



A CTE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Building The Future
AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

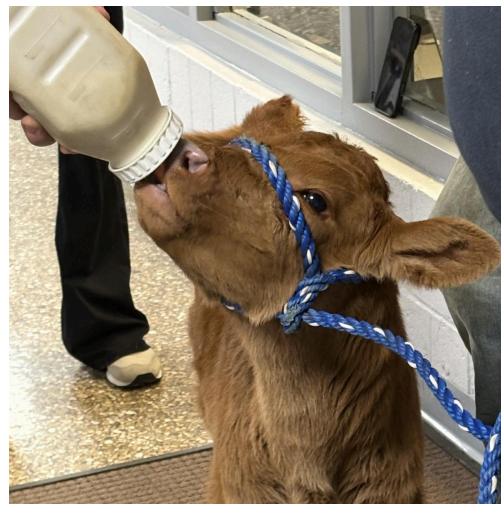


Prepared Today, Ready for Tomorrow

April brings the bulk of the NOCTI season, a time that can feel challenging, but also provides us all with a powerful opportunity to reflect on how much our students have learned and how far they've come. In Career and Technical Education classrooms, preparation isn't just about test day; it's about building confidence, problem-solving skills, and real-world readiness every single day.

As students demonstrate their knowledge and abilities this month, we celebrate their perseverance, growth, and determination. The hands-on experiences, industry-aligned skills, and critical thinking developed through CTE equip learners not only to succeed on assessments, but to excel well beyond them. This is a season to stay focused, encourage one another, and remember that effort and resilience are just as important as the results.

School Visit



Does Chocolate Milk Come from Brown Cows?

On the morning of March 3, 2026, Northern Westmoreland CTC asked fourth graders this very question as they toured the facilities and participated in a range of hands-on activities presented by each program. The day's success was owed to the older students who served as guides and mentors to their younger counterparts, with one arranging an unforgettable encounter.

My name is Emma Spiering, and I am a senior at Burrell High School and a second-year student in the Aspiring Education Program at Northern Westmoreland Career and Technology Center (NWCTC). Recently, I had the opportunity to combine two of my passions—farming and teaching—during a visit from fourth-grade students from the Kiski Area School District.

As a third-generation farmer at Spiering Farm in Upper Burrell, agriculture has always been an important part of my life. When the fourth graders visited NWCTC, I wanted to create a hands-on experience that would help them learn about farming in a memorable way. With the help of Jim Jones from Swank Farm, we arranged to bring a two-week-old bottle-fed calf named Curt for the students to meet.

For many of the students, it was their first time seeing a baby cow up close. They watched as I fed Curt from a bottle and asked questions about how cattle are raised and what daily life is like on a farm. Seeing their curiosity and excitement made the experience especially rewarding.

This experience also allowed me to apply the teaching and planning skills I've learned in the Aspiring Education Program by organizing the visit and sharing information in a way that fourth graders could easily understand.

It was a great opportunity to connect agriculture with education, and it strengthened my passion for becoming a teacher while sharing an important part of my life with younger students.

Thank you to Northern Westmoreland CTC for inviting ERC employees for a morning that had us smiling the rest of the day.

How Can I Help Get My Certificates on Time?

Post-testing Dates

Schools can now order post-tests, provided their Test Site Coordinator has completed the mandatory training. The testing window is **March 1** through **April 30, 2026**.

Test Ordering

It can take NOCTI up to 4-6 weeks to get you your post-tests once the order has been accepted. Place your orders sooner rather than later to ensure all goes smoothly.

Test Site Coordinators *must* have passed the December training to order.

Important Deadlines

- **April 30:** The last day of the post-testing window
- **May 15:** The following forms must be submitted to testing@careertechpa.org:
 - **Test Materials and Disposal Form** (Click to be taken to the form)
 - **NIMS Certification Form** (Click to be taken to the form)

NOCTI Accommodations Reminders

Special Accommodations

If you have a special accommodation request for a student, please fill out the form linked below as soon as possible.

All requests must be approved by the Bureau of Career and Technical Education and may take a few days* to be processed.

- **Student Occupational Testing Special Accommodations Request Form**

*Please get your forms in as soon as possible. Now that the post-testing window has opened, we are currently experiencing an influx of submissions. We ask for your patience as requests often require further research and approval.

Legislation Updates

Barriers to CTE Access

On March 18, in response to **a 2024 House Resolution**, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee released a report identifying barriers to student access to CTE programs, along with their recommendations.

