

18.41 Supporting K-12 Career and Technical Education

Resolution passed 2020

Whereas, Washington State PTA has a long history of supporting Career and Technical Education (CTE). Today's high-wage jobs require education and training beyond high school, and many employers in Washington are unable to find qualified in-state employees. State projections include about 150,000 job openings per year, with almost three-fourths requiring a credential beyond high school; and

Whereas, CTE includes locally-based middle and high school programs that provide 21st century academic and technical skills for all students. High school students involved in CTE are more engaged, graduate at higher rates, and typically go on to post-secondary education. The average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 95%, compared to an average national freshman graduation rate of 85%; and

Whereas, the Washington state CTE program definition and funding are based on grades 7-12, missing the critical opportunity for incoming 6th graders to experience CTE classes as they establish their middle/junior high school schedules; and

Whereas, current Washington state graduation requirements (HB1599) require a minimum of one CTE class for graduation and also include a CTE graduation pathway option: completing two or more classes that are an approved CTE sequence, industry-recognized certificate, or a Core Plus program; and

Whereas, CTE dual-credit classes allow students to earn tuition-free college credits and high school credits required for graduation, thereby increasing the rate of students advancing to post-secondary education. 91% of high school graduates who earned 2-3 CTE credits enrolled in college compared to the average rate of all high school graduates enrolling in college 80%; and

Whereas, nationally and in Washington state, CTE classes introduce students to family-wage job opportunities in high-growth industries. STEM, healthcare, infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing all report growth opportunities and shortages in the workforce; and

Whereas, skill centers, which are regional secondary schools, serve high school students from multiple schools or districts with specialized and concentrated CTE experiences. Currently, there are 14 skill centers in Washington state, but more are planned to increase opportunities for all students in Washington state; and

Whereas, CTE incorporates both school-based and work-based learning business partnerships, which are key to successful programs. Work-based programs can provide student benefits, including both a paid stipend and high school credits, but can be cumbersome to administer and discourages business participation; and

Whereas, Washington state has eight recognized Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) such as DECA, FLA, FBLA, etc. Students who participate in CTSOs in high school demonstrate higher academic engagement and motivation, civic engagement, career self-efficacy, and employability skills than other students. However, many clubs and students struggle financially to cover dress requirements,

travel, applications, and other expenses, thereby excluding them from these proven, positive opportunities; and

Whereas, OSPI reporting for CTE Concentrations (two or more CTE classes) shows disproportionate, low enrollment of some demographic groups, including American Indian/Alaska Native, limited English, and special education students. It is also imperative that all students are given equal access to CTE concentrations and all graduation pathways.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils shall support policies and programs that increase the awareness among parents, guardians, students, counselors, and other educators on the benefits and graduation requirements of K-12 Career and Technical Education (CTE), with an intentional focus to include students with disabilities, students of color and those in the opportunity and achievement gaps; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils shall advocate for expanding the Washington state definition of CTE education from grades 7-12 to grades 6-12, to increase the awareness and class choices when students transition from elementary to middle/junior high schools; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support expanding funding and student access to:

- CTE skill centers, CTE dual-credit, and certificate-earning courses statewide
- Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) to help offset the financial burdens associated with CTOSs to compete in state and nationally-recognized opportunities, especially among underserved communities; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils encourage improving systems and removing logistical barriers for the business communities to offer more student work-based learning opportunities.