



STATE POLICIES  
IMPACTING CTE:

2020  
YEAR IN REVIEW



COVID-19 (coronavirus) fundamentally disrupted the way education is delivered, forcing legislators, administrators, teachers and students to adapt to virtual learning while wrestling with school reopening.

In 2020, Career Technical Education (CTE) adapted to the challenges brought about by the coronavirus, continuing to deliver high-quality programming nationwide across all learner levels despite significant disruptions to education delivery.

Because the pandemic was on the forefront of federal, state and local governments' agendas, fewer policies and budget provisions for CTE were enacted than in previous years; in 2020, 67 CTE-related policy actions were enacted compared to 208 policy actions in 2019. Many CTE-relevant bills and budgets, including those that increased state funding for CTE, were passed before the coronavirus was declared a global pandemic. However, due to spending cuts stemming from the pandemic, many state budgets (or supplemental budgets) enacted this year decreased state CTE funding for FY2021. This trend is expected to continue and even worsen as economic challenges continue for many states.<sup>1</sup>



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## 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

Despite this challenging fiscal environment, because of the critical role CTE plays in workforce and economic development, it is expected that more CTE-related policies will be enacted in the coming years to support upskilling and reskilling efforts to kickstart the economy after the downturn brought on by the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

**AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, IN SPRING 2020**, states finalized their initial four-year state CTE plans for the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). State plans contained common policy themes that will strengthen the CTE system and develop a skilled, adaptable workforce for the post-pandemic economy. These themes included a shared statewide vision for CTE; ongoing and meaningful alignment and collaboration across the secondary, postsecondary and workforce systems; a commitment to equity and learner supports; systems for attracting, retaining and developing CTE instructors; the use of data-driven decision making; and others.<sup>3</sup> Though many of these themes have already appeared in previous and current legislation and budget provisions, the attention to these topics in Perkins V state plans suggests that these themes will be even more prevalent in state policy in the coming years.

In calendar year 2020, **31 states enacted or passed 67 policy actions related to CTE** and career readiness, including legislation, executive orders and budget provisions that significantly changed funding. Policies that were passed affected secondary, postsecondary, adult and workforce systems.

### SPRING 2020:

States finalized their initial four-year state CTE plans for the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V).

