15 WAYS

The CSDE is Supporting Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness

CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
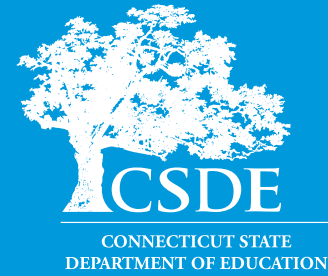
Investments, Passthrough Funding, and Grants

1 The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) manages and oversees federal (e.g., Perkins V, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) and state (e.g., Adult Education) entitlement, competitive, and supplemental grants to educate students and prepare them for the workforce.

2 The CSDE is using federal pandemic relief funding to expand dual credit offerings in Connecticut high schools to provide students not only with the opportunity to earn higher education credits toward postsecondary degrees but also to earn credits in alignment with critical job skills and professional certification.

Professional Learning

3 The CSDE offers professional learning and resources to align training programs from adult education providers with industry sectors of local workforce development boards, remove barriers to employment, and increase student outcomes related to employment, attainment of secondary school diplomas (or their recognized equivalent), and transition to postsecondary education and training.

4 Each year, the CSDE, in partnership with the National Restaurant Association (NRA), offers ServSafe Certification training to teachers to increase their knowledge of food handling, food safety, pest control, and sanitary practice to better assist students in earning ServSafe Certifications.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Computer Science Programs and Curricula

5 Today's Skills, Tomorrow's Careers: Career Clusters, Career Pathways, Sample Occupations, and Programs of Study assists districts in driving the pathways and programs of study in occupational areas of growth pertaining to Connecticut's long-term industry and occupational projections through 2026. These initiatives assist in providing students aligned, high-quality, equitable career pathway experiences leading to an industry-recognized credential, certificate, or licensure, and/or an associate or bachelor's degree and beyond.

6 In 2022, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the MBA Research Standards for the Career Clusters of Business Management and Administration, Finance, and Marketing to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for any career in business so students enter the workforce with an understanding of these core concepts.

7 The CSDE has developed curriculum and resources districts can use to implement a program on personal finance, providing students skills to navigate the complex consumer economy of the 21st century. Districts can offer Personal Finance or Financial Literacy as part of a program of study in Business Management and Administration, Finance, or Marketing Career Clusters.

8 The CSDE partners with the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) and districts to provide high school students with a career development continuum of work-based learning opportunities, including cooperative work education, pre-apprenticeship, supervised agriculture, and unpaid experiential learning experiences. The CSDE leadership meets with CTDOL leadership on a bimonthly basis to ensure alignment of programs, and to explore additional opportunities for collaboration.

9 Career and Technical Education in the Middle School (ct.gov) offers resources and career awareness activities for increasing career and technical education in the middle school.

10 In 2015, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) Career Cluster Content Frameworks to provide state agricultural education leaders and educators with a high-quality, rigorous set of frameworks that guide what students should know and be able to do after completing a program of study in each of the Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources career pathways.

11 The CSDE supports districts in aligning computer science instruction to the state approved standards so that computer science is eligible as part of the STEM credit pathway required for graduation (C.G.S. Sec 10-221a). The dedicated CSDE Computer Science web page offers guidance and resources, including the 2020 Computer Science State Plan, Computer Science Standards, Computer Science Course Reporting Guidance, and Position Statement.

12 Since 2020, the CSDE has coordinated the Lt. Governor's Computing Challenge, a statewide coding competition for Connecticut students to expand computer science education across the state.

13 Connecticut Adult Education offers Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a second language (ESL), citizenship classes, and three pathways for adults to attain a high school diploma: Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD), General Educational Development (GED), and National External Diploma Program (NEDP).

Collaboration with Key Partners

14 The CSDE partnered with the Regional Education Service Centers, workforce development boards, Connecticut community colleges, Connecticut Technical Education and Career System, and the Connecticut Manufacturers' Collaborative to develop a Connecticut map that includes the locations of these stakeholders and Connecticut's top occupational areas of growth.

15 The CSDE has begun intensive collaborative work with states as part of a New England Pathways Initiative, which began with a meeting over the summer of the six New England education commissioners. The goals of this initiative include cross-border collaboration, policy reciprocity, shared platforms/technology, data sharing/research, and collective requests for grants and philanthropic support. The goal is to use this regional partnership to create greater opportunities for students aimed at career pathways and higher education.