2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

STATE POLICIES **IMPACTING** CTE

ADVANCE CTE
State Leaders Connecting Learning to Work

Association for Career and Technical Education
ACTE

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

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IN 2025

49 states | 172 policies

The State Policies Impacting CTE: 2025 Year in Review report marks the 13th annual review of Career Technical Education (CTE) and career readiness policies from across the United States conducted by Advance CTE and the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE).

This report does not describe every policy enacted within each state but instead focuses on policy trends across the nation.

Across the nation, CTE is equipping learners with academic and technical skills via rigorous coursework aligned with state college and career readiness standards. Through CTE programs, learners can explore careers that interest them, participate in work-based learning experiences, and build foundational and occupational knowledge that prepares them to pursue further education and compete in the workforce. CTE learners, on average, are more likely than their peers to be employed after high school and to enroll in a two-year college, and they are just as likely to enroll in a four-year college.[1]

As interest in CTE grows, policymakers have responded by expanding access to CTE programs. Federally, the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act**, which was signed into law on July 4, 2025, expanded Pell Grant eligibility to include short-term training and workforce programs. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education announced several **grantmaking priorities** related to CTE, workforce development, career advising, and related topics while President Trump signed an **executive order** to expand Registered Apprenticeship programs and prepare individuals for careers in the skilled trades. State policymakers have also enacted legislation that connects learners with CTE programs and pathways, demonstrating at the state and federal levels an aligned investment in preparing learners to enter the workforce.

In 2025, **49 states enacted 172 CTE-related policies**, which is the largest volume of state policy activities in a single year since before the coronavirus pandemic. This surge was influenced in part by states that operate on biennial legislative calendars and were in session in 2025. States enacted policy in the following top five categories: funding; industry partnerships/work-based learning; data, reporting, and/or accountability; access and supports; and industry-recognized credentials. While the 2024 report featured the same policy categories, 2025 saw a greater number of policies enacted under each category, indicating a continuation of the CTE priorities that shaped policy action in 2024.

Readers looking for a full listing of specific state policies can visit the **Longitudinal State Policy Tracker** and filter by year; state; system level; and/or analysis tags such as graduation requirements, career/academic counseling, and governance.

[1] Lindsay, J., Hughes, K., Dougherty, S. M., Reese, K., & Joshi, M. (2024, March). *What we know about the impact of career and technical education: A systematic review of the research*. Career and Technical Education Research Network.

Key Policy Trends

In 2025, 49 states enacted 172 CTE-related policies. This analysis organizes each state policy action by category. State CTE policy most frequently addressed the following categories:

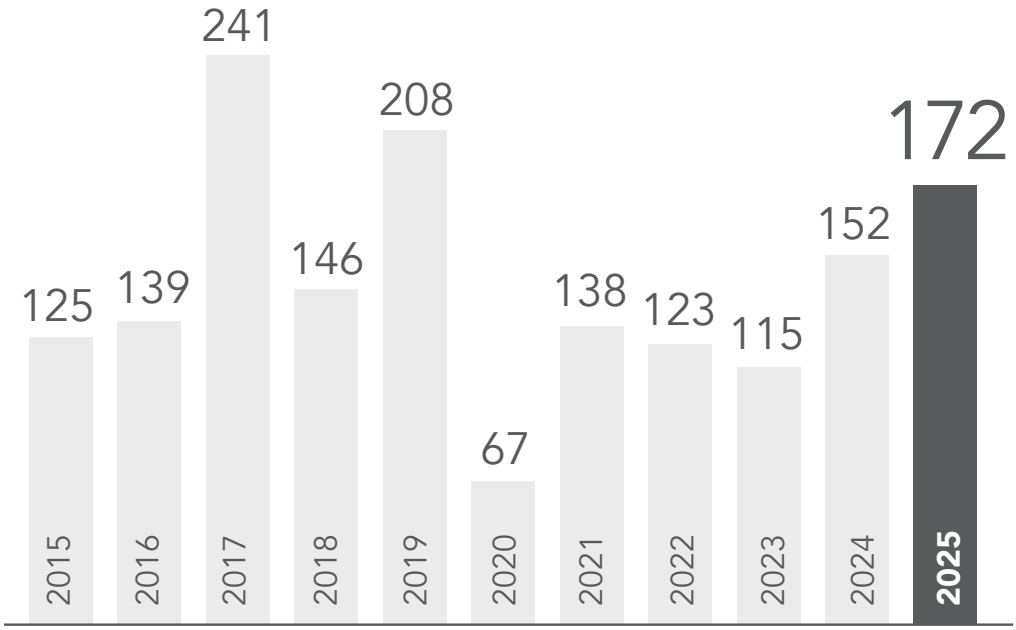
1	Funding	67
1	Industry Partnerships/ Work-Based Learning	67
2	Data, Reporting and/or Accountability	63
3	Access & Supports	53
4	Industry-Recognized Credentials	47
5	Dual/Concurrent Enrollment, Articulation, and Early College	33