The report includes an overview of **how CTE is offered in PA**, including the **regulations, policies, and programs** that govern and fund it (section 2), an overview of the **current access to CTE and the identified barriers** (sections 3 & 4), a **formula explanation and impact** of the

Secondary Career and Technical Education Subsidy (section 5), and **initiatives to address teacher shortages** in Pennsylvania and other states (section 6).

Career clusters most available to high school students: Architecture and Construction; Health Science; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics; and Human Services.

Least available to high school students: Business, Management, and Administration; Marketing, Sales, and Service; Education and Training; and STEM.

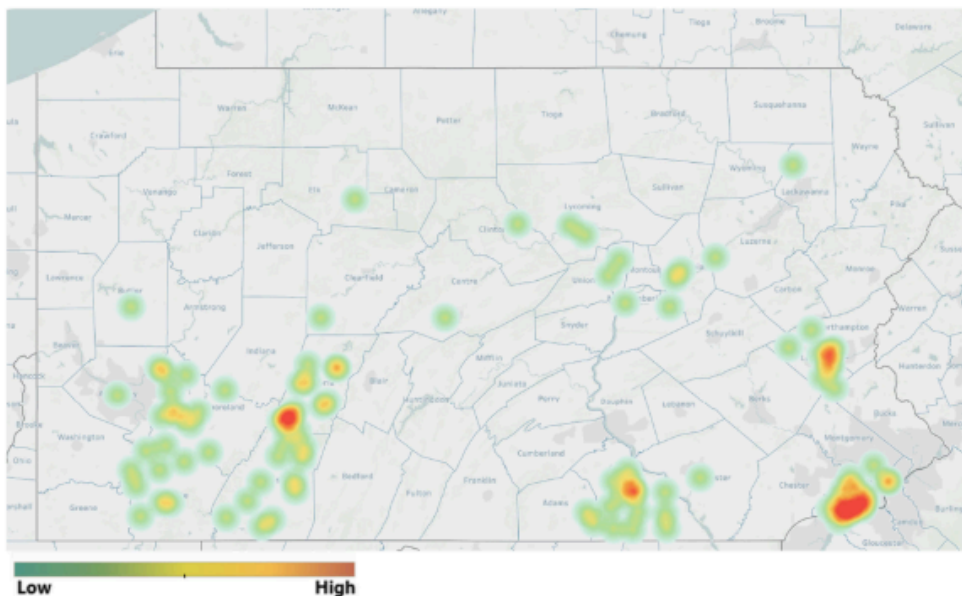
Report recommendations (in brief):

1. PDE should require CTE providers to report the waitlists for each program.
2. The General Assembly should consider a competitive needs-based grant program for CTE facility expansion.
3. The General Assembly should consider passing legislation to create tiered SCTES allocations based on in-demand career clusters.
4. Joint operating committees should consider covering CTE instructor certification costs.
5. PDE should establish an option for CTE instructors for in-demand careers that allows them to replace some educational credits for years of teaching experience for an Instructional II Certificate.

You can view the [full report here](#) and [the highlights here](#).

Exhibit 17

Density Map of Education and Training Programs by School District



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

PaTTAN Supports

Supports for Students with Special Needs

As a reminder, there is no charge for PaTTAN's special education services.

Services include:

- Professional Development,
- MTSS Support,
- Emotional Support Systems Support,
- and more!

Click [HERE](#) to learn more and access the request application.

This Month's Trivia



Did you know...

Penn State's Main Campus is home to the Obelisk, a 33-foot-tall monument comprised of stones ranging from the Precambrian to the Triassic Period, with the majority being from Pennsylvania. It shows not only how our local stones age but also serves as artistic inspiration.

Source: [Atlas Obscura](#)



Did you know...

Mifflin County and Juniata Valley are home to the Wild Geese: Flock Together art project. Since 2018, the flock has grown to over 50 fiberglass geese, including Captain Honkers, BFD (pictured above).

Source: [Community Partnerships](#)

Learning Opportunity Spotlight

Leadership Through Design:

**Enhancing Student Growth
and Achievement**

**Online Learning Opportunity!
A design thinking Act 45 course for
educational leaders**



25 Act 45 Hours

Online Synchronous (10 hrs.)
Job-Embedded (11 hrs.)
Online Asynchronous (4 hrs.)

