

Supporting Students in Rural Communities

Presented by:
John Glasgow

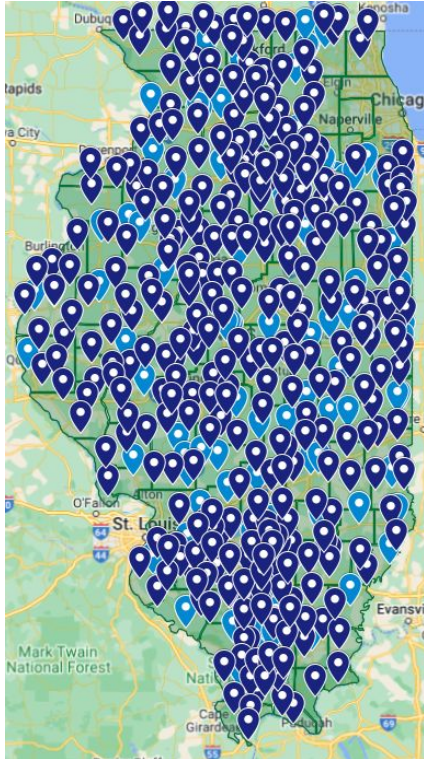
Program Director
The Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools



Background & Overview



Rural Illinois at a Glance



- 489 districts are small town or country
 - NCES 30s (town) and 40s (rural)
 - REAP eligible helps determine rurality
- 271 rural districts are high need
- Most attention and opportunities still go to the minority of districts
- This is why AIRSS exists

The Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools

- The only organization dedicated to serve as the Voice for Illinois rural and small schools
- Policy advocacy and collaborative partnerships at the local, state, and national levels
- Our work is guided by three simple values:
 - **Voice** – engaged listeners and tireless advocates
 - **Access** – networking to open spaces historically without much rural participation
 - **Leadership** – enabling capacity growth

Rural IL CTE Project



- AIRSS is partnering with ISBE to review the resource needs and equity gaps in rural CTE programming
- A unique chance for rural schools to voice their needs, challenges, and successes
- Objectives:
 - Research the difficulties of building rural CTE pathways
 - Provide technical assistance and tools to rural schools

Research Findings



Major Research Findings

318

6

55

70

300

Table of Contents

A Note from the Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools.....

Executive Summary.....

- Rural IL CTE Surveys.....
- Rural CTE Focus Group Conversations.....
- Additional Conversations and Consultations.....
- Rural CTE Advisory Council.....
- Recommendations.....

Introduction.....

Methodology.....

- Previous Work.....
- Defining Rural.....
- Surveys.....
- Focus Groups.....
- Additional Conversations and Consultations.....
- Advisory Council.....

Summary of Findings.....

- Surveys**.....
 - Rural IL CTE Survey.....
 - Rural IL CTE Teacher Survey.....
- Rural IL CTE Focus Groups**.....
 - CTE Professional Learning Communities.....
 - Community Colleges and Higher Education.....
 - Community Partnerships.....
 - School-to-School Collaboration.....
 - Focus Group Findings.....
- Additional Conversations and Consultations**.....
 - Rural CTE Advisory Council.....
 - January Meeting: CTE Program Growth and Support.....
 - February Meeting: Major CTE Challenges.....
 - March Meeting: Rural IL CTE Survey Findings Review.....
 - April Meeting: Student Perceptions of CTE.....
 - May Meeting: Rural IL CTE Teacher Survey Findings Review.....
 - June Meeting: Rural IL CTE Project Findings Review.....
 - Advisory Council Findings.....

Analysis & Recommendations.....

Conclusion.....

Appendices.....

