

CTE Without Limits Talking Points

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- Today we're going to be discussing ***Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education***

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- Advance CTE released its previous vision in 2016 – *Putting Learner Success First*, with support from 11 national partners. This vision was critical to driving Advance CTE's work and the direction of the CTE community over the last few years.
- In particular, *Putting Learner Success First* was instrumental in pushing CTE forward by directly impacting the priorities within Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), inspiring over 40 states to build career readiness within their K-12 accountability systems, influencing many philanthropic investments in CTE and career pathways, and inspiring many states' own strategic priorities for CTE.

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- As this vision was coming up on its five-year anniversary, in September 2020, Advance CTE joined with nine partner organizations to host CTE Forward: A Summit on CTE's Impact & Promise, virtually bringing together nearly 200 national, state and local leaders representing K-12, postsecondary, workforce development, business and industry and philanthropy.
- The Summit designed to have participants co-create a shared vision which would serve as the "true north" for the CTE community and its key partners.

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- Over the course of several months, Advance CTE worked with partner organizations and our members to synthesize and prioritize the ideas, strategies and goals generated during the Summit. In March 2021, *Without Limits: A Shared Vision for the Future of Career Technical Education* was released.

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- *CTE Without Limits* is anchored in the belief that each learner must have access to and the means to be successful in the career of their choice – a simple belief, but no easy feat to accomplish. Achieving this will require:
 - All systems working in concert to advance this shared vision

- A commitment to tearing down the barriers that limit opportunity
- CTE positioned as the catalyst to make this vision a reality

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- Critically, this is truly a shared vision. To date, over forty national organizations have joined Advance CTE and signed on to support this vision – organizations representing state and local leaders across K-12, postsecondary, adult education, workforce development and industry. These organizations are committed to using this vision to advance their own work and the goals we have set collectively.
- This is so important as no one organization or sector can fully realize the aspiration of this vision alone. Only by working together, with a wide range of partners, can this vision of CTE without limits - supported by a cohesive, flexible and responsive ecosystem - become a reality within and across states.

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- The new shared vision lays out five inter-connected and equally critical principles, as well as a set of foundational commitments

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- The foundational commitments are the non-negotiables that must be in place for the vision to become a reality. These include a commitment to:
 - All dimensions of equity – educational, racial, socioeconomic, gender and geographic
 - Quality – including quality programs, instructors, instruction, work-based learning and credentials
 - Meaningful partnerships, with industry partners deeply invested and involved in the design, delivery and success of the CTE system
 - Actionable, transparent and trustworthy data
 - Continuous improvement and leadership at all levels within our system.

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- To have CTE without limits means removing the limitations of our current policies and practices.
- This new vision and its principles, taken together, call on CTE to:
 - Remove the limitations of siloed systems and funding and accountability models that incent the wrong outcomes
 - Remove the limitations of racist and discriminatory systems, policies and practices that perpetuate inequities
 - Remove the limitations so that each learner can navigate their career progression seamlessly
 - Remove the limitations of seat time and degrees to value all learning and all skills wherever they occur
 - And remove the geographic limitations through cross-state collaboration and open access

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- With that, the first principle is that ***“each learner engages in a cohesive, flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem”***
- This principle acknowledges that all learners need a career preparation ecosystem that recognizes and supports non-linear career progressions and is designed to allow all learners to get the skills they need, when they need them, without redundancy or limitation.

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- To accomplish this, we must:
- Establish shared statewide goals for a cohesive career preparation ecosystem. States must eliminate the silos between delivery systems, learner levels, instruction type, and credit systems that create barriers for learners and lead to inefficiencies and redundancies.
- Ensure all CTE programs of study are flexible and responsive to both learners and industry
 - Every approved CTE program of study and career pathway should have well-articulated on- and off-ramps; be anchored by credentials of value; include opportunities for work-based learning; and align with high-skill, high-wage and in-demand careers.
 - At the same time, industry must not only be a beneficiary of this ecosystem, but also serve as a key partner and contributor in its success, which means aligning the career preparation ecosystem with talent pipeline strategies.
- Support expanded data and accountability models that value collaboration, equity and innovation
 - Meeting this goal will require new state- and institution-level metrics that measure the full continuum of CTE
 - We also need new and innovative ways of measuring equity in CTE so that we can better design and evaluate interventions and supports for marginalized learners.
- And design equitable funding models that direct funding to the learners, communities and programs that need it the most
 - States and institutions should identify and leverage flexibilities within federal funding streams to better target and braid resources to achieve more equitable outcomes.
 - New funding formulas should be created and scaled to move away from inequitable education funding designs, such as relying primarily on property taxes and credit hours.
 - We also must reconsider limitations on financial aid to better support each learner throughout their career progression.

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- The second principle is ***“each learner feels welcome in, is supported by and has the means to be successful in the career preparation ecosystem”***

- This principle reinforces that every aspect of the career preparation ecosystem must be designed with an equity lens to ensure it is fully flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of each learner.

