



ILLINOIS EDUCATION AND CAREER
SUCCESS NETWORK

Success Network Policy Committee

Q1 Meeting

March 11, 2026



Welcome & Introductions

Please share in the chat:

- Your name and organization
- Your favorite spring activity

Agenda

A recording of today's meeting will be shared at ILSuccessNetwork.org/Policy-Committee

- Welcome and Introductions
- Leadership Community Spotlight:
Student Voice in CTE at Whiteside
- Student Spotlight: CTE Participation
on the Success Network Dashboard
- College and Career Pathway
Endorsements Scale Update
- State and Federal Policy Updates
 - Legislative Session Update
 - Dual Credit Quality Act
 - Updated ESSA Plan
 - Workforce Pell
- Discussion: Statewide Goal Setting
- Upcoming Events and Resources
- Closing

Leadership Community Spotlight: Student Voice in CTE at Whiteside



Josh Johnson
Executive Director



Whiteside Area Career Center



**Thank you for your
support of WACC!**



History of WACC

WACC first opened in 1966

It was the first Career Center of it's kind in the state of Illinois to serve exclusively 11th and 12th graders attending local high schools.



Original Districts

Sterling
Newman
Erie
Fulton
Lyndon
Morrison
Prophetstown
Tampico

1969 Additions

Rock Falls
Polo
Milledgeville
Thomson

Current Districts

Amboy	Morrison
Ashton Franklin Center	Ohio
Bureau Valley	Oregon
Dixon	Polo
Eastland	Prophetstown
Erie	Rock Falls
Forreston	Sterling
Fulton	Newman
Milledgeville	Faith Christian

History



My History

- Educator for 16 years
- High School Principal for 3
- Director at WACC for 8



How can we be intentional???

- Evaluation of what we offer
- Interest in what we don't

Survey History

- 2nd year administering
- Working document

Methods



How is the survey administered?

- 18 district counselors
 - Forward the link to students
- Link sent to student email
 - Many districts block out time during the school day
- Challenges
 - TIME!
 - Student participation
 - Taking the survey only once!



Student Enrollment:

FY16 - 604
FY17 - 602
FY18 - 586
FY19 - 550
FY20 - 636
FY21 - 566
FY22 - 593
FY23 - 664
FY24 - 676
FY25 - 722
FY26 - 727

Tuition

FY16 - \$1150
FY17 - \$1150
FY18 - \$1155
FY19 - \$1155
FY20 - \$1155
FY21 - \$1155
FY22 - \$1155
FY23 - \$1155
FY24 - \$1155
FY25 - \$1155
FY26 - \$1155

Main sources of funding:

- Student Tuition
- CTEI (State) Grant
- Perkins (Federal) Grant
- Private Donations

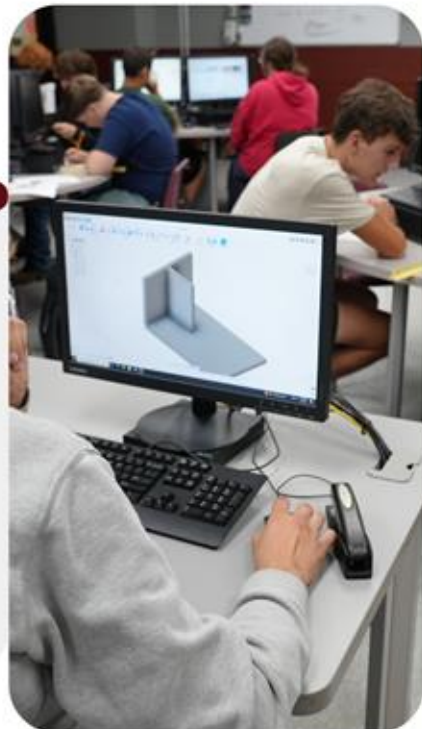


WACC Grows!

Developing New Ideas Every Day!