Growing Rural IL Success through CTE Programs

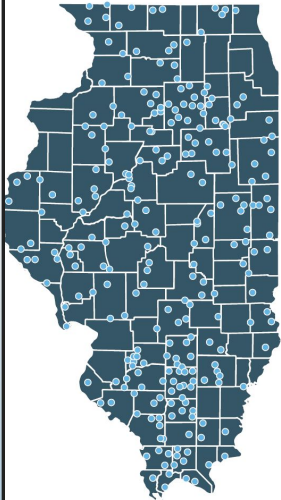
A report of research and recommendations for equitable Career and Technical Education programming in Illinois rural and small schools

JULY 2024

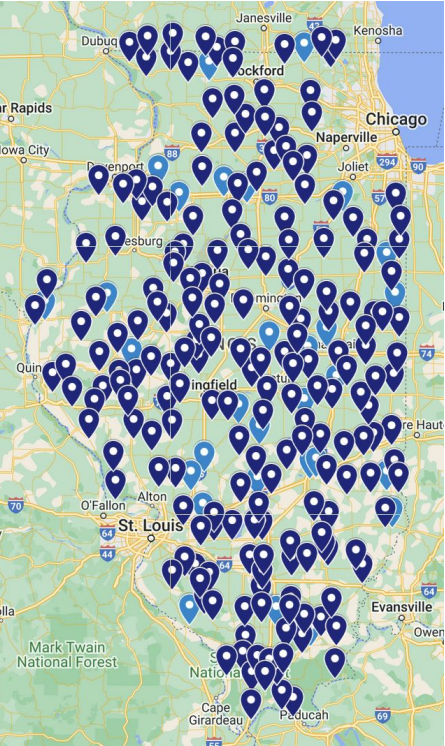


Appendices

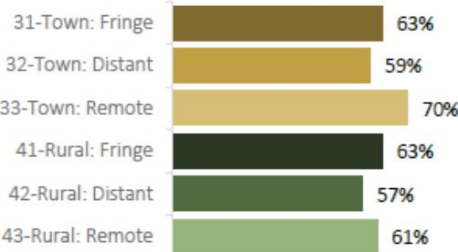
Appendix A: Map of Illinois Rural Schools Contacted for the Rural IL CTE Project



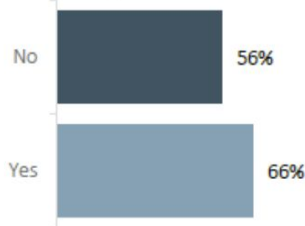
Rural IL CTE Survey: School Administrators