Many policies are included under multiple categories. A more comprehensive "Methodology" section describing how policies were identified and categorized can be found at the end of this report.

The policy areas that states focused on in 2025 are largely consistent with those in 2024, with only slight variations in the rankings of the categories. This year's heightened activity reflects both the national policy landscape and legislative timing. Several states on biennial legislative calendars, including Texas, were in session in 2025, contributing to the overall increase in enacted policies. Yet even when accounting for the biennium, the growth is still notable. **The last time these states were in session, in 2023, 115 policies were enacted overall, compared to 172 in 2025.** Looking across the postpandemic period, CTE has remained a steady policy priority despite shifts in administration, with states continuing to leverage legislation as a tool to strengthen systems, expand opportunity, and meet workforce needs.

Below is a chart illustrating the number of CTE-related policies enacted annually over the past decade.

Number of Enacted CTE Policies, 2015-2025



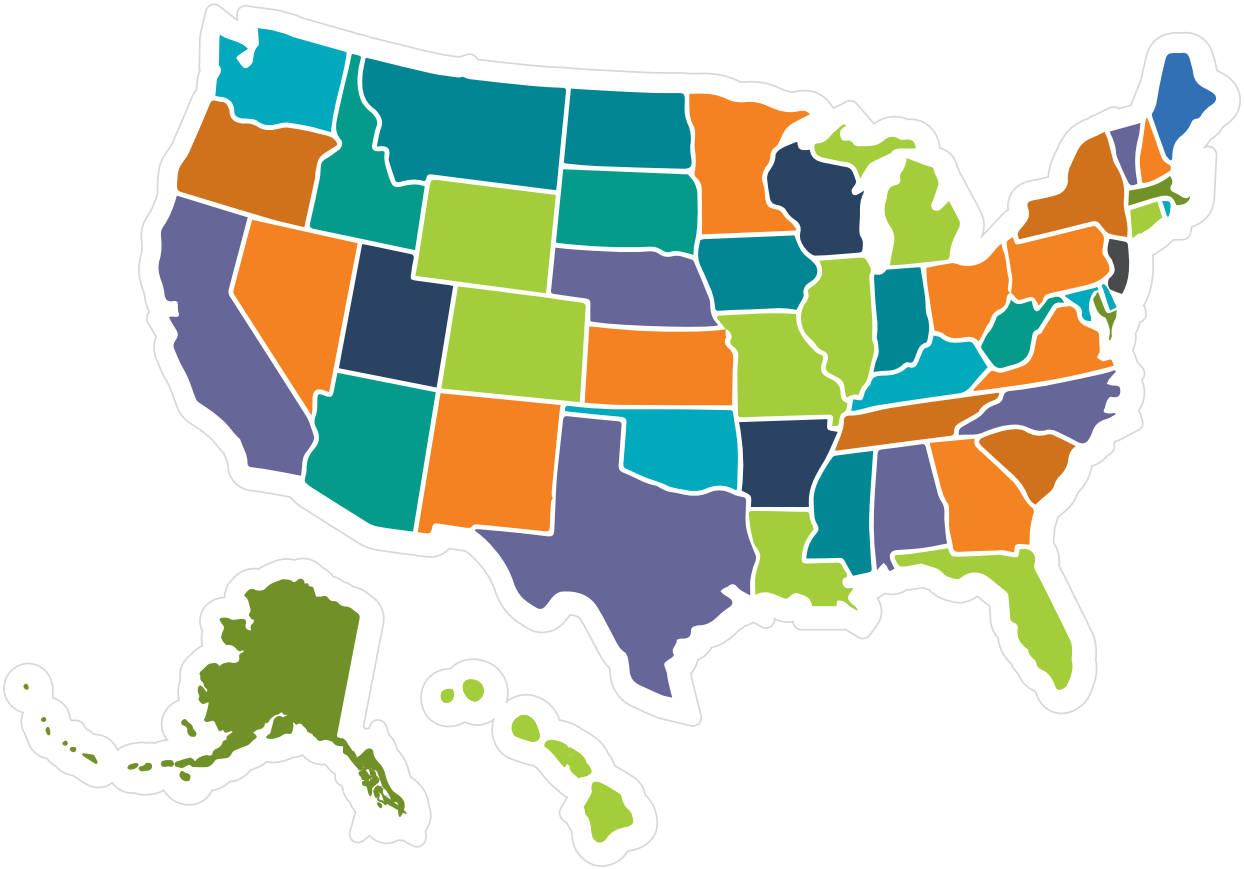
Categories of Enacted CTE-Related Policies in 2025

