

# Strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Nevada through Industry Partnerships



2025

## Executive Summary

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is focused on teaching career-based skills and knowledge required for specific jobs or fields of work. CTE prepares secondary and post-secondary students across a wide range of industries and occupations to meet the increasing demand for skilled labor across various industries.

The MGM Resorts Public Policy Institute produced this white paper in conjunction with its mission to explore pathways to the middle-class.

The paper examines the significance of industry-led partnerships in improving CTE program outcomes at the secondary level. It specifically focuses on a collaboration between MGM Resorts International (MGM Resorts) and the Clark County School District (CCSD), which is the largest school district in Nevada and the fifth largest in the United States. The 2024 Culinary Senior Event, a pilot program stemming from this partnership, aimed to strengthen workforce connections in Nevada. The program aligns culinary CTE courses with the employment needs of MGM Resorts, creating a direct pathway for students to transition from the classroom to the workforce.

Moreover, the collaboration between MGM Resorts and CCSD has the potential to enhance economic mobility among CTE students, allowing them to earn post-secondary credentials and secure better-paying jobs. This partnership could serve as a model for how industry collaborations improve CTE student and employer outcomes. However, additional research is necessary to assess the impact of CTE graduates hired through this program, as it will provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with developing, sustaining, and scaling the program.

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## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

Career and Technical Education (CTE) refers to courses and programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels that integrate academic learning with technical skills, preparing students for specific careers.<sup>1</sup> CTE provides industry-relevant competencies and offers pathways for direct workforce engagement and higher education.<sup>2</sup>

Secondary CTE participation is associated with positive outcomes for both students and employers. For students, CTE participation is linked to improved high school graduation rates, employment opportunities, and increased participation in post-secondary education. From a business perspective, CTE programs are expected to create a talent pipeline for a skilled pool of candidates to meet local demand for labor. Employers in high-demand fields underscore the importance of secondary CTE while emphasizing the need to expand industry-education partnerships.

The following sections explore research highlighting the advantages of CTE programs for students and employers, focusing on the significance of the collaboration between industry (MGM Resorts) and a K-12 educational institution (CCSD). The paper then provides an overview of Nevada's CTE culinary program, including student enrollment and demographic data. Next, it describes the partnership between MGM Resorts and CCSD, outlining its implementation and potential to address disparities in student educational and career outcomes. Lastly, it concludes with guiding questions for employers interested in developing similar partnerships with educational institutions in their communities.

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Overview

CTE programs aim to improve students' academic career outcomes and address workforce demands by aligning education with industry needs. Today's CTE programs fall under the scope and influence of the federal legislation: Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V). Perkins V plays a critical role in ensuring that all students, especially those from historically underserved backgrounds, have access to high-quality CTE programs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). Career and Technical Education in the United States. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/tob>

<sup>2</sup> Kim, E. H., Flack, C. B., Parham, K., & Wohlstetter, P. (2021). Equity in Secondary Career and Technical Education in the United States: A Theoretical Framework and Systematic Literature Review. *Review of Educational Research*, 91(3), 356-396. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321995243>

<sup>3</sup> Griffard, M. (2023). *Nevada's workforce landscape: An analysis of career and technical education programs and outcomes*. Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System. <https://npwr.nv.gov/media/pdf/griffard-report-2023.pdf>

## Benefits for Students

CTE programs provide students with meaningful academic and career advantages, increasing their chances of graduating high school, earning vocational credentials, and securing employment. Studies examining student outcomes in specialized CTE schools found that students in these programs were better prepared for both employment and post-secondary education.<sup>4</sup>

CTE concentrators—students who complete two or more courses in a designated CTE program area—are more likely to graduate on time than their non-concentrator peers. This effect is particularly pronounced among males and low-income students. Compared to similar male non- concentrators, male concentrators are 23% more likely to graduate, and low-income concentrators are 25% more likely to graduate than their non-concentrator counterparts.<sup>55</sup>

One key aspect of Perkins V legislation governing CTE programs is its focus on expanding access to and supporting the success of nine special populations.<sup>6</sup> Partly due to the socioeconomic challenges faced by CTE students within this classification, many secondary CTE graduates are found to prioritize finding work over enrolling in higher education. However, for high school graduates who do not attend college, CTE participation is linked to higher rates of full-time employment and greater workforce engagement within three years of graduation.<sup>7</sup>

