

Career and Technical Education Districts (CTEDs)

CTEDs and CTED member districts spent \$67 million in fiscal year 2019 on career and technical education (CTE) programs designed to prepare students for jobs in high-demand technical fields but do not have accurate and complete data to show whether they are effective in doing so

Special study purpose

To identify industry certifications earned by CTE students most associated with multi-year CTE programs that successfully prepare them for jobs in high-demand technical fields and to evaluate the effectiveness of CTEDs in preparing students for jobs in these fields.

Key findings

- We identified 37 State CTE programs that prepared students for jobs in high-demand technical fields and, based on feedback from business, industry, and higher education leaders, identified 88 associated industry certifications.
- CTEDs and member districts spent \$67 million in fiscal year 2019 on CTE programs designed to prepare students for jobs in high-demand technical fields.
- Although directed to collect student job placement and industry certification data, CTED and member districts' data was inaccurate and incomplete, putting them at risk of spending monies on programs that are not effective in preparing students for jobs in high-demand technical fields.
- The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has not implemented a 2016 statutory requirement to track student job placement data for all CTED students and to report this information, along with other measures, in annual achievement profiles for CTEDs.
- CTEDs, member districts, and ADE did not take sufficient action to implement a 2017 Auditor General recommendation to consistently collect data for all CTE students to help evaluate CTE programs' effectiveness.
- Changes to statutory requirements and data collection procedures could help improve CTE data quality, enabling assessment of program effectiveness.

Key recommendations

The Legislature should consider revising statute to clarify and enhance reporting requirements for CTEDs and member districts to ensure job placement and industry certification data is required to be collected and reported for all CTED students.

CTEDs, member districts, and ADE should continue working together to fully implement the Auditor General's 2017 audit recommendation to develop and implement ways to consistently collect accurate, complete, and comparable data for all students participating in CTE programs, including industry certification data, and use this data to help evaluate the effectiveness of their CTE programs in preparing students for jobs related to their CTE program.

ADE should implement the 2016 statutory requirement to include each CTED in its annual achievement profiles and ensure its data-reporting processes allow districts to report performance data for all CTE students. It should also implement data-sharing agreements with other State agencies, industry certification providers, and other organizations to directly obtain students' postgraduation employment, industry certification data, and other data instead of relying solely on districts to collect and verify self-reported data.