



# Members Brief

An informational brief prepared by the LSC staff for members and staff of the Ohio General Assembly

Authors: Jessica Sutton, Research Analyst  
Ryan Brown, Budget Analyst  
Reviewers: Mike Niemi, Research and Drafting Supervisor  
Jason Phillips, Assistant LBO Director

Volume 136  
January 10, 2025

## An Overview of K-12 Career Technical Education

State law generally requires that each city, local, and exempted village school district offer career-technical education (CTE) to students in grades 7-12. In general, school districts may offer their own CTE program, join a joint vocational school district, or participate in a career-technical compact to provide CTE services to their students. The Department of Education and Workforce has organized the planning and delivery of CTE services through a system of career-technical planning districts. Each school district, community school, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) school participates in that system. The Department provides state CTE funding to districts and schools to support the higher cost of CTE services. By participating in a CTE program, students may earn industry-recognized credentials, fulfill certain high school graduation requirements, and, upon enrollment in a state institution of higher education, earn college credit for qualifying equivalent coursework completed at a public high school.

### Contents

Career-technical education requirement .....	2
Career-technical planning districts .....	2
State funding of CTE programs .....	3
School districts and other public schools .....	3
Nonpublic schools .....	4
Industry-recognized credentials.....	4
Earning college credit through CTAG.....	5

## Career-technical education requirement

State law generally requires each city, local, and exempted village school district to provide career-technical education (CTE) to students in grades 7-12. School districts may meet this requirement in one of three ways: establishing a CTE program within the district (referred to as a comprehensive district), becoming a member of a joint vocational school district (JVSD), or contracting for CTE services with a JVSD or another school district (often referred to as a compact when two or more districts work together to jointly provide CTE services). A district board may opt not to provide CTE to students in grades 7 and 8 by annually adopting a resolution announcing its intent to not offer CTE services to those grades for that school year. The district board must submit that resolution to the Department of Education and Workforce (DEW) by September 30 each year.<sup>1</sup>

## Career-technical planning districts

A career-technical planning district (CTPD) is a school district or group of districts that DEW designates as responsible for the planning for and provision of CTE services to students within the district or group. A “lead district” is the school district or JVSD designated by DEW as a CTPD or the district designated to provide primary CTE leadership within a CTPD composed of a group of districts and other public schools.

DEW must assign each community school and STEM school that is serving students in any of grades 7-12 to a CTPD. State law expressly permits a community school to offer its own CTE program. Students enrolled in a community school also are expressly authorized to enroll in the CTE program operated by the CTPD to which the student’s resident school district belongs.

Unless DEW grants an exception, the district or group of districts and schools assigned to a CTPD must have a minimum total enrollment of 2,250 students in grades 7-12. Each CTPD with a total enrollment of at least 2,250 students must provide course offerings in 12 CTE pathways in at least eight approved career fields. For CTPDs with fewer than 2,250 students, the requirement is ten pathways in at least eight career fields. For more information about approved career fields, see [Career Fields](#) which is available on the DEW’s website: [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> R.C. 3313.90.

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3313.90, 3314.086, 3314.087, and 3317.023 and Ohio Administrative Code (O.A.C.) 3301-61-03(B).

The table below provides a brief description of how a school district may create or join each type of CTPD. For more information also see DEW's [Overview of CTE Delivery in Ohio \(PDF\)](#) and [map of CTPDs \(PDF\)](#), both available on the Department's website: [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov).

Type of career-technical planning district	Description
Comprehensive district	The school district establishes and maintains its own CTE program that meets standards adopted by the Department.
Joint vocational school district (JVSD)	The boards of education of each school district whose territory is proposed to be within the JVSD approve its creation. A school district may be approved to join an existing JVSD by the JVSD board of education or be assigned to the JVSD by the Department. <sup>3</sup>
Compact career-technical education provider	Two or more school districts that are not members of a JVSD enter a contract for services or a compact under which students enrolled in any participating district may access CTE provided by a participating district.

