



**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY**

MAY 7, 2026

ATTENDANCE: Alisher Burikhanov, Karen Dodd, Beth Engle, Kendra Goodpaster, Lauren Graves, Beth Hargis, Hope Harp, Mike Hesketh, Leah Jefferson, Kyle Kelly, Dexter Knight, Lea Lewis, Harmony Little, Cathy Hoehn, Matt Madding, Tom Thompson, Amy Tracy, Troy Watts, Brian Welch, Michelle Wilson

ABSENT: Jimmy Higdon, Bobby McCool, Max Wise, Michael Yoder, Gerald Brinson, John Phillips, Kayla Williams

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Presenter: Chair Harmony Little, Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)

Summary of Discussion:

Little called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. ET and welcomed the committee.

Agenda Item: Roll Call

Little called the roll and confirmed members who were in attendance. A quorum was declared present.

Agenda Items: Approval of Minutes from Nov. 13, 2025, Meeting

Presenter: Chair Harmony Little, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Summary of Discussion:

Harmony led the approval process for the Nov. 13, 2025 meeting minutes, with Hope Harp making the motion to accept the minutes as presented and Matt Mattingly seconding. The minutes were approved unanimously by acclamation with no edits or questions from the committee.

Agenda Item: Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) Staffing Updates

Presenter: Beth Engle, Division Director, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education

Summary of Discussion:

Engle shared the Office of Career and Technical Education staffing updates with the committee.

Jermaine Poynter was welcomed as the new SkillsUSA State Advisor, from Henderson County Schools where he served as a law and public safety instructor, following a 23-year law enforcement career.

Agenda Item: Accountability

Presenter: Beth Hargis, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education

Summary of Discussion:

Dr. Hargis presented updated accountability data for the 2024-2025 school year, showing significant growth in student participation, credential attainment, and involvement in career and technical student organizations, with input from committee members including Hope Harp and Kyle Kelly.

Student Participation and Credential Attainment: Over 145,000 students in grades 9-12 participated in CTE, with 14,253 graduates earning more than one post-secondary credential. The number of students earning multiple credentials has more than doubled in the past two years.

Concentrator and Graduation Rates: 83.8% of students completed at least two credits in a four-course pathway, and 99.37% of these concentrators graduated, indicating strong completion and graduation rates.

CTSO Participation Trends: More than 76,000 students participated in career and technical student organizations, with participation holding steady in the 77,000 range over the past two years, reflecting continued engagement.

Growth in Dual Credit, Apprenticeships, and Industry Certifications: Dual credit opportunities, registered apprenticeships, end-of-program assessments, and industry certifications have all shown significant growth, with work-based learning opportunities now recognized for funding, incentivizing districts to increase student credentials.

Chronic Absenteeism Reduction: CTE programs, especially area technology centers, have contributed to reducing chronic absenteeism, with rates significantly lower than the state average and aligned with state strategic goals.

Agenda Item: Strategic Plan and State Goals for CTE

Presenter: Beth Hargis, Ed.D. Associate Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education

Summary of Discussion:

Dr. Hargis outlined the Office of Career and Technical Education's vision, mission, and four strategic goals for 2024-2028, focusing on increasing post-secondary readiness, reducing absenteeism, piloting a middle school exploration plan, and boosting teaching pathway completion rates.

Vision and Mission Alignment: The OCTE vision is to empower every CTE student for a successful future, and the mission is to maximize student success through partnerships with districts, schools, families, business, and communities.

Post-Secondary Readiness Goal: The first goal is to increase the percentage of CTE 12th grade cohort students graduating post-secondary ready from 64% in 2024 to 70% by 2028, measured by accountability data.

Chronic Absenteeism Reduction Goal: The second goal aims to decrease the area technology center chronic absenteeism rate from 8.22% in 2024 to 7% by 2028, with the expectation that improvements will positively impact state-wide rates.

Middle School Exploration Plan: The third goal is to collaborate, train staff, and pilot a quality middle school exploration plan by June 2028, leveraging a three-year grant and focusing on student voice and informed decision-making.

Teaching Pathway Completion Goal: The fourth goal is to increase the completion rate of eligible high school students in the teaching and learning pathway from 6% in 2024 to 9% by 2028, in partnership with the Office of Educator Effectiveness.

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Presenter: Lauren Graves, Ph.D., Policy Advisor, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education

Summary of Discussion:

Dr. Lauren Graves provided an overview of recent legislative bills and regulatory changes affecting Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding, teacher certification, and program operations, including House Bill (HB) 500, HB 900, and revisions to 16 KAR 2020, with input from committee members such as Mike Hesketh and Hope Harp.

CTE Funding Changes: HB 500 and HB 900 provide \$70,063,400 and \$14 million, respectively, in supplemental funding for CTE, distributed to local districts and state-operated area technology centers. Additionally, HB 900 provides five million in 27-28 for the Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center to support the Activity Center and classrooms project.

Funding Formula Details: The funding formula for CTE Supplemental funding, per KRS 157.069, includes 60% for weighed full-time equivalent and 40% for performance incentives.

Regulatory Changes to Occupation-based career and technical education certification: Effective April 7, 2026, revisions to 16 KAR 2020 clarify requirements for occupation-based CTE teacher certification, notably removing the associate's degree requirement for electricity, plumbing, and HVAC if a Kentucky-issued master license is held.

