

Statewide CTE Task Force

February Meeting Notes

2–4 pm
 February 12, 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 sent it out. The agenda is as follows: Deciding on Deciding, Task A Draft Recommendations, Industry Feedback, Industry Collaboration, and Wrap Up/Next Steps.

Deciding on Deciding

- The Task Force discussed different approaches to group decision-making, as the group has reached the stage where formal decisions on recommendations are required. Three models were presented:
 - Voting (Majority Wins): Decisions are made by majority through polls, raised hands, etc.
 - Consensus (Everyone Must Agree): All members must agree, lending stronger collective voice to recommendations presented to policy makers.
 - Hybrid: Voting is used in a limited capacity to gauge the group's position, while striving for consensus. This approach can offer multiple options when consensus is not reached in order to capture all perspectives, though split decisions may carry less weight with policy makers.
- All votes will be recorded anonymously, with tallies included in meeting notes.
- Decision: The group voted on a preferred decision-making model:*
 - Hybrid approach selected – 7 votes in favor*

Task A Draft Recommendations

- The group was split into breakout groups to discuss the draft recommendations for Task A. The goal of Task A is to make recommendations for improving the accessibility, stability, and uniformity of all aspects of Career Connected Learning. The draft recommendations and discussion notes are as follows:
 - Draft Recommendation 1: The CTE Task Force recommends that the Legislature establish and fund sector-based collaborative learning**

networks.

- This is an important recommendation, but it should not be placed as number one (as in most important). The report should include re-ordered priorities.
- It was mentioned that this recommendation could get more specific around a funding recommendation and including teachers receiving funding.
- It is important to consider directly funding a program or school if they meet a certain industry standard or rigor- mirror the Core Plus grant model.
 - Core Plus: Collaboration also existed regionally to make sure there was collaboration amongst teachers- mirror this model as well.
- The group is unclear about how this would be different from what already exists. Example- regions regionalizing advisory board work. There concerns expressed surrounding if this would replace the current advisory council structure or would be added on top of it.
 - Some of this work may already be happening but may not be required.
 - Due to this, it is recommended to refine and/or separate Recommendation 1. Consider how it would function within existing structures.
- The term “Collaborative Learning Network” should be clarified or renamed. Is this a sector based professional learning community that also has regional advisory groups?
 - Some members consider this as a collection of educators across the state.
 - A need was identified for convening stakeholders by sector to collaboratively develop professional development, curriculum, and industry standards. There are several barriers, particularly around regional variation across the state. Concerns were raised about districts duplicating efforts- including instances where multiple districts are engaging the same employers in the same area and communicating inconsistent or conflicting requirements.
- Written Feedback Received:
 - Employer-led organizations (such as industry associations) would be powerful intermediaries in our education and training systems. With the right technical assistance and funding, they could create sector-based professional development networks for educators – connecting educators with employers in a coherent, streamlined way that doesn’t depend on who knows who in individual towns and school districts.

- Regional industry advisories – to consolidate individual school and district advisories – could be a much more efficient use of employer time and energy (a lot of feedback about the many requests employers get to sit on many advisory boards), and hopefully educator time and energy, too. The above-mentioned sector leaders could also play a role on these advisories, offering input about sector labor markets and skills needs, and free up employer bandwidth to actually offer Career Connected Learning programs.
 - This recommendation on paper aligns with what is heard from employers and association partners, as long as it accompanies a consolidation / refinement of the employer infrastructure that already exists, rather than just adding more. Maybe there’s an opportunity to leverage/align this recommendation with new national CTE clusters, and/or opportunities like Workforce Pell?
- **Draft Recommendation 2: The CTE Task Force recommends that OSPI collaborate with L&I and Department of Labor to establish required training for employers and educators who partner in Career Connected Learning Programs.**
 - This recommendation was to address lack of clear and consistent information on Career Connected Learning.
 - Adding another required training may not be well-received, and questions were raised about who would be responsible for facilitating the trainings. The group emphasized the importance of not creating additional barriers that could further disengage employers.
 - The Employer Survey that Paul Randall presented was noted as containing a number of potential solutions the group could support. Rather than introducing a new requirement, this could be framed as a best practices resource- a shared language guide or statewide playbook to avoid adding another mandate.
 - Employers want information that is easy to access and consolidated in one place. The goal should be to develop a shared understanding of language across all agencies so that stakeholders can interpret guidance independently, with fewer things left open to interpretation and no additional burdens created. Comprehensive resources are needed to support this.
 - The dual credit and articulation process was offered as a model- paperwork is completed and electronically routed to each relevant party before returning to the originator. It was recommended that Career Connected Learning documentation follow a similar process.
 - Obtaining guardian signatures for youth participants was identified as a

significant barrier. The group recommended considering broader access solutions to address this challenge.

