Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Statewide CTE Task Force
January Meeting Notes

2–4 pm
January 8, 2026
Zoom

Attendee List

1	Krista Fox (OSPI)*	9	Tory Gering*	17	Taelar Shelton*
2	Kari Morgan (OSPI)*	10	Wes Allen*	18	Kimberly Hetrick*
3	Heather Rees (OSPI)*	11	Nora Zollweg*	19	Morgan Irwin
4	Ellie Palmer (OSPI)*	12	Marie Bruin	20	Ingrid Stegemoeller*
5	Michelle Spenser*	13	Rachel Wabeke*	21	Erin Frasier*
6	Tom Walker*	14	Reuben Argel*	22	Katelyn Kean*
7	Tia Rivera	15	Wade Larson*		
8	Sarah Patterson*	16	Kristin Murphy*		

Indicates the member was in attendance

Welcome & Opening
- The agenda has shifted a little bit since we emailed it out. We will be covering uniformity, buckets, and solutions today.

Uniformity
- If you recall, in the December meeting, we broke out into groups with the topics of Accessibility, Stability, and Uniformity to discuss the definitions, challenges, and barriers of those topics in Career Connected Learning.
- It was discussed that we needed a shared understanding of Uniformity before we tackled the challenges and barriers of it.
- To create a shared understanding, it was noted that in order to be uniform, CTE programs should be regionally responsive to labor market needs, have uniform learning objectives and quality standards, and balance local flexibility with statewide consistency. This ensures equity in educational outcomes while allowing for flexibility in program design and students across the state receive comparable career preparation quality across all industry sectors.
- The whole group was split out into smaller breakout groups again to address the challenges, barriers, and solutions to Uniformity in Career Connected Learning.
- This is what each group recommended:
  - Definitions of Uniformity–
    - Uniformity means offering opportunities equally across all districts. However, standardized processes must avoid constraining high-functioning programs to accommodate less-developed ones.
    - Establish set standards and best practices for running effective program advisories and industry-aligned programs that meet consistent industry expectations.
    - Recognize that student age variances and access differences impact the accessibility, stability, and uniformity of programs.

- Provide teachers and industry partners with guidance and tools for sustaining effective, meaningful program advisories.
- Uniformity in purpose and end results while allowing multiple approaches to achieve common goals.
- Ensure consistent, substantive advisory and industry participation across all programs.
    - Challenges/Barriers to Uniformity–
        - Program advisory councils lack regional coordination, resulting in district-level isolation. CTE teachers may be disconnected from current industry practices if they haven't worked in their field recently, creating gaps in teaching current industry standards.
        - Program frameworks are too complex for teachers and industry partners to understand and implement effectively.
        - Significant variation exists in program completion timelines, including wide discrepancies in program hours between schools (540 hours versus 108 hours) result in vastly different learning experiences and outcomes.
        - Difficulty ensuring fair comparisons and consistent standards when evaluating different programs and contexts.
        - Age restrictions create inequitable work opportunities (e.g., earning a CNA certificate at 17 versus 26 doesn't provide the same employment access).
        - Budget cuts and "doing more with less" pressures undermine program uniformity and quality across CTE.
        - Significant differences in business sizes and their capacity to support work-based learning opportunities.
        - Industry advisory council requirements result in checkbox compliance, with dispersed and replicated efforts across schools and districts rather than meaningful engagement.
        - Lack of consistent job site exposure for educators to maintain current industry knowledge.
        - Widespread misunderstanding about the differences between pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs.
        - Variations in directed versus discretionary funding and staffing capacity across regions create inequitable ability to develop and sustain quality programming.

Buckets
- These buckets/themes and definitions will be used to help you form solutions to the barriers/challenges.
- The group will finalize these definitions and challenges during the report writing process based on recommendations. They are not set in stone but are a good reflection of our discussions so far.
- *Accessibility:*
    - Proposed Group Definition for Accessibility: Accessibility means all Washington students have equitable access to Career Connected Learning programs,

regardless of location, individual needs, or background. These programs prepare students to meet workforce demands in both quantity and skill level.

