



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



To: Superintendents of Schools

From: Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer
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Date: March 20, 2026

Subject: State Adoption of Advanced CTE Career Cluster Framework, Course Codes (SCED) and Next Generation Accountability System Reporting

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has adopted Advance CTE's modernized career clusters framework to strengthen alignment between education and the workforce, and to support the development of high-quality Career and Technical (CTE) programs. As part of this transition, districts will be required to implement the revised clusters and corresponding School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) codes to ensure accurate Perkins and Next Generation Accountability System reporting.

Beginning in the 2026–27 school year, the 14 updated Career Clusters will be in effect for all relevant reporting, which may impact local Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNA) and concentrator counts. Additionally, courses that previously counted towards Indicator 5 – College and Career Readiness Course-Taking that no longer align to a cluster will no longer be eligible for that indicator under the new framework.

Background and Rationale for Transition

The [National Career Clusters Framework](#) is periodically updated to reflect evolving workforce needs and ensure alignment between secondary education and labor market demands. Advanced CTE's recent revision consolidates and reorganizes clusters to better represent contemporary career pathways and eliminate outdated categorical boundaries that no longer serve students effectively.

The landscape of career clusters is evolving from what was 16 career clusters to 14 career clusters that are aligned to workforce needs. This shift necessitates some changes and poses unique flexibilities for course mapping. The dissolution of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) as a standalone cluster reflects several important considerations. First, the skills and competencies traditionally housed under FCS have become increasingly integrated across multiple industries rather than representing a distinct occupational sector. Second, this reorganization allows for more precise alignment between coursework and specific high-growth career pathways, enabling students to see clearer connections between their learning and employment opportunities. Finally, the transition addresses feedback from industry partners who have emphasized the need for career technical education that mirrors actual workforce structures and career progression routes.

Positive Impact on High School Courses and Programs

Rather than eliminating valuable coursework, this transition strategically repositions our existing courses within clusters that enhance their relevance and visibility. The integration of culinary arts, hospitality management, event planning, and related courses into the Hospitality, Events, and Tourism cluster provides several advantages for our programs. The integration of the Education Cluster with aligned courses in subclusters *early childhood development*, *learner*, *support and community engagement* and *teaching, training and facilitation* provides additional flexibilities. In the Arts, Entertainment and Design

Cluster, courses can be aligned to fashion and interiors now; an important consideration when renewing existing FCS courses.

Students will benefit from a more cohesive pathway that clearly articulates progression from introductory courses to industry recognized credentials (IRC) recognized by business and industry. The cluster structure supports the development of dual credit partnerships with postsecondary institutions offering aligned courses creating smoother transitions to higher education.

Impact on Access to High-Skill, High-Wage, In-Demand Careers

The revised structure enhances student access to lucrative and expanding career opportunities and improves our ability to connect students with industry certifications that carry national recognition. These credentials translate directly into enhanced employability and starting wages. Furthermore, the explicit connection to a defined industry cluster helps students understand the full range of career options available beyond entry-level positions, encouraging them to pursue both immediate employment and postsecondary education leading to management roles.

The reorganization supports equity of access by making career pathways more visible to students who might not have previously considered certain careers as viable high-wage options. Clear cluster identification also facilitates partnerships with regional employers who can provide work-based learning opportunities, apprenticeships, and direct hiring pipelines for our graduates.

Impact on Reporting and the Next Generation Accountability System

The alignment to the new clusters will be effective starting with the 2026-2027 school year. Courses coded for the 2026-27 school year will need to adhere to this revised framework to be eligible for earning points towards Accountability System Indicator 5. There will be no changes to reporting or Perkins alignment for the 2025-26 courses. The accountability results that will be released in Fall 2026, which will be based on data from 2025-26, will continue to use the old alignment. However, the 2026-27 school results that will be released in Fall 2027 for both Perkins/CTE reporting as well as Next Generation Accountability System reporting will be based on this revised structure. Realignment will mean that courses may not be in the same cluster as they were previously, some courses may be in more than one new cluster, and some courses may not be included in the alignment structure in any cluster.