- **Draft Recommendation 3: The CTE Task Force recommends the exploration of a structured CTE pipeline beginning in elementary school and continuing through postsecondary options.**
 - Edits and/or comments recommended via the Padlet–
 - Continue to market Skills Center programs to elementary and middle schools- including tours.
 - Start hands-on learning in classrooms in elementary and middle school. Create a “playbook” to ensure this is happening.
 - How would we get funding to ensure this exploration is in place in districts?
 - Further edits to this recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting.
- **Draft Recommendation 4: The CTE Task Force recommends that school districts implement family and community education programs about career connected learning pathways, ensuring all families understand opportunities beyond traditional university tracks.**
 - Edits and/or comments recommended via the Padlet–
 - OSPI should develop a template for marketing materials to be customized per district that outline pathways from elementary through post-secondary for schools to provide at family nights, etc. Materials can also include future jobs, wages, and locations for additional training and should be provided in multiple languages.
 - Further edits to this recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting.
- **Draft Recommendation 5: The CTE Task Force recommends that the Legislature increase the CTE apportionment rate.**
 - Edits and/or comments recommended via the Padlet–
 - This is especially significant given over 50% of students are now using the CTE graduation pathway.
 - Further edits to this recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting.
- **Draft Recommendation 6: The CTE Task Force recommends that the Legislature fund a dedicated career connected learning coordinator at every high school to manage work-based learning activities and programs.**
 - Edits and/or comments recommended via the Padlet–
 - Would this take place of existing Career Connected Learning coordinators?
 - Further edits to this recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting.

- **Draft Recommendation 7: The CTE Task Force recommends that OSPI and CTE partners work together to create a glossary of terms and work towards clear, concise and consistent terminology.**
 - Edits and/or comments recommended via the Padlet–
 - Who do the CTE partners include?
 - Further edits to this recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting.
- **Draft Recommendation 8: The CTE Task Force recommends that instructors be required to spend time working in their respective fields in order to renew their certification.**
 - Edits and/or comments recommended via the Padlet–
 - Externships are critical so teachers can learn from employers in a deeper way- competencies, decision making, back end challenges, etc.
 - Should look four to five years out to implement for competency needs in the industries.
 - How would unions play a role in this?
 - Further edits to this recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting.
- A question was raised regarding the next steps for the Task Force's recommendations. It was explained that upon conclusion of the Task Force's work, the group will produce a final report containing clear and actionable recommendations. This report will be submitted to the legislature, where individual recommendations may be taken up by a legislator and introduced as a bill, generate fiscal notes, result in changes to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), or be shaped through the broader legislative negotiation process.

Industry Feedback & Takeaways

- Paul Randall from Tri-Tech Skills Center attended the Task Force to present data of an Employer Survey that he created so that Skills Centers could obtain an understanding of barriers by people who actually hire minors.
- *Key Findings:*
 - Employers are eager to hire CTE-prepared minors and recognize the long-term workforce benefits.
 - However, they face layered barriers to this- restrictive statutes, liability concerns, fragmented or unclear guidance, and additional supervision costs.
- *Top Barriers:*
 - Liability and insurance, safety regulations, legal restrictions, administrative burden, scheduling alignment with schools, supervision demands, and workplace readiness.
- *What Employers Need:*
 - Plain-language guidance, operational efficiency, centralized resources, alternative

scheduling models, employer support programs, and regional advocacy.

- *Solutions:*
 - Regulatory alignment, state support, and flexible program design.
- *Group Discussion on the Data Presented:*
 - State law reflects a strong commitment to CTE. However, a need was identified to better align agency rules to ensure students are protected while safely entering the workplace, as rules can at times be contradictory. The group emphasized the importance of engaging students in CTE earlier to build interest and equip them with skills they will carry into adulthood. Replicating successful models across the state and across all sectors was recommended.
 - It was noted that this is not necessarily a legislative issue- it is largely an agency issue. The legislative intent is clear: to develop a capable workforce. Agencies hold significant authority to refine regulations and make meaningful progress toward this goal without requiring new legislation.
 - Concerns were raised about the existing system for juniors and seniors, including Running Start pathways. Frustration was expressed that students are being prepared through CTE programs, yet regulatory barriers prevent businesses from employing them- creating a problematic cycle where students cannot obtain the work hours required for employment because they cannot get hired without them. Industry hiring also varies by region and sector, further complicating these pathways. The group underscored that agencies must take ownership of resolving these regulatory barriers to restore and strengthen career pathways for students.
- *Group Discussion Question: What stood out to you as something that need to be addressed through collaboration and what do you think about the solutions that were presented?*
 - Federal regulations identify 30 variances students are prohibited from performing. Washington State permits 8 of those variances under specific conditions, including required training, rules, and oversight. While reducing administrative burden is a priority, some paperwork requirements cannot be eliminated.
 - Agencies operate under distinct regulations and must respect jurisdictional boundaries, though there are areas where cross-referencing is appropriate. The collective goal should be to make compliance easier for employers.
 - Year-round internships are valuable but must account for students' required coursework needed for graduation.
 - Questions were raised about what sanctions and penalties exist for employers who place students in unsafe conditions or require excessive hours without supervision. This was flagged as an area for further discussion.
 - The current variance structure, described as "variances within variances", lacks consistency in how variances are granted and to whom. Greater standardization is needed.
 - Unpaid internships present a significant equity concern, forcing students to choose between income and hands-on career experience. The group emphasized

the need to remove this barrier so students can access work-based learning without sacrificing a paycheck.

- Several bills currently in progress may address barriers the Task Force has identified. Members will be kept informed as legislation advances.

Wrap Up & Next Steps

- Survey data will be shared after identifiable information is removed.
- Additional feedback is welcome to be provided in written format. We will continue to adjust recommendation verbiage and k timelines as needed to capture the committee's perspective.
- Next Meeting March 12: 2–4 pm.