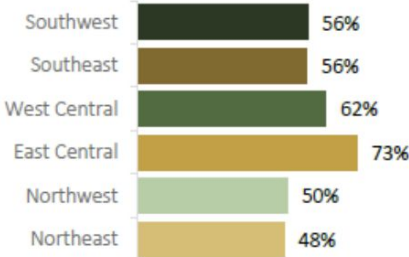
Response Rate by Locale



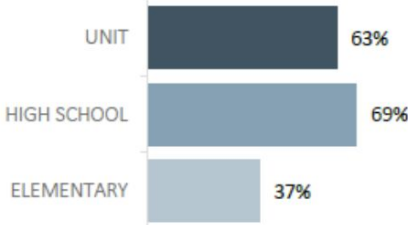
Response Rate by REAP Eligible



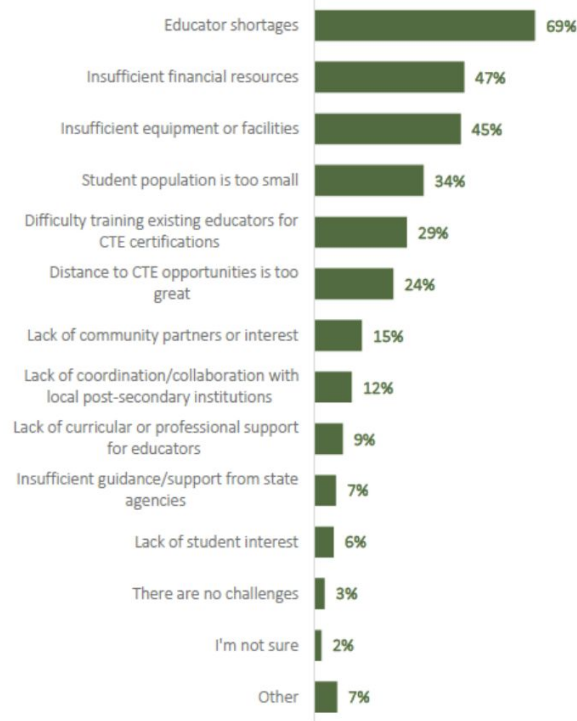
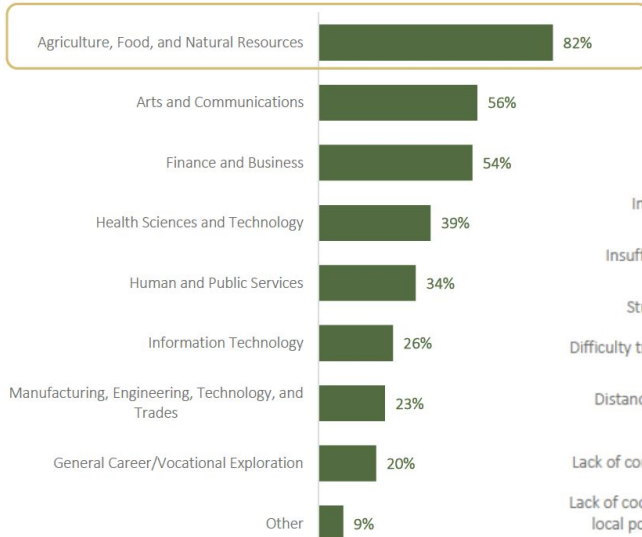
Responses Rate by Area



Response Rate by District Type



Rural IL CTE Survey: School Administrators



- 50% response rate: 237 of 468
- 91% of Rural districts offer CTE, most of which is Ag Education
- Yet, CTE is not well aligned with projected rural occupation growth
- Student interest is high, but low support & poor understanding of CTE from the government and community a challenge for growth
- Scheduling and limited workers and resources a primary issue in transportation, not necessarily distance

Rural IL CTE Survey: CTE Teachers

Figure 9: CTE Teachers' Perceptions of Students...