## Benefits for Employers

CTE can be a valuable resource for employers to meet their hiring needs. A national employer survey conducted in November 2020, with 315 participating employers, highlighted the value of CTE in producing job-ready candidates that meet their skill needs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hemelt, S. W., Lenard, M. A., & Paepelow, C. G. (2019). Building bridges to life after high school: Contemporary career academies and student outcomes. *Economics of Education Review*, 68, 161–178 and Neild, R. C., Boccanfuso, C., & Byrnes, V. (2013). *The academic impacts of career and technical schools: A case study of a large urban school district*. Baltimore, MD: Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University.

<sup>5</sup> Dougherty, S. M. (2016). Career and technical education in high schools: Does it improve student outcomes? <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/career-and-teched-in-hs.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> In Perkins V, special populations demographic groups include the following: Individuals with disabilities, economically disadvantaged individuals, individuals preparing for non-traditional fields, single parents, English learners, homeless individuals, youth in foster care, youth with a parent in the military, and out-of-workforce individuals.

<sup>7</sup> Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Holzer, H. J., Naito, N., & Xu, Z. (2020). Career and technical education in high school and post-secondary career pathways in Washington State (IZA Discussion Paper No. 13817). IZA Institute of Labor Economics. <https://docs.iza.org/dp13817.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Advance CTE (2021) *Shifting the Skills Conversation Employer Attitudes on and Outcomes for Career Technical Education*. Retrieved from [https://careertech.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/files/resources/EmployerResearchReport\\_100621\\_small.pdf](https://careertech.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/files/resources/EmployerResearchReport_100621_small.pdf)

When asked about the impact of expanding CTE programs on their business, more than half of employers strongly agreed that CTE produces a larger talent pool with employees who are:

- Better prepared for the workplace.
- Have greater job-specific technical skills.
- Possess more adaptable skill sets.
- Demonstrate better real-world skills.

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, employers strongly supported hiring employees with CTE experience, noting its positive impact on their businesses.

Figure 1.

*Employer Attitudes Toward the Benefits and Outcomes of Hiring Through CTE Channels*



*Source: Advance CTE Report on Employer Attitudes on and Outcomes for Career Technical Education (2021)*

Additionally, employers also strongly supported increasing public funding for secondary CTE programs, emphasizing the importance of strengthening connections between education and industry talent pipelines to ensure that CTE programs remain responsive to industry needs.

Research consistently supports the establishment of strong cross-sector partnerships between K- 12 education and industry partners to maximize the effectiveness of CTE programs. By aligning their visions for career readiness and workforce development, these

collaborations can fully realize the potential of CTE programs, creating value for employers, graduates, and schools, while positively impacting local economies and communities.

The next section focuses on CTE in Nevada, emphasizing the popularity of programs such as Culinary Arts. These programs play a vital role in meeting the increasing demand for skilled workers in the hospitality industry, which is a major contributor to Nevada's economy. The MGM Resorts - CCSD pilot program is positioned within this context to help meet industry demand.

## Career and Technical Education in Nevada

CTE programs in Nevada adopted the CTE framework with sixteen nationally and federally recognized Career Clusters®.<sup>9</sup> Hospitality and tourism are among secondary CTE participation's top three career clusters.<sup>10</sup> The Hospitality and Tourism Career Cluster focuses on the management, marketing, and operations of restaurants, food services, lodging, attractions, recreation events, and travel-related services. Within the Hospitality & Tourism career cluster, students can choose between (1) Culinary Arts and (2) Hospitality & Tourism programs.<sup>11</sup>

## Nevada's Culinary Arts Program

Culinary Arts is the most popular CTE program, with the highest enrollment statewide and within Clark County (see Table 1).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Nevada's career clusters: (1) Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; (2) Architecture and Construction; (3) Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication; (4) Business Management and Administration; (5) Education and Training; (6) Finance; (7) Government and Public Administration; (8) Health Science; (9) Hospitality and Tourism; (10) Human Services; (11) Information Technology; (12) Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security; (13) Manufacturing; (14) Marketing; (15) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; (16) Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

<sup>10</sup> Perkins Collaborative Resource Network. Perkins V National and State Enrollment Data for 2022-2023.