The following table shares the top 10 policy areas affecting CTE in 2025. For a complete listing of all policies and policy categories, please see the **Longitudinal State Policy Tracker**. A single law or policy may address multiple policy categories.

Rank	Policy Category		# of Policies Enacted	# of States
1	Funding	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.	67	34
1	Industry Partnerships/ Work-Based Learning	Policies address engaging industry to drive learning through work-based learning or other means.	67	34
2	Data, Reporting and/or Accountability	Policies address data and research activities that support CTE, including the use of labor market information and the inclusion of career readiness indicators within accountability systems.	63	34
3	Access and Supports	Policies address removing barriers for learners from diverse backgrounds to access CTE programs, including through scholarships, targeted opportunities, and inclusive career exploration.	54	27
4	Industry-Recognized Credentials	Policies address attainment of credentials recognized by industry, including microcredentials, such as badges, and educational certificates and degrees.	47	30
5	Dual/Concurrent Enrollment, Articulation, and Early College	Policies address postsecondary credit attainment and transfer through dual/concurrent credit attainment, credit transfer agreements, and early college programs.	33	25
6	Governance	Policies address responsibility within the state for CTE, including new committees or task forces and transfers of authority.	32	23
7	Career/Academic Counseling	Policies address school counselors or career advisers providing guidance such as disseminating college and career information and implementing individual academic and career plans.	23	17
8	CTE Teacher Certification/ Development	Policies address preparation, licensing, and credential requirements for CTE instructors and professional development for CTE educators.	18	14
9	Graduation Requirements	Policies related to the requirements for graduation from secondary school.	14	13
10	Career and Technical Student Organizations/ Leadership Development	Policies related to Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs).	8	8

These 49 States Enacted CTE-Related Policies in 2025

Alabama	Illinois	Missouri	Pennsylvania	
Alaska	Indiana	Montana	Rhode Island	
Arizona	Iowa	Nebraska	South Carolina	
Arkansas	Kansas	Nevada	South Dakota	
California	Kentucky	New Hampshire	Tennessee	
Colorado	Louisiana	New Mexico	Texas	
Connecticut	Maine	New York	Utah	
Delaware	Maryland	North Carolina	Vermont	
Florida	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Virginia	
Georgia	Michigan	Ohio	Washington	
Hawai'i	Minnesota	Oklahoma	West Virginia	
Idaho	Mississippi	Oregon	Wisconsin	
			Wyoming	