Session Dates

June 18, 2026 - 9am - 12pm

July 9, 2026 - 9am - 12pm

July 23, 2026 - 9am - 12pm

July 30, 2026 - 9am - 12pm

August 6, 2026 - 9am - 12pm

Where:

Online via Zoom

***An impactful and engaging education system
puts people first – students, caregivers,
teachers, and community members. Human-
Centered Design (HCD) provides the toolbox
and mindset to ensure your system stays agile
and responsive to current and future
stakeholders.***

Includes:

- Training website
- Video library
- HCD training materials
- Design templates
- Ongoing coaching

Learn how to:

- Design for your stakeholders
- Build consensus
- Collaborate with focus and purpose
- Ideate and refine solutions to complex challenges

**\$360.00 per
person
Register
today!**



CONSORTIUM
for
PUBLIC EDUCATION

Course

Breakdown

BIG IDEAS

- School leadership is enhanced through collaborative problem solving (co-design).
- Engaging stakeholders within and across the school community improves student outcomes.
- Empathetic leaders design solutions that better align with the needs of their students, staff, and community.
- Systems change is an iterative, design-based process.

COURSE SESSIONS

UNDERSTANDING & DEFINING A CHALLENGE

Learn the philosophy and phases of design that underpin impactful design, beginning with a focus on empathy and problem definition.

01

REFINING A CHALLENGE

Dig deep into a problem; explore its root causes and key stakeholders. Know your challenge well before moving on to designing solutions.

02

ACTION PLANNING & BRAINSTORMING SOLUTIONS

Learn collaborative methods to explore a variety of solutions, set priorities based on desired outcomes, and move forward with consensus.

03

PROTOTYPING TO FEEDBACK

Develop a prototype and gather input to refine your thinking.

04

USING HCD TO TELL YOUR STORY

Storytelling plays a key role in building support for a new design. Share your district story from empathy to final concept!

05

Contact:
Aaron Altemus
aaltemus@tcfpe.org



AMTEC **AI3**

Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation

Empower Your Teaching. Elevate Industry 4.0 Skills.
Join us for an immersive two-day experience designed specifically for advanced manufacturing instructors and faculty. Gain practical, hands-on expertise with cutting-edge Industry 4.0 technologies and proven strategies you can immediately apply in your classroom.

Owensboro, Kentucky

Choose one of these 2026 training dates:

June 16-17

October 6-7

Sessions Include:

- Industry 4.0 Concepts and Training
- Artificial Intelligence and Augmented/Virtual Reality
- Competency-Based Education and Funding Resources

Bonus:



Travel assistance available for participants traveling more than 60 miles.



Stipend provided upon completion of program requirements.



Virtual Community-of-Practice sessions led by peers and industry partners sharing best practices.

Register Today! Scan the QR code or contact:
270-686-4410 or cadie.underwood@kctcs.edu



Thank you to our partners!

zSpace



"Attending the AMTEC AI3 training was a game-changer. It equipped me with hands-on experience in Industry 4.0 technologies and gave me the tools to confidently bring these innovations into my classroom."
Sergio, May 2025 AI3 participant



This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Award No. DUE 2350012. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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AMTEC **AI3**

Institute for Industry 4.0 Innovation

Empower Your Teaching. Elevate Industry 4.0 Skills.

If you can't travel to the in-person AMTEC Institute, you can still join us! Attend our virtual Community of Practice sessions to gain classroom strategies, industry insights, and practical Industry 4.0 teaching tools. Each session features expert speakers and innovative approaches you can apply immediately.

Interested? Scan the QR code or contact us today for session details and registration information:
270-686-4410 or cadie.underwood@kctcs.edu



April 7, 2026 at 3pm (CT)

From Classroom to Manufacturing Lab: Tips for Teaching Industry 4.0
Modern Manufacturing Starts in Your Classroom



Featuring: Jon Pelland and Lucas Dulmes, Lakeshore College
Special Announcement: Catherine Ross, the Association for Manufacturing Technology

May 14, 2026 at 12pm (CT)



Joint Community of Practice Session
National Insights on the Future of Manufacturing and AI

Featuring: National Center for Next Generation Manufacturing and the National Applied Artificial Intelligence Consortium

June 9, 2026 at 11am (CT)

Innovating in Engineering and Welding Education
Unlock High-Value Tools for Welding & Engineering Labs



Featuring: Ramona Anand, Assistant Professor at Lorain County Community College and Project Manager for the National Welding Center



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Thank you to our partners! **zSpace**



Visit our website:
www.careertechpa.org

For questions or additional information contact ERC9065@psu.edu or 412-675-9065.

Education Resource Center at Penn State Greater Allegheny | 4000 University Drive | McKeesport, PA 15132 US

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