Top 10 Things
Parents Should Know about
Career and Technology Education

1. Career and Technology Education (CTE) - it's more than a name change!
Career and Technology Education (formerly vocational education) gives students a head start on college and careers in high skill, high wage and high demand occupations organized in ten different Career Clusters* including programs in Information Technology, Finance, Construction Trades, Homeland Security, Health Professions, Pre engineering and more.

2. CTE is for the career and college bound. In today's workplace, continued education and training are givens. CTE programs include a sequence of four or five high school courses taken in addition to the academic core classes of math, science, English and social studies. Students completing both the academic requirements and a CTE program have the advantage of graduating from high school prepared for college and the workplace.
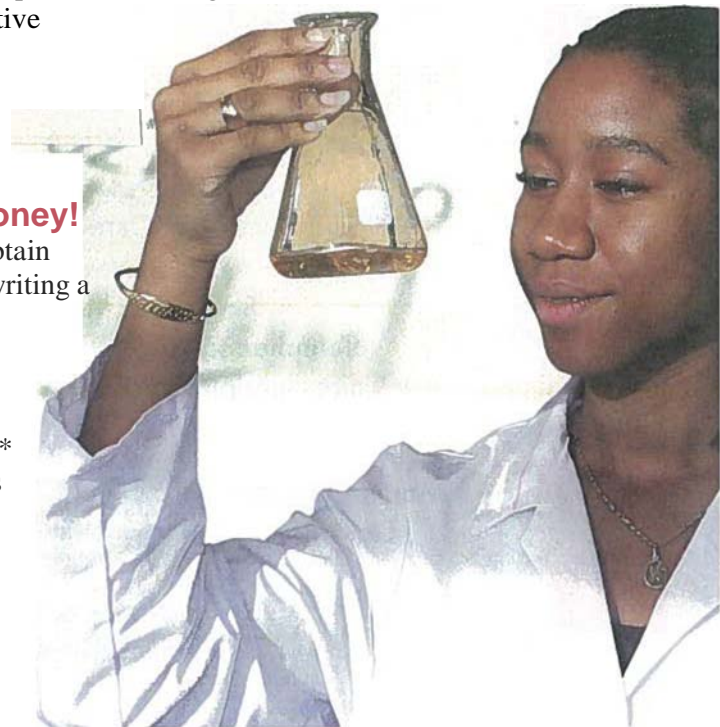
3. CTE students are able to earn college credits and certifications to give them an extra advantage after earning their diplomas. It's true! Most of the 40 + CTE programs offered around the state provide students with an opportunity to earn college credit**, industry-recognized certifications*** or both. As an added bonus, nearly every CTE program connects to a similar community college program which makes it possible for students to transition from high school to college.

4. Students apply what they learn in academic classes and this applied learning increases retention and understanding! For example, in the Pre-engineering program *Project Lead The Way,* students apply skills learned in higher level math courses to real world engineering projects, under the guidance of professional engineers/mentors.

5. Instructors are industry professionals teaching with up-to-date equipment and technology. CTE teachers have worked in their fields as part of their certification. Industry advisory boards help schools design and equip learning labs. For example, Culinary Arts students work in commercial kitchens; Cisco (computer networking) students use state-of-the-art networking software, and Automotive Technician students hone their skills using tools, equipment and curriculum recommended by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF).

6. Parents and students can save money!
High school is the only time individuals can obtain education focused on career preparation without writing a tuition check! High school students can earn licenses and credentials, such as a Maryland Cosmetology license or a range of computer software certifications, often at a reduced cost compared to the cost of obtaining certifications*** and licenses outside of high school. CTE students can also save money on college tuition by earning college credit three different ways.** Students completing CTE programs obtain knowledge and skills that can help them achieve better paying jobs while they are attending college.

7. Programs are designed for the future. Maryland industries and businesses partner with local school districts, community colleges and the Maryland State Department of Education to create programs of study that prepare students with the knowledge and skills required for current and future careers in today's global economy.

8. Internships and work-based learning opportunities provide "real world" work experiences and the prospect of developing a professional network. CTE programs frequently include a final internship or work-based learning experience which helps students develop a network of co-workers and managers who may also become valuable references.

9. Leadership and interpersonal skills are expanded! Students enrolled in CTE programs can join local chapters of national student organizations such as the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). Participating in Career and Technical Student Organizations like Skills USA, DECA, FFA and other state and national career competitions, builds confidence as students demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

10. To enroll your teen or to learn more about CTE in your community, contact your local school system CTE Director or guidance department. To learn more about CTE at the state level visit Career and Technology Education under Divisions at: www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/ divisions/careertech

* A grouping of occupations according to common knowledge and skills for the purpose of organizing educational programs and curricula.

** Articulation is the process by which academic or technical credits earned through high school programs may be acceptable in transfer by various community colleges and some four-year institutions. Transcripted credit can be earned when an actual college course, using college text books and materials, is taught to high school students. Credits earned appear on a college transcript. Dual enrollment is a program that allows high school students (usually juniors and seniors) to enroll in college courses for credit prior to high school graduation. College credits earned through dual enrollment can be simultaneously applied towards high school and college graduation.

*** Like an "MD" in the medical profession or a "CPA" in the accounting profession, an industry certification documents student achievement of industry standards based on an assessment of what students know and are able to do in a career pathway. Some certifications/licenses available to high school students are: Cosmetology, CISCO (computer networking), NATEF (automotive technician), just to name a few.

**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Career and College Readiness
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-2595
Telephone: 410.767.0195   Fax: 410.333.2099
www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech**

Martin O'Malley
Governor

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