### IN 2020:

**31**  
states enacted  
or passed  
**67**  
policy actions



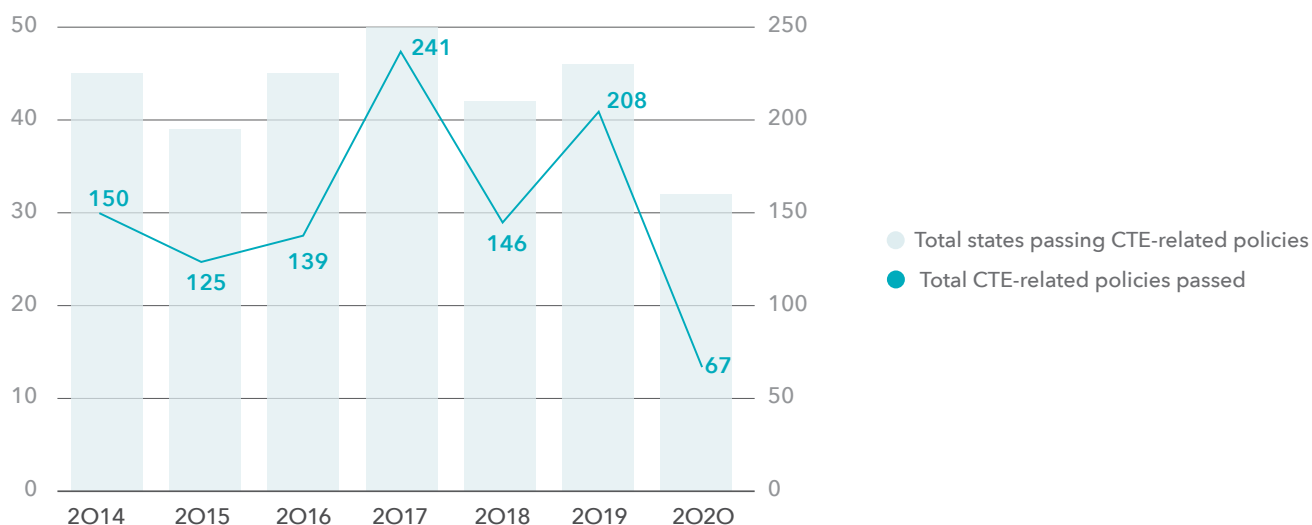
# TOP FIVE KEY POLICY TRENDS

**AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS**, this analysis categorizes each policy action by topic. Many policies involved multiple categories. A more comprehensive “Methodology” section can be found at the end of this report. In 2020, states most frequently addressed the following topics:

- 1. Funding (28 policies enacted)
- 2. Industry partnerships and work-based learning (17)
- 3. Access and equity (16)
- 4. Dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation and early college (16)
- 5. Data, reporting and/or accountability (16)

The policy areas that states focused on in 2020 were similar to previous years. In 2019, funding, industry partnerships and work-based learning, and access and equity were also among the top five key policy trends; however, in 2020, dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation and early college and data, reporting and/or accountability replaced industry-recognized credentials and governance among the top five key policy trends.

Number of States Passing CTE-related Policies and Number of CTE-related Policies Passed, (2014 - 2020)



## Categories of enacted CTE-related policy in 2020

POLICY CATEGORY	# OF POLICIES ENACTED	STATES THAT ENACTED POLICIES IN THIS CATEGORY
<b>Funding</b>		
Policies address significant changes in CTE funding, such as increasing or decreasing allocations, creating a scholarship or grant program, or investing in a pilot program.	28	<b>Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia**</b>
**Bolded states indicate an increase of funding for CTE in 2020. Alabama and Colorado had both an increase and a decrease in funding. Idaho is not represented in this table because its enacted policy was not categorized as a policy in one of the top ten categories.		
<b>Industry Partnerships/Work-Based Learning</b>		
Policies address engaging industry to drive student learning through work-based learning or other means.	17	Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia
<b>Access/Equity</b>		
Policies address access to CTE as well as strategies that support success within CTE for specific populations.	16	Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, West Virginia
<b>Dual/Concurrent Enrollment, Articulation and Early College</b>		
Policies address student transitions to the next level of education through dual/concurrent credit attainment, credit transfer agreements and early college programs.	16	Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington
<b>Data, Reporting and/or Accountability</b>		
Policies address data and research activities that support CTE, including the use of labor market information and the inclusion of career readiness within accountability systems.	16	Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Tennessee, West Virginia

**NOTE:** A single law or policy can address multiple policy categories.

## Categories of enacted CTE-related policy in 2020

POLICY CATEGORY	# OF POLICIES ENACTED	STATES THAT ENACTED POLICIES IN THIS CATEGORY
<b>Governance</b>		
Policies address responsibility within the state for CTE, including new committees or task forces and transfers of authority.	10	Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia
<b>Industry-Recognized Credentials</b>		
Policies address attainment of credentials recognized by industry, including micro-credentials, such as badges, and educational degrees.	9	Arizona, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, Utah, West Virginia
<b>Graduation Requirements</b>		
Policies address CTE as an optional or required avenue for earning academic credit and/or meeting high school graduation requirements, including diploma endorsements and seals.	7	Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Virginia
<b>COVID-19</b>		
Policies explicitly address the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, including increases or decreases to CTE funding, initiatives addressing the impact of the pandemic and changes to existing requirements.	7	Delaware, Louisiana, Nevada, Tennessee, Vermont
<b>Career/Academic Counseling</b>		
Policies address counselors or career advisers providing guidance such as disseminating college and career information and requiring individual academic and career plans.	6	Colorado, Louisiana, Minnesota, West Virginia



## SPOTLIGHT ON CTE DURING COVID-19

**THE CORONAVIRUS WAS THE FOCAL POINT OF CALENDAR YEAR 2020**, presenting significant challenges for education and particularly for CTE. Many states shared specific, non-regulatory guidance on the reopening of CTE programs due to the location- or equipment-based needs of CTE programs.<sup>5</sup> CTE programs responded with creativity and flexibility, continuing to address the needs of learners and industry while ensuring quality CTE delivery. Five states enacted policies specifically addressing the coronavirus and CTE programs, though other states published increased guidance or started programs using federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding.<sup>6</sup> The coronavirus greatly affected the 2020 school year and may have a lasting impact on the future of CTE programs. More coronavirus-related policies are expected in the coming years to help CTE programs develop the post-pandemic workforce.

