"This class challenges me in ways school hasn't challenged me before. In all my other classes you're just learning some things that might come in handy in the real world. These classes are like you're already in the real world."

Jeremie Fernando, 17
Sumner High School senior, Information Technology

"WSECU has been in partnership with career & technical education for more than 20 years. We have hired dozens of CTE employees and they are among our very best."

Ann Flannigan
VP/Public Relations, Washington State Employees Credit Union

CTE: An Investment in Success

Career paths that pay off

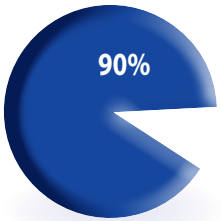
Career and technical education (CTE) connects students in a hands-on way to what they are learning, whether it's witnessing the complex chemistry behind the internal combustion engine or writing a detailed quarterly business report.

Academics and job skills, when taught together, can focus a student's attention on career goals and provide the tools to reach those goals.

CTE programs of study help students take their next educational or career step, allowing them to earn both high school and college credits while delving deeper into a particular field. Workforce Board research shows that both the student and the public benefit from relevant, applied learning that engages students and connects them to the work experience.

Employer Satisfaction

Employers continue to express satisfaction with new hires who complete a CTE or postsecondary professional/technical program. In response to the Workforce Board's employer survey, more than 90 percent of employers said they were somewhat to very satisfied with the overall productivity, work quality, job-specific skills and teamwork of their new hires from CTE.



More than nine out of 10 employers were satisfied with new hires who had career and technical training.

CTE Provides Skills for Today and Innovations for Tomorrow

Even in a down economy, employers need job-ready workers with specific skills. More than four out of five employers who found it difficult to fill positions said too many job candidates lacked occupational skills. But employers also need workers who can learn on the job, adapt to changing situations and, whenever possible, innovate. Because career and technical education programs pair relevant, applied learning with real world work experience, CTE students are able to take their education beyond the classroom and identify what they need to know to get the job done today-and in the future.

Return on Investment

Workforce Board studies routinely show CTE and professional/technical students pay back the public's investment in their education by earning more and therefore paying more in taxes.

- **Public cost:** $920
- **Pay back:** $6,600

Return on investment: Seven times the original public investment

(Based on the public costs for a student to complete high school CTE or Skills Center program compared to the additional taxes generated on average by CTE completers.)

Greater Need for Investment

Our current supply of newly prepared workers from community and technical colleges, apprenticeship programs, and private career colleges is sufficient to fill just 92 percent of the new jobs by 2012. That 8 percent gap will grow bigger without a sustained investment in career and technical education programs.

As the job market tightens, young people will need to think strategically about their education and skills, and what steps to take to position themselves for higher paying, in-demand careers. Because CTE brings what's happening in industry directly into the classroom, students stay on top of current trends and changes and can transition to the workplace with skills and knowledge that add value right away.

"A significant portion of our technical workforce is expected to retire over the next 10 years. Support for technical education is an important investment."

Jeff Callender
Public Affairs & Communications
ConocoPhillips refinery in Ferndale

"In well designed models of CTE, students have lower dropout rates, higher test scores, higher graduation rates, higher postsecondary enrollment rates, and higher earnings than students who do not enroll in CTE."

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Institute for a Competitive Workforce

CTE pays off at every level

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL—Students who complete a CTE sequence in high school or a Skills Center are more likely to get jobs that pay more per hour than similar students who did not complete a CTE program. They earn $840 more per year than their peers. They also have employment rates that are 6.7 percentage points above those who didn't complete a CTE sequence.*

Additional annual earnings: $840

Additional employment: 6.7 percentage points

COLLEGE LEVEL—Students who complete a community or technical college job preparatory program are more likely to be employed than their counterparts who don't complete one by 13 percentage points and will earn an additional $4.07 an hour on average, and $7,700 more per year.*

Additional annual earnings: $7,700

Additional employment: 13 percentage points

PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES and TECHNICAL SCHOOLS—Students who complete a private career college or technical school program are more likely to be employed than their counterparts who don't complete one by 7.3 percentage points and earn an additional $2.26 an hour on average, and $3,500 more per year.*

