

CTE WITHOUT BORDERS

Policy Playbook

PART 1

PART 2

PART 3

PART 4

Executive Summary

Our nation is facing a critical point in time that provides the opportunity to reflect on the ways Career Technical Education (CTE) is designed to meet the needs of all learners.



In light of the coronavirus pandemic, leaders innovatively and rapidly responded to the needs of learners during school shutdowns and leveraged virtual learning when in-person learning was not possible. The innovation borne out of the crisis indicates the opportunities available within our education systems to meet learners' needs across the country, regardless of their locality.

To truly meet the needs of learners, we must remove the geographic barriers that limit access and opportunity, particularly for learners in rural communities. This work is essential to ensure that each learner can access CTE without borders — one of the five principles of Advance CTE's *Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education*. Policies and programs should enable, not limit, mobility and access. States should come together to develop and expand new models of collaboration by investing in open-access systems that allow access both within and across state lines.

CTE without borders allows learners to engage in learning opportunities of their choosing regardless of their locality. Learners have the flexibility and support to engage in learning opportunities no matter where they live and no matter whether they are engaging in online or hybrid learning or attending courses and programs on campuses outside of their home districts or local institutions.

However, achieving CTE without borders will require significant policy and programmatic changes to how CTE is designed and delivered. To support state and local leaders in the development of policies and programs that advance the expansion of CTE and work-based learning within and across state borders, Advance CTE, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education partnered to create this CTE Without Borders Policy Playbook. The playbook was developed with input from more than 100 state and local leaders through a series of interactive roundtable discussions and interviews.

This policy playbook focuses on expanded access both within and across states and within and across secondary and postsecondary institutions. With a combination of key strategies, actions and policies across six focus areas, leaders can actualize expanded access within and across states to support learners' and industry's needs.

The design of expanded access to high-quality CTE and work-based learning requires alignment with the state's or region's context. Every state and region is different, and it is not expected that all the playbook strategies will be adopted in whole. Rather, consider leveraging this resource as a choose-your-own-adventure based on the governance and regulatory approaches in your state or region.

DIVING INTO **PRINCIPLE 5:** CTE WITHOUT BORDERS

You can find more information about Principle 5: Every Learner Can Access CTE Without Borders in [Advance CTE's Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education](#) and the [Principle 5 Roadmap](#).^{1,2}

Expanded Access Is Equitable Access

Historically CTE programs (once called vocational education) were sometimes associated with the “tracking” of learners — specifically, the tracking of historically marginalized populations into lower-wage occupations with limited opportunities for advancement. Today, the quality of CTE programs has vastly improved, making it a preferred path for many secondary and postsecondary learners. However, many learners do not have access to high-quality CTE programs in their communities. As the CTE field continues to evolve to meet the diverse needs of learners, program development and ongoing improvement should consider all dimensions of equity to ensure that all learners engage in high-quality learning experiences that prepare them for a high-wage, high-demand career. Such dimensions of equity can include learners' background, language, race/ethnicity, geography, economic profile, gender, disability or family history.

CTE without borders calls attention to the geographic dimension of equity and the disparities among learners related to access to high-quality programs that can prepare them for the workforce. Often, learners are excluded from enriching CTE programs and work-based learning opportunities due to geographic barriers.³ This issue is most common for learners in rural locations but is also experienced in suburban and metropolitan areas. To ensure that the CTE community remains flexible to meet the needs of learners and industry across the country, leaders should enable their CTE systems to provide expanded access to high-quality CTE programs and work-based learning opportunities.

How do learners, industry and institutions benefit from CTE Without Borders?