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- To accomplish this, we must:
- Take a deep look at the scope and impact of the institutional barriers and systemic racism and discrimination that exist within the CTE system
 - States and institutions should conduct equity audits to assess how CTE is serving learners of color and other marginalized populations, such as learners with disabilities and learners from low-income communities.
 - Importantly, such efforts must be coordinated with equity audits across the broader education and workforce systems. While CTE has its own equity challenges, the work to fully eliminate all barriers put before our learners is a shared responsibility that will require shared solutions.
- Attend to the cultural competency of the CTE workforce and its industry partners
 - States and institutions should commit to building recruitment strategies and talent pipeline programs that attract diverse CTE instructors, administrators and leaders who are demographically representative of the learners they teach and have strong industry expertise and continue building their capacity through culturally responsive professional development.
 - Industry partners providing work-based learning or mentorships should also receive supports to build their cultural competency as they interact with a diverse group of learners.
- Design CTE programs and interventions on the margin, while maintaining a commitment to quality, to ensure we are meeting the needs of the learners who have the greatest barriers to success
 - States and communities will need to meaningfully engage currently hidden populations (justice-connected youth and adults, learners experiencing homelessness, single parents, etc.) as they are often placed on the margins of the education and workforce systems.
- And states and institutions should leverage existing and design new opportunities to engage learners, families and key community partners to share their unique experiences with the CTE system to inform and improve upon programs and supports.

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- The third principle is ***“each skillfully navigates their own career journey”***
- This principle recognizes how critical it is that we empower learners to make informed decisions by providing them with resources and information that supports their full range of needs, including academic supports, career supports, and wraparound services.

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- To accomplish this, we must:
- Connect advisement systems across K-12, postsecondary and workforce
 - States and institutions must align career advisement and navigational supports, and critical wraparound supports that are necessary for learners to engage in and be successful in CTE programs.
 - In addition, all learners must have access to meaningful experiential learning opportunities, such as work-based learning and Career Technical Student Organizations, which can build social capital and professional skills.
- Provide actionable data on CTE options and outcomes including access to meaningful labor market data. Learners and families must have access to this information to guide their decisions and make thoughtful choices.
- And invest the necessary resources to support integrated advisement systems, which includes, but is not limited to, more advisement professionals. We cannot support each learner without dedicated federal, state and local investments in counseling professionals, training for any and all individuals working directly with learners, data systems and the wraparound supports themselves.

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- The fourth principle is ***“each learner’s skills are counted, valued and portable”***
- This principle advocates for more flexible learning opportunities that enable and value upskilling, reskilling and lifelong learning by recognizing and counting the skills and competencies learners gain throughout their lifetimes.

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- To accomplish this, we must:
- Capture and value all learning that occurs, wherever and whenever it happens through the expansion of competency-based education models
 - States in particular have a clear role to play in building out a broader policy infrastructure, embedding credentials of value within the credit for prior learning system, facilitating opportunities for collaboration and statewide articulation, and elevating existing opportunities for learners.
- Build and leverage trusted systems to translate competencies and credentials into portable credit, including through college in high school programs, statewide articulation agreements and expanding credit for prior learning
- And encourage industry to expand skills-based hiring practices that value competencies and not just degrees
 - Under-valuing non-degree programs has a tremendous cost to employers and can leave behind workers with great experience but less traditional or no degrees.
 - To further empower learners, states and communities should provide each learner with a learning and employment record that captures the learner’s accomplishments, aptitudes, skills and competencies.

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- Finally, the fifth principle is “***each learner can access CTE without borders***”
- This principle calls on states to collaborate even more to expand access and remove geographic barriers. This will require that states come together to develop and expand new models of collaboration, invest in cross-state, open access systems and agree to common frameworks for defining and delivering CTE.

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- To accomplish this, we must:
- Leverage the soon-to-be modernized National Career Clusters® Framework for connecting education and the workforce.
 - The work to update the National Career Clusters Framework is focused on providing structural alignment and a common language to bridge education and work and on empowering each learner to explore, decide on and prepare for dynamic and evolving careers. As it has served as a common framework for states over the past twenty years, the modernized version will usher in new ways of collaboration and alignment.
- Develop and expand inter-state compacts that support collaboration and the flow of data, credits, credentials and learners to remove barriers
 - States should build on existing inter-state compact efforts to better reflect the global economy in which our learners and employers live. Such compacts can allow learners to seamlessly access in-person and virtual CTE programs and work-based learning experiences in any community or institution without needing to relocate.
 - States should also consider how to expand access to CTE programs within their own borders to ensure each learner can engage in the right experience for them
- And invest in research and development to ensure virtual opportunities are quality, equitable and meaningful

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- The vision ends with a “call to action” which underscores many of the points made earlier.
- For this vision to be successful in creating a more flexible and responsive career preparation ecosystem, we must draw on the capacity of each existing system, leverage their greatest assets and push for new models of collaboration, learner-centric design and delivery, and funding and accountability models that create the right incentives and supports.
- Only together can we realize the possibility and aspiration of a career preparation ecosystem that provides each learner with limitless opportunity.

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- To read the full vision, access additional resources and sign up to stay engaged, please visit www.careertech.org/without-limits.
- Thank you!