Targeted Professions



📌 Current Programs:

- Automotive Technology (X2)
- Allied Health - 3 Dual Credits
- Building Trades - On the Job Training
- CEO - 3 Dual Credits
- Cosmetology - Internal Credit
- Criminal Justice - Future possibilities
- Culinary Arts - 3 Dual Credits
- Digital Media Arts - 12 Dual Credits
- Early Childhood - 4 Dual Credits
- Health Occupations - 8 Dual Credits
- Welding, Machining & Manufacturing - 10 Dual Credits

Google Forms



FY26 CTE (Career and Technical Education) Interest Survey for 9-11th graders

Form description

Name *

Short answer text

Email *

Short answer text

School *



**Over 1600 students
participated in the survey!!**

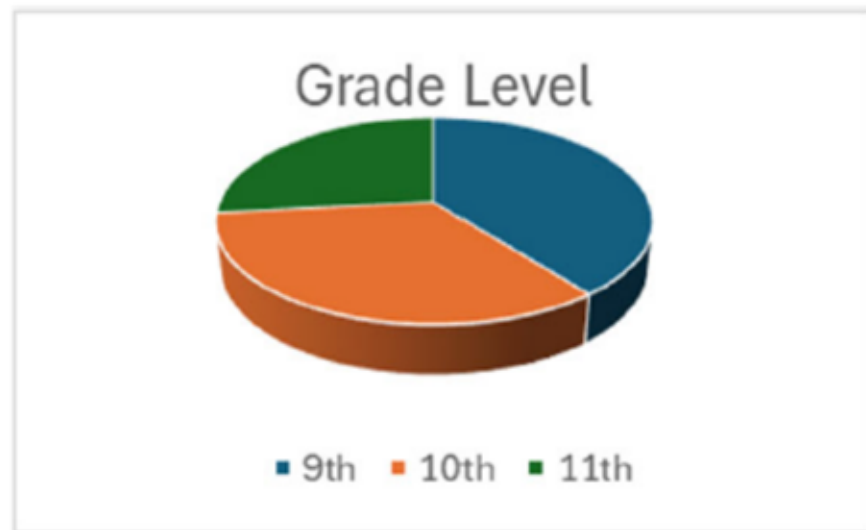
Student Grade Levels Represented

9th - 646

10th - 552

11th - 437

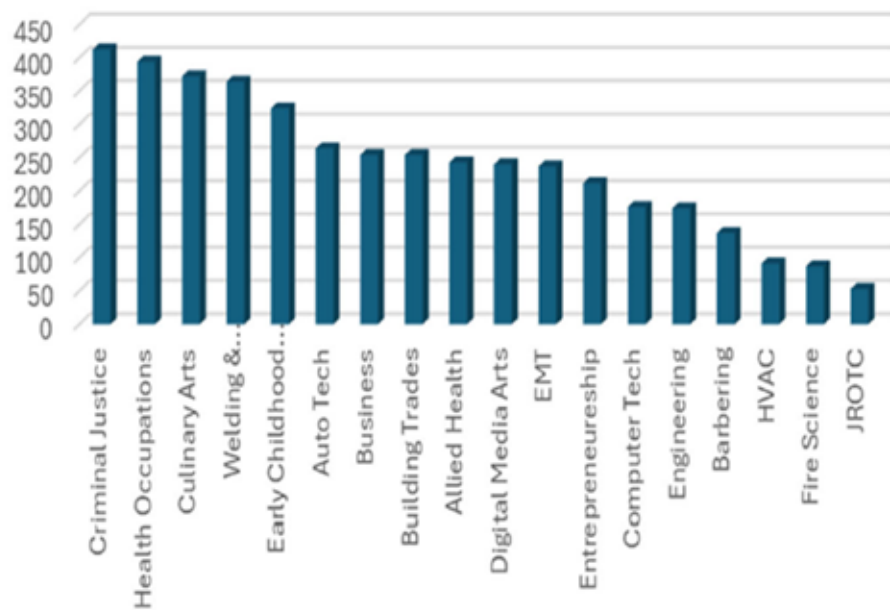
Survey Participation





Student Interest

Which Training are you most interested in?



Which training are you most interested in?