LEARNERS 	INDUSTRY 	INSTITUTIONS 
<p>EXPANDS OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>With CTE without borders, learners’ geographic barriers are removed to allow them to pursue their career goals regardless of their locality.</p>	<p>WIDENS THE TALENT POOL</p> <p>Industries are currently experiencing tight labor markets. Providing expanded access for learners to engage with industry via virtual or hybrid models removes geographic barriers to widen the talent pool to hire workers. With expanded access, industry can also achieve easier economies of scale in their partnerships with CTE programs within and across states, rather than needing to duplicate efforts to meet various state and local requirements.</p>	<p>INCREASES PARTNERSHIPS</p> <p>Expanding access to high-quality CTE and work-based learning will require secondary and postsecondary institutions to increase their partnerships within and across states. These partnerships can support the sharing of resources, knowledge and support across institutions. Institutions will also engage in more robust and coordinated partnerships with industry and employers, which can assist in structuring CTE programs and pathways.</p>
<p>PROVIDES MULTIPLE MODES OF LEARNING</p> <p>Expanded access to high-quality CTE and work-based learning can include in-person, virtual and/or hybrid opportunities. These structures can manifest themselves in a learner engaging with a CTE program or work-based learning opportunity across their state line if they live near a border; engaging in CTE courses online with an institution that is not near their home district; and/or engaging in a variety of online and in-person CTE courses or work-based learning opportunities.</p>	<p>INCREASES WORKERS’ SATISFACTION</p> <p>Research shows that workers want the ability to personalize their jobs in a way that supports flexibility and well-being.⁵ Providing learners, who eventually will transition into the workforce, with the flexibility to engage in expanded access through virtual or hybrid work-based learning opportunities experience the conditions to be efficient and productive while maintaining work-life balance and satisfaction in their workplace.</p>	<p>BROADENS FIELD OF INDUSTRY EXPERTS</p> <p>Engaging in expanded access through virtual or hybrid experiences provides opportunities for more industry experts to engage with CTE and work-based learning that might not otherwise be available.</p>
<p>ENABLES CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS</p> <p>Expanded access can equip learners with the tools they need to transition into a different locality, if they so choose, once they are ready to shift into their career. Providing expanded access for a learner who plans to move locations after the completion of their program can prepare them for a successful transition by leveraging expanded access to the programs and work-based learning opportunities in their desired locality.</p>	<p>SUPPORTS A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE</p> <p>Companies and organizations with a high percentage of women and ethnic minorities in their leadership team are significantly more likely to have above-average profitability than those with relatively few.⁶ Expanded access to work-based learning within and across states provides industry the opportunity to recruit across geographic regions within and across state lines which can support industry initiatives for a more inclusive and diverse workforce.</p>	<p>SUPPORTS ENROLLMENT</p> <p>Providing expanded access for learners transitioning to and through postsecondary institutions will support enrollment for under-enrolled courses — or give more options to learners if certain programs are already over-enrolled. Allowing learners to enroll in courses virtually or in person, based on their needs, can support postsecondary institutions’ goals to provide a variety of courses for their institution and help learners meet course requirements to complete their CTE program and achieve their career goals.</p>

LEARNERS



“

I'm from a small town; being part of the academies helped show me that there are many things you can do in the world. With the JROTC program, we've traveled, and it's shown me all these other schools, all these other places, and what other people are doing. You can branch out to see what the world has to offer. ”

DYLAN VALADEZ

High school senior engaging in cross-district expanded access in the JROTC program at Falfurrias High School in partnership with Texas A&M Kingsville through the Rural Schools Innovation Zone⁴

INDUSTRY



“

We need to think outside the box when educating students in CTE. We need to figure out a way, not to have every high school trying to replicate programs and facilities... but we need to be able to share and be more creative in our delivery of current CTE to give more students greater access to opportunities. This is how we are going to meet the demands of our industries – by giving our students a greater opportunity to succeed. Because they can't succeed in our current educational model. As important as CTE is, it can't touch enough kids in its traditional means of delivery. ”

WILLIAM BRYAN

Chair of the Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees, Principal-in-Charge for Rhode Island PK-12 projects for Gilbane Building Company and industry representative on the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Apprenticeship Council

INSTITUTIONS



“

CTE is one of the best things we do in education. Expanding access is crucially important to make sure that the workforce being generated through programming is one that's equipped to represent the learners we have in our city, town, state and country. All of our CTE programs are paired with industry and employer partners to provide work-based learning for our students – experience is the best teacher and is a huge component of having a successful employee who has not only the skillset, but who is also built into the culture of your company. All companies should be establishing a network of resources to have internships to pull from these students to create their workforce. ”

