

Support Career and Technical Education Opportunities for Students

A Blue Ribbon Commission appointed by the Board of Regents has outlined possible changes to the state's requirements for high school graduation. Whatever changes may be forthcoming, a goal should be to ensure all students have experiences in school which prepare them for whatever they pursue beyond school, whether further education, a career, or a combination of the two. Expanding access to career and technical education must be part of that agenda.

Specifically, we recommend that the final state budget:

- Increase the “aidable” salary for Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) CTE instructors to \$60,000 over the next three school years—\$40,000 for 2024-25, \$50,000 for 2025-26, and \$60,000 in 2026-27; and
- Increase the per pupil cap and expand funding to include 9th grade students for Special Services Aid for CTE programs in the Big 5 city school districts and other districts which are not BOCES members.

The aidable salary limit for BOCES programs, including CTE, has not been increased since 1990. Over that time span, the Consumer Price Index has more than doubled. As a result, rising costs have been borne from other sources, including local taxes, and this has jeopardized the capacity to sustain these programs and to meet growing demands for skilled entry-level workers.

State per pupil funding for CTE programs in the Big 5 cities and other non-BOCES districts also falls short of meeting costs and does not provide support on behalf of students in 9th grade.

Our State Constitution promises “...a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated.” We owe young people an education that prepares them for demands of adulthood. CTE programs deliver on that promise. Students in BOCES CTE programs have typically graduated at rates above the statewide percentage for all students. A large number directly enter the workforce, but high percentages of CTE program graduates go on to college as well.

The Council urges the Legislature to increase state funding for CTE programs, to ensure opportunities for students and meet the needs of employers.