

Career

Tech

Education

“IMPACT = Change”

Presented by
Klamath Union DECA
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I. SUMMARY

The majority of high school students today are no longer focused on college and future careers, but solely on graduating high school. Due to this mentality, students are overlooking opportunities and are not as prepared to enter the next step after high school. With today's advancing economy, higher expectations are inevitable. Early awareness and education is needed in order for students to be better prepared to pursue a future career in today's society. Career and Technical Education, (CTE, formally known as Vocational Education) is needed to expose and broaden the views of students at an earlier age so they can have smoother transitions into secondary education, or even entry-level jobs.

Klamath Union DECA completed an extensive project to evaluate and measure the various impacts of Career Tech Education throughout Oregon. The goal is to determine the importance of CTE and its effect as students advance past high school and to the industrial level. We hope to establish a connection between the varying expectations at both levels. Research and supported facts will be evaluated, summarized, and presented to hopefully increase its overall awareness.

CTE IMPORTANCE

CTE encourages high school students to further their education in different fields of study. CTE not only teaches technical and vocational skills in the classroom, but also emphasizes all the different aspects of an industry. This includes allowing opportunity for students to participate in hands on projects and work in real-life scenarios relating to a career path. It involved occupational areas such as arts and communication, agriculture, health services, business, engineering, technology, and more. Not only does it teach skills in an occupational area but it also enhances day to day skills such as communication, organizational, and leadership skills, etc.; that are all essential to becoming successful as an overall person.

Some of the facts that we found through secondary research include the following:

- Students involved in CTE courses versus students who are not, are more pleased with their career paths.
- Involved students have smoother transitions into post-secondary education
- Vocational graduates are more likely to be employed and earn more than their non-vocational counter-parts, particularly vocational graduates who worked part-time in high school
- Majority of employers claim employees with past work-based learning experiences were superior in productivity and attitude than those without
- Technical and occupational skills provided in vocational education increase worker productivity, skill transfer, job access and stability when these graduates find training-related jobs

CTE overall provides a piece of real-life experience that prepares its learners for a possible future as it allows for students to explore different career opportunities both in school and in the work-place.

THE PROJECT/ PRIMARY RESEARCH

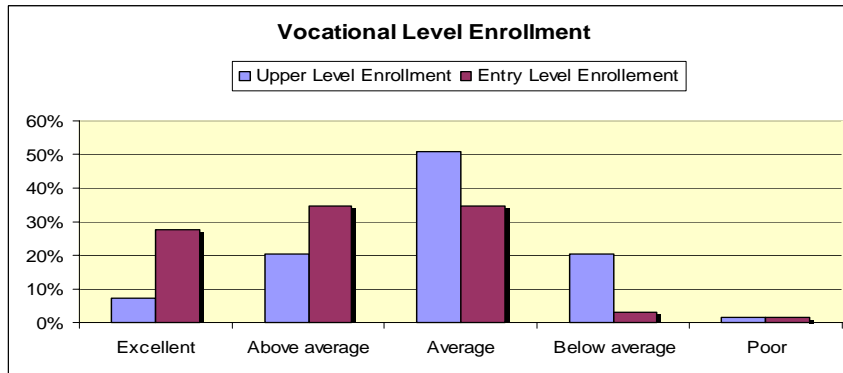
Our project consisted of two main focuses; to determine the viability of CTE and to establish a connection between education and the industry. Currently the main concern with CTE is that there is a decrease in the programs' importance, its current status, and possibly its existence in the future.

To properly research these problems, we created two web-based surveys directed at two target markets. These surveys were sent out through e-mail and were made available through the web; the results from both surveys are summarized:

Education Survey: Our first survey targeted high school vocational teachers, administrators, and all those affiliated with the educational department. Below is a summarization as a responder's profile:

- By sorting the first three digits of all area codes, there were twelve different regions from which people took surveys throughout Oregon.
- Out of all the survey takers, 98% were vocational teachers
- The majority of overall school enrollment was between 700 and 2000 students
- The majority of students view "graduating high school" as their main focus as a senior.
- There was a wide spectrum of responders in all the different areas of CTE.