Other Legislative Highlights: Bills such as HB 67, HB 555, HB 727, SB 9, SB 4, and SB 98 address communication systems, student-based enterprise sales, FFA Leadership Training Center management, maternity leave policies, principal leadership practicum, and welding certification requirements, respectively.

Agenda Item: Occupation-Based Teacher Certification

Presenter: Lauren Graves, Ph.D., Policy Advisor, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education

Summary of Discussion:

Committee members, including Harmony, Hope Harp, Matt Madding, Michelle Wilson, Leah Jefferson, Troy Watts, Mike Hesketh, and Alisher Burikhanov, engaged in a detailed discussion on simplifying occupation-based teacher certification, debating the necessity of associate's degrees, industry experience, and local input, with Dr. Graves seeking feedback for future regulatory changes.

Degree Versus Experience Requirements: Members discussed whether an associate's degree should be required for all occupation-based CTE teachers, with several advocating for prioritizing industry experience, especially in skilled trades, over formal education.

Pathway-Specific Certification Models: The group considered whether certification requirements should vary by pathway, such as requiring a master license for electricians but not necessarily an associate's degree and recognized the need for flexibility based on program area.

Community and Local Input: Mike Hesketh and others suggested leveraging community input and local assessment to identify qualified instructors, especially for high-need positions, and referenced House Bill 257's changes to local community involvement.

Adjunct Certification and Dual Credit Challenges: Dexter Knight raised questions about adjunct certification as a pathway for new teachers, and Harmony explained the complexities of dual credit instructor credentialing across KCTCS colleges, noting accreditation-driven requirements.

Marketing and Recruitment for Retirees: Alisher Burikhanov highlighted the need for clear marketing and structured pathways to attract retirees from industry and labor unions into teaching positions, especially in skilled trades.

Agenda Topic: Grants and Awards

Presenter: Beth Hargis, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education

Summary of Discussion:

Dr. Hargis reported on the middle school exploration grant and CTE Innovation Grants, describing collaborative efforts with other states and districts to develop quality exploration plans and distribute mini grants, with Harmony requesting future updates on funded innovations.

Middle School Exploration Grant: A \$30,000 grant was used to collaborate with four other states and develop a middle school exploration plan, with \$25,000 allocated for five \$5,000 mini grants to districts to pilot and refine the plan.

Quality Measures and Curriculum Development: The grant aims to establish quality measures for exploration experiences, moving beyond simple exposure to meaningful engagement, and to create curriculum and content that can be adapted by schools.

CTE Innovation Grants: Five \$100,000 grants were awarded to districts for CTE innovation, with ongoing efforts to improve marketing and stakeholder communication about available opportunities.

Future Updates Requested: Harmony requested that the committee receive updates at the November meeting on funded innovations and progress with the middle school exploration plan.

Apprenticeship Program Growth and Legislative Barriers: Kyle Kelly inquired about legislative barriers to apprenticeship participation, prompting Dr. Hargis and Hope Harp to clarify that there are no significant age-related legislative restrictions, and to describe successful models and strategies for increasing apprenticeship opportunities.

Legislative Barriers and Age Requirements: Dr. Hargis explained that there are no major legislative barriers preventing students from participating in apprenticeships, with business partners able to hire students through agencies like Adecco to address workers' compensation concerns.

Work-Based Learning and Insurance Coverage: Hope Harp described how participation in CTE programs and work-based learning removes many hazardous occupation restrictions, with students covered by school insurance during their placements.

Employer Education and Outreach: The committee discussed the need for presentations and outreach to employers to dispel myths about hiring students and to promote the benefits and protections of apprenticeship programs.

Growth and Capacity in Skilled Trades: Hope Harp noted significant growth in skilled trades apprenticeships, attributing success to the track program and increased OCTE outreach, while acknowledging capacity limitations in accepting all interested students.

Summer Conference Planning Update: Cathy Hoehn provided a brief update on the upcoming summer conference, noting that proposals and sessions are full and that the event will occupy all available space, with Dexter Knight and others involved in planning.

Conference Scheduling and Participation: Cathy Hoehn reported that the draft schedule is being finalized, session proposals are full, and the conference will utilize all available space, indicating strong participation and engagement.

Agenda Item: Questions, Feedback, Reflection and Adjournment

Presenter: Chair Harmony Little, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Summary of Discussion:

Occupation-Based Teacher Certification Feedback: Collect and review feedback from recently hired CTE teachers regarding their experience with obtaining an associate's degree and its benefits and assess alignment and waiver processes between KDE and post-secondary institutions.

Occupation-Based Teacher Certification Alternatives: Reach out to Hope for insights on supporting field-to-teaching transitions and education portions for occupation-based teacher certification.

Middle School Exploration Plan and Innovation Grants Update: Prepare an update for the November meeting on funded CTE Innovation Grants and progress of the middle school exploration plan.

CTE Stakeholder Communication Materials: Develop and distribute a presentation or materials for employers (e.g., contractor days) clarifying student work-based learning, hazardous occupation exemptions, and insurance coverage to address misconceptions and encourage apprenticeship participation.

CTE Legislative Session PowerPoint Distribution: Send out the PowerPoint presentation from the meeting to all participants.

The meeting adjourned at 2:06 p.m. by unanimous acclamation.