

Guest Editorial

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Strengthening community partnerships key to future of students

A guest editorial by State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor

With the month of February representing Career and Technical Education Month in our state and across the nation, there is no better time to recognize those who aid in providing these invaluable opportunities to Wisconsin students.

The unique partnerships between educators, businesses, and organizations help students gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for lifelong success. For CTE to continue its growth and positive results, those relationships within communities must be strengthened.

As state superintendent, I have had the great honor of traveling across our state and witnessing firsthand the impact CTE has on the lives of students. Using interactive, hands-on learning, CTE forms a bridge for students from high school academics to the career or college of their choice. Whether aspiring to be a doctor, carpenter, chef, engineer, to name a few, CTE and its pathways are truly for all students.

Of course, these CTE programs would not be possible without our outstanding teachers, who provide the sequence of courses to lay the foundation for any career pathway. I am continuously amazed to hear stories of the innovative ways CTE teachers reach their students and encourage them to work toward their ambitions, whether it be in person or virtually.

Thank you, CTE teachers, for inspiring your students. Your tireless dedication helps advance their knowledge, enabling them to explore and master new, long-lasting skills.

In addition to the work of our teachers, partnerships with employers, organizations, and technical colleges help identify and implement real-world skills needed in various industries directly into CTE curriculum. Work-based learning opportunities and internships offered by local businesses give students hands-on experience in the workplace, and dual-credit courses allow students the chance for a head start on their futures.

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Thank you for coordinating youth apprenticeships and offering students these meaningful training opportunities. Your commitment to the future of our students leads seamlessly into degree programs or industry-recognized credentials and directly to jobs.

While these relationships are all vital pieces to the puzzle, often the encouragement of parents and guardians makes the biggest difference in the lives of students. Recognizing the value of these programs and encouraging students to follow their career passions are essential not only to their future, but also to the future of CTE in our state.

The effort of all those in our communities is needed to better support the aspirations of our next generation through CTE. By working together to form new partnerships and grow existing ones, we can improve access to these programs and help achieve our vision of every child graduating college and career ready.

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