



March **, 2022

Governor Kathy Hochul
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
Room 330
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12247

Assemblymember Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Re: State Support for Career and Technical Education Programs

Dear Governor Hochul, Senator Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie:

On behalf of the groups who have signed below and who strongly support Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for New York's students, we are asking for your assistance to ensure these highly effective programs can be sustained and expanded through an increased state investment.

District and BOCES based Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have proven highly effective in helping to provide students with the essential skills they require to successfully transition to college and career. In addition, CTE programs help ensure that businesses in New York have skilled workers, which is essential to their success and that of the state's economy. Despite these important contributions and proven successes, the state's funding for CTE programs has not kept pace with program needs.

The current reimbursement for BOCES CTE teachers provides only up to \$30,000 per CTE teacher to component districts. This amount has not been increased since 1990. This leaves a large gap between what a district is reimbursed and the salary of teachers in the CTE programs. The difference in cost has to then be covered by local tax revenue in each participating component district.

The Big 5 city school districts and other non-component school districts receive state funding for CTE programs through Special Services Aid. However, the \$3,900 per pupil formula-based funding cap falls far short of meeting the cost of CTE programs and excludes funding for 9th grade students. The Big 5 school districts are heavily reliant on state funds and don't have the ability to raise local revenue given their fiscal dependency. Furthermore, there is no expectation that their respective municipalities will increase their local share of spending for education.

To ensure the sustainability and growth of these programs, we ask that you include the following in the 2022-23 Final Budget proposal:

- ***Increase the “aidable” salary for Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors to \$60,000 over the next three school years;***
 - *\$40,000 for SY 2022-23, \$50,000 for SY 2023-24, \$60,000 SY 2024,*
 - *This increase would be more reflective of current salary scales; and*
- ***Increase the per pupil cap and expand funding to 9th grade students for special services aid that is provided to the Big 5 school districts and other non-component school districts for CTE programs.***

As fixed costs (including contractual salary increases and health insurance) continue to rise the ability of local districts to continue to increase support to maintain existing CTE programs is in jeopardy. At the same time, in many regions and industries, demand for trained, skilled employees is increasing. CTE programs not only prepare students to enter the health care industry, but they are also leaders in training certified mechanical and electrical engineers and almost future employees for all aspects of the hospitality industry. However, demand is outpacing supply. Without updated and increased state support, school districts will not be able to continue to support programs at a participation level that allows these programs to expand and meet the student and industry needs, while still being mindful of local taxpayers and the tax cap.

CTE programs are a proven tool, helping students achieve academic and career success, and provide a proven alternative model for academic and career success. In 2019-20, nearly 40,000 students developed college and career-ready skills through their BOCES CTE program. 90% of BOCES CTE students graduated, a rate higher than the statewide average and while a significant number of students were able to enter the workforce from these programs, many students also went on to college. The Big 5 school districts and other non-component school districts also operate innovative and successful CTE programs. In many cases, graduation rates for pupils in these programs far exceed their district averages.

CTE programs are not just beneficial for students, but also for the business community. Many of these programs have been designed in collaboration with local businesses to ensure the programs provide students with the skills which are required by employers, and employers have a pipeline of skilled future employees. In 2019-20, more than 5,000 businesses had representatives serve on BOCES CTE advisory councils. The Big 5 districts also work with industry leaders to expand programs to meet growing workforce demands.

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations strongly support Career and Technical Education Programs for students attending New York state public schools. We ask that you support these programs by including an increase in both the aidable salary for BOCES CTE instructors and Special Services Aid for CTE programs in the Big 5 school districts and other non-component school districts as part of the 2022-23 Final Budget proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at kmacdonald@gvboces.org.

Sincerely,

Kevin MacDonald
Chair, BOCES Educational Consortium
District Superintendent and CEO Genesee Valley BOCES

CC: Senator Shelley Mayer
Assemblyman Michael Benedetto
Michael Smingler
Terry Pratt
Dan Fuller
Michael Mastroianni