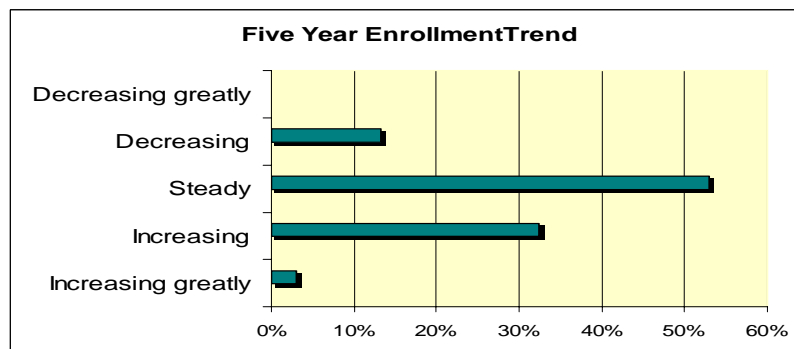
We also concluded the following findings from this survey:

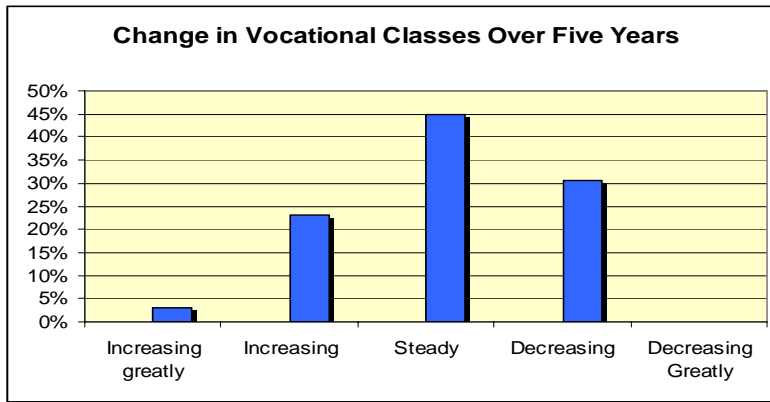


Upper level enrollment in CTE is less than lower level enrollment:

By comparing two of our survey questions, the results showed that although enrollment at an entry level began as average and above average, the enrollment trend of the upper level courses decreased to just being average. Therefore, there is a decrease in enrollment of CTE courses as students advance in grade level.

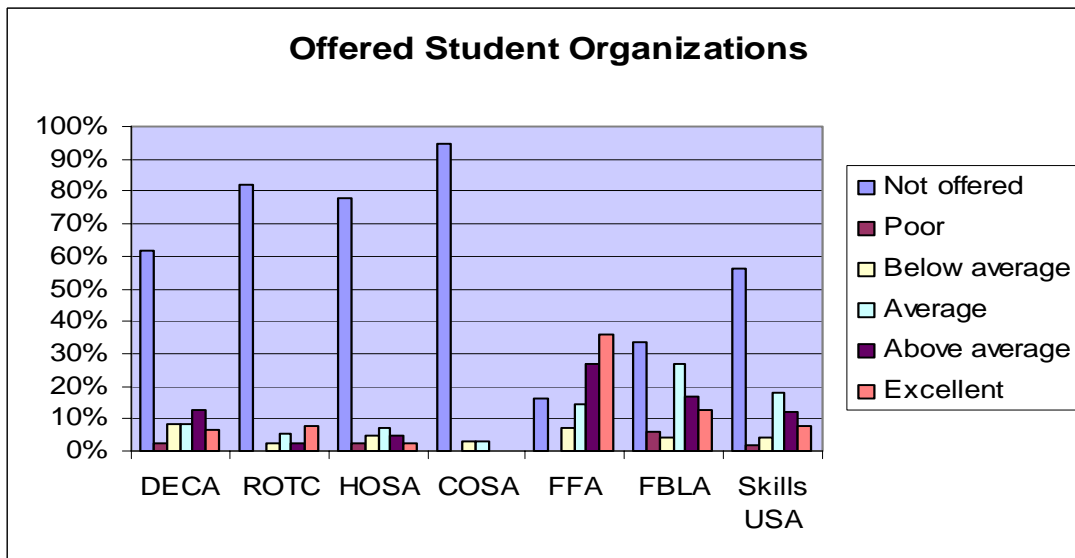
Enrollment in CTE programs is steady





The overall enrollment trend for the last 5 years has been mainly steady. The change in vocational courses offered in the last five years ranked highest with over 45% as steady, 32% as decreasing, and 23% increasing.

