



# Issues Update

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*Issues Update* is a report from the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) written by Executive Director Michael R. Stone and presented on its website, [www.kacteonline.org](http://www.kacteonline.org). As needed, *Issues Update* will report on state and federal Career and Technical Education (CTE) policy and legislative developments. KACTE and Stone can be reached at [kmstone@mis.net](mailto:kmstone@mis.net) or 502-223-1823.

## Gubernatorial Candidates Answer Questions on CTE Positions

*Kentucky -- and Kentucky's Career and Technical Education (CTE) community -- is in transition. No change may have greater impact than who will be the next governor. For Kentucky's CTE community, the impacts the next governor may have through biennial budget proposals could affect the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System (KTRS), the public school SEEK funding level, and any investment in CTE.*

*To discern the candidates' positions on CTE, the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) asked each to respond to a questionnaire. Following are the responses, unedited, and presented alphabetically from Republican Matt Bevin, Democrat Jack Conway, and Independent Drew Curtis.*

*The questions only address specific CTE issues. The candidates positions on pension reform and other issues are detailed on their websites: [www.mattbevin.com](http://www.mattbevin.com), <http://conwayoverly.com>, <http://drewcurtis.nationbuilder.com>. Please refer to them for more information on the candidates' positions.*

### The Questionnaire

Career and Technical Education (CTE -- formerly known as vocational education) includes educational pathways in agriculture, arts and humanities, business, communications/media arts, construction, engineering and technology, family and consumer sciences, health sciences, information technology, junior ROTC, manufacturing, marketing, pathway to careers/special needs, and transportation. CTE programs are taught at middle schools, high schools, locally operated career and technical centers, state operated area technology centers, community and technical colleges, and universities. CTE in Kentucky is administered through the Kentucky Department of Education-Office of Career and Technical Education (middle school and secondary) and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (postsecondary).

1. What do you see as the value of CTE to Kentucky? What level of emphasis should CTE receive within the state's educational system?
2. Please comment on the goal that every student should graduate high school both college and career ready? Should a postsecondary degree or credential be available to all students?
3. What role does CTE play in economic development (including the reduction in unemployment) in the Commonwealth?

4. How do you propose to align educational instruction with business and industry workforce skill demands and the state's economic development sectors strategy?
5. How would you propose to make a CTE career pathway available to a student choosing a career in that particular field?
6. Will adequate CTE funding be an emphasized priority within your support of education?
7. What are your plans to address needed program consumables (classroom supplies and materials) and revitalize equipment and facilities for career and technical training?

### Matt Bevin

*1. What do you see as the value of CTE to Kentucky? What level of emphasis should CTE receive within the state's educational system?*

Growing our economy requires a skilled workforce. CTE provides real-world training for high-skilled, high-demand jobs. Expanding CTE opportunities prepares more students for successful careers and grows better paying jobs in numerous fields.

There are currently unfilled jobs in the state due to a lack of skilled workers, a problem that can be solved by making CTE an integral part of our education system. More CTE opportunities increases the number of students who are career and college ready, making CTE imperative in creating

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economic prosperity in Kentucky.

Our state is extremely well-positioned to be a hub for manufacturing with our low utility costs, DHL and UPS facilities and our connectivity to other states via road and waterways. By increasing CTE, and therefore developing more highly skilled workers, we can easily attract more businesses to move to Kentucky.

As Governor, I will incentivize and support an education system that results in a highly employable workforce. This includes integrating more CTE courses into secondary education and increasing well-structured vocational training programs to develop workers with the technical and life skills necessary to contribute to and thrive in a strong economy.

*2. Please comment on the goal that every student should graduate high school both college and career ready? Should a postsecondary degree or credential be available to all students?*

We have a moral obligation to ensure that the education we provide to Kentucky's students prepares them with real-world skills. All graduating students should be college and career ready -- we cannot afford to fail them in this.

The state has a vested financial interest in graduating students who are college and career ready because it gives us a competitive edge over other states with whom we compete for jobs. Increasing and improving the skills of our labor force helps them qualify for jobs with higher incomes, and helps the state attract these higher paying jobs. It is in the best interest of both the state government and the individuals in the state for us to ensure postsecondary degrees and credentials are available to all students.

We must also expand access to postsecondary credentials to working adults. Providing postsecondary educational options for working adults makes us more economically competitive and improves prosperity rates for Kentucky families.

*3. What role does CTE play in economic development (including the reduction in unemployment) in the Commonwealth?*

There is a strong correlation between education, a highly skilled workforce, and economic stability within a state. More highly skilled workers means we attract higher value jobs, in turn, decreasing unemployment and increasing wealth creation.

Further, CTE gives working adults the ability to be retrained for new careers when certain industries and markets suffer. This allows them to seek higher-skilled, better paying jobs, rather than being forced into unemployment.

