

Angela Mike

Pittsburgh Public Schools – CTE Executive Director

Good Morning, Chairwoman Culver, members of the Senate Education Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about Career and Technical Education (CTE). My name is Angela Mike, and I am currently the Executive Director for Career and Technical Education for Pittsburgh Public Schools. I have served in this capacity since 2010.

CTE's goal is to empower students to transition into post-secondary education and career opportunities confidently and successfully and to become positive, contributing members of society. CTE prepares students for career pathways in the global marketplace by offering experiential learning, post-secondary credits, and industry certifications.

Pittsburgh Public Schools offers 17 Career and Technical Education programs of study in six high schools. Each program of study is linked to a state-identified high-priority occupation. All programs except for our Engineering program follows the three-year model: students participate for three periods per day, five days per week, for three years.

Through CTE, students can gain:

- Stackable industry-recognized certifications
- Transcribed dual enrollment credits
- Preparation for high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers

CTE students receive hands-on instruction in labs equipped with state-of-the-art equipment that mirrors real-world work environments. Taught by teachers who are industry professionals in their respective fields, our students learn how to use the tools, techniques, software, and hardware necessary to enter the workforce and/or post-secondary education.

CTE Outcomes Include:

- Increased graduation rates
- Career and college readiness
- Higher student motivation and engagement
- Development of academic and technical proficiency
- Strengthening of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills
- Access to entry-level, career laddering jobs

Funding Support & Impact

The work we do, and the impact of our programs would not be possible without the funding support we receive from the government.

At the federal level, we have received short-term support from the ESSER grant and annual funding from the Perkins grant.

At the state level, we receive annual subsidies for every student enrolled in a program of study (10th grade and above). We receive a Supplemental Equipment Grant and a Competitive Equipment Grant. The state recently reinstated funding for dual enrollment costs, directly benefiting CTE students. Additionally, we received a Schools-to-Work grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor.

Here are examples of how the funding has directly impacted student experiences:

Federal Level:

- Perkins funds cover salaries for Career Counselors, English and Math Integration Teachers, and one Co-Operative Education Coordinator.
- Perkins funding also covers industry certification vouchers and testing, student transportation for job exploration field trips, equipment, technology for learning labs, and professional development for staff.
- ESSER funds improved infrastructure, providing air conditioning in five programs and new lighting in three programs. It also funded two tiny house kits for Carpentry students.

State Level:

- Annual subsidies help cover CTE student supplies, uniforms, equipment and equipment replacement, specialty furniture, field trips, SkillsUSA membership fees, competition costs, and other student supports.
- The Supplemental Equipment Grant funds CTE equipment that is recommended by industry members of our Occupational Advisory Committees, ensuring our labs reflect current industry standards.
- The Schools-to-Work grant supports our state-registered Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship program (which was the first pre-apprenticeship program for high school students in the state). The grant covers costs that will help students transition into the Carpenters Union by covering expenses for union entry fees, first-year apprentice toolkits, and work boots.

We appreciate your work to elevate career and technical education and provide funding for students, equipment, and existing CTE programs, but there is still work to do.

Challenges & Recommendations

CTE programs are expensive, and costs continue to rise.

- Large equipment can cost \$30,000 or more.
- Transportation costs for field trip buses have more than tripled in the past three years.
- Industry certification vouchers have increased in price.
- Implementing the latest technologies, such as simulation and AI, requires additional funding.

Here are ways you can help us:

1. **Allow more flexibility in state-sponsored competitive equipment grant funding.**
 - The Competitive Equipment Grant is limited to specific CTE programs per year. Expanding eligibility to all programs would better support specific program needs.
2. **Allow more flexibility in state funds allocated for career and technical education.**
 - Provide funding to cover CTE program start-up costs.
 - Current funding covers existing programs but hinders our ability to keep pace with labor market needs.
 - New program offerings, such as aviation and aeronautics, are cost-prohibitive without additional funding.
3. **Consideration of a change of CTE's end of program NOCTI Assessment.**
 - NOCTI is costly, time-consuming, not widely recognized by industry.
 - Redirect funds toward additional stackable industry recognized certifications that better prepare students for the workforce and make students marketable.
4. **Create a CTE State Marketing Plan.**
 - A coordinated effort and funding support would send a clear message across PA on the job forecast for the future and the opportunities in High School to jump start viable CTE career choices thus preparing students to meet the workforce demand.

- Statewide Marketing plan would save funds and provide a repository of marketing material and tools while allowing local resources to be responsive to employer needs.
5. **Create flexible pathways for industry professionals to become certified CTE teachers.**
- The CTE teacher shortage is a critical issue that requires solutions to help industry professionals transition into education.

In conclusion: I want to thank you again for your ongoing support of Career and Technical Education and as I mentioned earlier, we rely heavily on state/federal funding and its predictability to support CTE student learning, certification opportunities and state-of-the-art equipment. Therefore, your support and advocacy are appreciated and critical to making sure our Perkins funding continues as we move forward.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure the success of our students and the continued growth of Career and Technical Education in Pennsylvania.

To learn more about PPS-CTE visit our virtual tour at: For more information, please see our PPS-CTE Virtual Tour at: <https://www.pghschools.org/academics/career-and-technical-education-cte/cte-virtual-tour> or attached brochure.