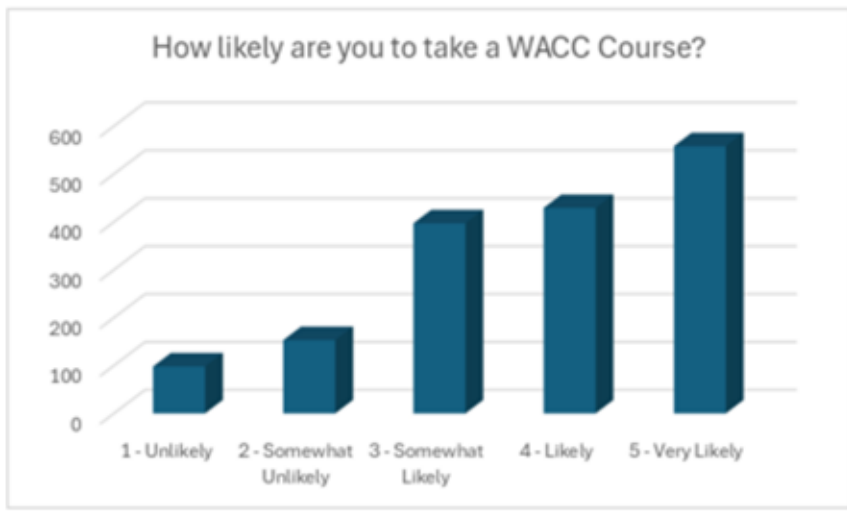
1. Criminal Justice	413
2. Health Occupations	394
3. Culinary Arts	372
4. Welding & Manufacturing	364
5. Early Childhood Education	324
6. Auto Tech	264
7. Business	254
8. Building Trades	254
9. Allied Health	243
10. Digital Media Arts	240
11. EMT	237
12. Entrepreneurship	212
13. Computer Tech	176
14. Engineering	174
15. Barbering	137
16. HVAC	91
17. Fire Science	87
18. JROTC	53

Are students interested in WACC?

Are students interested in WACC?

How likely are you to take a WACC Course?

1 - Unlikely	98
2 - Somewhat Unlikely	153
3 - Somewhat Likely	397
4 - Likely	429
5 - Very Likely	558





Skills Attainment



What are the most important skills you hope to gain?

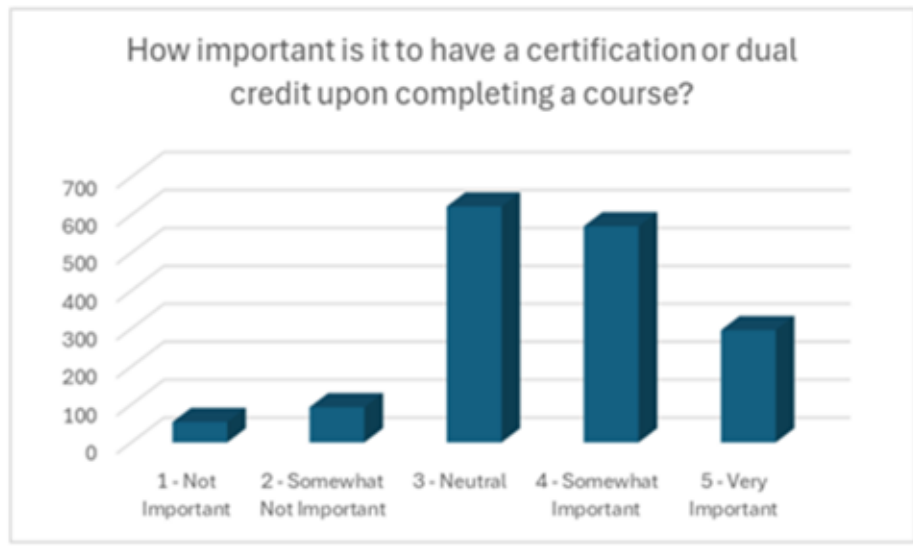
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Technical Skills | 300 |
| 2. Problem Solving | 172 |
| 3. Teamwork Experience | 131 |
| 4. Leadership Skills | 182 |
| 5. Hands On Training (Internship) | 850 |



Certificate Importance?

How important is it to have a certification or dual credit upon completing a CTE course?