- o Proposed Buckets of Challenges/Barriers to Accessibility: Communication & collaboration, knowledge about working minors, legal restrictions, program supply, instructor supply, student demand, and transportation.
- o It was noted that additional barriers to Accessibility were discussed during this meeting:
  - Community colleges prefer College in the High School articulations over CTE Dual Credit because they're more profitable, despite requiring high school teachers to hold master's degrees that not all community college instructors themselves possess.
  - Core content is not flexible enough to be implemented in Skills Centers and Independent High Schools. These options need to work for both Skills Centers and Districts without Skills Centers.

- *Stability:*
  - o Proposed Group Definition for Stability: Stability in Career Connected Learning is a system characterized by reliable, long-term funding; consistent program offerings; and clear alignment between available opportunities and student, employer, and labor market demand.
  - o Proposed Buckets of Challenges/Barriers to Stability: Funding, staffing, student supply, and consistency in workforce demand.
- *Uniformity:*
  - o Proposed Group Definition for Uniformity: Uniformity in Career Connected Learning means all students receive equitable, high-quality learning experiences tied to career skills, regardless of their location, employer, or program. While specific experiences may vary by context, the core skills and standards remain consistent across all opportunities.
  - o Proposed Buckets of Challenges/Barriers to Uniformity: Terminology, industry standards, workforce transitions, funding, instructor standards, and geographic variability.

Solutions
- The whole group was split out into smaller breakout groups to address solutions to Accessibility, Stability, and Uniformity in Career Connected Learning.
- These solutions will be used to draft our recommendations. The Padlet will remain live so the group can add more information as it comes up.
- This is what each group recommended:
  - o *Accessibility–*
    - Solutions to Communication & Collaboration Barriers:
      - Obtain written clarifications from employers regarding program expectations and requirements.
      - Industry-led Professional Development with inclusion of classroom-based best practices, program-format best practices, school/industry partnership best practices, etc.
      - Establish collaborative learning networks with shared professional

development so teachers can discover and adopt best practices within their sector.

- Engage industry partners to host exciting, targeted professional development for teachers, recognizing that small-scale, inspiring sessions are more effective than attempting statewide events.
- Develop common, shared curriculum that districts can access for free.
- Create more shared model frameworks and curriculum for CTE course equivalencies.

▪ Solutions to Knowledge About Working Minors Barriers:
  - Increased communication of and invitation to training provided by L&I and Department of Labor for employers and educators who partner in Worksite Learning or Work-Based Learning programs.

▪ Solutions to Legal Restriction Barriers:
  - Will be addressed by Task D

▪ Solutions to Program Supply Barriers:
  - Expand access to free, job-relevant curriculum that is easily accessible and applicable to real-world employment scenarios.

▪ Solutions to Instructor Supply Barriers:
  - Enhance state funding for Career Connected Learning and Core Plus programs to support teacher professional development, training, and access to quality instructional materials.
  - Strengthen collaboration networks among teachers and educators to facilitate peer support and empowerment.

▪ Solutions to Student Demand Barriers:
  - Explore the creation of a structured CTE pipeline beginning in fifth grade and continuing through middle school to high school.
  - Implement family and community education programs about career connected learning pathways, ensuring all families understand opportunities beyond traditional university tracks.
  - Design tiered healthcare pathway programs that accommodate students at all levels—from complete beginners who can graduate job-ready to exploratory programs that inspire students to pursue further training after high school through Skills Centers or Running Start.

▪ Solutions to Transportation Barriers:
  - Address transportation barriers by improving student access to driver's education programs, public transportation, and other safe travel options to and from work sites.

▪ Two questions were posed to the group:
  - Shareable Curriculum: Is curriculum currently available through Open Educational Resources (OER) that could be expanded for broader use, or is a new platform needed to facilitate curriculum sharing?