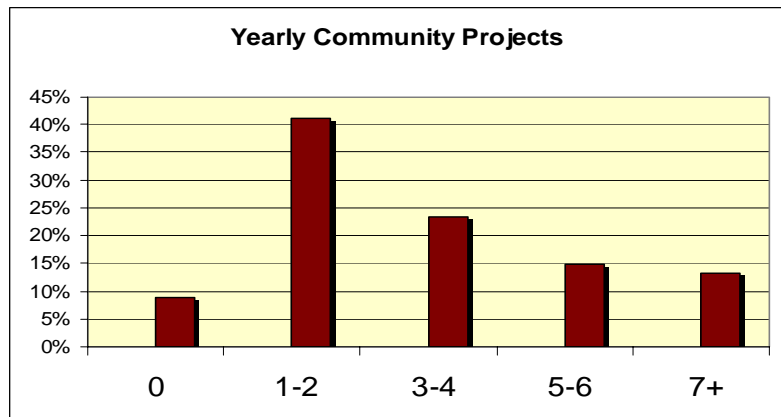
Few schools offer Career Tech Student Organizations (CTSO)



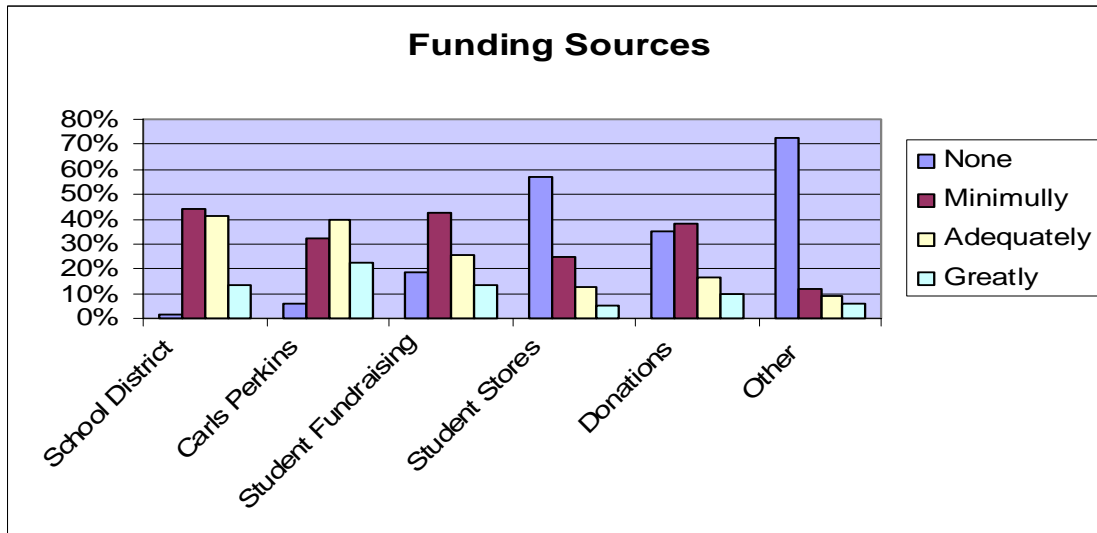
Our results show that the majority of schools don't even offer CSTO programs such as: DECA, ROTC, HOSA, COSA, FFA, FBLA, Skills USA; 6 of 7 of these student organizations were rated highest for not being offered. And out of the following that are offered, their enrollment trends are mainly average.