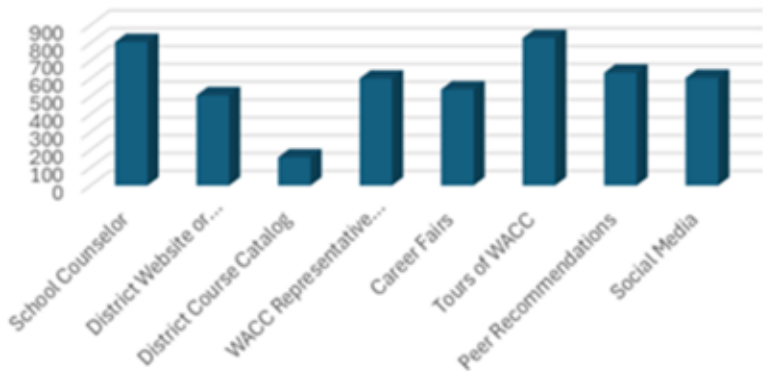
1 - Not Important	54
2 - Somewhat Not Important	93
3 - Neutral	622
4 - Somewhat Important	570
5 - Very Important	296





Marketing our courses to kids?

How are you most likely to learn about career training courses in your region?



How are you most likely to learn about career training courses in your region?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. School Counselor | 805 |
| 2. District Website or WACC Website | 506 |
| 3. District Course Catalog | 158 |
| 4. WACC Principal Visiting Schools | 600 |
| 5. Career Fairs | 539 |
| 6. Tours of WACC | 827 |
| 7. Peer Recommendations | 633 |
| 8. Social Media | 604 |

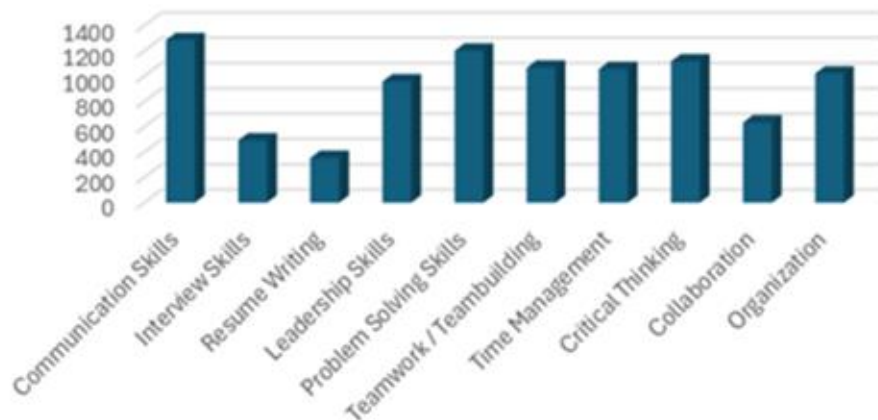


Skills Attainment

What practical skills do you think are important to your career success?

1. Communication Skills	1284
2. Interview Skills	491
3. Resume Writing	353
4. Leadership Skills	957
5. Problem Solving Skills	1200
6. Teamwork / Teambuilding	1066
7. Time Management	1055
8. Critical Thinking	1116
9. Collaboration	633
10. Organization	1020

What practical skills to you think are important to your career success?



What are our next steps?

- Program Expansion
 - Criminal Justice?
 - Business / Marketing?
- Intentional Marketing of programs
 - Parent involvement
 - Social Media platforms
- Survey improvement (Working Document)
 - Does it target what we need to know?



Questions?



WACC

Take the Advantage!



Student Voice Spotlight: CTE Participation on the Success Network Dashboard

Ayesha Camara, Class of 2027



About South Shore International College Prep.

600 students

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

95% African American, 5% Biracial and Hispanic students.

1 INTERESTING FACT

Known for its rigorous academics and CTE programs in Health Sciences and Business.



CTE Participation

CTE Participation is a dashboard that shows the **percentage of students taking career and technical educational courses.**

Methodology

In total, the participants in my focus was **nine, three per group.**

Many people were interested to join the focus group. I **generated a number** and whoever was the closest, I chose them.

Each group consisted of **11th graders** between the **ages of 15-16 y/o.**

Discoveries in the Data

Low CTE Participation

Across all focus groups, the students were most **surprised by how low the CTE participation was**, health science and business, since it is a popular career field.

