

Setting a New Standard for Career Technical Education: The Common Career Technical Core

WHAT IS THE COMMON CAREER TECHNICAL CORE (CCTC)?

The Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) are a set of rigorous, high-quality benchmark standards for Career Technical Education (CTE), the result of a state-led initiative. The goal of the CCTC is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a global economy.

The CCTC includes a set of end-of-program of study standards for each of the 16 Career Clusters[®] and their 79 Career Pathways, as well as an overarching set of Career Ready Practices, which address the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are important to becoming career ready.

WHY DO WE NEED THE CCTC?

As the economy has changed, many CTE program have transitioned from helping students prepare for an individual job (employment with limited growth opportunity) to helping students prepare for a career (employment with expectations of advancement). As part of that transition, national organizations like The National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc), individual states, and industry-based organizations have created different sets of standards for student learning in career technical programs.

The result of this early standards work is a hodgepodge of standards that vary in quality and specificity from one state to the next and one industry to the next. Inconsistency across CTE programs puts some students at a distinct disadvantage for competing in the ever-changing global economy. Recognizing the need for more consistency in today's global marketplace, State CTE Directors united around a vision to develop a shared set of standards that meet a quality benchmark for students in CTE programs, regardless of where they live or which delivery system they use.

IS THE CCTC A FEDERAL INITIATIVE?

No. The CCTC were developed by the states, for the states. States can choose to use the CCTC as a benchmark, voluntarily adopt the standards, or disregard them as they see fit.

IS THE CCTC FOR ALL STUDENTS?

The CCTC Career Cluster and Career Pathway standards should guide CTE programs; they are therefore relevant for CTE students. The Career Ready Practices are appropriate for all students.

WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CCTC?

- Forty-two states, the District of Columbia and Palau pledged support for and participated in the development of the CCTC. Participating states nominated experts from a variety of sectors to serve on working groups responsible for the development of the standards.
- NASDCTEc coordinated the CCTC initiative on behalf of the states.
- Vivayic, a learning solutions company, partnered with NASDCTEc to gather research and write the standards.
- Marzano Research Laboratories, an independent organization dedicated to educational research, facilitated the working groups in the development stage of the standards.
- Numerous business and industry representatives, administrators, educators, researchers and the general public provided input during the development phase that included a public comment period.
- The final set of CCTC standards was determined by achieving consensus among state-appointed members of each of the 16 Career Cluster working groups. The final standards were developed and approved by the states.

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE CCTC?

The process for developing the CCTC was informed by:

- High-quality state education and industry standards;
- Input and guidance from educators, business and industry, and state leaders; and
- Feedback from the general public.

The development process began in 2011 with a comprehensive review of state, industry and other national CTE standards, including The National Career Clusters Knowledge & Skills Statements. This review included input and guidance from subject matter experts from across the country to help guide the development of the draft CCTC standards.

In early 2012, participating states nominated experts to serve on working groups charged with reviewing, recommending changes and validating the final standards. The working groups advised and approved changes suggested during the state and public comment periods, which occurred in March, April and May 2012. In total, more than 3,500 representatives from K-12, postsecondary, and business and industry engaged in the development effort in some capacity.

Following sign-off from the working groups, the NASDCTEc Board of Directors approved the final standards, which were publicly released in June of 2012.