



# South Dakota Districts CTE Stakeholders' Input: Spring 2019 Report

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## Report Summary

The South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE) is updating their Career and Technical Education (CTE) state plan and requested input from SD educators to inform their planning. From January to March 2019, the SD DOE's CTE department collected response data from school district stakeholders regarding current CTE program connections, the concentrator definition, equity and access, program alignment, consortia work, and what the state needs to know from the field. There were approximately 365 individuals who participated in providing the data responses representing 150 districts across the state of South Dakota. The data responses collected came from in-person regional meetings, Survey Monkey, Padlet, and Improve19 Reflection and Feedback forms. From the data collected, an analysis of the responses was conducted to find the dominant trends. Those trends are highlighted in this report by corresponding question.

## Program Connections

The program connections section examined the barriers districts may encounter connecting to programs outside of the core CTE program, including post-secondary institutions, work-based learning experiences, business partners, parents, non-CTE staff within the schools, parents, and students.

### Post-Secondary

- **Question:** What prohibits you from connecting more frequently with post-secondary programs?
  - Dominant Response Categories:
    - Distance and cost due to location
    - School and student schedules
  - Response Examples:
    - “Distance in an issue, as we are centrally located in the state. Time is also a challenge, trying to fit everything in a year without conflicting with other programs.”
    - “Physical distance is difficult. We provide it but it can be difficult with how much time is taken away from the school day. Efforts go more towards graduating seniors and not underclassmen.”

### Work-Based Learning

- **Question:** What, if any, barriers exist in your district in providing multiple, meaningful work-based learning opportunities for students?
  - Dominant Response Categories:
    - Limited opportunities due to rural location
    - Issues related to transportation (distance and cost)
  - Response Examples:
    - “Limited labor market. Liability insurance is a concern.”
    - “We are a small community with limited opportunities. Lack of student desire.”
    - “...Geography is limiting options that are available to our students that would allow those opportunities to take place during the school day.”
- **Question:** Does your district track the number of work-based learning experiences your students participate in?
  - Most districts have a method of tracking experiences either through student logs, portfolios, or school records.

## Business Partners

- **Question:** What, if any, are the greatest challenges with business partners, to either share their expertise with teachers on curriculum or to provide work-based learning opportunities for students?
  - Dominant Response Categories:
    - Limited opportunities due to rural location
    - Issues related to time and scheduling
  - Response Examples:
    - “Lack of available industry within a reasonable distance from the school to make it feasible during the school day. The community partners that we currently have are very willing to assist us in any way possible.”
    - “Being such a small community, business owners are often strapped for time and resources as they wear many hats...Their time to add more duties is very limited.”

## Career Guidance

- **Question:** To what extent do adults other than school counselors provide systematic career guidance to students in your district?
  - For most there is not a systematic process, guidance in this area comes through informal conversations with students, career fairs, and guest speakers.
- **Question:** In your district, how well can non-CTE teachers talk about careers with students?
  - The majority of communication about careers from non-CTE teachers comes through informal conversations with students and potential lesson connections they are able to make.

## Parents and Students

- **Question:** What is one suggestion for how to improve awareness and perception of CTE for parents?
  - The vast majority of the responses indicate more needs to be done in providing communication materials for parents and having increased advertising.
  - Key points mentioned repeatedly to advertise CTE programs included an increased social media presence along with information that breaks down perceived stereotypes and misconceptions regarding CTE programs.
- **Question:** What actions does your district utilize to recruit students into taking CTE classes?
  - Districts are using introductory classes in middle school and CTE open houses or demonstration showcases primarily as a way to recruit students.
- **Question:** Does your district have a plan/activities for retaining students in CTE programs?
  - There was no dominant pattern of responses to this question. Answers ranged from thoughtful scheduling on the part of the school to increasing the number of hands on learning experiences to keeping programs relevant to student interests.

## Concentrator Conversation

The concentrator conversation examined the input regarding changes being made to the current concentrator definition. The current concentrator definition used within South Dakota’s CTE program is “students in grades 9-12 who have earned two credits in a single approved CTE program. At least one of the two credits for concentrator status must come from cluster or pathway courses. The remaining credits may also come from foundational, academic, and capstone courses.” The proposed new concentrator definition is “two pathway courses following an introductory course within a single Career Cluster program of study.”

- **Question:** Do you see any specific benefits or problems with this potential new concentrator definition?
  - Responses regarding the benefits were very limited, but having students focus on a single career path was the dominant benefit of this proposed change in the responses given.
  - In regards to the problems with this new definition, the dominant issues that arose included:
    - Issues with the introductory course inclusion and definition
    - Too specific for small schools
    - School programs are too limited in opportunities
    - It does not allow students to “dabble.”
- **Question:** What would be a meaningful definition of a concentrator?
  - The responses to this question varied greatly; however, these two areas are worth noting due to their repeated theme in the responses.
    - Define as two credits from a career cluster
    - Clear up the definition between a course and a credit

## Equity and Access

Ensuring equity and access to programs across the state is an essential element in providing quality CTE programs to all students. This section gathered the input regarding student access to programs, distribution of resources, and assistance for rural schools.