While the challenges brought by the coronavirus for CTE programs are clear, some states took this time to reaffirm their support of CTE.



**VERMONT** reimbursed **\$88.3 million** to school districts or regional career technical center school districts for any coronavirus-related costs that occurred. Vermont also provided \$2.3 million to state colleges to provide training, in partnership with the state Department of Labor, to help displaced workers re-enter the workforce.

The **TENNESSEE** Legislature provided **CTE programs with flexibility** as well as wraparound supports during the pandemic crisis. These supports included ensuring that high school learners in dual or concurrent enrollment courses would continue to receive guidance, resources and other opportunities that would have been provided before schools were adversely affected by closures due to the coronavirus. The state also granted flexibility to programs, allowing for the waiver of end-of-the-year assessments and similar requirements during the pandemic.

States also focused on workforce training and re-employment efforts in response to the coronavirus.



In **DELAWARE**, Governor John Carney Jr. issued an executive order creating the **Rapid Workforce Training and Redeployment Initiative**. This initiative creates a partnership between the Delaware Department of Labor and the Delaware Workforce Development Board to make rapid credentialing, certificate programs and other workforce programs more accessible to unemployed or under-employed Delaware citizens. The program is funded by a \$10 million investment through the federal CARES Act.



## FUNDING

IN 2020:

**23**  
states

ENACTED

**28**  
policies

Twenty-three states enacted 28 policies in 2020 that affected CTE funding, making funding the most common policy category for the eighth year in a row. This total includes 14 states that increased funding for CTE-related programs and initiatives overall, eight states that decreased funding, and two states that increased funding for some CTE programs and initiatives and decreased funding for others during FY2020. Policies in this category include grants, scholarships and budget appropriations. Budgets or other legislation that did not significantly change CTE allocations from previous fiscal years were not included in this report.



**LOUISIANA** appropriated **\$10 million in new funding** for Workforce Training Rapid Response through the Louisiana Community and Technical College System. This funding will be used to assist employers with training and reskilling that will result in quickly acquired industry-recognized credentials.



**ARIZONA** directed **\$5 million in new funding** toward the Arizona Industry Credential Program to provide awards of up to \$1,000 to a school or school district for each K-12 learner who earns an eligible credential, certificate or license in a high-demand career field before graduation.



**MAINE'S** biennial budget included **\$2 million in one-time funding** to upgrade equipment at CTE schools to meet national industry standards.

## INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS AND WORK-BASED LEARNING

IN 2020:

**12**  
states  
ENACTED  
**17**  
policies

Industry partnerships and work-based learning was the second most common policy category in 2020, with 12 states enacting 17 policies in this area. This category includes business-education partnerships overall and work-based learning as a primary strategy to connect learners with businesses.



**MISSISSIPPI** established the **Mississippi Learn to Earn Act**, which requires the state Board of Education to identify “high school-to-work” apprenticeships that can be used for graduation credit and allows the state board to authorize local boards to approve alternative courses for graduation credit.



**OHIO** created an **Individual Microcredential Assistance Program** to reimburse employers and training providers for training new and current workers to earn an in-demand industry-recognized credential or certificate that takes less than one year to complete and is approved by the chancellor of higher education. The law also created a grant program to support industry sector partnerships and sector partnership networks.



**WEST VIRGINIA** created a **summer youth intern pilot program** to provide high school students with internship opportunities that allow them to explore and prepare for in-demand careers, gain work experience, and develop skills for occupations and entrepreneurship. The state Department of Commerce is required to work with employers, non-profit organizations and educational institutions to provide for the placement of youth in internships in in-demand career fields.