Community Involvement

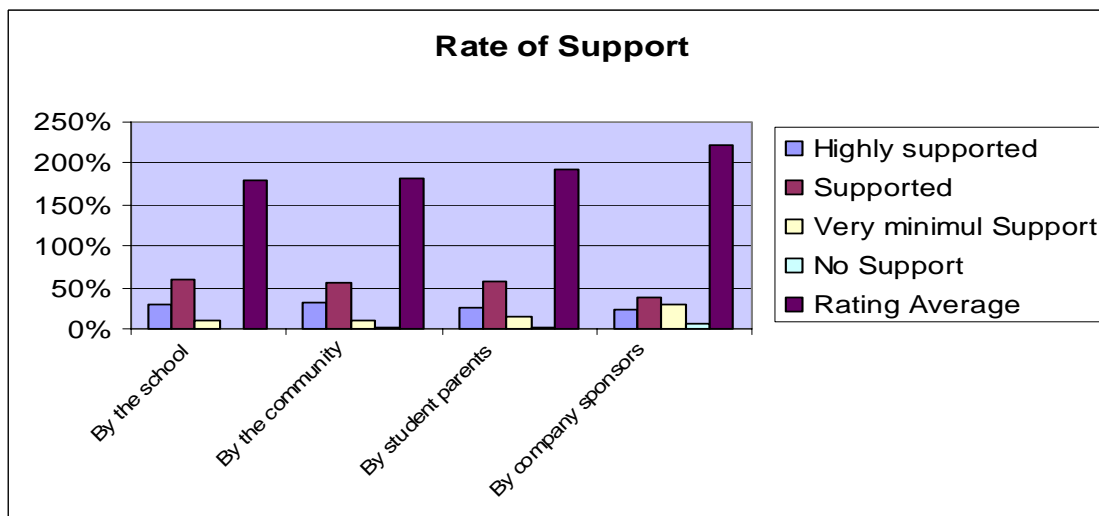
Nearly all the areas of CTE are involved in at least one community project throughout the year. Over 30% are involved in even more. What other area of education offers this type of involvement?



Support and Funding



Funding was rated as the most important factor affecting the future of CTE, therefore is a main concern. From our surveys, the high schools are receiving mostly minimal to adequate funding from programs such as Carl Perkins and the school district. The same applies to student fundraising. However, student stores, donations, and other sources rated highest, all breaking 35%, as providing nothing to the area. Not one of these sources were rated highest as providing “greatly” to CTE programs.



There is support from all the following options: the school, community, student’s parents, company sponsors and others. But the least amount of support comes from company sponsors and others.

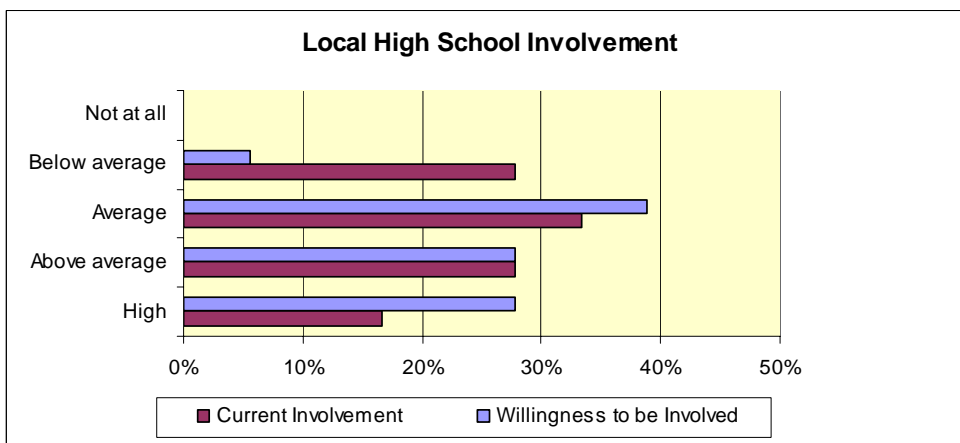
Industry Survey: Our second survey dealing with businesses, targeted at employers, responses are summarized as follows:

- The majority of responders were in the government industry
- Over 25 % of businesses had 200 + employees. The remaining majority were between 10-100 employees.
- The average businesses employees were paid between \$13-17 starting salary
- The average business required employees to have a HS diploma.
- The average employee had a HS diploma
- Most jobs require industry specific training