<sup>11</sup> Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning, and Education Options Nevada Department of Education (2023). Culinary Arts Program of Study and Complementary Course Standards.

E\_Possible\_Approval\_Of\_Culinary\_Arts\_Program\_Of\_Study\_With\_Complementary\_Course\_Standards\_98e539db7d.pdf.

<sup>12</sup> Nevada CTE Dashboards by Nevada Department of Education, Career and Technical Education  
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/nevada.cte/viz/NevadaCTEDashboards/LandingPage>.



Table 1.

2022 CTE Program Enrollment Data for Nevada and Clark County School District (CCSD)

<p><b>Statewide Enrollment (Nevada):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85 CTE programs are offered across 123 public middle and high schools.</li> <li>41 schools offer Culinary Arts CTE programs.</li> <li>105,748 students enrolled in at least one CTE course.</li> <li>Top three programs by enrollment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culinary Arts: 9,160 students (8.66%)</li> <li>Military Science: 6,259 students (5.91%)</li> <li>Video Production: 5,953 students (5.63%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Clark County Enrollment (CCSD):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>65 CTE programs are offered at 57 public middle and high schools.</li> <li>26 schools offer Culinary Arts CTE programs.</li> <li>78,416 students enrolled in at least one CTE course.</li> <li>Top three programs by enrollment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culinary Arts: 7,425 students (9.47%)</li> <li>Video Production: 5,098 students (6.50%)</li> <li>Military Science: 4,485 students (5.72%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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The Culinary Arts program introduces students to the principles and techniques of commercial food production. Its structure is based on Nevada’s Culinary Arts Standards, developed with input from industry experts. Figure 2 is an illustration summarizing the structure of Nevada’s Culinary Arts program.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2.

Nevada’s Secondary CTE Culinary Arts Program Structure



<sup>13</sup> Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning, and Education Options Nevada Department of Education (2023). Culinary Arts Program of Study and Complementary Course Standards. [https://webapp-strapi-paas-prod-nde-001.azurewebsites.net/uploads/E\\_Possible\\_Approval\\_Of\\_Culinary\\_Arts\\_Program\\_Of\\_Study\\_With\\_Complementary\\_Course\\_Standards\\_98e539db7d.pdf](https://webapp-strapi-paas-prod-nde-001.azurewebsites.net/uploads/E_Possible_Approval_Of_Culinary_Arts_Program_Of_Study_With_Complementary_Course_Standards_98e539db7d.pdf).

## Industry Demand & Workforce Challenges

The leisure and hospitality sector is a major driver of Nevada's economy. As of 2023, it accounted for over 22.7% of total employment in the state, with an even greater concentration in Clark County.<sup>14</sup> Three years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sector remains a cornerstone of Nevada's job market, employing one in five workers statewide and one in four in Clark County.<sup>15</sup>

The industry is expected to grow, fueled by tourism, large-scale events, and conventions. Major attractions, such as the Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix and Super Bowl LVIII in February 2024, continued to drive economic activity and job creation. However, persistent labor shortages can challenge growth in this sector. Many hospitality businesses continue to struggle with unfilled positions.<sup>16</sup> The difficulty in attracting and retaining workers is often attributed to perceptions of low wages and limited career advancement, discouraging potential employees from entering or remaining in the industry.<sup>17</sup>

Secondary CTE programs in hospitality and culinary arts offer a promising solution to the industry's workforce shortages. While the programs provide students with foundational industry skills and hands-on experience, making them valuable pipelines for future talent, there is little evidence to support that CTE participation directly translates to meeting workforce needs or employment retention in hospitality.

This suggests a need for stronger industry-education partnerships to ensure CTE programs align with student expectations and labor market demands. Collaboration between industry and educational institutions strengthens CTE programs and enhances student experiences. Early engagement with employers helps students bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world job expectations, facilitates direct workforce entry, and provides valuable industry connections. These opportunities create clear pathways for career advancement. For employers, collaboration helps meet immediate hiring needs and can also ensure the long-term viability of their workforce.