## ACCESS AND EQUITY

IN 2020:

**13**

states

ENACTED

**16**

policies

The next three top policy areas tie for third with 16 policies passed in each area. Thirteen states enacted 16 policies related to access and equity. For this category, states implemented changes that will expand access to CTE for learners, including special populations such as learners with disabilities, learners from economically disadvantaged families, participants in fields of study that are non-traditional for their gender, single parents and out-of-workforce individuals, as well as under-served populations such as learners of color. This category also includes middle school CTE programming that exposes all learners at an earlier age to CTE programs and related occupations. Finally, this category includes legislation that increases diversity in the CTE educator community.



**KENTUCKY** amended an existing law with the goal of increasing participation in computer science courses for under-represented groups by requiring the state Department of Education to annually report disaggregated data on participation in computer science courses.



**NEW MEXICO** created a grant program that is designed to increase diversity in the teacher workforce, fill high-need teaching positions, and include both academic coursework and a guided apprenticeship for aspiring teachers. The grants will be awarded to public postsecondary educational institutions and tribal colleges in partnership with one or more local school districts or charter schools.



**WEST VIRGINIA** required county boards to provide elective CTE courses for middle school students beginning in the 2022-23 school year. The legislation also directed the expansion of workforce preparedness information communicated to students to include the knowledge, skills and characteristics needed for success in occupations and entrepreneurship and encouraged career exploration opportunities in the middle grades.

## DUAL/CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT, ARTICULATION AND EARLY COLLEGE

IN 2020:

**15**  
states  
ENACTED  
**16**  
policies

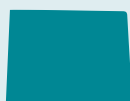
In a tie with access and equity, dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation and early college had 15 states taking 16 policy actions in this area. In this category, policy changes address secondary students earning postsecondary credit; articulation between the secondary and postsecondary levels or among postsecondary institutions; and creating, expanding or strengthening early college high schools.



**UTAH** created two certificates for individuals who complete courses through concurrent enrollment and meet other requirements. The LAUNCH certificate is awarded to students who complete six concurrent enrollment credits, are awarded an industry certificate or institutional certificate, and complete a college and career readiness plan. The DISCOVER certificate is awarded to students who complete one three-credit course through a concurrent enrollment program. The law also created the Utah PRIME pilot program to expand access to concurrent enrollment and CTE certificate programs through virtual delivery models.



**VIRGINIA'S** Legislature directed the state Board of Education to include in its standard diploma graduation requirements the option for learners to complete a **dual enrollment course or high-quality work-based learning experience**. The board has subsequently updated requirements to affect students in the 2021-22 graduating class or younger.



The **COLORADO** Legislature **instructed the community college system** to provide information for parents of students in grades 6-8 across the state regarding the benefits of concurrent enrollment in grades 9-12.

## DATA, REPORTING AND/OR ACCOUNTABILITY

IN 2020:

**12**  
states  
ENACTED  
**16**  
policies

Completing the three-way tie, data, reporting and/or accountability had 12 states taking 16 policy actions in this area. Policy changes in this category include those for which the core purpose is to conduct research and provide a legislative report, those that adapt a state's accountability structure, or those designed to make use of labor market data.



**FLORIDA** amended the state's high school accountability system to include the percentage of secondary students who complete 300 hours or more of career dual enrollment during high school, subject to regulations by the state Board of Education.



**LOUISIANA** directed the state Department of Education, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Board of Regents, and the Louisiana School Boards Association to prepare a report providing data surrounding the earning of industry-based credentials, whether students pursue a postsecondary degree, and/or whether students enter the workforce in their area of study to in turn evaluate the state's Jump Start program.



**MAINE** created a task force to research and study the feasibility of a comprehensive four-year CTE program that would provide a technical high school setting for students as well as increasing crosswalks between technical curricula and academic standards.

## SYSTEMS AFFECTED

2020  
STATE PASSED  
POLICIES:

50

secondary  
education

40

postsecondary  
education

5

adult learning

25

workforce  
development

This analysis categorizes policies by the systems and learner levels affected: secondary education, postsecondary education, adult education and/or workforce development. This is the fourth year that policies have been categorized by system. In 2020, states passed 50 policies that affect CTE related to secondary education, 40 policies related to postsecondary education, five policies related to adult learning and 25 policies related to workforce development. As in prior years, this analysis identified more policies affecting the secondary system than any other system.