IN 2025

34 states | 67 policies

Top 5 Categories: Policy Examples

1 Funding

With 67 policies in 34 states, funding tied as the top policy category for 2025, maintaining its leading spot from 2024. Policies in this category significantly alter or create new state-level CTE funding and do not include federal appropriations from the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V). Funding policies that states enacted in 2025 include new scholarships or 5% increases or decreases for existing scholarships for short-term training programs, appropriations for middle school CTE programs, and tax credits that incentivize employers to hire apprentices.

MICHIGAN allocated $70 million from the state school aid fund to **expand learner success and enrollment in CTE programs**. Of this amount, $68.5 million is to be used for a competitive grant program for districts that are in a "CTE desert" (areas with limited CTE programming) or can demonstrate a CTE opportunity gap. In addition, up to $1.5 million is allocated for a statewide campaign to educate the public on the importance and economic viability of jobs created through CTE pathways.

MISSOURI established the **Career-Tech Certificate Program and Fund** to help learners earn credentials in short-term programs in high-need occupations. The Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development must establish procedures to provide reimbursements for the costs of tuition, books, and fees to eligible institutions, including approved community, technical, vocational, and virtual colleges; training providers; and eligible programs under 60 credit hours that lead to a nongraduate or industry-recognized credential.

WYOMING amended previous legislation related to CTE equipment grants. This amendment increases the maximum amount that can be granted **from $50,000 to $75,000 per year**. The amendment also reduces the "look back" period from 5 years to 2 years, reducing the time a district has to spend all of its state-allotted CTE funding to be eligible for the grant.

Other states that enacted policies in this category: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

IN 2025

34 states | 67 policies

1 Industry Partnerships and Work-Based Learning

In 2025, industry partnerships and work-based learning tied as the most common policy category, with 67 policies enacted across 34 states. These policies strengthen collaboration between employers and education institutions to expand work-based learning as a key strategy for exposing learners to relevant industry practices and career pathway programs. Its sustained prominence reflects states' continued investment in preparing the workforce to meet evolving industry needs.

COLORADO established a **3-year Work-Based Learning Consortium pilot program** under the Colorado Department of Higher Education, contingent on securing $2 million from private or grant sources. The consortium will consist of representatives from institutions of higher education, employers, workforce development entities, and other stakeholders. Its purpose is to expand access to high-quality work-based learning experiences in credit-bearing postsecondary courses through employer-sponsored projects.

HAWAI'I now allows employers or Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors to enter contracts with the islands' Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to **provide internships** for high school and college learners, as well as recent graduates.

LOUISIANA established a **work-based learning tax credit** to incentivize employers to hire and train apprentices, interns, and youth workers. Eligible participants include apprentices who have a formal apprenticeship agreement or who are enrolled in a recognized training program (minimum of four levels, 500 or more instructional hours); interns in officially authorized internship/work-based learning programs; and youth workers who are between the ages of 15-23, are unemployed, and meet at least one qualifying criteria such as being justice involved, a veteran, a parent, or a recipient of public assistance.

Other states that enacted policies in this category: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

IN 2025

34 states | 63 policies

2 Data, Reporting, and/or Accountability

A total of 34 states enacted 63 policies related to data, reporting, and/or accountability, the second most common policy category for 2025. This category includes policies that address research and data-related topics such as labor market information, accountability indicators, and reporting requirements. In 2025, states passed policies that create new metrics for program outcomes, commission studies, and connect education and workforce data systems.