*4. How do you propose to align educational instruction with business and industry workforce skill demands and the state's economic development sectors strategy?*

Labor market data should help drive education as well as policy. First, we must analyze our current performance in workforce development and education so we know where we are using our resources efficiently -- and where we are not -- in developing a high-qualified labor force. Identifying factors such as student access to postsecondary degrees and credentials, graduation rates, and employability allows us to track our progress and improve labor market outcomes.

We must also start laying the groundwork for the jobs of the future now. This involves not only strengthening our workforce, but also anticipating employer labor needs over time. By analyzing sectors with higher growth potential, we will work with local school boards to continually tailor curricula towards growing and flourishing industries.

Kentucky should adopt policies that allow education and training to be guided by the labor market, with the flexibility for schools to work with local businesses to help students develop real-world skills. Our Administration would seek to give more control to local communities, school boards, educators, and parents over curricula so they can align education with the skills employers need on both a local and global level.

*5. How would you propose to make a CTE career pathway available to a student choosing a career in that particular field?*

Our Administration would seek to expand career pathways within the state, ensuring we begin in secondary education and continue through postsecondary education. We will encourage counties and local school boards to work with CTE professionals to expand upon the current career and technical courses offered, tailored to their regions and the interests of their students.

We will analyze thriving and emerging markets and then strengthen the educational courses pertaining to those markets to prepare students for careers in those areas.

*6. Will adequate CTE funding be an emphasized priority within your support of education?*

My overall goal is to create a more business-friendly environment in the Commonwealth that will result in job creation.

If you look at our Blueprint for a Better Kentucky that Jenean and I launched two weeks into our primary campaign, you will see that modernizing education is one of the integral parts of our 7-point plan. You will also see that we've made clear CTE is intrinsic in our goal to improving education in our Commonwealth.

As stated, we will expand CTE courses and career pathways beginning in secondary education to ensure a

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smooth transition for students advancing into postsecondary education. We will also expand CTE opportunities for working adults by encouraging employers to support continuing education for their employees. We will develop policies such as tax credits for employers or providing matching dollar amounts to help fund continuing education and training for their workers.

We also think it is important for more students to consider vocational training programs along with 4-year degree colleges and universities when deciding on a career path, as well as making the transition from a vocational training school to a degree school as easy and seamless as possible. We will encourage career and technical institutions to work with other postsecondary educational institutions to develop more uniform standards in their courses to allow noncredit career and technical courses to be applied to credit-bearing postsecondary universities and colleges where possible.

We will continue meeting with the Council on Postsecondary Education and University Presidents to discuss concerns and develop solutions to issues arising in postsecondary education. It is imperative we find a solution to rising tuition costs to make postsecondary education affordable, while creating more well-structured vocational training programs as alternatives to traditional 4-year universities.

*7. What are your plans to address needed program consumables (classroom supplies and materials) and revitalize equipment and facilities for career and technical training?*

We need to begin by prioritizing funding based on outcomes. Again, we will analyze our current performance in workforce development and education so we know where we are using our resources efficiently in developing a high-qualified labor force. We will allow flourishing and emerging labor markets to guide our expenditures in secondary and postsecondary education, eliminating what is not working and expanding what is - shifting revenue away from outdated, ineffective programs to upgrade and grow programs with proven outcomes.

Our Administration will also make a deliberate effort to partner our technical schools and training centers with private manufacturers for resource sharing. We will be committed to developing these types of mutually beneficial relationships not only for resource purposes, but to make the transition from postsecondary education to employment as smooth as possible for both students and employers.

Expanding innovative CTE programs will attract the jobs of the future to Kentucky, providing more revenue that can be spent in modernizing and improving education in the state. As Governor, I will ensure that cutting edge, forward-looking schools, programs, and courses have the facilities, equipment and materials necessary to provide the best education for our students.

## Jack Conway

*1. What do you see as the value of CTE to Kentucky? What level of emphasis should CTE receive within the state's educational system?*

Building the best workforce is a central part of my plan to create more Kentucky jobs. I believe that supporting career and technical education in Kentucky is critical because the quality of our workforce – more than anything else – will be the key factor in determining Kentucky's economic success.

I support career and technical education at all levels in Kentucky's schools. Equipping our students with these skills and making them aware of opportunities gained through career and technical education is an important part of making certain Kentucky's students are making smart choices about their futures.

*2. Please comment on the goal that every student should graduate high school both college and career ready? Should a postsecondary degree or credential be available to all students?*

The single most important thing that we can do for kids across Kentucky is to make certain that they graduate from high school with the education and training they need to take advantage of future education and employment opportunities. We have made progress ensuring that more of Kentucky's students are graduating college and career ready, but there is still work to be done. I'm committed to supporting and improving schools across Kentucky because a strong public education system provides students with the foundation they need for lifelong success.