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<sup>14</sup> University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Center for Business and Economic Research. <https://cber.unlv.edu/southern-nevada-economy/>

<sup>15</sup> Guinn Center & Center for Business and Economic Research. (2023). *Workforce development in Nevada: Identifying pathways to economic mobility*. Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System. <https://npwr.nv.gov/media/pdf/guinn-cber-report-2023.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Matthey, R. (2023) *1,800 Las Vegas hotel jobs unfilled as employers compete with new hire incentives*. <https://www.8newsnow.com/news/local-news/1800-las-vegas-hotel-jobs-unfilled-employers-competing-with-new-hire-incentives/>

<sup>17</sup> Gilbertson, K. M. (2022). *Strengthening the Southern Nevada Workforce Pipeline*. Lincy Institute. 1-30. [https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lincy\\_policybriefs\\_reports/6](https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/lincy_policybriefs_reports/6)



## **MGM Resorts and CCSD Collaborate in Launching the 2024 Culinary Senior Event**

In May 2024, MGM Resorts International, in partnership with Clark County School District (CCSD), hosted the 2024 Culinary Senior Event. The partnership is aimed at strengthening workforce connections in Nevada by aligning CTE programs with MGM Resorts' employment needs and improving the employment and educational outcomes for students. This initiative is part of MGM Resorts' broader strategy to invest in local talent and cultivate a sustainable pipeline of future professionals, contributing to the organization's success and the development of the local workforce.

CTE educators nominated up to thirty high school seniors graduating from Culinary programs across seven CCSD schools to participate in a Skills Assessment and Interview Day attended by Chefs at MGM Resorts properties and Talent Acquisition teams, with the goal of recruiting graduates for entry-level cook and cook helper positions within MGM Resorts' culinary department. The event culminated in a Signing Day Event, where MGM Resorts offered employment letters and prestigious culinary jackets to twenty-five students, marking the start of their professional journey.

The program was implemented in three phases, involving participation from key stakeholder groups from MGM Resorts and the CCSD administration (see Appendix 1). The following section presents an overview of the program, followed by a broader discussion on the potential benefits gained by all partners, including CTE graduates, in terms of their career and professional development.

### **Day 1: Virtual Information Session**

MGM Resorts chefs shared their experiences and offered a glimpse into the kitchen environment, including work schedules, the fast-paced nature of the job, and potential career paths. The Talent Acquisition team presented available employment opportunities detailing the benefits of working at MGM Resorts, such as employee tuition assistance and leadership training. MGM Resorts staff also outlined the next steps and collaborated with CTE teachers to provide students with preparation for skills assessments and interviews with hiring managers. Meanwhile, CCSD partners were instrumental in promoting the event among CTE culinary students, ensuring that everyone was well-informed and prepared.

### **Day 2: Skills Assessment and Interview Day**

The Skills Assessment and Interview Day focused on evaluating students' culinary skills and readiness for employment, with the goal of identifying candidates for entry-level cook and cook helper positions within MGM Resorts' culinary department. Key aspects of planning included:

- **Selecting a Venue:** Southeast Career Technical Academy (SECTA) offered a kitchen that was outfitted with industry-standard equipment for assessing student skills.

- **Developing Assessment Criteria:** MGM Resorts Chefs evaluated essential culinary techniques and competencies critical for success in a professional kitchen environment.

- **Materials:** MGM Resorts supplied the food, CCSD provided tools and equipment.

- **Interview and Hiring:** MGM Resorts' Workforce Development and Talent Acquisition teams managed the interview process.

- **Student Participation:** CTE teachers nominated up to thirty students to participate.

### **Candidate Evaluation Criteria:**

- ☒ **Career interest and commitment.**
- ☒ **Strong communication skills & ability to follow instructions.**
- ☒ **Ability to work in teams.**
- ☒ **Reliability and professionalism.**
- ☒ **Scheduling flexibility.**
- ☒ **Meets age requirement of 18 years or older by the hire date.**

### **Day 3: Signing Day Event**

The program concluded with a Signing Day event at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino, celebrating the achievements of culinary high school graduates successfully hired through the event. MGM Resorts presented new hires with offer letters and prestigious culinary jackets to honor their commitment to careers in the culinary arts.

Attendees included students and their families, CCSD partners, post-secondary CTE and certification representatives, media representatives, and MGM Resorts Philanthropy & Community Engagement office. The media coverage aimed to promote the program to a wider audience, support the expansion of similar partnerships in other CTE programs, and address staffing needs in other high-demand fields. MGM Resorts Philanthropy & Community Engagement office highlighted the company's dedication to workforce development and showcased the students' accomplishments.