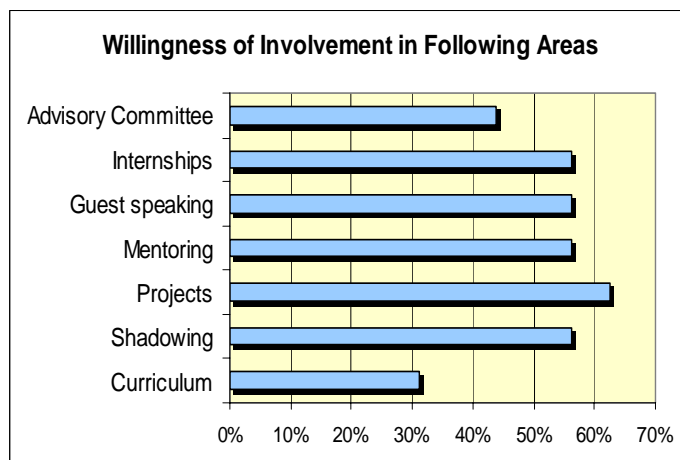
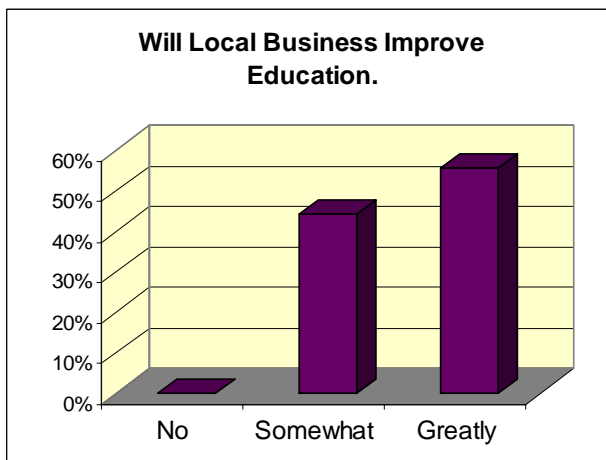
Some conclusions from the data include:

Business Involvement:

From our survey, we were able to determine that businesses are willing to be involved with local high schools. 58% of all survey takers were willing to be above average and highly involved, while another 38% were willing to be involved at an average level. Currently, business involvement is rated at 27% below average, 33% average, and 27% above average.



Over 50% of survey takers believe that local business involvement will “greatly” improve education. Over 55% are also willing to be involved in education by the following: Internships, Guest speaking, Mentoring, Projects, and Shadowing



The most important skills to employers were also the skills new employees' lack.

The skill assets that employers rated most important breaking 40% are listed on the following page on the left column in order from one to nine. The right column represents also the top eight skills that employers rated, but as what employees were lacking the most. As you can see the top two match exactly.

Most Important Skill Assets

1. Listening
2. Cooperating
3. Accepting Responsibility
4. Managing time
5. Being punctual
6. Solving problems
7. Speaking effectively
8. Writing concisely
9. Coordinating Tasks

Lacking Employee Skill Assets

1. Listening
2. Cooperating
3. Coordinating tasks
4. Being punctual
5. Managing time
6. Accepting responsibility
7. Solving problems
8. Speaking effectively
9. Writing concisely

After comparing graphs from both surveys, we have a **Comparison of skill assets being taught vs. skill assets sought by industry**

The results from our surveys showed that the top skill sets taught by teachers “very extensively” are in the order as follows listed in the left column. These results can be compared to the skill assets rated in order of importance by the industry on the right column. As you can see they differentiate meaning schools are not aware of what the industry views as most important as far as skill assets.

Top Skills taught by Teachers

1. Day to day skills
2. Communication
3. Leadership & management skills
4. Research and planning
5. Human relations

Top Skills Sought by Industry

1. Communication
2. Human relations
3. Research & planning skills
4. Leadership & management skills
5. Day to day skills

Factors impacting the future of CTE

(Refer to Graph on following page)

From our first survey, were able to determine that funding was the very top factor affecting the future of CTE. Funding was rated over 80% as extremely important, followed by scheduling and availability of CTE teachers at over 60%.

Seven different factors broke 40% as extremely important.

Eight different factors broke 40% as important.