GEORGIA required the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB), in consultation with other state education and labor agencies, to develop a **data-driven** methodology to determine which careers should be included in the state's High-Demand Career List. Additionally, the SWDB must oversee and report on return on investment for secondary and postsecondary programs aligned with the High-Demand Career List.

LOUISIANA directed the Louisiana Workforce Commission to conduct a **return on investment analysis of high school industry-recognized credentials**, including but not limited to employment rates and wage outcomes.

NEW HAMPSHIRE revised the structure and responsibilities of the state's Advisory Council of CTE. The council is now tasked with studying core CTE elements such as access and delivery, teacher recruitment and retention, labor market alignment, and industry and educational partnerships. The council must also set and track key annual metrics such as credentials earned and dual and concurrent enrollment participation. An **annual report detailing findings and policy recommendations** must be submitted to legislative leaders and the governor by November 1.

Other states that enacted policies in this category: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawai'i, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

IN 2025

27 states | 54 policies

3 Access & Supports

Access and supports was the third most common policy category for 2025, with 54 policies across 27 states. Policies in this category seek to remove barriers that prevent learners from accessing CTE and workforce development programs in their state. Examples of policies enacted in this category include grants to expand programs for justice involved individuals and alternative high school diploma pathways for learners who previously dropped out.

KENTUCKY established the **Team Kentucky Office of Reentry Services** in the Office of the Governor. The office will consist of officials from the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet; the Education and Labor Cabinet, including the Department of Workforce Development and Office of Adult Education; and the Cabinet for Economic Development, among others. The office will focus on providing high-quality reentry services to individuals who have been incarcerated, including developing training opportunities.

OKLAHOMA created the **Oklahoma National Guard CareerTech Assistance Program** to provide tuition assistance to eligible Guard members who enroll in a technology center school. The assistance covers tuition for up to 3 years for career and technology programs leading to certification or licensure, subject to available funding.

WASHINGTON directed the state's CTE task force to recommend policy changes aimed at **expanding training, certification, and employment opportunities for 16- and 17-year-old CTE learners** who may face barriers or age restrictions as they seek opportunities. The task force will examine agency rules imposing age restrictions on when a minor can start training, test for, or receive a license or certification or work in a profession related to a secondary CTE program the minor is currently participating in or has completed.

Other states that enacted policies in this category: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Vermont.

IN 2025

30 states | 47 policies

4 Industry-Recognized Credentials

As the fourth most prominent policy category, industry-recognized credentials tallied 47 policies across 30 states in 2025. Policies in this area are designed to increase or incentivize the attainment of certifications, degrees, or other credentials aligned with labor market information or industry need.

MAINE created a statewide **Credentialed Workforce Program** administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) to support the development of the state's workforce through industry-aligned credentials. The bill authorizes FAME to award grants and forgivable loans and to establish payment programs for eligible individuals, including adults and high school learners, to reduce financial barriers associated with earning credentials, certifications, or degrees in high-demand occupational fields.

TEXAS directed state agencies to collaborate with public junior colleges or technical institutes to offer a new state **Information Technology Apprenticeship Credential**. Approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, these programs must prepare participants for journey- or senior-level information technology (IT) roles and include a 1-year apprenticeship hosted by a state agency, a major IT project entity, or a regional network security center.

UTAH established the **First Credential Program**, which supports high school learners in earning their first industry-recognized credential before graduating. The state also created an oversight committee of employers, public schools, technical colleges, and others to ensure that the credentials align with current labor market demands.

