South Dakota Career & Technical Education

Preparing Students for College and Careers

What is Career & Technical Education?
In South Dakota Career & Technical Education (CTE) refers to middle and high school students enrolled in programs leading to careers in such areas as engineering, construction, health and agriculture. Emphasis is on career exploration and developing skills and knowledge for work to meet the needs of South Dakota’s in-demand industries. There are 30,000 CTE students — 45.3% percent of all students in grades 7-12 in the state.

In South Dakota, over 700 CTE programs are offered in 151 public, private and tribal schools districts across sixteen Career Clusters*.

Why is CTE important?
South Dakota CTE maximizes student learning with real-world knowledge and skills. CTE includes challenging academic and technical content and fosters strong relationships with industry and higher education. In addition to meeting South Dakota graduation requirements, students develop leadership skills and earn industry certifications and dual credit in their fields of interest.

- 1,530 students took a dual credit technical course at one of the State’s four technical institutes in 2018-19
- 4,080 students earned a National Career Readiness Certification at a Silver, Gold or Platinum level in 2018-19
- 7,574 students participated in a Career & Technical Student Organization, including DECA, FBLA, FCCLA, FFA, and SkillsUSA in 2018-19

What proves the value of CTE?
Consider these three pieces of data about students who have taken two or more CTE courses of Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses during their high school career.

95% of all CTE students graduate from high school within 4 years.

90% of Native American CTE students graduate from high school within 4 years.

87% of CTE students went on to postsecondary education, the military, or the workforce.

Where can you find South Dakota CTE?
All South Dakota students have access to CTE, including in-person courses at their local school, online through the South Dakota Virtual School, and through dual credit at the State’s technical institutes. Additionally, seven districts are providing students greater access to CTE courses through regional collaboration. These districts collaborate to share costs and provide students a wider range of course options that facilitate more comprehensive career exploration and access to a larger network of business partners.

Enrollment by Career Cluster*

- 6,627 STUDENTS in Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- 3,718 STUDENTS in Architecture & Construction
- 6,482 STUDENTS in Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
- 6,291 STUDENTS in Business Management & Administration
- 939 STUDENTS in Education & Training
- 2,672 STUDENTS in Finance
- 1,110 STUDENTS in Health Science
- 6,169 STUDENTS in Hospitality & Tourism
- 14,192 STUDENTS in Human Services
- 2,328 STUDENTS in Information Technology
- 2,556 STUDENTS in Manufacturing
- 3,268 STUDENTS in Marketing
- 5,509 STUDENTS in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- 1,894 STUDENTS in Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

*SY18-19 data reflects duplicate numbers as some students take classes in more than one career field.