- Teacher Collaboration: What mechanisms could facilitate teacher connections and collaboration? Suggested approaches include hosting workshops at state conferences like WA-ACTE, organizing virtual networking sessions via Zoom to connect interested teachers, or adding items to the OSPI CTE newsletter for ongoing communication.
  - *Stability–*
    - It was noted that there is a lot of overlap with Accessibility and Stability.
    - Solutions to Funding Barriers:
      - Explore alternative funding sources beyond traditional CTE allocations to address current resource gaps.
      - Consider public-private partnership models where businesses contribute financially to work-based learning programs.
      - Encourage direct business sector investment in workforce development programs to ensure future talent availability and program sustainability.
      - Consider broader student outcomes and population health, ensuring long-term financial stability beyond student headcount.
      - Revisit K-12, community college, and skills center funding to maintain FTE enrollment.
      - Community colleges prefer College in the High School articulations over CTE Dual Credit because they're more profitable, despite requiring high school teachers to hold master's degrees that not all community college instructors themselves possess.
    - Solutions to Staffing Barriers:
      - Designate primary employer points of contact for work-based learning experiences in each district.
      - Create mutual incentive programs that encourage collaboration across multiple groups and sectors, bridging social and organizational divisions.
      - Remove barriers to professional development participation, ensuring all CTE staff can easily access training to maintain current industry standards and certifications.
    - Solutions to Student Supply Barriers:
      - Begin building tactile and foundational skills at the elementary level, with particular emphasis on fifth grade as a critical starting point.
      - Embed and expand dual credit and statewide credit equivalency opportunities within all CTE programs.
      - Actively recruit and retain students in CTE programs through sustained engagement strategies that respond to current student needs and interests.
      - Incorporate student input into system development to ensure programs meet the needs of new generations.

- Address declining enrollment and birth rates by encouraging districts to leverage dual credit, AP, and skills center partnerships creatively.
- Balance maintaining local program enrollment with recognizing the essential role skills centers play in CTE, supporting shared enrollment models that strengthen rather than compete with district programs.
  - Solutions to Consistency in Workforce Demand Barriers:
    - Strengthen development of core employability skills and fundamentals across both school-based programs and WBL experiences.
    - Develop and implement cross-sector, uniform employability and soft skills standards with formal credentialing. Address system-wide challenges collectively rather than sector-by-sector to achieve meaningful, large-scale impact.
  - *Uniformity–*
    - Solutions to Terminology Barriers:
      - Develop a unified program model with clearly defined core components, common outcomes, and shared terminology/definitions.
      - Establish written definitions and standards from a singular source.
      - Focus on standardizing program outcomes and measurable results rather than prescribing uniform implementation methods.
    - Solutions to Industry Standards Barriers:
      - Rely on sector-facing groups to guide and revise skills needs.
      - Lack of established uniformed standards- reality that there is varied ability in sectors experience with early talent opportunities.
      - Frameworks need simplification into one-page competency documents that are accessible to industry.
      - There's a need for uniform industry standards across all CTE sectors (similar to nursing standards) that clearly reflect the competencies industry expects from students.
    - Solutions to Funding Barriers:
      - Similar to funding solutions for Stability.
    - Solutions to Instructor Standards Barriers:
      - Instructors spend time working in the field to renew their certification and be familiar with the current work.
      - Help employers understand the value for their future talent pools of educating teachers about their sector.
      - Establish regional and state-level systems for collecting and disseminating industry skills data, reducing over-reliance on individual employers.
      - Leverage broader industry group feedback to identify transferable skills that apply across multiple sectors, ensuring more equitable

information access statewide.
- Require CTE teachers to return to industry periodically (similar to teacher certification renewal).
  - Solutions to Geographic Variability Barriers:
    - Dedicated funding for an appointed person to run work-based learning at each district/school (could be a teacher or not).
    - Establish regional advisory groups to reduce duplication and over-reliance on the same businesses.
  - o It was noted that some of these solutions can easily be turned into recommendations and some would need to be best practices considering local control rules in Washington State. It was then discussed that best practices may not be the best way to go because everyone interprets things differently.

Wrap Up & Next Steps

- Feel free to consider sharing your thoughts on the live Padlet: https://padlet.com/elliepalmer/taskapart2.
- During the next meeting, we will discuss Task A Recommendations and then dive into Task B.
- Next Meeting: February 12, 2026 from 2–4 pm.