South Shore (SSICP): 20%

Chicago Public Schools (CPS): 11.7%

Awareness of CTE Programs

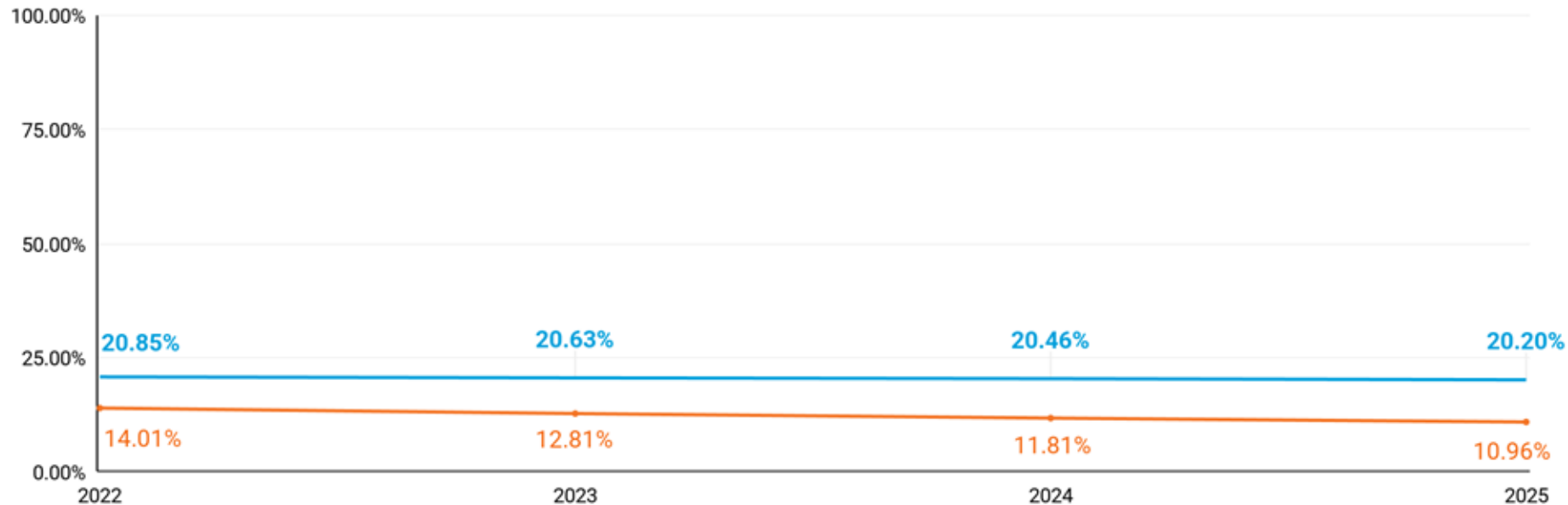
An exciting takeaway from the focus groups is that nearly **every student showed awareness of CTE programs.**

This proved that **low CTE participation isn't due to lack of motivation**, but lack of access.

Students Participating in Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Comparing District Trends

Chicago Public Schools South Shore Intl College Prep HS



Findings + Recommendations

Conclusion + Percentages

Overall, the data set is **extremely low in CPS schools**. CPS takes up 1.3% out of 3.0% in Illinois.

The data set reflects poorly because there's limited access and constant decline in participation of CTE.

Illinois Statewide Percentage: 48.8%

Chicago Public Schools (CPS): 11.7%

Recommendations

For this data set to change, educators or policymakers should consider,

- **Guest speakers** from different careers expressing how successful they were through CTE
- **Better funding** for schools with CTE programs
- **Forming partnerships** with universities, hospitals, or industries.

Discussion

Want to hear more student voice?

Check out the [full SAC presentation](#) at the Success Network Conference.

