

Meeting the **Urgent Demand** for **Career and Technical Education** Instructors

Forty States' Certification Systems are Better Suited to Retain High School CTE Teachers

In 80% of all states, where 2.3 million educators are teaching in public schools, Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers can attain tenure via a non-academic pathway that tests their industry skills, or by earning significantly less academic credits than Pennsylvania requires. Too many experienced CTE educators leave their teaching jobs because PA regulations require onerous, non-industry specific academic courses to prove they are qualified to continue to teach.

Retaining CTE Teachers Will Give More Students Access to High School CTE Options

To retain more high school CTE teachers, Pennsylvania can maintain its academic certification standards and add an alternative pathway. CTE instructors can choose the option that works for them to secure their Instructor II certification to ensure the Commonwealth that CTE teachers are prepared to deliver quality instruction to their students.

Pennsylvania school districts have more than 700* vacancies for CTE High School Teachers

Experienced high school CTE educators often leave their public school educator positions before their 8th year by which they must earn 60 academic credits (180 hours of college level classes) to maintain their Instructor II certification. These courses typically do not relate to or improve their industry-related skills.

In some districts, experienced CTE educators must pay out of pocket to meet the academic requirements, and take non-relevant courses while also teaching full-time.



**Within 8 years,
many
experienced
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their jobs**

An Alternative Pathway for CTE Instructor II Certification Can Improve CTE Outcomes

K–12 teachers benefit from high-quality academic certification requirements in Pennsylvania because these requirements boost the subject-specific knowledge and teaching practice skills of teachers. An alternative pathway is needed specifically for CTE instructors to align their skills to quickly evolving industry standards. Such a pathway will:

- Incentivize CTE teachers to **update their industry knowledge and skills**.
- Increase the **likelihood that students are learning current industry skills** so they are ready to accept apprenticeships and jobs upon graduation.
- Boost the **capability of CTE teachers to build the real world skills** of students that mirror current industry practices.

Establish a new option for CTE teacher Instructor II licensure that recognizes industry experience and training as the basis of Instructor II certification.

Permit a new pathway that is designed as:

1. Instructor passes an appropriate industry certification(s) between the 5th and the 7th year of teaching, and
2. Instructor secures a satisfactory evaluation conducted by the LEA that assesses instructor efficacy based on a template prepared by the Department at the end of the 7th year, and
3. Instructor completes all Act 48 requirements. (The Commonwealth could focus the Act 48 requirements for CTE Instructor II faculty specifically on pedagogy, instructional practice models, classroom management, and other courses that augment the industry skills of the educator).

Pennsylvania is an CTE educator regulations outlier

In the last decade, dozens of states revised their CTE instructor certification requirements to ensure high school CTE teachers have the option to be certified by passing industry-specific assessments in the subjects they teach.

In states like Pennsylvania where teachers have more than one step to tenure, many states revised their approach to ensure that at each step CTE teachers can meet state certification requirements by passing recognized industry assessments.

* Kraft, James and Hans Meeder, "Strengthening Recruitment and Retention of Secondary Career and Technical Education Teachers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," (2025) [Unpublished report submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Career Technical Education].

80% of all states offer CTE teachers more options to achieve tenure than Pennsylvania