- **Question:** Does your district have a formal process or system in place to ensure all students have equitable access to CTE?
  - Many districts do not have a formal process in place to ensure this; however, many also commented that the courses are available to all students through class scheduling or registration.
- **Question:** What types of resources related to equity would be most useful to your district?
  - Dominant Response Categories:
    - Additional funding
    - Access to promotional materials
  - Response Examples:
    - “Our students could benefit from understanding CTE courses can fit all career paths. Typically, students at our school who are planning to attend a 4-year college do not think CTE is a good fit for them, and they would prefer to take dual credit or advanced classes.”
    - “Funding is the big hurdle when it comes to equity. The problem is we sometimes have a hard time meeting some standards because we cannot afford some of the equipment that larger schools take for granted.”
- **Question:** How could access to career and technical education programs for rural schools be expanded regardless of teacher availability?
  - Dominant Response Categories:
    - Increased virtual course options
    - District partnerships and/or mobile units
  - Response Examples:
    - “Technology: virtual reality simulation is available for programs. Distance education can be used for some things.”
    - “Distance learning in non-lab-based classes. Allow students to travel to neighboring schools to be able to offer certain lab-based classes.”

## Program Alignment

The area of program alignment looks to uncover the connections being made with local industry, core teacher collaboration, and CTE teacher professional development.

### Local Industry

- **Question:** How does your district know that your CTE programs are meeting the needs of employers in your community and region?
  - Districts' responses fell primarily into two categories regarding this question: employer communication and advisory council.
- **Question:** What strategies do you use to determine this?
  - Districts are primarily looking at employer feedback while some are looking to former student feedback and the advisory council to determine if they are meeting community needs.
- **Question:** How influential has labor market data been in building your CTE program? (Multiple choice options as given.)
  - Not Yet: 46
  - A Little: 100
  - Major Influence: 20

### Core Teacher Collaboration

- **Question:** To what extent do CTE teachers and core content teachers collaborate in your district?
  - For the majority of districts there is collaboration occurring or at least attempts at collaboration.
- **Question:** In what ways do they collaborate?
  - Collaboration occurs primarily with specific content area teachers when content aligns with career knowledge and skills. This is stated most often as occurring informally.
- **Question:** What supports would help to facilitate more collaboration between core content teachers and CTE teachers?
  - More time is needed in order for collaboration to occur and for there to be time to build a joint understanding on how they can work together.

### CTE Professional Development

- **Question:** If you do not attend professional development related to your specific career cluster or CTE role, what prevents you from doing so?
  - Barriers to attending professional development primarily include not having the time to do so and also when the opportunities are scheduled.
    - The responses regarding the time of year when the opportunities are scheduled are mixed. During the school year it is difficult to get substitutes, but during the summer people also have other responsibilities.

- **Professional Development Multiple Choice:**

Question	Not Yet	Within past year	1-4 years	5-10 years	10+ Years
How long has it been since you attended the SDACTE/CTE Conference?	56	69	32	6	5
How long since you attended professional development (other than Improve 19) offered by DCTE?	45	91	28	4	0
How long since you attended out-of-state PD (not including CTSO travel)?	104	37	16	9	3
How long since you attended out of state PD (including CTSO travel)?	61	26	19	6	1

### Consortia Conversation

As the consortia works with many districts across the state, the feedback gathered here looks to improve the effectiveness of their work with districts.

- **Question:** How could consortia help establish greater regional collaboration?
  - Based on responses greater collaboration would be aided by more regional meetings or trainings offered by the consortia along with them facilitating the usage of shared resources.
- **Question:** In an ideal world, what does an effective consortium look like and how would it function in South Dakota?
  - Predominately, districts see an effective consortium doing a better job of collaborating on resources and funding along with improved communication.

### State Needs to Know

As the SD DOE CTE department looks to create the Perkins V plan and improve their system of service, a section of questions was created to provide them with information they need to know from the field in order to best serve the districts within South Dakota.

- **Question:** What is most important to you that the Department of Education know as we move forward with the new state plan?
  - The dominant categories of responses were to ensure the system provides equity in acknowledging the limitations of rural schools and there needs to be work done to improve the proposed definition of concentrator and define credit vs. course.
  - Response Examples:
    - “We can’t have a one-size fits all plan that will exclude large districts or small districts. Too often in SD decision making (of any kind) the concerns of Sioux Falls and Rapid City are the only ones that are considered. However, we have so many small districts, they need to accounted for.”
    - “I am concerned about the proposed concentrator definition; this would become difficult in smaller schools to manage to teach an introductory class in each cluster when some teachers teach multiple clusters.”
- **Question:** Are there particular pieces of SD’s CTE system you feel are working well and should not be changed?
  - The current concentrator definition career clusters, and standards are working well for many schools. There is also an appreciation for the communication they have received and having a regional representative to assist them.

- Example Responses:
  - “Please do not change the current 16 cluster areas. They finally make sense and standards work for the content areas.”
  - “Communication within the regional meetings has been outstanding.”
- **Question:** Are there particular pieces of the SD CTE system you feel must be changed?
  - Respondents voiced concerns with the funding, terminology used, data collection, and the regulations.
  - Example Responses:
    - “The program application this year was very cumbersome and redundant.”
    - “More options for students of small schools that don’t have the same resources readily available to them as students in larger schools.”
- **Question:** CTE: More
  - Dominate responses included the need for there to be more training, collaboration time, funding, and access to resources.
- **Question:** CTE: Less
  - Overwhelmingly, the dominant response is the need to have less reporting requirements and regulation.

## Conclusions

The data collected for this report may be used to inform the direction of South Dakota’s department of Career and Technical Education as it moves forward with changes within the state and in the Perkins V plan. The high participation numbers in this data collection process has provided input from districts varying in sizes and locations and gives a comprehensive view from the CTE field in South Dakota.