### **Program Outcomes**

Of the 29 students that participated in the event, MGM Resorts identified 25 eligible students for hire. The partnership demonstrated the potential for secondary CTE graduates to quickly take up jobs in critical employment areas within MGM Resorts properties.

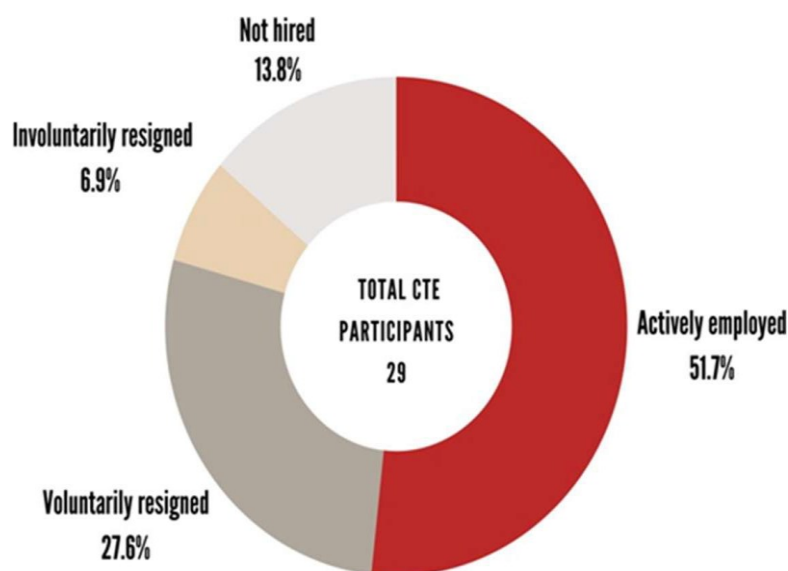
Participation at the event instilled a sense of pride and accomplishment among these emerging talents while providing them with job opportunities and career pathways within MGM Resorts' culinary department.

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*"The skills assessment portion was fun and fast-paced. It not only assessed our skills but also gave us a taste of what to expect in a high-speed operation"*  
 - Anna Trojahn (CTE Graduate)

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**Figure 3.**  
*CTE Participant Outcomes*



MGM Resorts actively engaged with students by conducting skills assessments and interviews to ensure that candidates were qualified and job-ready, demonstrating the potential of the CTE talent pipeline and giving companies like MGM Resorts access to a larger pool of qualified candidates. Chef Jeffery Davis explained that training young culinary students early on can shape their professional habits

and provide them with a strong foundation for a successful career in the kitchen. He hoped these students would aspire to stay in the culinary field for 20 years, eventually advancing to roles like chef or assistant chef.

The pilot program's success was largely due to the collaborative effort of several key stakeholders at MGM Resorts and CCSD. Coordination with CTE teachers also ensured that students were well-prepared for the skills assessments and interviews and became familiar with industry practices and standards. This allowed participating students to be effective and efficient employees from day one, leading to reduced onboarding time and quicker integration of new hires into MGM Resorts' operational teams.

