

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION: COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

Throughout Allegheny County, the majority of Career and Technical Education (CTE) students split their day with academic instruction in their home school and then are transported to a regional Career and Technical Center (CTC) for CTE programming. However, within the county, there is another option for students in McKeesport Area School District and Pittsburgh Public Schools. Students from these two districts receive their CTE instruction through a comprehensive high school model. This model allows academic coursework and CTE programs of study to be under one roof for students to easily access both without having to leave their home school district. Both CTC and comprehensive high school programs are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and lead to certifications and other industry recognized credentials upon program completion. In addition, both CTCs and comprehensive high schools have industry experts closely involved through an Occupational Advisory Committee, and are eligible for the same state and federal funding.

Pittsburgh Public's CTE program has 16 programs of study offered to its 529 CTE concentrators, and McKeesport Area Center for Technology has nine programs of study for its 270 students enrolled. Both schools are exceeding the county average in terms of percent of eligible students enrolled in CTE, with Pittsburgh Public enrolling 11 percent of eligible students and McKeesport Area enrolling 26 percent. The county average is eight percent and statewide average is 13 percent of eligible students enrolled in CTE programming.

Although both Pittsburgh Public Schools and McKeesport Area School District use the comprehensive high school model, the implementation of programming is very different. Pittsburgh Public Schools is a large district that has many school buildings and chooses to offer select CTE programs spread throughout six of the district's high school buildings. Since McKeesport Area only has one high school, all CTE programs are housed at the McKeesport Area Senior High School.

Comprehensive high schools are funded through the school district, the state CTE subsidy, and the Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Act. Like many education programs, CTE continues to be underfunded at the federal and state levels.

Comprehensive High School	% of Federal CTE Funding	% of State CTE Funding	% of Local CTE Funding
McKeesport Area CTE	7%	19%	74%
Pittsburgh Public CTE	4%	9%	87%

2016-17 Program Enrollment		
CTE Program	Pittsburgh Public CTE	McKeesport Area CTE
Accounting Technician	12	NA
Adm Asst/Secr Sci Gen	28	NA
Autobody Repair Tech	32	26
Automotive Mechanic Tech	38	NA
Carpentry/Carpenter	61	NA
Child Care/Supprt Srv Mgt	NA	17
Commercial/Advertisng Art	NA	32
Communications Tech Oth	13	NA
Computer Network/Telecom	29	NA
Construction Trades Oth	NA	41
Cosmetology General	62	56
Diversified Occupations	NA	15
Engin Tech/Related Other	19	20
Health Prof/Rel Sci Oth	93	30
Heating AC Refrig Mech	33	NA
Hmland Secr/Law Enforc Ot	17	NA
Institutional Food Worker	52	33
Machine Tool Tech	9	NA
Web Page Design	31	NA

Many advocates would like to see more school districts develop a comprehensive high school CTE model. For this to become a reality, districts would have to overcome many obstacles. Simply creating the physical space and acquiring equipment for CTE programming is difficult and costly. The cost of equipment is the same in each CTE program, no matter the enrollment, making it difficult to start and sustain at a district level. Other barriers include PDE approval of CTE courses, recruitment of CTE certified teachers, and funding.

CTE, whether it is embedded in the district through a comprehensive high school, or at a regional CTC is working to ensure students are properly trained with the appropriate credentials to enter postsecondary or the workplace ready to succeed.