KEN HOPKINS

Director of the Cranston Area Career and Technical Center providing expanded access across the state of Rhode Island through the PrepareRI Initiative



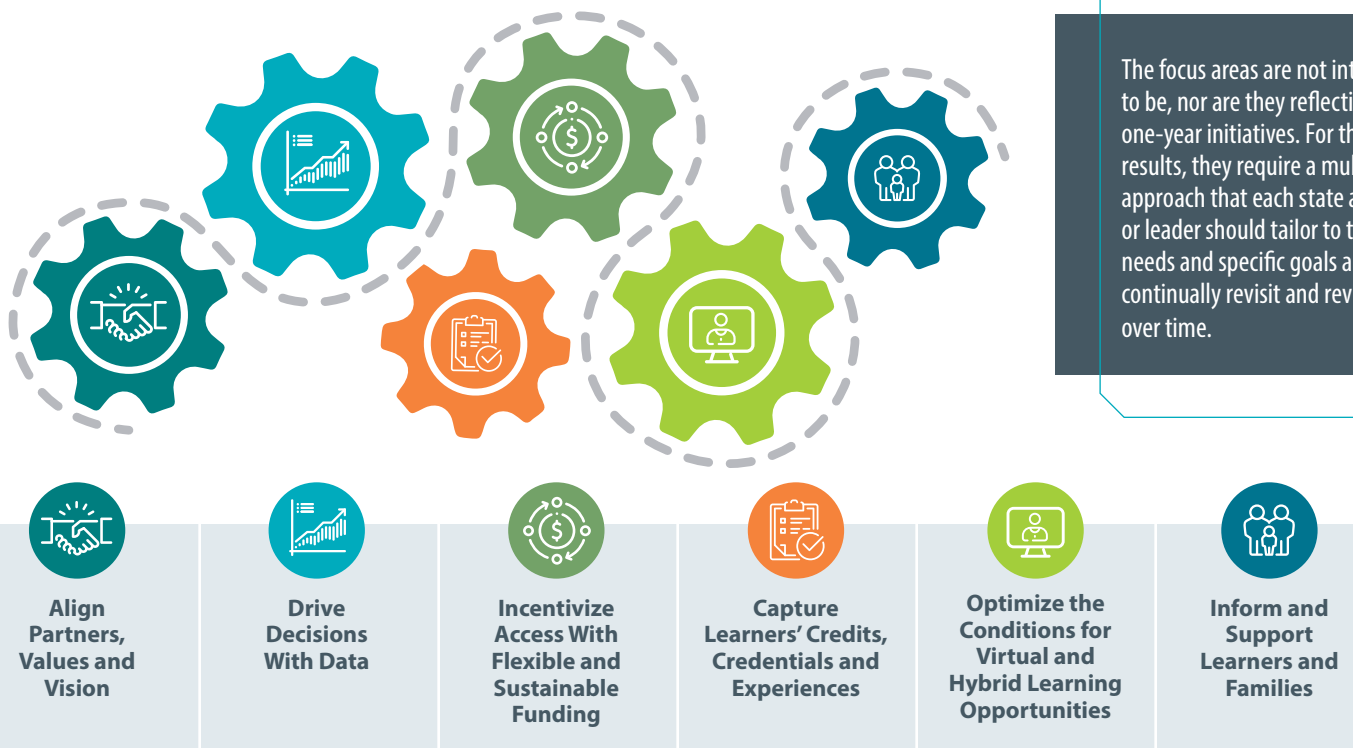
STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO EXPAND ACCESS

to High-Quality CTE and Work-Based Learning

Leaders should leverage this resource to evaluate their CTE systems and discern where in their partnerships, systems, policies and practices they have opportunities to expand access within and across states to meet learners' and industry's needs. The strategies and actions in this playbook will support leaders as they determine the scope of this work for their state or region and understand where they have opportunities to prioritize various policy efforts to actualize CTE without borders.