Other states that enacted policies in this category: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

IN 2025

25 states | 33 policies

5 Dual/Concurrent Enrollment, Articulation, and Early College

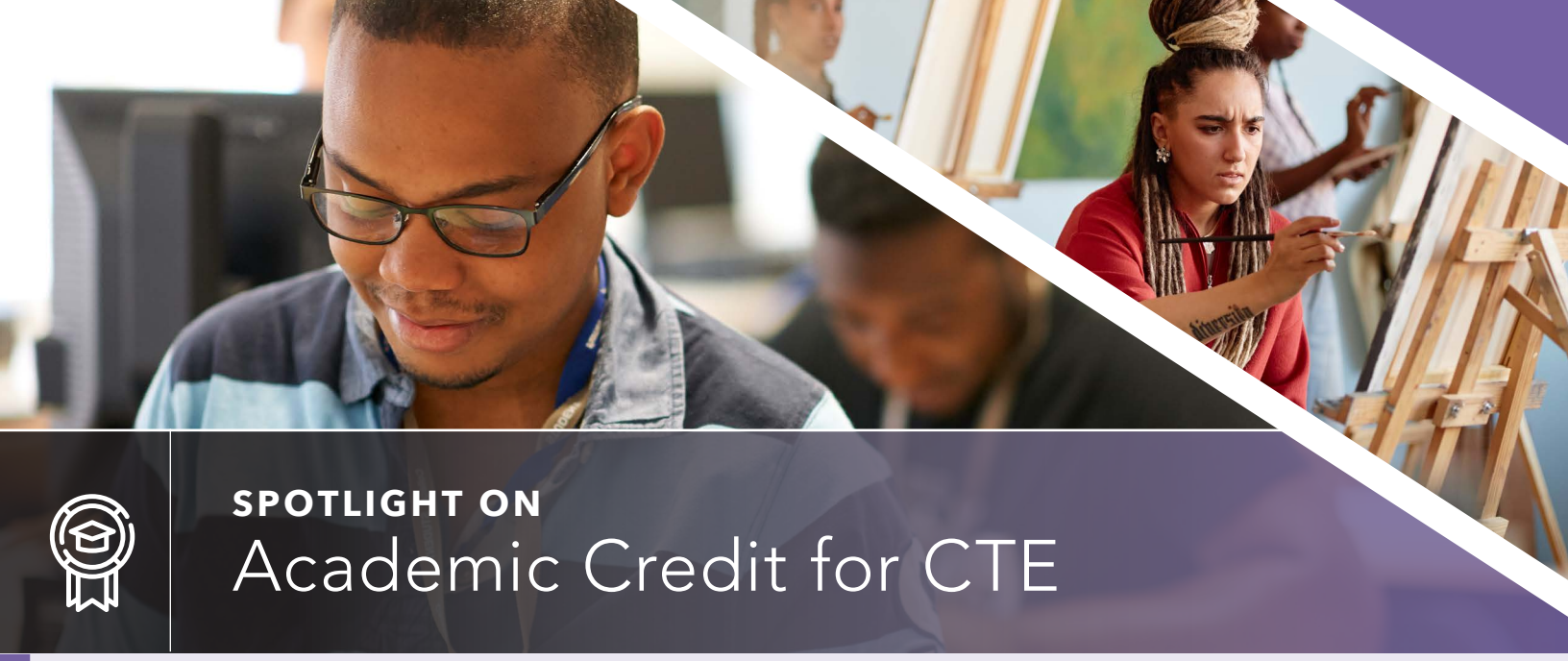
Rounding out the top five policy categories, 25 states enacted 33 policies affecting dual/concurrent enrollment, articulation, and early college in 2025. Policies in this area are designed to facilitate dual enrollment opportunities connected to CTE; create or expand early college high schools; or establish articulation and credit transfer agreements between secondary and postsecondary CTE systems, or on the postsecondary level, among institutions and between non-credit and for-credit programs.

IDAHO now allows community colleges to directly **enroll homeschooled learners to dual enrollment courses** in their Advanced Opportunities program, which offers funding for learners in grades 7 -12 to cover expenses such as career technical certification exams. The state department of education is required to reimburse community colleges or counties for any out-of-district tuition costs for dual credit courses taken, capped at $50 per credit hour. Learners who earn more than 15 postsecondary credits must identify postsecondary goals and meet with career advisors to ensure that the institutions they wish to attend will accept the dual credit course(s) they take.

