with the goal of securing additional funding to support college- and career-readiness activities in K-12.

**Actions(s)**

**3.5.1** The CTE Division will identify representatives from each group of stakeholders, including CTE teachers and administrators, Department of Education, Department of Higher Education and legislators, to serve on a committee to establish guidelines for the implementation of ACT 743. In addition, CTE will use feedback from the committee to develop legislation to provide funding to implement Act 743 to be presented in the 2015 General Session.

**3.5.2** A current staff person will be designated as the CTE legislative liaison. This person will attend all relevant committee meetings and work with legislators to promote CTE.

**3.5.3** A grant-writing component will be established within the Assessment Department for the purpose of securing grants for each department.

**4. 0 Improve CTE Instruction**

* 1. ***Improve instructional rigor and relevance***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will boost the rigor and relevance of curricula through the integration of academic and CTE skills within all articulated postsecondary education pathways. Outcomes include **collaboration** of training needs, recommendations for technology-based programs in high-demand sectors and training partnerships.

**Action(s)**

**4.1.1** The CTE Division will develop crosswalks of academic skills and CTE courses to fully integrate CTE and academic curricula. Career pathways of study will be designed to include cross-disciplinary team teaching by CTE teachers and academic teachers.

***4.2 Standards Alignment***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division frameworks will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the Common Career Technical Core and industry standards.

**Action(s)**

**4.2.1** The CTE Division will review the Common Core State Standards and the Common Career Technical Core to determine areas for academic integration and alignment. CTE will team with the Department of Education to determine which CTE courses will be approved for core academic credit.

***4.3 Teacher Qualifications***

**Goal:** By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will review all requirements for permits and endorsements to determine if the licensing requirements are reflective of content knowledge, education credentials and work experience if applicable to ensure that CTE teachers are adequately prepared.

**Action(s)**

**4.3.1** The CTE Division will determine professional development requirements for CTE teachers seeking permits and endorsements.

**4.3.2** The CTE Division will provide CTE teachers permits and endorsements that will enhance their teaching effectiveness by allowing for career development and pathway cross-walking within the teacher’s area of instruction.

**4.3.3** The CTE Division will provide approved subject-specific professional development for all CTE teachers in concert with identified partners.

**4.3.4** The CTE Division will create a permit for career development facilitators (CDFs) documenting successful completion of training and certification under the guidelines of the National Career Development Association and the Center for Credentialing and Education.