Federal & State Policy Developments



Workforce Pell



- **Expands Pell to short-term training** (8-15 weeks), allowing eligible IL institutions to offer federal aid to programs aligned to high-wage, in-demand fields beginning July 2026.
- Covers **career-focused, stackable credentials** in fields central to IL workforce needs, such as health care, IT, skilled trades, and advanced manufacturing.
- Programs must meet **strict quality metrics** (70% completion, 70% job placement, and a value-added earnings test).
- **Governors** lead approval work, IL agencies collaborating to inform implementation.
- **Department of Labor investing \$65 million** in community college development support
- Proposed regulations [posted 3/6/2026](#)

→ Check out this [Workforce Pell Substack](#)

Federal Student Aid

- Reshaping **access** and **affordability**
 - New caps on Parent PLUS loans
 - Elimination of Graduate PLUS loan
 - New graduate loan limits
 - Changing classification of ‘professional’ degrees
- More restrictive repayment options, increased focus on collection
 - **Loan proration** for less than full-time enrollment
 - New **Repayment Assistance Plan** replacing Income-Driven Repayment Plan



Learn More: Illinois Federal Education Response Group

To keep up with ongoing shifts in federal policy, tune into the **Advance Illinois Federal Education Response Group** held virtually every three weeks.

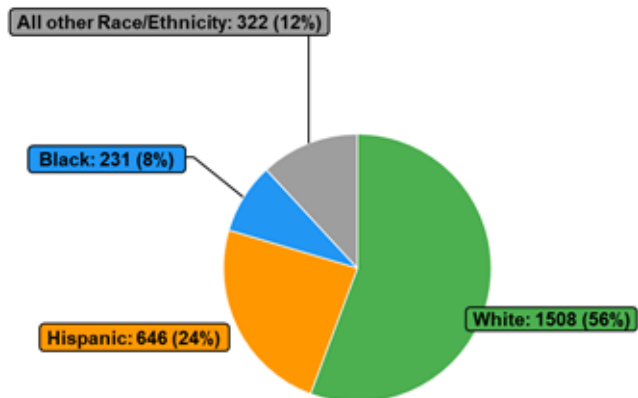
Next call is March 13, 2026, 1-2:30 p.m.

→ [Register](#)



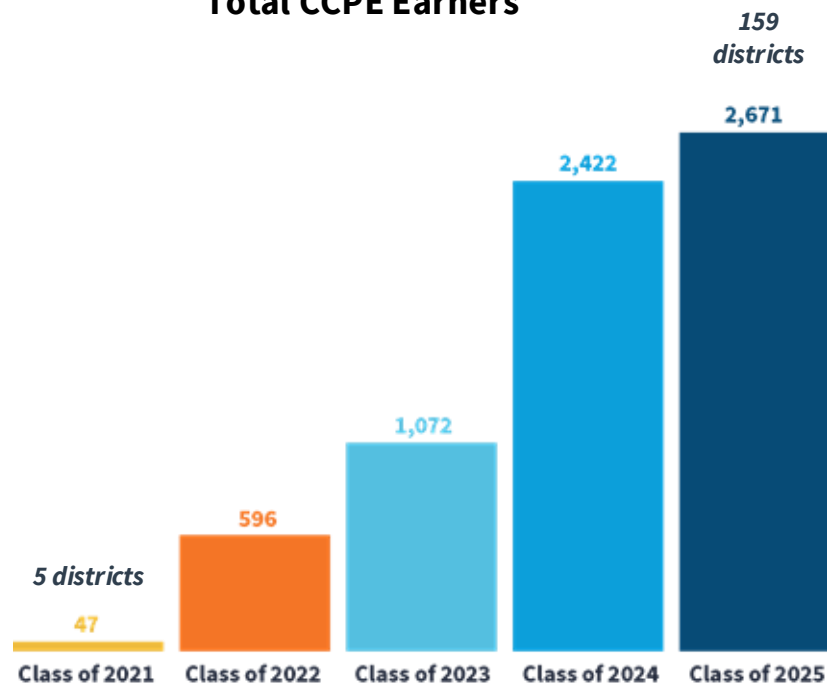
College & Career Pathway Endorsements

Class of 2025



[HB3296/Public Act 102-0917 Overview](#)

Total CCPE Earners



Illinois Perkins Model Programs of Study Guides

Purpose: Provide guidance and exemplars for local programs to adopt or customize as they develop programs of study for approval as part of the Perkins V Plan, including identifying priority dual credit courses and entry points for employer supports.