OREGON required the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to **develop dual-credit program standards** for programs in agriculture, forestry, and natural resources. The standards must establish how career and technical student organizations (CTSOs), including organizations related to agriculture and natural resources, will collaborate to determine program quality and ensure alignment of content, objectives, and outcomes.

WEST VIRGINIA created a **statewide guaranteed transfer system** so learners can transfer credits earned in career pathways across high schools, CTE centers, community and technical colleges, and four-year institutions. The state directed the Higher Education Policy Commission and the Council for Community and Technical College Education to oversee transfer agreements, establish an advisory committee, and develop clear degree pathways for seamless transfer.

Other states that enacted policies in this category: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Washington.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Academic Credit for CTE

Recognizing that high-quality CTE integrates rigorous academic and technical instruction, several states enacted policies in 2025 to align CTE and academic coursework more intentionally. The policies include allowing learners to substitute approved CTE courses for academic credit in subjects such as math, science, and fine arts and promoting dual enrollment in learners' career areas of interest. These efforts not only expand pathways to graduation but also reinforce the role of CTE as a vehicle for both college and career readiness.

ALABAMA enabled high school learners to take dual enrollment courses offered by a local community college or university. Learners must consult with a counselor or career coach to ensure that the course(s) selected align with their career goals. Local education agencies **must award high school credit for successful completion** of these courses.

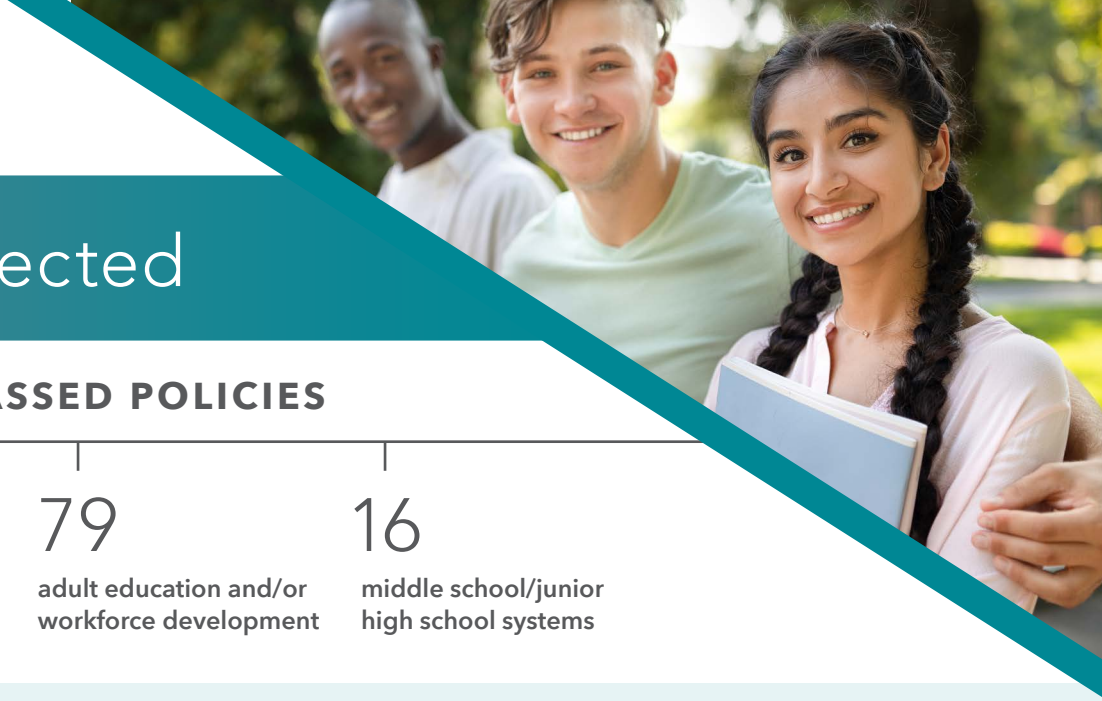
CALIFORNIA indefinitely extended the provision allowing a course in CTE to **satisfy the high school graduation requirement** for one course in visual or performing arts, world language, or CTE.