FOCUS AREAS

The following focus areas guide leaders through strategies and actions to develop policies and practices within and across systems, agencies and institutions to expand access to high-quality CTE and work-based learning within and across states. These focus areas provide leaders with an understanding of the full system of policies and supports necessary to expand access to high-quality CTE and work-based learning. These strategies and actions rely on partnerships among K-12 institutions, postsecondary institutions and systems, state agencies, workforce development and industry and employer partners to connect policies and practices to each other and should be informed by comprehensive data, focused on learner outcomes, and designed with equity in mind.



Additionally, because each state operates within a different structure and context, some strategies and actions lend themselves to expanding access only at secondary institutions, postsecondary institutions or within states or across states, while other strategies may encompass more than one area of expanded access. The following keys are identified throughout the playbook to help navigate the strategies and actions.

-  **Expands Secondary Access**
-  **Expands Postsecondary Access**
-  **Expands In-State Access**
-  **Expands Cross-State Access**

Acknowledgments

Advance CTE thanks and recognizes the following individuals for their support of this publication:

- Debbie Anderson, program director, Teaching to Lead, Southern Regional Education Board
- Peace Bransberger, senior research analyst, policy analysis and research, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
- Ivy Coburn, division director, education and workforce, Southern Regional Education Board
- Victoria Crownover, assistant state director of CTE accountability, Colorado Career and Technical Education
- Colleen Falkenstern, senior research analyst, policy analysis and research, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
- Linda Floyd, program director, Technology Centers That Work, Southern Regional Education Board
- April Henry, director, workforce development, Kansas Board of Regents
- Dan Hinderliter, senior policy associate, Advance CTE
- Ken Hopkins, director, Cranston Area Career and Technical Center
- Su Jin Gatlin Jez, executive director, California Competes
- Michael Gonzalez, executive director, Rural Schools Innovation Zone
- Sydney Kobza, assistant state director, Nebraska Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education
- Kate Kreamer, deputy executive director, Advance CTE
- Patrick Lane, vice president, policy analysis and research, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
- Kathleen McNally, senior school improvement instructional coach, Southern Regional Education Board
- Danielle Morton, school improvement leadership coach, Southern Regional Education Board
- Jeff Newell, director, Illinois Community Colleges Online
- Stephen Osborn, state officer for student opportunities, Rhode Island Department of Education
- Shelley Plutto, project manager, policy analysis and research, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
- Christina Sedney, director of policy and strategic initiatives, policy analysis and research, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
- Spencer Sherman, chief of innovation, Rhode Island Department of Education
- Wayde Sick, director and executive officer, North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education
- Joseph Tadlock, senior research associate, Southern Regional Education Board
- Elizabeth Texeira, director, Office of College and Career Readiness, Rhode Island Department of Education
- Scott Warren, division director, Making Schools Work, Southern Regional Education Board
- Candace Williams, data and research manager, Advance CTE (former)
- Dale Winkler, vice president, school improvement, Southern Regional Education Board
- Haley Wing, senior policy associate, Advance CTE

We would also like to thank the many participants in the CTE Without Borders Roundtables, held between May and August 2022.

Endnotes

- ¹ Advance CTE. (2021, March). *Without limits: A shared vision for the future of Career Technical Education*. <https://careertech.org/without-limits>
- ² Advance CTE. (2021, October). *Pushing the limits: A roadmap for advancing principle 5 of CTE Without Limits*. <https://careertech.org/resource/cte-without-limits-vision-roadmap>
- ³ McKittrick, K., & Nguyen, K. (2022, August). *Promising state practices to close equity gaps in career and technical education: An analysis of Perkins V data and state secondary CTE policies*. Harvard Kennedy School.
- ⁴ Rural Schools Innovation Zone. (n.d.). <https://www.thersiz.org/>
- ⁵ McKinsey Global Institute. (2021). *The post pandemic economy: The future of work after COVID-19*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-after-covid-19>
- ⁶ Harvard Business Review. (2022). *Competing in the new talent market*. <https://hbr.org/2022/10/competing-in-the-new-talent-market>



Continue the ***CTE Without Borders*** Series Part 2:
Preparing the Landscape, System and Partners for Expanded Access