## State funding of CTE programs

### School districts and other public schools

Foundation funding provides the main source of state operating support to school districts and other public schools. The funds are distributed to districts and schools by formula. JVSDs receive foundation funding through a separate formula similar to that used to fund traditional school districts. JVSDs receive a distribution for the state share of their base cost, additional categorical funds for CTE and other purposes to cover the higher cost of those services, and guarantee funding if applicable. For more information on foundation funding for JVSDs, see the LSC *Members Brief* on [Joint Vocational School District Funding \(PDF\)](#) available at LSC's website: [lsc.ohio.gov](http://lsc.ohio.gov). The foundation funding formulas for traditional school districts, community schools, and STEM schools provide CTE categorical funding to those districts and schools. The formula for calculating CTE categorical funding (for all school types) separates CTE students into five categories based on CTE program type and funds a weighted amount for each category. CTE categorical funding for JVSDs and traditional districts is subject to each district's state share percentage, which provides more state funds to lower wealth districts. For more information on the CTE categorical components, see the LSC *Members Brief* on [Categorical Add-On Aid to Ohio Schools \(PDF\)](#) available at LSC's website: [lsc.ohio.gov](http://lsc.ohio.gov).

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 3311.16 to 3311.18, 3311.213, and 3313.911.

The table below shows total foundation aid for JVSDs and CTE categorical aid for traditional school districts, community schools, and STEM schools, along with their total and CTE enrollment, respectively, for FY 2024. Altogether, these sources provided \$543.6 million in state funding for CTE in FY 2024. As the table shows, JVSD foundation aid was \$446.0 million in FY 2024 for nearly 49,000 students. CTE categorical funding for traditional school districts and community and STEM schools totaled to \$97.6 million for about 40,000 students the same year.

<b>CTE Funding and Enrollment by School Type (\$ in millions), FY 2024</b>		
<b>School Type</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Funding</b>
JVSDs (total)	48,659	\$446.0
Traditional school districts (CTE only)	26,708	\$58.7
Community and STEM schools (CTE only)	13,262	\$38.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>88,630</b>	<b>\$543.6</b>

### **Nonpublic schools**

Nonpublic schools may not receive state funding for CTE programs. Instead, state law permits nonpublic school students to participate in CTE programs without financial assessment, charge, or tuition beyond that paid by resident public school students in such programs. Nonpublic school students are counted toward the enrolled average daily membership (ADM), the student count used for funding purposes, for the school district maintaining the CTE program. Nonpublic students are included in ADM as part-time students in proportion to the time spent in the school district's CTE program.<sup>4</sup>

### **Industry-recognized credentials**

Through participation in CTE programs, students have the option to earn three types of industry-recognized credentials: occupational licenses, certifications, and certificates. State law permits students to use approved industry-recognized credentials to help meet the state's graduation requirements associated with demonstrating competency and readiness for success after high school. DEW, in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and representatives of business organizations, is required to maintain a list of these credentials and licenses.<sup>5</sup>

The state provides funding to school districts and other public schools to support the cost of credentials. DEW requires districts and schools to pay upfront for the cost of the credentials and claim reimbursement from the state for the testing fees for credentials earned during the previous school year. DEW pays districts and other public schools an additional \$1,250 for certain earned credentials through the Innovative Workforce Incentive Program (IWIP). Qualifying

<sup>4</sup> R.C. 3313.90(A).

<sup>5</sup> R.C. 3313.618, 3313.6113, and 3313.6114.

credentials for IWIP payments focus on segments of the economy that have been identified as high-growth, in-demand fields such as advanced manufacturing, information technology, engineering, and construction. In FY 2024, DEW reimbursed for 114,211 industry-recognized credentials and made incentive payments for 19,175 IWIP-eligible credentials. H.B. 33 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly earmarked \$5.5 million for industry-recognized credential reimbursements and \$10.5 million for IWIP payments for each of FY 2024 and FY 2025. For more information and to access DEW's approved list of industry-recognized credentials, see the Department's [Industry-Recognized Credentials Guide](#) and list of [IWIP Qualifying Industry-Recognized Credentials \(PDF\)](#), which are available on the DEW website: [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov).

## Earning college credit through CTAG

Students who complete qualifying career-technical courses at public high schools and meet certain other criteria (normally including earning a proficient score on a related WebXam) are often awarded college credit upon enrollment in a state institution of higher education. To qualify, a course must comply with criteria, policies, and procedures established by the Chancellor of Higher Education in accordance with state law. Those criteria, policies, and procedures must permit a student to transfer credit for qualifying courses to a state institution from a public secondary or adult career-technical institution or another state institution "without unnecessary duplication or institutional barriers."<sup>6</sup>

This credit transfer initiative is known as the Career-Technical Assurance Guide or "CTAG." For additional information about how students can earn college credit through CTAG, see [Career-Technical Credit Transfer](#), which is available on the Transfer Credit Ohio website: [transfercredit.ohio.gov](http://transfercredit.ohio.gov).

---

<sup>6</sup> R.C. 3333.162.