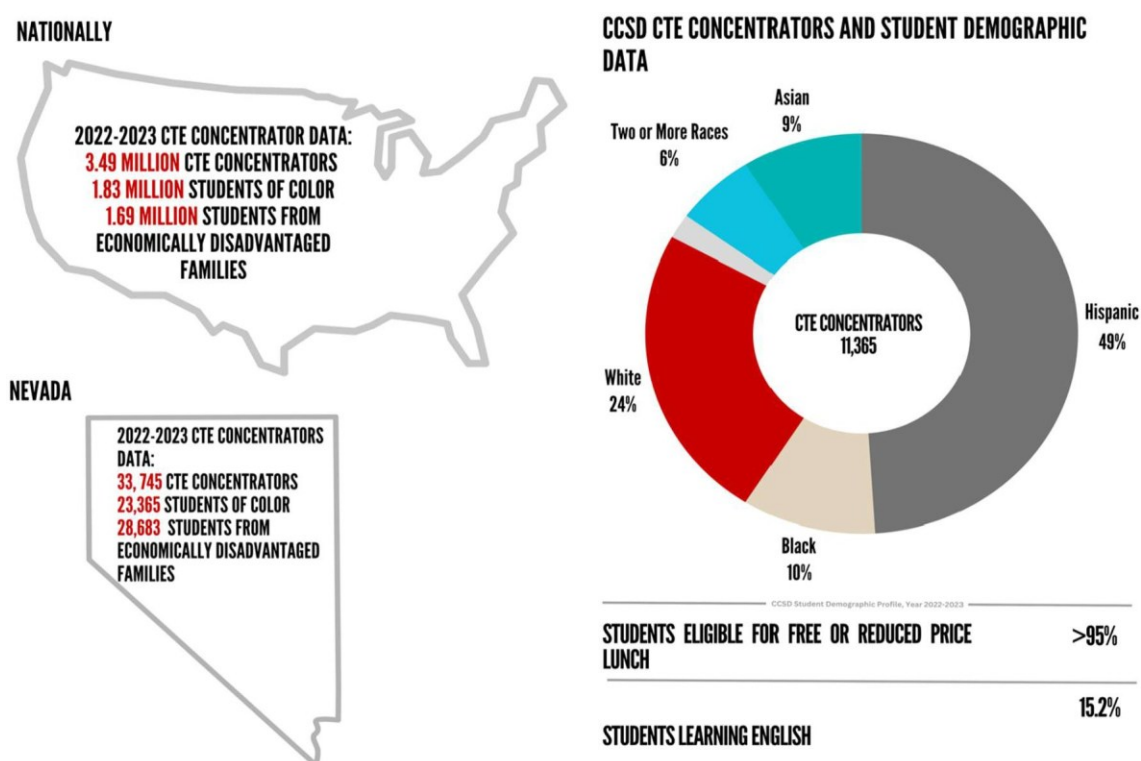
## Significance of this Work: Addressing Equity Gaps in Education and Employment

CTE programs are crucial in preparing students for the workforce and post-secondary education. The Perkins V Act prioritizes access to CTE programs for special populations, including individuals with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners, to improve career readiness and educational outcomes.

Nationally and across the state, a significant number of CTE concentrators (students who complete two or more courses in a designated CTE program area) come from historically underserved populations. In CCSD, over 80% of students belong to underserved groups and qualify for free or reduced-price meals (See Figure 4). These students often face socioeconomic challenges that result in students needing to enter the workforce after high school.

**Figure 4.**

*CTE Student Profiles Across the U.S., Nevada, and Clark County School District (CCSD)*



Sources: Perkins Collaborative Resource Network, Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR) & Nevada Department of Education.

The median annual salary for cooks at MGM Resorts in Las Vegas is \$59,582, with Executive Chefs earning up to \$102,965. According to Pew Research Center's definition of middle class, the median salary for cooks at MGM Resorts places them within the middle-income category for the Las Vegas metro area.<sup>18</sup> The program serves as a pathway for secondary CTE graduates to attain middle-class status and enhance their economic opportunities over time. It provides immediate job placements, enabling students to achieve financial stability shortly after graduation. As students gain experience, they develop valuable skills to advance into higher-paying roles.

<sup>18</sup> Fry, R. (2024, September 16). Are you in the American middle class? Find out with our income calculator. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/09/16/are-you-in-the-american-middle-class/>

## Enhancing Career Outcomes Through Experience and Connections

National surveys conducted by Advance CTE (2017, 2021)<sup>19</sup> reveal differences in how students perceive the value of secondary CTE programs. While "Preparing for the Real World" is the most widely recognized benefit across race, gender, and income groups, "Making Connections" is ranked particularly important for Black, Latinx, and low-income students. This suggests that beyond acquiring technical skills, these students see personal and professional relationships as crucial to their educational and career success. Given that historically underserved learners can often face barriers to mentorship, networking, and career exposure, these findings emphasize the need for relationship-building opportunities within CTE programs to ensure equitable outcomes.

For secondary CTE students who do not pursue higher education, participation in CTE programs is associated with higher full-time employment rates. CTE programs that connect students with job opportunities, such as through MGM Resorts' partnership with CCSD, offer significant advantages. They provide competitive wages that promote financial stability, clearly defined pathways for career advancement through structured training and promotion opportunities, and access to professional networks.

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*CTE hires received competitive wages of \$25 per hour and have clear pathways for career advancement within the organization.*

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These networks connect students with industry mentors, employers, and career development resources. Together, these elements enhance long-term job security and support upward income mobility.