We also need to make certain that Kentucky's students have affordable opportunities for postsecondary degrees or credentials after graduating from high school. Part of ensuring those opportunities is doing a better job helping our students make smart decisions about their futures. As Governor, I'll implement a new program for high school juniors and seniors that will help students do exactly that by providing them information about regional economic opportunities and growing industry sectors while connecting them with local business and education leaders.

*3. What role does CTE play in economic development (including the reduction in unemployment) in the Commonwealth?*

Employers across Kentucky are struggling to find the skilled workers they need to grow. The quality of Kentucky's workforce plays a critical role in the decisions of businesses to expand or to locate in our state.

Career and technical education is a central component of my plan to grow more good-paying Kentucky jobs. My jobs plan calls for expanding apprenticeship programs to make training more affordable for students and realigning workforce training programs to meet the needs of

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employers. Supporting career and technical education will be one of my top priorities because a strong career and technical education system is absolutely necessary for Kentucky's continued economic growth.

4. *How do you propose to align educational instruction with business and industry workforce skill demands and the state's economic development sectors strategy?*

We can't effectively train workers for the future if our workforce training is from the past. We need a system that is responsive to the needs of growing employers across Kentucky. Improving communication and information sharing between our businesses, educators and state government to better workforce training will be a priority of my administration.

As Governor, I'll also ensure that each school within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System conducts an annual assessment of their region to identify the top three growing local industries. That assessment will be shared with the education system and state government to ensure that we are aligning our workforce development programs with the needs of employers while also encouraging customized training programs.

5. *How would you propose to make a CTE career pathway available to a student choosing a career in that particular field?*

As Governor, I'll work to make certain that career and technical education is an affordable opportunity for Kentucky's students by growing opportunities for hands-on, paid occupational experience – benefiting both students and employers.

I'll aggressively expand existing successful apprenticeship programs, like the Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME). Our ultimate goal will be implementing the first coordinated, multi-industry statewide apprenticeship program to help workers earn while they learn.

6. *Will adequate CTE funding be an emphasized priority within your support of education?*

Supporting education at all levels in Kentucky will be one of my top priorities as Governor. Career and technical education in Kentucky is a critical component of our economic success and job growth and I will work to make sure that these schools have the funding needed to educate and train our students.

7. *What are your plans to address needed program consumables (classroom supplies and materials) and revitalize equipment and facilities for career and technical training?*

Like families across Kentucky, state government and our educators have had to do more with less over the last

few years. As our economy continues to improve, I'll look to make more investments in education because every dollar invested in our schools and students returns dividends in the future.

## Drew Curtis

1. *What do you see as the value of CTE to Kentucky? What level of emphasis should CTE receive within the state's educational system?*

As higher education gets more expensive, it is important that students get the best opportunity to find more options for career paths that will help them succeed in life, including careers in CTE.

2. *Please comment on the goal that every student should graduate high school both college and career ready? Should a postsecondary degree or credential be available to all students?*

We must make sure every student can graduate high school college or career ready. A four-year degree may not be the best option for every student, so we must make sure that each graduating senior knows that they have options in CTE as well.

3. *What role does CTE play in economic development (including the reduction in unemployment) in the Commonwealth?*

CTE plays a significant role in economic development in Kentucky. Having students prepared to work and go to college gives them options. They can go straight into the workforce or they can choose to go to college. Either way they are prepared for the real world and will have the ability to find jobs.

4. *How do you propose to align educational instruction with business and industry workforce skill demands and the state's economic development sectors strategy?*

I like what the mayors of Lexington and Louisville did to increase employment: They went to major employers and asked them what skills they were looking for in employees, then they made sure that local colleges were teaching those skills. That program can be expanded to other regions and even down into the high school level. We can make sure that educators and students know what is needed and we are getting that information straight from the businesses, giving our students the best chance at success.

5. *How would you propose to make a CTE career pathway available to a student choosing a career in that particular field?*

I think that creating more awareness of CTE is the first step. Career fairs, information sessions, and classroom

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discussions are a great way to introduce these programs to students. We must also make sure school counselors are ready to help students discuss CTE careers.

6. *Will adequate CTE funding be an emphasized priority within your support of education?*

Our public school system as a whole is underfunded, so it will be difficult to find the funds needed for CTE. The best way to make sure funds are available for these types of programs—and all school programs—is to fix our unfunded pension problem. If we don't, our state will go bankrupt in the next few years. Fixing the pension system will also help attract the best teachers to our state—we can't

expect to hire great teachers if they're not being promised an adequate pension. You can learn more about my solution to fix the pension system here: <http://bit.ly/1CdGwI8>.

7. *What are your plans to address needed program consumables (classroom supplies and materials) and revitalize equipment and facilities for career and technical training?*

We must fix the pension program first, and then we will be able to dedicate resources to other priorities such as education. In general though, I want to speak with teachers and see what they feel they need for their classrooms. That's where we start: listening.



Learning that works  
for Kentucky