NEVADA expanded the Teacher Academy College Pathway program, giving high school learners the option to complete either two units of college credit in education-related courses or a **CTE program in education and training** as part of the requirements for successful completion of the program.

TEXAS established the **Applied Sciences Pathways program** and allowed the commissioner of education to approve the substitution of credit in a subject area required for graduation (math, science, English, or social studies) with a career and technology course provided under this program.

UTAH included woodworking, metalworking/welding, traditional handcrafts, architectural trades such as carpentry, and digital design/animation in the list of **courses that count as "art" or "fine arts" credits** for graduation purposes.

Systems Affected



IN 2025 STATE PASSED POLICIES

116 secondary education

88 postsecondary education

79 adult education and/or workforce development

16 middle school/junior high school systems

This analysis categorizes policies by the systems and learner levels affected: secondary education, postsecondary education, adult education and/or workforce development, and middle school/junior high school education. This is the 7th year that policies have been categorized by system. **In 2025, states passed 116 policies that affected CTE in secondary education**, **88 policies related to postsecondary CTE**, **79 policies related to adult education and/or workforce development**, and **16 policies related to middle school/junior high school**. Similar to prior years, this analysis identified more policies affecting the secondary system than any other system. These policies frequently illustrate how schools and institutions partner with each other and with employers and industries to provide high-quality and accessible CTE programs. Examples of policies that affected multiple systems include the following:

ALABAMA established a **nontraditional high school diploma pathway** for learners age 18 or older who left school before graduating. The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) will oversee and evaluate these programs to ensure that their curricula align with state graduation requirements. Local education agencies will promote the diploma pathway to at-risk juniors and seniors, while ACCS's Adult Education Division will lead a statewide awareness campaign to inform learners, parents, and educators about the opportunity.

INDIANA required the Governor's Workforce Cabinet to **collaborate with the state education and workforce agencies, postsecondary institutions, and the Indiana Management Performance Hub**, which facilitates cross-agency data-driven decision making, to develop a state talent plan that incorporates labor market information; reflects state workforce needs; and includes a guide for K-12, workforce, and economic talent development efforts.

MISSOURI lowered the age requirement for a learner to enroll in an adult high school from 21 to 18 and **changed the classification of a learner transferring from a local education agency to an adult high school** from a dropout to a transfer learner for data purposes. The state also created the STEM Career Awareness Activity Program and an associated fund to increase science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) career awareness in high schools; support STEM educators in improving their teaching skills; increase the attainment of STEM credentials; and increase talent pipelines for the STEM workforce.

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 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.

To be included in this report, policies must have been passed during the 2025 calendar year, have a statewide impact, and be related to career readiness or CTE within the state. This report is designed to be value neutral. The 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 2024 and passed in 2025 were included; policies that went into effect in 2025 but were passed in prior years were not included. However, if a state took meaningful action to implement in 2025 a policy passed earlier—for instance, a state board action approving new graduation requirements in 2025 in response to legislation enacted in 2024—that 2025 action was included. Policies were categorized as funding if they authorized new funding or increased or decreased funding to a CTE program by 5%. Funding policies were not included if they were implemented in 2025 but were authorized in prior years unless those policies repurposed or restructured existing funds in a way that affected CTE and career readiness.

While extensive efforts were made to verify the completeness and accuracy of this report, we would be happy to correct any discrepancies noted and include any CTE-related policies we have missed.

Please contact:

Advance CTE Policy Associate **Velie Sando** at **vsando@careertech.org** or
ACTE Research and Policy Coordinator **Jesus Galvan** at **jgalvan@acteonline.org**.

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