## Enhancing Educational Outcomes Through the MGM Resorts College Opportunity Program (COP)

After six months of employment, MGM Resorts provides new hires access to its employee benefits programs, including the College Opportunity Program (COP). Through a partnership with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), this program offers full tuition coverage for online degrees and certification programs at any NSHE institution. Additionally, it includes tuition reimbursement and student loan debt assistance, helping employees overcome financial barriers to career advancement and higher education.

In summary, this partnership can provide students with secure, meaningful employment in fields aligned with their CTE training while also opening doors for further education and

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<sup>19</sup> Advance CTE. (2017). The Value and Promise of Career Technical Education: Results from a National Survey of Parents and Students. <https://careertech.org/resource/the-value-and-promise-of-career-technical-education-results-from-a-national-survey-of-parents-and-students/> Advance CTE. (2021). Communicating Career Technical Education: Learner-centered messages for effective program recruitment. <https://careertech.org/resource/communicating-CTE-recruitment>

career development. Through such industry partnerships, students gain access to resources, guidance, and opportunities that can significantly enhance their career potential and overall life trajectory

## **Broader Impact on Local Communities and Workforce Connections**

With nearly 30% of adults in Nevada having no more than a high school diploma, their prospects are often limited to low-wage work unless they further their education or acquire new skills. This dynamic hampers not only their progress in the labor market but also that of wider regional economies; well-paying jobs requiring higher levels of education are unlikely to locate and grow in places without people with the skills to fill them.<sup>20</sup>

MGM Resorts' investment in secondary CTE helps towards developing a more skilled workforce, making the region more attractive to higher-paying industries. This can result in increased business investments and broader economic growth. As employees improve their skills and advance in their careers, their heightened productivity and expertise contribute to a more dynamic and competitive local economy.

Additionally, decisions about CTE programs and curricula often rely on data that may not accurately reflect the current and emerging needs of local and regional employers. Partnering with employers can enhance the ability of CTE providers to quickly and effectively analyze labor markets. This ensures that CTE programs align with sectors poised for growth and provide accurate information about local job opportunities and wage conditions.<sup>21</sup>

## **Future Direction**

The initial success of the MGM Resorts and CCSD collaboration has paved the way for its expansion. In its second year, MGM Resorts plans to hire up to 40 CTE Culinary Arts graduates for cooking positions while also expanding the program to include up to six baker positions. Additionally, MGM Resorts and CCSD are continuing to explore additional CTE offerings to address staffing needs in other critical roles at MGM Resorts.

This program could serve as a model for employers both within and beyond the hospitality sector to create similar partnerships that enhance their talent pools. However, further investigation is necessary to evaluate the program's impact and ensure its long-term success. For example, it is crucial to engage with CTE graduates who have been hired through this partnership to better understand how effectively their training prepared them

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<sup>20</sup> United States Census Bureau. Current Population Survey Education Attainment 2022 Data for Nevada.  
<sup>21</sup> U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. (2019). Talent Pipeline Management Resource Guide: A Compendium for High-Quality CTE. [https://www.tpmacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Resource-3-Implementing-High-Quality-CTE\\_PUBLIC.pdf?utm\\_source=tpmacademy.uschamberfoundation.org&utm\\_medium=redirect](https://www.tpmacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Resource-3-Implementing-High-Quality-CTE_PUBLIC.pdf?utm_source=tpmacademy.uschamberfoundation.org&utm_medium=redirect)



for their roles. Identifying areas where they might need additional support for professional growth is equally important.

Conversely, interviewing hiring managers will provide insights into how the program affects departmental operations, staffing efficiency, and employee performance. These discussions are essential for assessing the immediate contributions of the program and identifying potential challenges that could impede its success. By addressing any identified issues, the program can maximize its impact, ensuring that both graduates and employers benefit as intended.

Lastly, documenting the tangible outcomes for both students and employers can highlight the value of this initiative to educational partners and other stakeholders, promoting broader adoption of similar collaborations.

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## **Path for Success:**

The following questions aim to guide employers in assessing the landscape of secondary CTE in their state and encourage strategic thinking about building effective partnerships that benefit their workforce development efforts.

