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**Overview Script Notes**  
**Career and Technical Education Curriculum Standards**  
**(Client Design Specifications, Client Style Guide)**

**Welcome and Introduction**

Welcome, career and technical education (CTE) teachers, counselors, and administrators! This overview module is designed to familiarize you with the newly revised CTE curriculum standards for middle school and high school CTE courses. The new curriculum standards increase relevancy, improve academic and technical rigor, incorporate college and career readiness standards, promote student employability skills, and encourage participation in extended learning experiences such as career and technical student organizations (CTSO). This module begins with an overview of CTE, and then explores key changes to the CTE curriculum standards.

Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education is a critical element of the education system, providing rigorous academic and technical instruction, valuable career exploration, and practical preparation for success in further education, training, and careers.

Career and technical education programs prepare students for lifelong success by equipping them with the relevant technical knowledge and skills to compete in a rapidly changing workforce and developing strong academic skills needed for post-secondary education and successful careers.

Many CTE courses satisfy graduation requirements for math, science, English, or fine arts. [State and federal education data](#) demonstrate that CTE students perform significantly better on standardized academic measures than the general population of students. Many CTE programs also offer students the chance to earn industry-recognized credentials and certificates that help students demonstrate technical skills and gain entry level employment. Capstone courses include work-based learning, on-the-job training, and the chance to gain real-world experience through internships and job shadowing.

The CTE curriculum standards are organized under the 16 nationally recognized [Career Clusters](#)<sup>®</sup>, adopted as the framework for CTE. The Career Clusters are broad groups of occupations and industries that branch into narrower [career pathways](#) then into more specific [programs of study](#) that prepare students for college and career success.

The 16 Career Clusters are:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
- Business Administration & Management

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- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Security & Corrections
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Preparing students for college and career success requires instruction that provides academic rigor, engages students in authentic skill development, and reflects the contemporary practice of their chosen field. Such instruction also develops a student's capacity to set and pursue personal goals, make responsible decisions, and cultivate attitudes and habits that foster workplace success.

#### Global Changes

The overall objective for the updated curriculum standards is to provide students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in the modern economy. The revised knowledge and skills reflect current career expectations and include demonstrations of learning.

Key changes include:

- Employability skills
- Practicum course revisions
- CTSO participation

**Employability Skills:** Employers often cite employability skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving, as critical to success in the 21st century workforce, and a lack of employability skills as a primary barrier to workplace success. Integrating employability skills into the curriculum standards for each CTE course helps students to overcome that barrier.

**Practicum and Extended Practicum Courses:** Practicum and extended practicum courses provide a capstone experience for students that is specific to the Career Cluster where they're housed. Practicum courses generally consist of classroom time as well as experiences in a lab setting or at an approved training site and may be paid or unpaid. Extended practicum courses provide supervised practical application of knowledge and skills for students concurrently enrolled in a practicum course.

**Career and Technical Student Organizations:** [Career and technical student organizations](#) are an integral part of CTE. These co-curricular organizations extend classroom instruction by enabling students to gain leadership skills and have a direct impact on their community through

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volunteering and participating in local, state, and national events. School districts may sponsor a variety of CTSOs:

- BPA—Business Professionals of America
- DECA
- FBLA—Future Business Leaders of America
- FCCLA—Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
- FFA
- Educators Rising
- HOSA
- SkillsUSA
- TSA—Technology Student Association

### **Conclusion**

Career and technical education plays an essential role in equipping students with the skills necessary to participate in emerging professions and to meet the needs of a competitive job market. Career and technical education is at the forefront of providing rigorous and relevant programs that produce college and career ready graduates for the emerging workforce.