Please see the [spreadsheet for the SCED course codes and their new cluster alignments](#). In the upcoming months, you will be provided with another document aligning courses to subclusters to further assist in planning student career pathway experiences. Please note that you will likely not need to recode the vast majority of your existing courses; much of the new alignment translates easily from the current clusters. However, some courses are now included in fewer clusters. For example, Public Administration (code 15201) was formerly in both the Government & Public Administration cluster and the Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security cluster. In the new alignment, that course will be found solely in the Public Service and Safety cluster. Fashion Design (05190), formerly in the now-eliminated FCS cluster, will now be aligned to Arts, Entertainment, & Design, as the FCS cluster has been removed.

There are also courses that are no longer included in the alignment structure because they are not aligned to any cluster, are not a CTE course, or the concepts and skills taught in these courses should be embedded into every single CTE course. Some of these courses were solely in the FCS cluster, such as Life Skills (19257). Other courses were included across many clusters and are no longer mapped to any cluster, such as Employability Skills (22152). The most frequently offered courses that will be eliminated from the new cluster structure are:

- Health Education (08051)
- Health for Parenting Teens (08056)
- Family and Consumer Sciences—Comprehensive (19251)
- Life Skills (19257)
- Personal and Career Readiness (19258)
- Family and Interpersonal Relationships (19259)
- Personal Development (19260)
- Family and Consumer Sciences—Aide (19295)
- Family and Consumer Sciences—Independent Study (19297)
- Family and Consumer Sciences—Workplace Experience (19298)
- Family and Consumer Sciences—Other (19299)
- Leadership (22101)
- Community Service (22104)
- IB Personal and Professional Skills (22113)
- Personal and Professional Skills (22114)
- Employability Skills (22152)
- Integrative Learning—Career Project-based Learning (25994)

The CSDE encourages all districts to investigate the impact of Connecticut’s SCED and cluster realignment on their current course offerings to ensure that they are coded accurately for the 2026-27 school year. Furthermore, this is an opportunity to redefine college and career readiness skills through well-coordinated CTE pathways. If a currently offered course was impacted by the new reorganization, please take the time to look at how the course’s content could be amended to include the rigor necessary to more closely align with a course currently mapped to a specific career cluster. If the course cannot be amended to include higher levels of rigor and offering this course is still important to your local community’s goals, then please continue to provide this course to your students though it may not contribute towards Perkins or Next Generation Accountability System results.

To reiterate, the CSDE’s adoption of Advanced CTE’s modernized career clusters framework will take effect beginning with the 2026–27 school year, requiring districts to transition to the 14 updated clusters and corresponding SCED course codes. This shift is essential to ensuring consistent, high-quality CTE programs and accurate Perkins and Next Generation Accountability System reporting. As you complete your Perkins CLNA, please keep in mind that the updated cluster framework may affect your concentrator counts, and only courses aligned to a cluster will remain eligible for Indicator 5 beginning in 2026–27.

Next Steps

We recommend that district leadership support this transition by allocating resources for professional development, updating course descriptions and pathways documentation, and communicating these changes to students, families, and community partners. The CSDE team is available to discuss implementation strategies and address any questions regarding specific courses or programs.

There will be an [informational webinar](#) on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, from 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. to provide an overview of the transition to the Advanced CTE Career Cluster Framework. [Register for this webinar today.](#)

For questions regarding Perkins programming, please contact Kyllie Freeman at Kyllie.Freeman@ct.gov or Sean McKeown at Sean.McKeown@ct.gov. For questions regarding Perkins reporting, please contact Samuel Kamin at Samuel.Kamin@ct.gov. For questions regarding the Next Generation Accountability System, please contact Renee Savoie at Renee.Savoie@ct.gov.