### **1. How is CTE implemented in your state?**

Understanding the local CTE landscape is crucial for effective collaboration. [Exploring Perkins State Plans and Data](#) provides helpful information about each state's vision, goals, and priorities for CTE, as well as exploring student outcomes.

### **2. What industry-recognized credentials are needed in your field? Do they align with the offerings of local CTE Programs?**

CTE curriculum frameworks are valuable resources for learning about the coursework, skills assessments, and industry credentials available to CTE students. This information can typically be found on your state's Department of Education website. For instance, the [Nevada Department of Education](#)'s CTE program resources page offers the curriculum framework for local CTE programs.

### **3. How does your state currently support similar CTE Career Pathways efforts?**

Cross-sector partnerships are more easily developed at the local and regional levels. After all, these are the communities where K-12 schools, higher education institutions, and businesses are most engaged. However, cross-sector partnerships still require state-level engagement to enhance their chances of success. Employers can better understand how to navigate and leverage state resources by reviewing legislative agendas and the role of Workforce Intermediaries. An intermediary is an organization (or dedicated individual)

whose role is to connect state, regional, and local employers with K-12 education leaders and post-secondary institutions to develop and grow the “education to career” pipeline.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4. Explore how secondary CTE, post-secondary CTE, and workforce systems collaborate in your state.

Most often, cross-sector collaboration can occur in the following ways:

- Through statewide advisory committees/boards
- Sharing labor market information
- Aligning programs of study with career pathways
- Offering joint professional development
- Approving a common list of industry-recognized credentials

Consider the resources available to you to collaborate with K-12 partners. Is support needed to maximize your participation? To learn more about employer engagement in your state, visit Advance CTE’s [State Profiles](#) webpage.

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<sup>22</sup> Mezera, D., and Sufferin, Q. (2018). *Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Support Career and Technical Education Pathways. A Playbook for Policy Makers*. <https://excellined.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ExcelinEd.CTEPlaybook2.BuildingCrossSectorPartnerships.May2018.pdf>

## Appendix 1

### Planning and Implementing the 2024 Culinary Senior Event

	Planning	Program Awareness	Information Session	Interview & Skills Assessment	Signing Day Event
FOCUS AREA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify current employment needs, focusing on critical areas with staffing shortages (i.e., culinary department)</li> <li>Seek out partnerships with local school districts that offer CTE programs.</li> <li>Identify CTE programs that closely align with staffing requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange site visits and MGM Resorts property tours for CTE educators and students to explore the work environment and connect with staff and hiring managers.</li> <li>Conduct informational sessions for CTE educators sharing current employment opportunities and skills needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information about immediate career opportunities, wages, and employment benefits.</li> <li>Include insights from hiring managers regarding the work environment and expectations, such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work schedules</li> <li>Work pace</li> <li>Advancement opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Outline the expectations for the interview and skills assessment day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify students for hire to fill entry level cook and cook helper roles within MGM Resorts' culinary department.</li> <li>Evaluate the students' technical abilities, readiness for employment, and identify areas for additional training upon hire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Celebrate the hiring of CTE graduates by presenting them with hire letters and prestigious culinary jackets. This not only acknowledges the graduates' achievements but also serves to encourage more students to pursue CTE programs.</li> <li>Demonstrate MGM Resorts' commitment to CTE partnerships and the use of CTE channels to address workforce shortages.</li> </ul>
KEY CONSIDERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that program's objectives align with the overall goals of the partner organizations involved.</li> <li>Evaluate partner contributions to promoting and raising awareness of the program.</li> <li>Create clear and consistent messaging to be used across all communications about the program.</li> <li>Organize event schedules and logistics to maximize participation and effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early engagement with CTE teachers and students to build relationships and generate interest.</li> <li>Position employment at MGM Resorts as a desirable career path by highlighting employee benefits, career advancement opportunities, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek input from direct hiring managers to develop selection criteria for skills assessment, focusing on technical competencies, work ethic, and essential attributes for success.</li> <li>Coordinate with CTE educators to assist students in preparing for assessments and interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTE educators nominated students to participate in the program.</li> <li>Hiring managers are present to evaluate the students' technical skills.</li> <li>Talent Acquisition teams are on-site to conduct interviews.</li> <li>The selected venue is suitable for skills assessment and reduces barriers to participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the broader community, including families of CTE graduates, post-secondary CTE partners, media, and other relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>