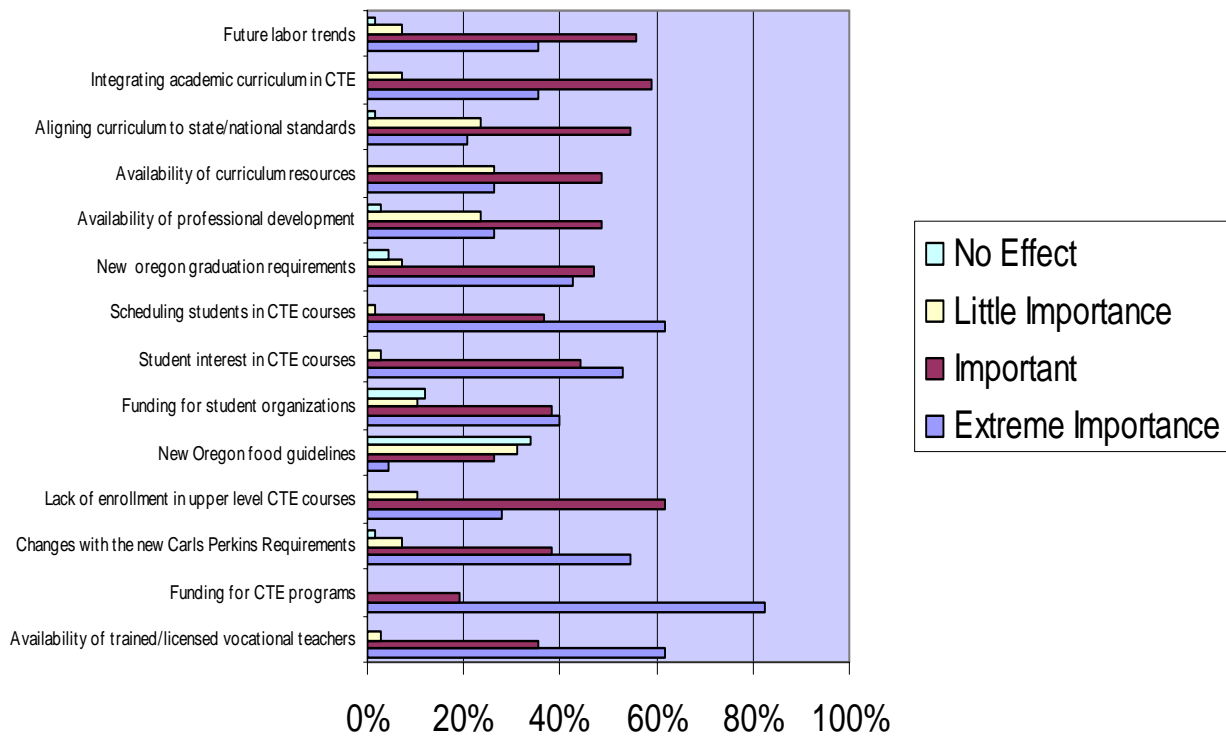
With both extremely important and important ratings combined, new Oregon graduation requirements and student interest broke 40%.

After analyzing our results and findings, we developed recommendations for this project. The focus of our recommendations is to increase CTE awareness, and provide more knowledge dealing with the future and current CTE programs. Our recommendations:

Recommendations for Change:

- Develop a state-wide CTE marketing plan
- Present data and lobby state and federal politicians

Importance to Future CTE



- Create an informative document
- Involve industry in more aspects of education
- Create pilot programs for all schools
- Find existing programs and relay information to other schools

Our surveys showed that main concerns such as funding and graduation requirements contributed the most to the decline of CTE programs. Something needs to be done about upper level course enrollment, and CTSO's (Career Tech Student Organizations) which currently are not even offered at the majority of Oregon's high schools.

We trust that our research will have a snowball effect, continuing to roll and grow with the increase in exposure. Overall our project will increase the awareness of CTE and impact its program. Through our planned promotion; this will further the support of CTE and influence future choices with taking our findings into consideration. Promotion will bring curiosity, willingness, and excitement to opportunity.

Exposure will also increase involvement of the industry to Education. Involving businesses will be an addition to students' education for career opportunities; early and direct exposure to the industry will enhance skill assets in students and better their transitions into the future.

What Can You Do?

We challenge you to personally become more involved in CTE programs. Write your state and federal legislature. Ask them to increase funding and find ways to improve CTE programs. We also challenge you to become more involved in your local CTE programs. You can make a difference and the time is now for CTE programs to be the leaders in education.