A single policy may address multiple systems. These policies frequently illustrate how secondary schools and postsecondary institutions partner with each other and with employers and industries to provide high-quality CTE programs.

Examples of policies that affected multiple systems include the following:



**MICHIGAN** created the [Michigan Reconnect Grant Act](#), which provides financial assistance to Michigan citizens ages 25 or older seeking associate degrees or industry-recognized credentials, with the goal of increasing the number of adults ages 25-64 with college degrees or credentials to 60 percent by 2030.



**COLORADO** is creating an [online platform to assist residents with career exploration and planning options](#) through collaboration among the state Workforce Development Council, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Higher Education and other agencies and partners.



**INDIANA** amended an existing law to change the membership of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet to include additional representation from education and industry and to increase alignment and coordination among agencies including the Early Learning Advisory Committee, the state Board of Education, the Commission for Higher Education, and the Department of Workforce Development.

## METHODOLOGY

The policy activities included in this report and the accompanying policy tracker were compiled through a comprehensive national scan, drawing on information from numerous sources. Policies were identified and cataloged using government websites and media stories and were augmented by compilations such as those prepared by the Education Commission of the States and the National Association of State Budget Officers. Once compiled, the information was distributed to State CTE Directors for review, and any feedback was included in this final report and policy tracker.

For the purposes of this report, policy activity was defined to be an action by state policymakers, including the state legislature, the board of education, the state education agency, the higher education authority, the governor's office or any other state-level agencies, or a ballot initiative approved by voters. Although several national career readiness initiatives, such as the New Skills ready network, were underway across the states, involvement in these initiatives was not included unless it spurred notable state policy change.

To be included in this report, policies must have been passed during the 2020 calendar year, have statewide impact, and be related to career readiness or CTE within the state. This report is designed to be value neutral. Inclusion of a specific policy or action is for informational purposes only and does not reflect any judgment regarding the quality or strength of that policy. Policies introduced in 2019 and passed in 2020 were included; policies that went into effect in 2020 but were passed in prior years were not included. However, if a state took meaningful action to implement in 2020 a policy passed earlier – for instance, a state board action approving new graduation requirements in 2020 in response to legislation enacted in 2019 – that 2020 action was included.

Policies were categorized as funding if they authorized new or increased funding or if they decreased funding to a specific program. Funding policies were not included if they were implemented in 2020 but were authorized in prior years, unless those policies repurposed or restructured existing funds in a way that affected CTE and career readiness. Any policy that was enacted in response to COVID-19 that utilized federal CARES Act funding for CTE-related programs was not included unless the funding was used in conjunction with additional state funding (as in Vermont) or through executive/legislative order (as in Delaware).

While extensive efforts were made to verify the completeness and accuracy of this report, should discrepancies be noted, we would be happy to correct them at any time. Please contact Advance CTE Policy Associate Dan Hinderliter ([dhinderliter@careertech.org](mailto:dhinderliter@careertech.org)) or ACTE Policy Research Associate Hannah Neeper ([hneeper@acteonline.org](mailto:hneeper@acteonline.org)).





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## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> National Association of State Budget Officers. (2020). *Summary: Fall 2020 fiscal survey of states*.

<https://www.nasbo.org/reports-data/fiscal-survey-of-states>

<sup>2</sup> Education Strategy Group. (2020). *Pivot to recover: State postsecondary attainment agendas in the era of COVID-19*. [http://edstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Pivot-to-Recover\\_FINAL.pdf](http://edstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Pivot-to-Recover_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Advance CTE. (2020). *The state of Career Technical Education*.

[https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/State\\_CTE\\_PerkinsV\\_2020.pdf](https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/files/resources/State_CTE_PerkinsV_2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> To view all policies, please visit the [2020 State Policy Tracker](#)

<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of state school reopening plans, view Advance CTE's [state reopening plan tracker](#).

<sup>6</sup> Unless allocated through executive order or other official policy action, CTE or workforce development programs funded through the federal CARES Act were not included in this state-level report.