

MYTHBUSTERS:

COMMON MYTHS & REALITIES ABOUT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Myth: *Career and Technical Education is designed for students who do not want to attend college.*

Reality: Career and Technical Education programs support students at all academic levels. They provide a foundation of skills that enables graduates to be gainfully employed full-time and/or to pursue college. Nearly two-thirds of all high school graduates of career and technical programs enter some form of postsecondary program. At **MBIT**, 71.7% of the class of 2013 attended some form of post-secondary training, either a two year or four year college/university or a technical institution.



SkillsUSA Officers

Myth: *Career and Technical Education is just a fancy new name for the old vocational education.*



Automotive Technology

Reality: Unlike in the past when the sole focus was on preparing students for work, today's CTE is aligned with a college prep curriculum. It provides students with both academic and technical skills to pursue a variety of options after graduation to include apprenticeship programs, degree programs at two- and four-year colleges, private career schools, as well as industry-sponsored education and training.

Myth: *Career and Technical Education locks students into career choices at an early age.*

Reality: Students are not locked into career choices. The programs offer students an organized sequence of courses to explore a particular career field.

Myth: *Students planning to go to a 4-year college will not benefit from participating in Career and Technical Education Programs.*

Reality: In today's economy, a 4-year degree no longer guarantees success in life. Students must also have practical application skills in problem-solving, communication, team work, critical thinking and leveraging technology. CTE helps students to develop these skills.

Myth: *Career and Technical Education programs only prepare students for non-professional careers in the trades.*

Reality: The Programs of Study enable students to explore a variety of employment/career options in career fields from construction to engineering, from culinary arts to health sciences and from manufacturing to teacher preparation. These programs enable students to make better decisions when choosing a career.



Myth: *Career and Technical Education doesn't pay off.*

Reality: On the contrary it does. A range of studies show that CTE graduates are more likely to be employed and earn more than their non-CTE counterparts, particularly CTE graduates who worked part time during high school (Stone 1993). There is strong evidence that the generic technical skills and occupationally specific skills provided in career & technical education increase worker productivity, skill transfer, job access, and job stability when CTE graduates find training-related jobs (Bishop 1995).



Public Safety students with children from Li'l Bucks Pre School

Myth: *A Four-Year College Degree Is the Ticket*

Reality: A closer look at supply and demand in the labor market uncovers another reality to contradict the belief that a four-year college degree is the ticket to success. That fact is that professional occupations make up only 20 percent of all jobs. Technical employment is the fastest-growing segment of the labor market. Most technical work will not require a four-year college degree. Only 25 percent of all technical work requires a four-year or graduate degree. The fastest-growing piece of the high-skill, high-wage technical workplace is occupations that require an associate's degree.

- o Among college students who graduate with a four-year degree, only two of three will find employment related to their field of study.
- o Among college students who graduate with a professional credential (e.g., for teaching, engineering, or accounting), only one in two will find related employment.
- o A four-year degree does not guarantee a high income.
- o Although college graduates have higher average earnings than high school graduates, only some of the variation in earnings can be attributed to education; supply and demand are the most important factors.
- o The U.S. Department of Labor's Managerial/Professional job grouping is indeed at the top of the salary ladder. But the next rung down on the ladder is Craft, Precision Metal, and Specialized Repair occupations in virtually every industry and every work environment like construction drafter, medical lab technician, manufacturing systems operator, computer repairperson, and paralegal that pay well but require specific occupational skills available in secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical programs or apprenticeship programs.



Dental Assisting

Myth: *Career & Technical Education is for the noncollege bound student or the potential dropout.*

Reality: Research shows that students who participate in CTE programs are:
More likely to complete high school.
More likely to attend college.
More likely to be prepared to enter the workforce.