Recent Updates:

- Guides were updated in 2025
- [Companion Guide](#) created in 2025 to support local implementation
- Merging of [ICCB](#) and [ISBE](#) guides (beginning with education, health sciences, and IT) to:
 - Create one clear, aligned pathway system from high school to college and careers.
 - Improve coherence and coordination across high schools and community colleges.
 - Ensure pathways are consistently aligned to labor market demand and high-value credentials.
 - Clarify and streamline dual credit and early college course sequences.
 - Strengthens Illinois' statewide strategy for college and career pathways and cross-agency collaboration.



Illinois' Dual Credit Quality Act (DCQA)



Overview

June 2025 Amendment

The DCQA codifies minimum requirements for dual credit partnerships and coursework:

- What secondary and postsecondary partners need to do to establish quality programs.
- Expectations around ensuring adequate access to different student groups (including students with disabilities).
- Communication of opportunities to stakeholders including students and educators.
- Created the [Model Partnership Agreement](#) to center students and guide local leaders in their partnership development.

- Emphasizes the importance of local partnerships as the first priority over non-local or out-of-state providers
- Sets a firm timeline and process for districts and community colleges to commence negotiations
- Creates a process for districts to appeal their partner college's decision to decline a course
- Extends Professional Development Plan eligibility indefinitely
- Creates a Dual Credit Committee composed of secondary and postsecondary representatives that will meet at least annually to improve accessibility, quality, and alignment of dual credit programs to meet the needs of students

Updates:

- New administrative rules are expected to be published for public comment imminently. These will outline expectations and processes for partnership development as required under the amended DCQA.
- Emerging work to update Model Partnership Agreement through Dual Credit Committee

FY 2027 Budget Proposal

“Maintenance” budget, with largely flat funding

- \$305 Million Increase for Evidence-Based Funding (EBF)
- \$51 million Increase in Mandated Categoricals (MCATs)
- CTE funding:
 - New: “Vocational Training Grant Program”
 - \$50 million for Area Career Center improvement
 - \$59 million (flat) for CTE
- Continued Dual Credit Funding
- 1% increase for Higher Education
- Flat funding for state scholarships (MAP, AIM High, Teachers of Illinois)
- Ongoing investment in teacher recruitment (Golden Apple and ISBE Teacher Vacancy grants))

104th General Assembly

Emerging legislative topics:

- Graduation requirements
- Pathways & employer engagement
- Community College Baccalaureate
- College admissions
- Evidence-based funding
- Higher Education Funding

Select Bills:

- SB4026 (Lightford): Allows for high schools to give 2 years of foreign language credit to students who pass a proficiency exam at level of State Seal of Biliteracy & students who completed 2 years of HS equivalency in another language
- HB4354 (Vella): Directs ISBE and DCEO to collaborate on establishing career pathways that start in high school and includes a provision to compensate employers offering paid WBL.
- SB3769 (Hunter): Formalizes licensure for Registered Medical Assistants and Licensed Medical Assistants.

Launching New Work: A Comprehensive Look at Illinois High School Graduation Requirements

EdSystems is embarking on work to develop a comprehensive understanding of Illinois high school graduation requirements and identify stakeholder priorities in reevaluating them.

- Reach out to Madeleine (mgreene@niu.edu) or to discuss or learn more.

Related: **New [Guidance Document](#): CTE Course substitution for graduation requirements**

- The ISBE CTE team has developed guidance related to an existing School Code policy that authorizes local boards of education to adopt policies to allow CTE coursework to satisfy certain Illinois graduation requirements.

Looking to a new statewide vision

Illinois' Postsecondary Attainment Goal

The Illinois P-20 Council goal was that by 2025, 60% of all Illinois adults will have a high-quality college degree or postsecondary credential.

> **Right now, Illinois is at 58.1%.**

A 2023 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce report notes that **70% of jobs in Illinois will require postsecondary training in 2031.**



2025 has passed. Now what?

We hope to see state leaders establish a new statewide goal or vision to increase learner access, retention, and success throughout the P-20 pipeline.

