

Summary: Skilled Trades Industry Advisory for Career Technical Education

November 30, 2021

NMPED Overview

Thank you to all industry members for your willingness to donate your time and equipment to support students and the community. The recently signed \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill will rebuild our nation's roads, bridges and rails, give Americans access to high-speed internet, address environmental issues, and provide clean drinking water to American households. This will add an average of 1.5 million jobs over the next ten years, many in the skilled trades sector.

Unemployment is highest when a person does not have a high school diploma. People without a four-year degree, but with a trade credential or an associate degree, fared better during the pandemic-related recession. High school students need to know the benefits of short-term credentials offered in postsecondary programming. PED is eager to align high school programs and postsecondary skilled training programs to ensure we have a vibrant pipeline of potential skilled workers.

Using an instant Word Cloud survey, NMPED asked attending industry leaders: *What are your 3 biggest employment needs right now?* As can be seen in the resulting image, responses can be broken into three categories:

- 1. Specific skills or trades
- 2. Employability skills
- 3. Attitude and personal characteristics

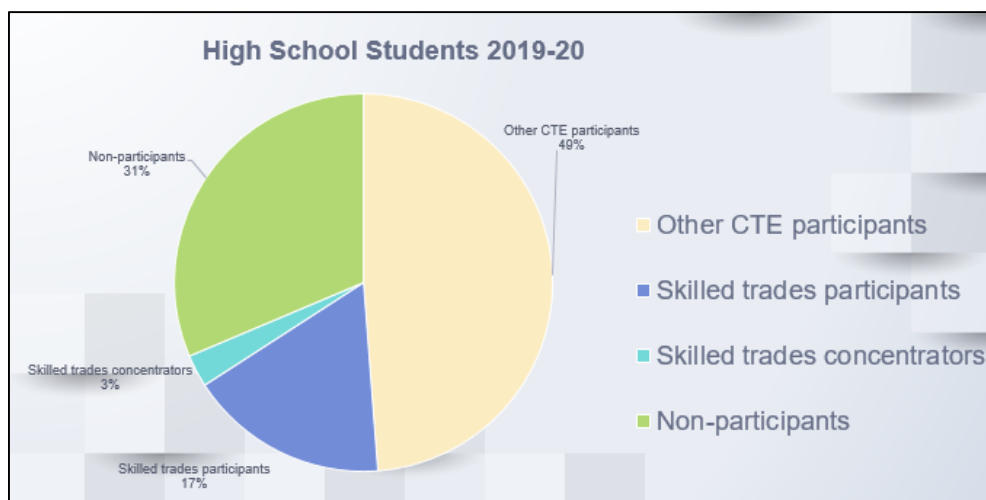


All federal CTE grant funds – and half of state CTE grant funds – must support programs that align with economic priorities. To facilitate this process, NMPED created 10 CTE regions, each of which conducted a comprehensive local needs assessment to review local labor market information and determine their funding priorities. Funding high school CTE programming is an essential first step in ensuring students have knowledge of employment opportunities. Funded programs should be well-aligned with postsecondary programs so that students can transition smoothly into sophisticated technical training.

All CTE regions in New Mexico identified one or more of the following skilled trades as priorities:

- Construction Trades
- Drafting
- Manufacturing
- Transportation
- Welding

High school students are the next generation of skilled tradesmen and women. 70% of students take at least one CTE course during high school, but only 17% of students take a skilled trades class. Just 3% of students take two skilled trades classes within the same program—which means 97% of high school students are an untapped potential pipeline into skilled trades jobs. Quality, engaging courses taught by well-informed teachers who know the community’s workforce needs are essential for turning this potential source of workers into the skilled workforce we need.



Breakout Sessions

NMPED asked skilled trades industry representatives two questions regarding ideas to support quality educational programs and opportunities to promote high quality CTE programs across the state:

1. *What is one thing that can be done to improve high school or postsecondary skilled trade programs?*

The overwhelming response from participants was the need for open lines of communication between education and industry, in order to resolve disconnects in what educational programs are currently offered to students. Employers need students to come in with basic employability or soft skills that will help them in the workplace. Skills such as communication, arriving to work on time, working as part of a team, etc. are very important. Additionally, the majority wanted to see opportunities to increase collaboration to discuss how internships, job-shadowing, and other experiences in work-based learning can be implemented to support students and better prepare them for the workforce.

2. *What can your company do to support programs in Skilled Trades (either high school or postsecondary)?*

The promotion of hands-on experiences and on-the-job training for students while still in school, whether secondary or post-secondary, came through as a top priority for employers. They are hoping to build stronger partnerships with the schools so that they have direct contacts when they have a need for employees in specific areas. Many agreed to provide tours of their facilities and/or provide overviews to the school programs in some fashion, such as video in-person interviews or career fairs, so students are

better exposed to skilled-trade job opportunities. Employers pointed to some strong programs that are already in effect around the state and encouraged educators to replicate these practices in more areas.

Next Steps

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment meetings will take place regionally over the next several months, with an emphasis on reviewing existing programs, considering how well programming met the goals of the prior application, and identifying best uses of future CTE funding at both the secondary and postsecondary level. Funding applications will be submitted in late spring for funding awards in Summer 2022. Employers are encouraged to partner with a teacher, principal, district leader, or regional representative to help identify specific practices that will strengthen programs that meet local needs.

If you want more information about providing program-level input for how funds can improve CTE, please reach out to get more involved.

- Elaine Perea, PhD, Director of College and Career Readiness
 - Phone: 505-469-3475
 - Email: Elaine.Perea@state.nm.us
- Victoria Denise Ojeda, College and Career Readiness
 - Phone: 505-490-2160
 - Email: Victoria.Ojeda@state.nm.us
- Regional CTE coaches are on NMPED's website: [College and Career Readiness Staff – New Mexico Public Education Department \(state.nm.us\)](#)