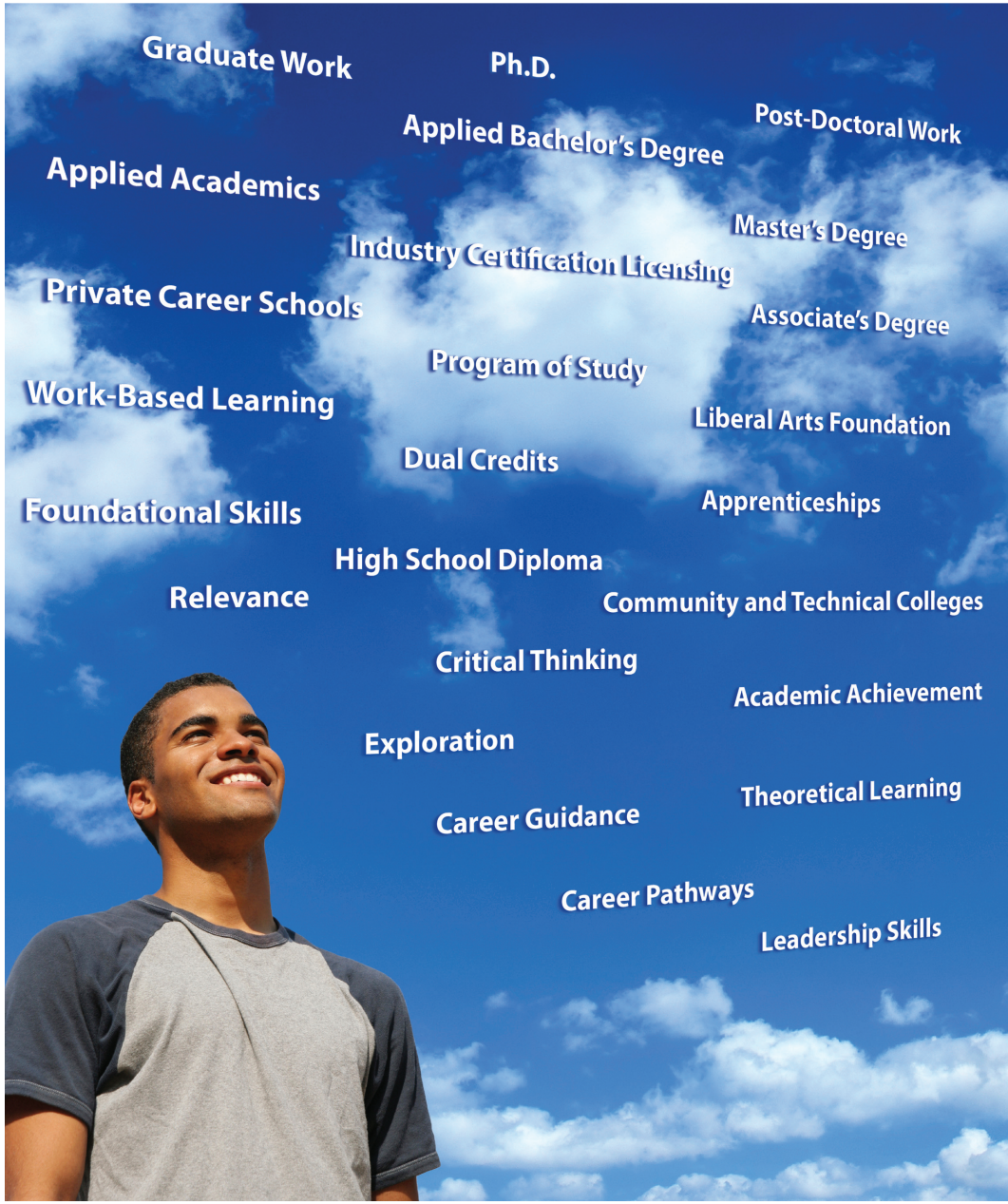
Additional annual earnings: $3,500

Additional employment: 7.3 percentage points

*Figures derived from impacts observed seven to nine months after leaving both high school and college-level CTE programs as reported in Workforce Training Results 2008.

The Workforce Board is a partnership of labor, business and government dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.

Invest in Success



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Career and Technical Education

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