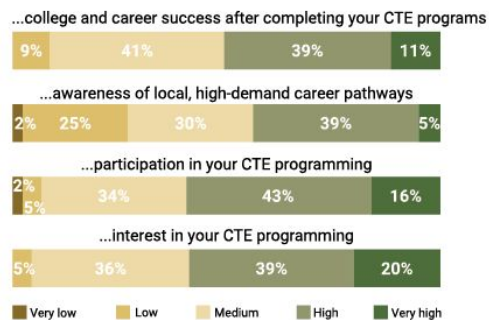


Figure 10: CTE Course Alignment by Teachers

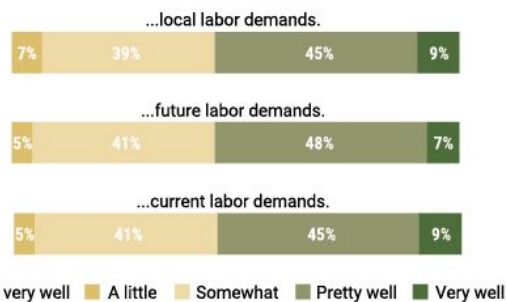
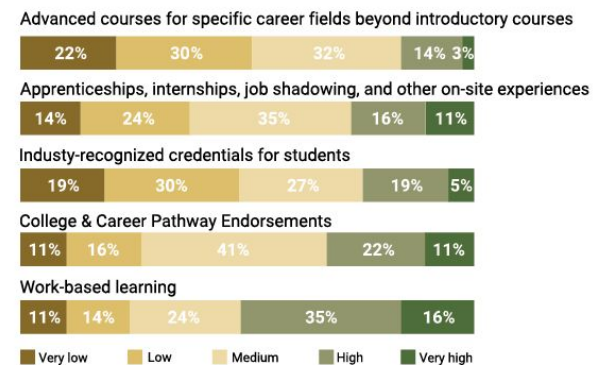
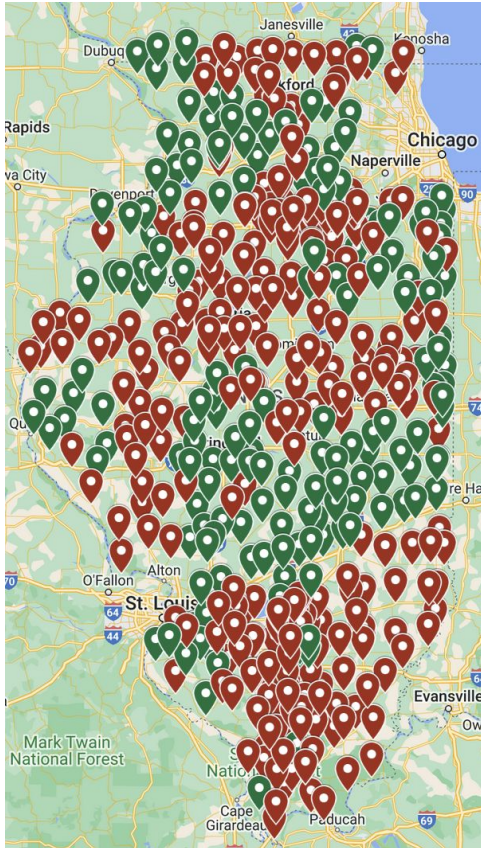


Figure 12: CTE Course Capacity to Offer



- Lower long-term student success despite high interest and participation
- Strong course alignment to labor demands, but needs context
- Lack of instructors and program support a major barrier to program growth

Focus Group & Other Conversation Findings



- CTE funding should be increased and focused on adequacy
- Regional CTE organizations are essential and critically under-supported
- Stereotypes about CTE are rampant and damaging
- Coordination for dual credit is weak
- CTE courses have issues:
 - Low focus on lower grades
 - Barriers to collaboration
 - CTE segregation
- Despite challenges, some programs are strong

Rural CTE Advisory Council Meetings



*Creativity with
Scarce Resources*

Keys to CTE Success:



