

# ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

## **Q: WHAT IS CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION?**

**A:** Career Technical Education combines high academic expectations with the relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare students for additional education or careers in high-demand professions. Through Career Technical Education, students can gain technical skill proficiency as well as an industry-recognized credential, certificate or associate degree that allows them to enter the job market sooner and better prepared to be successful.

## **Q: WHY SHOULD STUDENTS CONSIDER CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION?**

**A:** Career Technical education exposes students to a variety of career fields that offer ready employment and a competitive wage. Students in Career Technical Education can be prepared for work with just two years or less of training and education beyond high school – in many cases they can begin college-level coursework while still in high school.

In addition, Career Technical Education can lead to an industry-recognized credential, which provides a leg up in a competitive job market. The high wages that can result from attaining an industry credential can help finance additional education at a four-year university to provide for even further career advancement.

## **Q: CAN A TECHNICAL CAREER REALLY PROVIDE A DECENT WAGE?**

**A:** Absolutely. Individuals who earn an industry credential earn an average of 20 percent more than high school educated workers – that's about \$240,000 more in lifetime earnings. In addition, the starting wage for Kansas careers requiring an associate degree is 60 percent higher than for those that only require a high school diploma. Associate degrees earned in select technical fields offer strong earning potential:

- Dental Hygienist - \$62,670
- Registered Nurse - \$58,750
- Heating, Air Conditioning Mechanic and Installer - \$43,430
- Bus/Truck Mechanic and Diesel Engine Specialist - \$40,310
- Surgical Technologists - \$38,400

**Q: ARE THERE INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION?**

**A:** A recent statewide initiative is providing a number of incentives for high school students to pursue Career Technical Education. Funding is now available to:

- Cover tuition costs for high school students enrolled in a Career Technical Education course at a nearby community or technical college.
- Assist school districts in transporting participating students to and from the community or technical college.
- Cover up to half the cost of an industry-recognized credential assessment in a high need area for high school students enrolled in Career Technical Education.

In addition, a number of Career Technical Education secondary courses are recognized through articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions. Through the agreements, high school students can be granted free college credit, recognition as meeting entrance requirements and/or substitute for postsecondary experiences. A complete list of the available articulation agreements are available by following the Career Technical Education link at [www.ksde.org](http://www.ksde.org).

**Q: WHAT OTHER BENEFITS ARE THERE TO CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION?**

**A:** In Kansas, students concentrating in Career Technical Education tend to have a higher graduation rate than the general student population, and a majority of those students graduate on time.<sup>1</sup> Most students who graduate having concentrated in Career Technical Education are employed, in the military or enrolled in postsecondary education within six months of graduation.<sup>2</sup>

**Q: WHAT DOES CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION LOOK LIKE IN HIGH SCHOOL?**

**A:** Kansas uses the National Career Cluster model. Under the model, job skill sets are grouped according to similarities into 16 fields of study known as Career Clusters. Within the Career Clusters, the skill sets are further refined into pathways related to occupational areas within the cluster. Kansas has established 31 pathways within the Career Clusters.

**Q: HOW ARE CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION PATHWAYS DEVELOPED?**

**A:** The demands of the economy, both now and in the future, inform which Career Technical Education pathways are developed, as well as support established pathways. New pathways are developed in collaboration with business and industry advisors and are based on the most appropriate, reliable and valid technical standards available. Pathways are evaluated based on academic success, attainment of technical skills, employability and student success in further education and employment.

**Q: HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN MY SCHOOL?**

**A:** Visit [KANSASWORKS.com/careerzoom](http://KANSASWORKS.com/careerzoom) for more information on Career Technical Education.

<sup>1</sup>Kansas' Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) for the Carl D. Perkins Career Technical Education Act of 2006, 2009-2010

<sup>2</sup>Kansas' Consolidated Annual Report (CAR) for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, 2009-2010