CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOL: DOES IT IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES?

EVIDENCE FROM ARKANSAS

89% of students have taken at least one career and technical education (CTE) course in high school.*

Students take an average of 4.9 CTE courses in high school.*

Students can concentrate by taking a sequence of three or more CTE courses in a program of study aligned to a specific career and industry.

Student Take a Sequence of CTE Courses in a Program of Study Aligned to a Specific Career and Industry

3 PERCENTAGE POINTS MORE LIKELY TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL

1 PERCENTAGE POINT MORE LIKELY TO ENROLL IN A TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

2 PERCENTAGE POINTS MORE LIKELY TO BE EMPLOYED AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

$28 PER QUARTER BETTER COMPENSATED IN THE YEAR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

$45 PER QUARTER BETTER COMPENSATED IN THE YEAR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Comparative chart: Students who concentrate in a single program of study are compared to similar students who take the same number of courses but do not concentrate.

BENEFITS OF CTE COURSEWORK

Just one additional CTE class above the average means a student is...

- 31% more likely to graduate from high school
- 25% more likely to enroll in a two-year college
- 18% more likely to be employed after high school

Students who concentrate in a single program of study are...

- 21 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school
- 1 percentage point more likely to enroll in a two-year college
- 1 percentage point more likely to be employed after high school
- $21 more per quarter better compensated in the year after high school

BENEFITS OF CONCENTRATION

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For more, read the full report at edexcellence.net

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

States:

- Offer CTE courses aligned to skills and industry-recognized credentials in high-growth industries, and encourage (or require) high school students to take them.

- Systemize “CTE for all” by offering courses that are appealing, relevant, and available to all types of students at all types of schools.

- Advise students taking multiple CTE courses to concentrate, especially in programs that prepare them for high-growth industries.

Federal:

- Reauthorize the Perkins Act and increase federal support for high-quality, labor-market-aligned CTE.

*Beginning with the class of 2014, Arkansas implemented “Smart Core” which requires that high school students complete six units of “career focus” coursework in addition to their academics. CTE courses can fulfill the requirement, as can electives such as art, music, world language, or AP courses. (Whether a class counts toward the requirement is determined by a student’s guidance counselor based on his work aspirations.) Our data include all students entering ninth grade in 2008 and 2009, who were not subject to Smart Core, and students entering ninth grade in 2010, who were.