Any statewide goal should be informed by local perspectives, and give opportunities for local leaders to work toward a goal that is also meaningful to their community.

What should state leaders take into account if they are setting a new statewide goal or vision?

*What is your **vision**
for learners in
your community in
the next 5-10
years?*

*What should
learners **access,**
experience, and
achieve, and why?*

Chatterfalls

Type your response to the question in the chat but don't hit send until we say!

Discussion

What themes emerge?

Whose perspectives should be elevated?

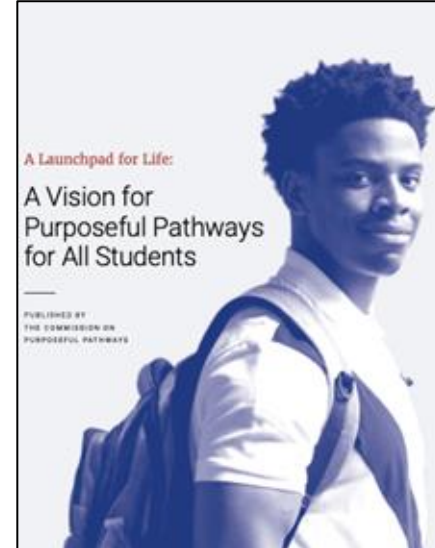
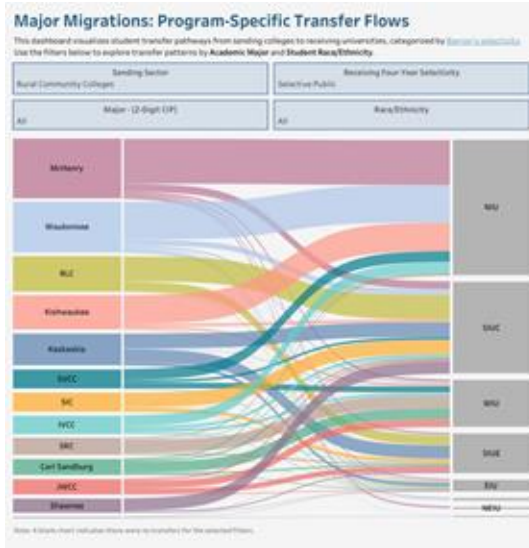
What types of learner experiences should be centered?

What's missing?

[Summary from Success Network Conference](#)

Resources and Upcoming Opportunities

New Reports We're Reading



Partnership for College Completion: [Transfer Dashboards](#) & [Second Progress Report on Reforming Developmental Education in Illinois](#)

Commission on Purposeful Pathways: [A Launchpad for Life: A Vision for Purposeful Pathways for All Students](#)

Select highlights:

- *The Future of Work: Navigating the Next Decade of Jobs, Skills, and Opportunity* ([Recording](#); [Slides](#))
 - Dr. Jeff Strohl (Director of the Georgetown Center for Education and Workforce) explored the evolving role of education and credentials in workforce readiness, the emerging skill sets and training pathways needed to meet future demand, and how demographic shifts and automation will reshape job opportunities.
- Breakout Sessions:
 - [Engaging Families in College and Career Pathways](#)
 - [Understanding Young People's Perceptions of College](#)
 - [The Role of School Counselors in Advancing Career Pathways](#)

Success Network Annual Conference

All session content can be found on [this conference page](#).



Upcoming Events

March 16: Success Network Webinar – Future Ready: Building Postsecondary and Career Awareness in Middle School ([Virtual](#))

March 25: Illinois Work-Based Learning Innovation Network (I-WIN) Webinar – Expanding Health Sciences Pathways: Regional Models for High-Quality Work-Based Learning ([Virtual](#))

March 31: Developmental Education Reform Act Conference (Bloomington; [Website](#))

April 27: Success Network Webinar – Fostering Unity for Rural Education ([Virtual](#))

May 6: ISBE's Career Connections Conference (Normal; [Website](#))



ILLINOIS EDUCATION AND CAREER
SUCCESS NETWORK

Please fill out our exit survey.

See you at our [Q2 Meeting](#): Monday,
May 18, 2026 from 9:30-11am

Thank You!