*Focus on Student
Outcomes*

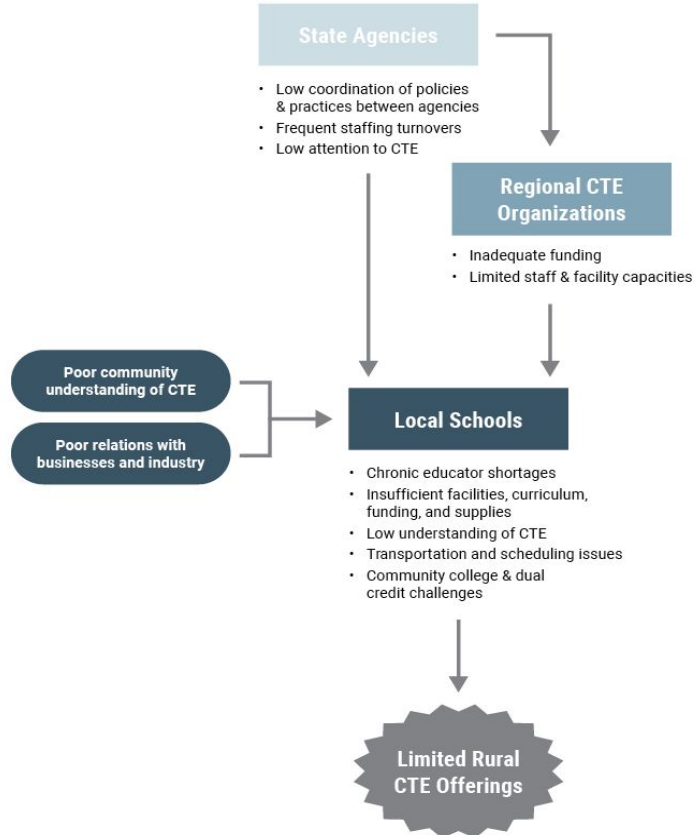


*Invest in Teacher Recruitment
& Retention*



*CTE Needs More
Definition & Models*

System Analysis



- **State Level**
 - Low financial support despite economic and social importance and impact of CTE, and verbal commitments to support CTE
 - Low coordination among parallel state efforts (dual credit especially)
- **Community/Regional Level**
 - Poor networking between schools and workforce
 - Low capacity of regional organizations to help rural districts
- **School Level**
 - Difficulties collaborating with each other
 - Poor networking with workforce partners
 - Weak alignment to major rural economic drivers
- **All around poor understanding and awareness of CTE**

Action Areas

	Policy	Practice
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Advocate for making CTE a required part of every student's learning, not just an elective → Advocate for more robust funding of local and regional CTE efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Foster more cross-agency, cross-department collaborations → Bring schools and community colleges to the table together
Community /Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Explore and institute clearer regulations for allowing high school interns → Cultivate a practice of including school representatives at strategic employment meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Attend your local Education for Employment Regional Delivery System meetings → Consider how your staff and facilities could support the education process
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Incorporate more core curriculum material in CTE courses so they count toward graduation credit → Adopt a more flexible bell schedule to allow for easier travel to CTE learning opportunities → Create a CTE advisory council of workforce and community partners → Extend the PaCE Framework to Kindergarten 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Adopt a more flexible and collaborative approach toward working with other districts in support of student success → Consider co-teaching models or opportunities with workforce partners → Partner with your local workforce innovation board to align CTE programming to employment needs and connect students with assistance → Invest in the school itself as a site for work-based learning in all fields

Next Steps & Current Work



Next Steps



Research

- Deepen existing efforts
- Explore new topics



Technical Assistance

- More resources
- Marketing campaign



Policy & Advocacy

- Rural school summit
- Lobby for stronger funding

Current Work

1) School Support

3) CTE Understanding

2) Regional Support

4) State Unity

Research

- School & CTE Funding Models (1 & 2)
- Expanding Rural CTE Survey (1 & 3)

Policy & Advocacy

- Continuing Advisory Council (all)
- Collaborating with CTE Advocates (all)
- Sharing and applying research (all)

Technical Assistance

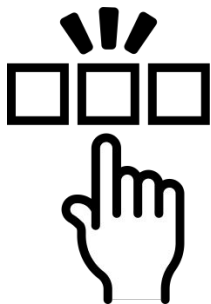
- Rural School Summit (1, 3 & 4)
- Prairie Career Advocate (1 & 3)
- Expand Asset Map (1 & 2)
- CTE Teacher Workshops (1 & 2)
- Pilot Programs (1, 2 & 3)

Your Role



Your Role back Home

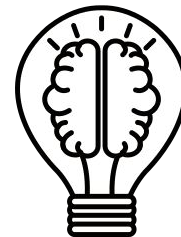
The Rural IL CTE Project can help you:



**Pilot new pathways
based on local data**



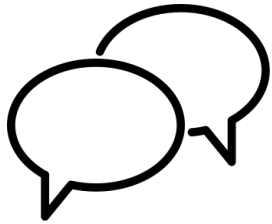
**Build partnerships
between education
and workforce**



**Find grants, learn
from others, and
access additional
resources**

Your Role in Collaboration

The Rural IL CTE Project wants to work with you to:



**Share your
perspectives**



**Understand the
needs of your
rural schools**



**Collaborate on
innovative
rural CTE**

Thoughts & Questions?



SCAN HERE

or visit airssedu.org/cte

for rural CTE support, tools, and resources

Email: john@airssedu.org