



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors and Authorizers
Career and Technical Education Administrators

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D. *Sally*
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: February is Career and Technical Education Month

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) has designated February 1-28, 2011 as Career and Technical Education Month: Learning Today; Earning Tomorrow.

There are 15.6 million secondary and postsecondary career and technical education students in the United States.

In Michigan, the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), Michigan Department of Education, has responsibility for the major career education initiatives that affect learners K-12 and beyond. Staff members are involved in curriculum development activities, grant planning and management, and providing professional development for teachers and administrators throughout the state.

Secondary career and technical education (CTE) programs are designed to provide high school students with specific knowledge and skills leading to initial employment and additional education through apprenticeships or a postsecondary institution. CTE programs integrate academic learning with technical training in order to enhance and strengthen academic skills while preparing students for careers.

CTE provides students with opportunities for real world learning and helps them to discover the connection between the academics required to graduate and their plans for a future career. For the last 10 years, the high school completion rate for students who complete CTE programs in Michigan has been above 97 percent.

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The relevance of academics to future careers is especially important now with the expectation for increased academic rigor within the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Students must have opportunities to realize how the academic skills they must master apply to the world of work and how the world of work has changed to require lifelong learning. Academic achievement success for CTE students has been at 75 percent. These are students who may have dropped out if not enrolled in the courses that match their learning style and teach them knowledge and skills that make sense to them.

Consistently, over the last 10 years, 40 percent of Michigan's 11th and 12th grade high school students enroll in CTE courses. In addition, 40,000 9th and 10th grade students are enrolled in CTE and 40,000 students are enrolled in Family and Consumer Sciences programs. Approximately 35 percent of those students are members of special populations, which includes students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students who have elected to enroll in a career program that is nontraditional for their gender.

Michigan students enroll in over 2,000 instructional programs such as pre-engineering, automotive technology, health care, and construction trades that are offered in their local high schools or at separate career center buildings. In addition, new and emerging programs continue to be developed and the curriculum is continuously updated. CTE teachers maintain a continuous relationship with Business and Industry Advisory Committees to ensure that their curriculum meets the needs for a well-skilled workforce.

Every CTE program must provide leadership opportunities for their students. This is accomplished through Career and Technical Education Student Organizations (CTSOs). Students have the opportunity to participate in a group, work with business and industry, hold office, and enter competitions at the regional, state, and national level. In 2008-2009, nearly 27,000 secondary students participated in 646 chartered chapters of CTSOs.

School districts in Michigan annually conduct a follow-up study of all CTE students who have graduated from high school. CTE programs provide students with valuable skills to find beginning employment as they continue on with their education or an apprenticeship.

CTE educators realize the importance of continuing education for students beyond high school and early college credit opportunities for students while in high school. In fact, every high school CTE program of study must be aligned to a corresponding associate degree program at a community college. Dual enrollment opportunities in CTE and articulated credit help move students forward into postsecondary studies.

School districts act responsively to ensure that CTE programs continually meet the needs of employers, as well as the needs to build a better economic future for Michigan. With the help of advisory groups from business and industry, guidance from the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth, and initiatives of the Office of the Governor, teachers and administrators constantly update the curriculum and expand program availability.

All high school CTE programs must be articulated with related postsecondary programs offered by community colleges and other postsecondary institutions serving the area. Thus, the secondary programs provide a seamless transition to advanced levels of instruction. Through the articulation process, hundreds of high school students earn college credit before graduation.

All Michigan citizens are urged to join in celebrating Career and Technical Education Month and the valuable opportunities CTE programs offer. In addition, all schools and communities are encouraged to support, promote, and participate in these programs which will benefit both Michigan and the entire nation by preparing our students to be vital members of a strong, well-educated workforce.

For more information on CTE programs, please contact Patty Cantú, Director, Office of Career and Technical Education, at cantup@michigan.gov or telephone (517) 335-5224. You may also visit: www.michigan.gov/octe or www.acteonline.org.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance