

The cleveland school district essay sample

[Education](#)



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Today's students are tomorrow's future of the nation and so, the essence of greatness for any nation rests entirely in the present quality and future potential of its public school system.

As the educators of the nation work to ensure the success of its students in the community, they must remember that each child is capable and, more importantly, has the right to learn, regardless of age, race, gender, income, or social upbringing. Educators must continue their work, to be advocates for the nation's children, be it the poor children, wealthy children, black children, white children, brown children, children with special education needs and second-language learning children.

Whatever is the condition of a state, city, country or the world, the ultimate mission of all educators remains the same since ages—the mission of providing all students with opportunities to become effective and successful citizens. Despite what the turmoil's of the world or a city or a state may be, the nation will always aspire and work towards this mission for ensuring a bright future. And how it prepares its students determines what opportunities are provided to them as they go through the transition from individual schools into the big, bad world of employment. The preparation for a seamless transition has to be embedded in how education is imparted to the students and what the School to Career programs, also known as the Vocational Education programs or the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs look like.

1. 1 What is vocational education?

Vocational education, also called Career and Technical Education (CTE) or Vocational Education and Training (VET), aims at preparing students for manual or practical activity based careers. These activities would be usually non-academic and completely related to a specific trade or vocation, because of which it has got its name, ' Vocational Education'. It is also known as technical education since the students straight away develop mastery in a particular technique/s.

The terms vocation and career are generally interchangeable. Vocational education can be compared to abstract or tertiary education, which concentrates more on theory and concepts. Both secondary or post-secondary levels can have vocational education and it can also be clubbed with the apprenticeship system. Although vocational education is increasingly getting a lot of recognition, but still it is seldom considered in its own form to be categorized as higher education.

Vocational education is an organized educational program that is directly into preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment. It is an education with a focus on developing occupational skills. It is the training for a specific vocation either in industry, agriculture or trade.

Vocational education is intertwined with the age-old apprenticeship system of learning.

As late as the end of the twentieth century, vocational education was only trade-specific. An automobile mechanic or welder would fall under the traditional definition of vocational education, because of which it was always

associated with the lower social classes. This left a great level of stigma on the term ' vocational education'.

However, with the specialization of the labor markets and economies demanding greater levels of skill, vocational education has gained immense importance in the recent years. Governments and businesses are investing heavily in vocational education through specialized training organizations and subsidized apprenticeship programs for businesses. Vocational education is usually offered by an institute of technology, or by a local community college at the post-secondary level.

Career and technical education (CTE) is a huge industry in the U. S. There are numerous comprehensive high schools, vocational and technical high schools, and community colleges that offer CTE programs. Almost every high school student takes minimum of one CTE course, and one-fourth of the students take atleast three courses in a single program area. More than one-third of college going students are engaged in career and technical programs, and more than 40 million adults enrol for short-term postsecondary occupational training.

It is more than 85 years since the first piece of federal vocational education legislation was formed. CTE is now evolving from its once singular focus of preparing students for a career immediately after completion of high school. The present day CTE programs include a rigorous, competitive, up-to-date and challenging academic content. These CTE programs provide a sequence of courses which is non-duplicative and which lead to a credential which has

been well-recognized by industry, either in the form of a certificate, an associate or a baccalaureate degree.

Vocational education has grown by leaps and bounds over the 20th century and is now present in a variety of Industries like retail, traditional crafts and cottage industries, tourism, IT, cosmetics, as well as in the funeral services.

A foundation of skills is imparted to high school graduates by CTE. These skills enable them to be gainfully employed—either full-time or while they are in college. Almost sixty five percent of all high school graduates of CTE programs enter some form of postsecondary program. These CTE programs have a rigorous academic content which is intertwined to technical subject matter, because of which these students become well prepared for college. In addition to that, the internships and other cooperative work experiences, which are a core part of technical education, seem very attractive to all students wishing to get a head start on a career, whether that career goal is doctor or nurse, automotive technician or computer sciences. There are also numerous student career organizations pertaining to every subject area, which help students acquire the employability and leadership skills that help them to succeed in the workplace. The Tech prep programs connect high school and community college curricula, which help students, make a smooth transition to postsecondary education and careers.

Some highlights of CTE are:

- CTE aims at preparing both youth and adults for a variety of careers. A varying level of education may be required by these careers, ranging from high school and postsecondary certificates to two- and four-year

college degrees. CTE is offered in middle school, high schools, two-year community and technical colleges and other postsecondary schools.

- The most commonly associated subject areas are: Agriculture (careers related to food and fiber production and agribusiness); Business (accounting, business administration, management, information technology and entrepreneurship); Family and Consumer Sciences (culinary arts, management and life skills); Health Occupations (nursing, dental, and medical technicians); Marketing (management, entrepreneurship, merchandising and retail); Technology (production, communication and transportation systems); and Trade and Industrial (skilled trades such as automotive technician, carpenter, computer numerical control technician).
- According to U. S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), most high school students take at least one career and technical education course, and one in four students take three or more courses in a single program area. One-third of college students are involved in career and technical programs, and as many as 40 million adults engage in short-term postsecondary occupational training.
- By the year 2009, almost thirty five percent of the fastest growing occupations would need an associate's degree or a postsecondary vocational certificate, according to a 2004 U. S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics report.

- As many as 75 percent of employers report severe difficulties while hiring qualified workers. 40 percent of these say that applicants are poorly skilled while 30 percent believe that applicants have the wrong skills for available jobs, as per a 2002 survey by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Center to Workforce Preparation. Career and technical education is poised to play a vital role in helping American business by providing skillful employees and thereby building a competitive workforce for the 21st
- CTE aims at helping students, workers and lifelong learners of all age groups to maximise their working potential. However, its main objective is high school and college education that provides students with:
 - Contextual learning, which provides them with academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world.
 - Numerous employability skills, ranging from job-related skills to workplace ethics.
 - Interesting education pathways, which help students, explore interests and careers during their tenure at school.
 - CTE is also about providing a second-chance of education and training for the unemployed and uneducated, who wish to upgrade their employability skills.
 - CTE also provides an education to earn additional degrees, especially related to career advancement.

- CTE is also about Corporate training, continuing education, skills upgrades and refresher courses for those who are already employed in the workplace.

Vocational education's primary goal is to prepare youth for employment. This primary goal also became a national priority during the 1980s. Changing demographics along with technological advancements have made training of the work force a national agenda.

Continuous slow population growth results in a smaller pool of potential future workers with a different pool combination available to employers. (Johnston and Packer 1987). As per a U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT article (" The Forgotten Half" 2002), the era of the white male worker, who is the nation's best-educated employee, will come to an end. Between now and the year 2015, as many as 57 percent of growth of all labor-force will be black, Hispanic or other minorities, who are less educated. Also, the number of women worker's will increase, and by the year 2015, 47 percent of the labor force will be females.

Demands of the workplace are also changing. Most of the jobs, in whichever tech (high or low) and whichever sectors, require a more sophisticated and skilled labor force to compete domestically and internationally. For example, automated manufacturing in rural south requires workers having qualitatively different skills and behaviors like higher-order skills, greater flexibility, and the participative abilities.

1. 2

Why should an urban school district have voc-educating programming? How is voc ed programming linked to a significant public administration issue?

In a survey held recently in 2006, as many as 85% of urban education leaders were “optimistic” or “somewhat optimistic” about the future of city schools (Lewis, Baker, and Jepson 2000). However, despite this sense of optimism, it remains a fact that urban high schools face significant challenges, which are unique in them. These are challenges like inadequate and deteriorating facilities ranging from overcrowded classrooms to teacher quality and shortages to low student achievement to an environment in which student violence, truancy, drugs and vandalism prevail to dropout rates as high as 50-60%. Urban students face this typical and unique set of problems, which exist as an interwoven set of social, educational and economic problems. High absenteeism, low-level standards, classroom disruption, drugs on the street, lack of effective role models, and poor eating habits and low value systems were all causes of poor performance by students in many urban schools.

The majority of teachers in urban high schools are still white but the student body is increasingly diverse in terms of race and culture. The number of white, urban high school students changed from a majority of 54.5% to a minority of 45.4% during the 1980s (Maxwell and Rubin 2000). A disproportionate number of minority and low income students are enrolled in urban high schools: 33% of the nation’s African-American students, 30% of the Hispanic students, about 25% of the Asian population, and nearly 25% of the students eligible for free lunches (Casserly 2000). The growing demographic diversity among urban high school students has not led to <https://assignbuster.com/the-cleveland-school-district-essay-sample/>

diversity within schools, but still white urban students prefer to attend schools that are predominately white and African-American students prefer to attend schools that are primarily African-American (Maxwell and Rubin 2000).

The unique challenges faced by urban schools are all the more worrying for career and technical education programs. Urban public high schools are usually criticized for producing students who are unable to meet the knowledge and skill requirements of the labor market. The present environment in most urban school districts is not supportive of the development of effective career and technical education programs. Recent developments, however, are making way for changes in both urban high schools and career and technical education. Moreover, in urban districts, educational reformers have started looking at school-to-career approaches not merely as a pedagogical approach but as a strong medium to bring about changes across the mindset of the urban school students (Steinberg, Cushman, and Riordan 1999, p. 45).

Many of these problems are not in the direct control of educators. However, some of these, like the high absenteeism and classroom disruption were factors which could be controlled to a certain extent by creating an interest in the minds of the students about the course they were pursuing and highlighting the bright career prospects that the course offered. The state Department of Education came to a conclusion that a widespread commitment from all stakeholders, its staff, its board members and management; principals, teachers, parents, community, and business

leaders and most importantly, the students themselves –would help in addressing the problems within their control.

A successful urban initiative to address these problems will require such a commitment. Urban school problems are local problems and if at all, a solution is imposed from the top, it won't work. As a result, creating interest in the minds of students about the career prospects that their courses offered was seen as the only way to solve these urban school problems. The Department of Education thus started taking vocational education a lot more seriously because this was the only form of education, which was ' practical and career oriented' and not ' theory and concept oriented' like the tertiary education. Thus, it is imperative for an urban school district to have voc-educating programming

Voc ed programming is certainly linked to a significant public administration issue, because of which the Department of Education chalked out a broad-based program to assist urban districts to overcome their problems. Setting up more schools with a variety of vocational courses and increasing the vocational education pupil employment rate was a core objective of this program. Some other objectives were improving special education options for secondary students, helping bilingual students with their first language as some other language than English to graduate, helping dropouts to get diplomas and get jobs; reducing disruptive behavior and abusive language and increasing the appropriate use of computers. The Department of Education wanted all urban schools to adopt a school system, which lay a lot of emphasis on industrial arts and vocational education

1. 3 What is the current level of vocational educational programming in the CSD?

CTE in US

More than 11, 000 comprehensive high schools, several hundred vocational-technical high schools and about 1, 400-area voc-tech centers across the US offer CTE programs. In addition to this, almost 9, 400 post secondary institutions (including community colleges, technical institutes, skill centers and other public and private two- and four-year colleges) offer technical programs. As per the U. S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, more than 11 million secondary and postsecondary students take up career and technical education in the U. S.

Career and technical education is offered in public middle schools in the form of courses like family and consumer sciences and technology education (a modular sequence of courses that enables students to explore a variety of technology-based careers). High school programs are offered within a “comprehensive” high school or in separate “area vocational-technical schools.” Some states, like Delaware, do offer both academic and technical courses in full-time vocational-technical high schools. Normally CTE programs are offered as a continuum of courses that are supplemented by work-based experiences like internships or apprenticeships.

The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is an education association dedicated to the advancement of education, which makes the

youth, and adults prepared for careers. It is the largest such association in the US.

The National Research Centre for Career and Technical Education, is another such association, which acts as a primary source of research-based information. It significantly affects the quality of knowledge and understanding required to encourage and popularise CTE programs in the United States. Career and technical education programs are an integral part of public education and are aimed to educate about, through, and for careers.

The National Research Centre is committed to provide innovative approaches to improving the practice of career and technical education at local, state, and national levels resulting in improved student achievement. It develops intensive, ongoing relationships with practitioners, teachers and policymakers in career and technical education. The funding for National Center for Career and Technical Education is done by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U. S. Department of Education.

How can CTE pathway programs connect to goals for improving high school performance?

To make CTE pathway programs connect their goals to improve high school performance, CTE programs offer the following benefits to:

Teachers and Staff: Makes them more aware about Industry Requirements, expektations of Industry about skills, clear definition of professional requirements, greater knowledge of future trends as far as curriculum/

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Resource Support/ Curriculum Enhancement/New Course Offerings are concerned, makes them abreast with the latest Technology/ Instructional Support, etc.

Students:

CTE has proven to instill greater focus & a greater Commitment to excel in academics, to raise confidence and self esteem levels, to provide students with mentoring/ Professional Role Models, to give students Intern/Co-Op Opportunities (Career to Work Programs), College Bound Programs, College Visits / Summer Enrichment experiences.

CTE in the Cleveland School District

The primary goal of the Cleveland Municipal School District is to become a premier school district in the United States of America."

(<http://schoolnet.cmsdnet.net/outreach>)

Cleveland School District is the largest urban school district in the state of Ohio. It provides services to as many as 77, 000 students. 72, 000 of these students are enrolled in one of their 122 buildings. CSD employs over 12, 000 people, and its budget, including its capital budget, is just under \$2 billion, as on March, 2006.

The total number of students in CSD enrolled in career and technical education classes has increased from 9, 734 during last school year (2005) to 13, 749 this current academic year. A forward plan entitled " educating Cleveland's children" has been developed by CSD for improving student

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achievement. CSD works towards its mission of ensuring that each of its children receives a high-quality education every single day in each of their classrooms.

The plan has five focal points:

- Children today are learning at higher rates and achieving at a younger age. Because of which, the curriculum has been updated and a lot of new concepts are being taught in earlier grades to younger children
- Schools today are safer, and they, as a place, are being made more conducive for teaching and learning for all children. Based on this thought, CSD is spending a lot of its time and resources on improving the ‘ physical environment’ of its schools.
- CSD has developed English language arts, arts, mathematics and science standards and all these standards have been implemented since last school year. A standards-based report card for parents is under implementation stages.
- CSD has adopted a strict promotional policy to improve the quality of students. It has also increased the grade point average for promotion and participation in extracurricular and sports activities to 2.0 and no F’s.
- CSD has recently begun to actually rebuild its school buildings with the passage of a \$335 million bond issue. It plans to invest about \$1.5 billion to replace and renovate its schools, in partnership with the State of Ohio. By 2013, CSD plans to have a total of 5 new schools

constructed on existing sites and 59 existing schools renovated and rehabbed.

The Cleveland School District was recently recognized for being the first school district in the state in the nation to receive the District Accreditation award as a ' Quality School System' by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Council of Accreditation and School Improvement.

However, CSD has an acute occurrence of ' dropouts', because of which The State of Ohio has rated the Cleveland school system an " academic emergency." Only about one-third of entering high students exit with a diploma. Less than one-third of these students go on to college. Again, only about one- third of these students continue college after the freshman year. Alarming figures for sure!

Cleveland is working hard to turn this around. A complete restructuring of its high schools is on, using the research-based Talent Development model. It promises to increase instructional time in core academics during the 9th and 10th grades. Students are being offered far greater number of choices; new high schools have been set up on the campuses of Cuyahoga Community College and Cleveland State University. Almost three-quarters of the high school academic and technical courses were eliminated because they failed to meet State academic standards and nor did they prepare students for success in college and the workforce. Some painfully rudimentary academic courses like business math, consumer math, and life skills math were scrapped. It has been made mandatory for all students to complete a college prep academic core. Vocational courses like shoe repair and shorthand have been replaced by technical education programs, such as the Ford Academy <https://assignbuster.com/the-cleveland-school-district-essay-sample/>

of Manufacturing Sciences. These programs would include rigorous academics and connections to post-secondary education. There are significant signs of improvement in high schools where these and other reforms have been introduced.

The State Dropout Prevention Plan, 2007-2019 has been coined with the following three overarching goals:

- To raise the graduation rate to 85 percent by 2018-2019.
- To bring down the state dropout rate by 50 percent by 2011-2012.
- To bring down the statewide truancy rate by 50 percent by 2011-2012.

At present, the following are the Schools, which offer one or more forms of Vocational Education.

- Academy of Finance at East
- Classical Academy at John Marshall
- Collinwood Academic School of Technology (CAST)
- Technical Academy at East Technical
- Engineering/Technician Program at East Technical
- JROTC at various locations
- Project SMART at Max S. Hayes
- Sports and Health Management at South

List of full-time vocational programs and certifications offered:

- Auto Body Repair – ASE Certification
- Automotive Mechanics/Inspection Technology (AMIT) – ASE Certification, PA State Vehicle Inspection License, Mobile Air

Conditioning Society (MACS), Refrigerant Recovery/Recycling Cert., ASE Refrigerant Recovery/Recycling Cert., Doctor of Motors Certification (Dana Corporation), and Raybestos Counter Pro Training Course.

- Barbering School Program – State Barber License
- Building Custodial/Maintenance/Repair (BCMR) – NCCER
- Business Practices – International Computer Drivers License (ICDL)
- Computer/Electronics Technology & Repair – None at this time
- Custodial Maintenance Program (CMP) – None at this time
- Auto Mechanics Pa State Insp. Lic.; Pa State Emissions Insp. Lic.; Certifications; Apprenticeships
- Auto Body Pa State Insp. Lic.; Pa State Emissions Insp. Lic.; Certifications; Apprenticeships
- Small Engine Repair Apprenticeships
- Building Maintenance Apprenticeships; NCCER Certification
- Custodial Maintenance Apprenticeships; NCCER Certification
- Arts & Crafts Apprenticeships; NCCER Certification
- Business Education Apprenticeships
- Barber School PA State Barber License

• **Leadership and Urban Awareness Academy**

HHIGH SCHOOLS

The following guidelines are followed for voc ed programming at present in CSD:

- Integration of academic, workforce, and technology skills in all secondary vocational curriculum frameworks
- Certified *Rigor and Relevance* trainer to serve on each curriculum framework revision team
- All vocational curricula to include active learning techniques, cooperative learning, and project-based learning teaching and assessment strategies
- Face-to-face and online professional development opportunities dedicated to increasing the Rigor and Relevance curriculum enhancement to be made available to academic and vocational educators
- Vocational Program M Streamlining the 49 two-year Secondary Vocational Programs to:
 - Approximately 10 introductory courses (retaining 6 Family & Consumer Sciences courses)
 - Approximately 20 two-year vocational programs
 - Continuation of Post secondary Vocational Cluster Programs modifications

These guidelines aim to:

- Enabling students to gain a practical understanding of the broad range of career, occupational, and educational options that are open to them
- Helping students gain a better understanding of their own interests and potential
- Connecting interests to future education and career options

- Equipping students to develop goals and plan for their career by making well-informed decisions
- Providing students a context for connecting what they are learning across a wide spectrum of academic subject areas through the theme
- Expanding options and opportunities for all students
- Providing map to reinforce academic learning by demonstrating direct application of classroom learning to the world of work
- Providing flexible scheduling for students
- Flexible, creative programs that respond to changing business, industry, student and community needs
- Training and professional development for teachers and staff to ensure quality instruction and revitalized professional & technical outlook
- Development of partnerships between business industry, the community and universities

In the coming years, it is expected that mid-size and rural school districts will show the greatest demand for middle school vocational education teachers, and urban districts will show increased demand for high school teachers in this area. It is also expected that over the next five years, 627 high school vocational education teachers will be needed to maintain current student to educator ratios.

Resources are being used effectively to provide youngsters the educational foundation they need to be successful in post secondary education and the workforce.

CSD's vision of vocational education begins with this inescapable fact that current and future American workers must be challenged to master
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academic knowledge and practical skills at levels which are at par to the skills owned by workers in other advanced countries. Students who do not attain this level of mastery have a bleak economic future. The global economy in today's world is neither compassionate nor forgiving. The world has become a global marketplace and one has to compete with the entire world. Thus, the American students must be equipped with the profound knowledge and skills needed to be successful in an economy, which continues to undergo profound transformations. The economy today is highly knowledge-based and information-oriented and it sure is a 'survival of the fittest' regime today.

CSD also wants to ensure that each and every student is absolutely well prepared and completely proficient in core skills so that he or she can easily adapt to the changing demands of the economy and can freely choose his or her own work space. CSD doesn't want to impart an education that prepares students for a job but does not provide the skills to move up or move on. CSD's reauthorization strategy is driven to accomplish this vision of individual empowerment and choice.

1. 4

What do experts recommend as the appropriate level of vocational education for an urban school district?

Vocational education has undergone tremendous reform in the last decade to live up to the expectations of the public, corporate, and government sectors, which hold community colleges accountable. One of the most noticeable elements of change has been the active participation of

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businesses in encouraging and developing initiatives in vocational education programs.

Businesses and education were earlier seen as competing enterprises with a certain animosity in them. However, they have now started to embrace and support one another which results in a complete education which is able to satisfy both the demands for skilled employees as well as knowledgeable and intellectually capable citizens.

Experts have observed that Secondary and higher secondary education are important terminal stages in the general education system because it is here that the youth decide about higher education, opt for technical training or join the workforce. Educationists and experts have over the years consistently recommended that education at these stages should be given a vocational link with the world of employment.

NEW VOCATIONALISM

Vocational education has evolved beyond a mere traditional entry-level workforce training to a more holistic training, which provides individuals with skills to pursue careers in high-wage, high skill occupations. (Jacobs, 2001, p. 93). This change, brought about by the ever changing needs and demands of the federal government, the private sector, and the business world, has created a new form of education which is being referred to as “ new vocationalism” (Bragg, 2001).

New vocationalism is based on five core principles (Bragg (2001)):

- * Career clusters extending from entry-level positions right upto professional levels in fields integral to the new economy.
- * An integrated curriculum comprising of both academic and vocational elements.
- * Greater integration into the K-16 educational system with a broader base of economic structures.
- * Active and new teaching strategies, learner-centered instruction, practical orientation, and project-based approaches to teaching
- * A holistic and well-rounded instruction and a curriculum that is easily applicable

Experts recommend that the level of voc ed in high schools should comprise of the above five core principles. Inherent in each of these core principles are its collaboration with businesses. Active participation by business leads to a comprehensive, tailor-made program that is mutually beneficial to all parties: students, community colleges, and businesses.

Experts also recommend five favoured approaches to voc ed which are tech-prep programs, work-based learning programs, applied baccalaureate degree programs, certificate programs for credit and noncredit, and contract and customized training programs. Bragg (2001) mentions that while all these approaches are popular but there is no single model or approach which is applicable to all school districts. However, one common element is the partnership between the business community and the community college.

This element helps in finding opportunities to “ forecast workforce

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development needs, develop new training opportunities, identify new student markets, and create training and preparation specializations” (Orr, 2001 p. 41).

The grades when voc ed can be introduced, as recommended by experts, are Grades 9 and 10. However, they also recommend that even in earlier grades, the curriculum should be more ‘ practical and application’ oriented rather than just being ‘ theoretical and conceptual’ oriented.

Numerous researches have demonstrated that higher educational qualifications lead to, on average, both to higher annual earnings and to a lower likelihood of unemployment (“ More Education” 1999). Information on the economic benefits of CTE, in the past, has been unfortunately less clear. Institutional follow-up mail or telephone surveys have a limited reach and acceptance due to low response rates, lack of control groups, self-reporting, and cross-sectional, short-term design. Also, the findings used to be limited to the single organization conducting the survey (Azari 1996). All analyses correlating educational attainment with educational and employment outcomes have usually clubbed together all students who began post secondary education but did not attain a baccalaureate degree into a single category—“ Some college, no degree“. This categorisation however fails to highlight those who have completed important CTE credentials such as occupational licenses, certificates, or associate degrees (Grubb 1999; Sanchez and Lanaan 1997).

However, new national data sets became available with more results in greater detail in the 1990s. (ibid.; Kerckhoff and Bell 1998). Some states and

individual postsecondary institutions have also started analyzing Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage record data to analyze the effects of postsecondary education (Azari 1996; Grubb 1999; Luan 1996; Sanchez and Lanaan 1997). These UI systems, however, do not have data on self-employed individuals, out of state employees, or employees not in the labor force. All these new analyses provide good amount of data and evidence of the earnings benefits of sub baccalaureate CTE programs.

Benefits of associate degrees: Many national studies on the economic benefits of sub baccalaureate education and credentials have been conducted. Most of these studies cited that associate degree holders enjoyed average earnings 20-30 percent higher than those of high school graduates, whereas baccalaureate degree holders could earn 30-40 percent higher than high school graduates. These studies also found that sub baccalaureate returns, like baccalaureate returns, were normally higher for women than for men and higher for earnings than for wages.

The benefits of certificates: Studies conducted to find out the benefits of post secondary occupational/technical certificates found that returns for both men and women that were significant but slightly lower than those for an associate degree (Grubb 1999; Kerckhoff and Bell 1998).

1. 5

What is necessary for CSD to close the gap between what is and what is recommended?

Vocational educational, now known as career and technical education, is a unique form of education due to its hands-on aspect. The Government of US always felt that a strong workforce and people having jobs and working, would help in increasing the earning power of people and some of the worrying social issues would automatically be taken care of. So, a well-educated workforce was the need of the hour, and the way to do it was through vocational education.

It is a misconception in the minds of people that current technical vocational education is for a student of lesser ability or someone who has discipline problems. However, the fact is that voc ed students are very bright, very motivated, very capable, and they're really forming the core of a value-added economy because they have the potential to go out and work at a skill. Voc ed creates the carpenters, the plumbers, the machinists, the cosmetologists, the secretaries, the medical office workers, the potential nurses, right here. Voc ed also promises to give students a head start by starting them at a younger age.

Voc ed helps us in having a better appreciation and stronger appreciation for a person's skill and their craft. Career and technical education imparts us with the respect we ought to have for the people who have those skills and what they can do with their hands and what they can create and what they diagnose and solve.

However, many a times these voc ed schools go without students or very less strength, maybe because of the stigma attached to it or maybe because of financial conditions. In the late 90s and around 2000, 2001, the voc ed

schools couldn't supply enough students for the skilled positions that were entry level skill positions.

The Bush Administration, however, feels that current technical education is a dinosaur left over from the 50s and the Government is planning major cuts in funding to the technical education schools. This, in my view would not be the prudent thing to do because these schools are totally up to date as far as current technologies and current teaching practices are concerned. These schools are teaching what's going on today. Their students are in demand and they have a huge support mechanism of business and industry. Career and technical education has a great piece in the whole efficiency of the work force. They go out to work, are smarter, better-trained, more inclined to create a new process, or a more efficient process because they were introduced to the trade, the skill, whatever, at a younger age. These youngsters have more opportunity to synthesize ideas and come up with better ways to do things.

To close the gap between what is and what is recommended, CSD should:

High School Reform

- Make small communities for learning, which gives the teachers and learners of large schools the advantage of personalizing schools for young people. These small, personalized learning communities result in a group of teachers working with the same students over a number of years. This makes learning more individualized and teachers are better able to understand the needs of each student. Students connect to caring adults and become a part of a peer group. The importance of

strong relationships with caring adults cannot be underestimated for many youths (American Youth Policy Forum 2000; Kazis and Kopp 1997; Lewis 2000; *The New Urban High School* 1998).

- Emphasize on contextual teaching and learning. The traditional methods of education are no more motivating for most students because they cannot see the relevance of what they are expected to learn. Learning should be made relevant to students by connecting it to their needs and interests and encouraging them to be actively engaged in the learning process. This not only motivates students through applied learning but it also results in a natural integration of academic and career and technical education (American Youth Policy Forum 2000; Copa 2000; Lewis 2000; Steinberg et al. 1999).
- Expose students to the world beyond school, including the world of work. This helps in contextualizing teaching and learning. Students should be given an opportunity to work with adults other than their teachers in community and work settings. Teachers also need to teach in settings other than the traditional classroom (American Youth Policy Forum 2000).
- High standards should be maintained at all times. This does not necessarily mean that only creating an emphasis on traditional academic standards can raise standards. High standards should be maintained while connecting learning to the world of the students. Schools can create new frameworks for students by eliminating distinctions between academic and career and technical education. Schools that have done this have seen increased numbers of students

taking demanding courses (American Youth Policy Forum 2000; *The New Urban High School* 1998; Steinberg et al. 1999).

- Give more options for future education and training. There should be a change in how high schools are structured and designed to create more options for future education and training. Rather than narrowing choices for youth, the number of options available to them should constantly increase. The goal should be to create programs in which all students master challenging academic standards and career-related competencies.

Voc ed Teachers

Vocational education teachers, also known as career and technical or career-technology teachers, train and teach students to work in a variety of fields like healthcare, business, auto repair, communications, and, lately, technology. The courses that they teach are generally in high demand by area employers. These employers may provide input into the curriculum and also recruit students as interns and finally as employees. An active role is played by these vocational teachers in building and further developing these partnerships.

Vocational teachers, in many states, have similar teaching requirements as their academic counterparts. Some states do license vocational education teachers without a bachelor's degree since knowledge and experience in a particular field are important criteria for the job, provided they have established their expertise in their field. A minimum number of teaching hours may also be required.

In addition to being knowledgeable in their subject, teachers must have the ability to communicate, inspire trust and confidence, and motivate students, as well as understand the students' educational and emotional needs.

Teachers must be able to recognize and respond to individual and cultural differences in students and employ different teaching methods that will result in higher student achievement. They should be organized, dependable, patient, and creative. Teachers also must be able to work cooperatively and communicate effectively with other teachers, support staff, parents, and members of the community.

1. 6 What are the political and the funding barriers and opportunities concerning the suggested ways of closing the gap?

To promote vocational education and literacy, the fiscal year 2003 budget included \$591 million for vocational and adult education, including \$584. 3 million for formula grants to States and the remaining \$6. 7 million for the National Institute for Literacy.

The ' No Child Left Behind Act' and the secondary and technical education proposal will make an effort to ensure that American students graduate high school with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in post secondary education and the workforce. However, there are many students who have already been left behind are looking for a second chance. They dropped out of school before graduating or graduated without learning the basic skills or are recent immigrants to US with limited English literacy skills. Economic opportunities for such students are limited, and shrinking. The national assessment of literacy in the early 1990s found that unemployment rates <https://assignbuster.com/the-cleveland-school-district-essay-sample/>

among the least literate in the workforce were almost seven times greater than those at the highest literacy level. Among the employed, there was found to be a 40 percent earnings gap between the least and most literate. This gap is sure to keep on widening in the near future.

Federal vocational education revenues are formula grants, which have been authorized by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (P. L. 101-392). Revenues from Title II (Basic Grants), Title III-A (Community Based Organizations), Title III-B (Consumer and Homemaking Education), and Title II-E (Tech-Prep Education) are included in these grants. States and outlying areas get assistance from these funds to improvise and expand their vocational programs. These grants are disbursed to support numerous programs like professional development; development, dissemination, field testing of curricula; and assessment of programs. Promoting partnerships among business, education, industry, labor, community-based organizations, or government agencies; tech-prep education programs; vocational education student organizations; and leadership and instructional programs in technology education are also areas where these grants are used.

Grants and Programs for Career and Technical Education/Community Colleges

Federal funds are allocated to develop the academic, vocational, and technical skills of secondary and post secondary students. These funds are particularly earmarked for students who elect to enroll in vocational and technical programs.

These funds are used to provide states with support for state leadership activities, administer the state plan for vocational and technical education, and sub grant the funds further to eligible recipients to improve vocational

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and technical education programs throughout the State. Sub grants are eligible to a recipient who operates a vocational and technical education program that:

- Strengthens the academic, vocational, and technical skills of all students participating in CTE programs by integrating core academic subjects into vocational and technical education programs through a coherent sequence of courses;
- Imparts a strong experience to students in all aspects of an industry;
- Develops, improvise, or expands the use of technology in vocational and technical education;
- Conducts professional development programs for teachers, counselors, and administrators;
- Develops and implements the evaluation of the CTE programs carried out with funds allocated under the Perkins Act, and also includes an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met;
- Initiates and modernizes quality vocational and technical education programs;
- Provides quality and effective services and activities that are of sufficient size and scope
- Links secondary programs with post-secondary programs, secondary vocational and technical education, including Tech-Prep programs with post secondary vocational and technical education programs.

The funds under the State grants are allocated to State and local schools which offer programs to develop the academic, vocational and technical skills of students in high schools, community colleges, and regional technical

centers. These funds can be used for a broad range of programs, services, and activities, which are aimed at improving career-technical education programs and ensure access to students requiring special needs.

The Federal investments with a view to close this education and earnings gap is substantial. Federal funding for the vocational and adult education program increased \$104 million, by almost 21 percent, between FY 2000 and FY 2002. The Carl Perkins Act, which is a federal source for funds for current and technical education, was about \$1.4 billion dollars prior to the current proposed budget. Even then more students are not being served with these funds, nor are the school districts pursuing and achieving higher performance goals. The Administration's reauthorization proposal seeks to ensure that the Federal investment leads to better results for eligible adults and that grantees are held accountable for achieving those results.

Proposed amendments to the vocational and adult Education and Family Literacy Act would expand choices and opportunities for individuals to learn and help States to provide a diversified array of local providers. Amendments would promote greater participation of businesses and more workplace literacy programs and expanded use of technology to make education more accessible. They would also promote State incentives to strengthen coordination among education and employment programs.

The reauthorization proposal also seeks to improve the performance of the vocational education enterprise by insisting on greater accountability for results. The proposal would continue to offer incentives for success to School districts and local programs, and would also spell out more explicit

consequences for failure to perform, including technical assistance and sanctions. It is proposed that School districts establish rigorous content standards and standardized assessments in technical skills.

Research-based practice is another tool for improving the quality and productivity of vocational education. Millions of dollars support research on voc ed tools, and must continue to do so. With national activity funds, for example, we are supporting rigorous research through the Institute of Education Sciences on the most effective methods for teaching technical skills to students. From this and other scientifically based research, we hope to identify effective instructional practices. Schools districts, in turn, will support professional development and other strategies to ensure that this knowledge is shared with instructors and used in their classrooms.

First, we need to make sure that current services are of the highest possible quality—reflecting the best-known research about vocational training and having a clear focus with specific objectives for each vocational course that is offered. What is required for these are clear expectations, good curriculum and assessments, well-trained teachers, and an accountability system to measure and report on student and program success.

Second, we need to make a broader array of services available to vocational learners who are currently not accessing learning. That is what led to developing national activities around the role of workplace education as providers of rigorous training on research-based practices to prepare tutors, and the use of libraries and technology- enabled learning to supplement the role of a well-trained vocational education teacher.

Thus, to conclude, technology, changing demographics and global economic competition are combining at an unexpectedly fast pace to change work and redefine the American workplace. Unlike jobs a few decades back, today most positions that pay family-supporting wages and offer opportunities for advancement demand strong academic and technical skills, technological proficiency, and some education beyond high school. The nation's prosperity and competitive edge rely on its ability to prepare every American for the future.

1. 7

What recommendations to CSD flow from this analysis?

Based on the analysis above, the following are a list of recommendations for CSD:

- CSD should better align high school exit requirements with the expectations of
- colleges and employers.
- CSD needs to create and support new high school models that vary in their structure, curriculum, financing and target population. They include schools that are open throughout the year, blur and minimize the transition between high school and college, are based on community connections and resources, emphasize technical preparation for good jobs, and deliver instruction and assessment on the Internet.

- CSD should provide students a context for connecting what they are learning across a wide spectrum of academic subject areas through the theme.
- CSD should expand options and opportunities for all students
- CSD must provide map to demonstrate direct application of classroom learning to the world of work
- CSD should provide flexible scheduling for students
- CSD should enable students to gain a practical understanding of the broad range of career, occupational, and educational options that are open to them
- It should help students in identifying their own interests and potential
- It should then connect interests to future education and career options
- CSD should equip students to develop goals and plan for their career by making well-informed decisions
- CSD should streamline the 49 two-year Secondary Vocational Programs to:
 1. Approximately 10 introductory courses (retaining 6 Family & Consumer Sciences courses)
 2. Approximately 20 two-year vocational programs
- CSD should continue its Post secondary Vocational Cluster Programs
- According to Parnell (1996), the philosophical position of academic education has been “ learning to know is most important; application can come later”; of vocational education: “ learning to do is most important; knowledge will somehow seep into the process” (p. 19)
- CSD should get serious about its image building by:

1. Identifying internal (teachers, counselors, students, school board members) and external (parents, taxpayers, civic groups, and professional organizations) markets it wants to “sell” on vocational education.
 2. Building its own network and tapping it.
 3. Target areas that need improvement or misconceptions that require explanation.
 4. Set its goals. These might include to provide information concerning the nature of vocational programs; to clarify the philosophy, goals, and objectives of programs; to publicize program activities; and to create an awareness of program needs. It should make its desired outcomes specific: to increase enrollment, for example, or to attract more females into the program.
 5. Design a strategic marketing plan to meet those goals.
- CSD should make its voc ed schools focus on imparting the following skills to its students. These are the skills which employers look for in voc ed students. These skills are: basic skills in reading, writing, math; communication skills, both speaking and listening; problem-solving ability; employability skills; reasoning skills; leadership skills; computer literacy; interpersonal skills; ability-to-learn/learning-how-to-learn skills; and collaborative/teamwork skills.
 - CSD should lay greater emphasis on imparting basic skills because employers acknowledge that basic skill deficiencies can hinder job performance and limit an employee’s ability to profit from further training.

- CSD should have more communication and closer collaboration with businesses/industry
- CSD should identify and instruct in a common core of employability skills that are transferable across occupations including problem-solving and decision-making skills and the skills necessary for getting and keeping a job
- CSD, in order to develop work maturity skills, should provide more opportunities for supervised work experience that provide close articulation between in-school educational experience and on-the-job experience
- It should emphasize on applied basic skills and employability skills in secondary programs and technical skills in post secondary programs
- CSD must make a more systematic and intensive effort to identify and assist potential dropouts prior to and at entry into vocational programs;
- CSD must program activities to enhance school climate and reduce absenteeism, class-cutting, and drug and alcohol abuse;
- CSD must promote systematic awareness and educational activities directed toward enhancing parents' involvement in program planning and support;
- CSD should encourage a more extensive career exploration and related career education experiences, particularly prior to and at the transition into high school;
- CSD must improve transitions through a vocational program to direct dropout-prone students to job-specific skill training courses;

- CSD must review and evaluation of work study experiences for dropout-prone students to ensure that they involve concrete objectives and program experiences, clear linkages with students' overall school programs, and built-in evaluation activities;
- CSD should review of rules governing vocational program entry to ensure student access to and participation in vocational and work study programs with firm ties to overall school plans and goals;
- CSD should have activities to increase dropout-prone student participation in the vocational program and enhance linkages between students' vocational experiences and their other school-related experiences and activities

1. 8

How did the MPA Program assist in this analysis?

As the information-based economy continues to develop, it is clear that employees must be effectively equipped with technical and professional competencies to survive and prosper in public sector environments. It is here that the MPA Program steps in and imparts employees with these technical and professional competencies. MPA programs churn out leaders, particularly with regard to the administration and management of public sector organizations.

The MPA program's content is multi-disciplinary in nature. It offers a holistic program of administrative and vocational skills through a blend of administration and management modules. These modules are set against an innovative teaching and learning strategy.

The MPA program assisted in this analysis as:

- It imparted basic knowledge and skills in relation to the major elements of the study of public administration, public management and public policy, three core elements of vocational schools.
- It imparted the ability to comprehend the major dimensions of public management and public administration and helped in relating them to a range of relevant ideas, concepts and theories.
- Imparted the ability to think critically. It also helped to analyse and assess problems in the field of public administration and management.
- Imparted the knowledge and understanding of the patterns of development of public administration and public management. Also helped in defining the interplay of political, governmental and administrative influences in the making of policy for vocational schools and its implementation.

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