



# Career & Technical Education (CTE) Reopening Guidance

*Released 10/5/20. Updated 12/14/20.*

## Introduction

The primary documents regarding school reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at [Back2SchoolRI.com](https://www.back2schoolri.com) and the [RIDE COVID-19 webpage](#). This document builds on those documents, and provides additional information specific to the functioning of CTE programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guiding principle underlying the successful operation of a CTE program under COVID-19 is to maximize student learning while maintaining safety for students and adults. The guiding principle is to maintain high expectations for student learning and outcomes, but take a flexible and adaptive approach on how to best help students meet those expectations.

While running any education program has become more difficult under COVID-19, CTE programs face particular challenges. This is because many programs prioritize “hands-on learning” that is hard to replicate in a virtual setting, and the industry partnerships that are the backbone of CTE become more difficult when industry is trying to navigate a challenging economic landscape. There are few easy answers, but RIDE, the CTE Board of Trustees (CTE Board), and broader Rhode Island CTE community are committed to partnering with schools to share whatever resources and tools may help schools navigate this challenging time.

## CTE Board Standards

CTE programs in Rhode Island are governed by RIDE and the CTE Board of Trustees (CTE Board), as described in Rhode Island’s [Perkins V State Plan](#). The [program standards](#) for each career field are set by the CTE Board and adopted by RIDE.

Most RIDE and CTE Board requirements are not impacted by COVID-19 and the move of large numbers of students to some form of distance or hybrid learning. For example, requirements about course sequences, whether credits are listed on transcripts, definitions of Priority Sectors, etc. are not changed by whether students are learning virtually or in-person. **Unless explicitly stated otherwise in a RIDE policy document, CTE programs are expected to continue to meet the RIDE and CTE Board requirements issued before the COVID-19 pandemic.**



The impact of the move to a distance learning or hybrid learning on a CTE program varies significantly by the career field—for example, computer science courses are easier to do virtually than culinary courses. Therefore, any modifications to the CTE Board Standards will be specific to each career field. Proposals for COVID-related modifications to standards should be brought to the relevant Industry Advisory. Programs seeking modifications to the standards should contact the co-chairs of the relevant Industry Advisory. (See the [RIDE CTE website](#) for a list of advisory chairs and their contact information.) The Advisories, composed of representatives from industry, K-12 education, and higher education will discuss the proposal, and submit a formal recommendation of proposed changes to the CTE Board for consideration and approval during its monthly meeting. (For a list of meeting times, see the [meeting schedule](#)). If the CTE Board approves any changes, RIDE will update this guidance document and notify relevant programs of the change.

**At this time, RIDE and the CTE Board have not received any proposals from the Industry Advisories for modifications to the CTE Board Standards, and have therefore not approved any changes.** Programs are expected to continue meeting the current CTE Board Standards until and unless any such changes are approved by the CTE Board and adopted by RIDE.

For advice on how to run successful programs under COVID-19, see [COVID-19 Planning Guide from the Association for Career & Technical Education \(ACTE\)](#).

## CTE Reopening Scenarios *Updated 12/14/20*

RIDE's [Back to School RI Guidance Document](#) outlines four reopening scenarios: Distance Learning, Limited In-Person, Partial In-Person, and Full In-Person. In the Limited In-Person scenario, vulnerable populations are prioritized for in-person instruction. Given that some CTE programs require hands-on learning that cannot be easily done in a virtual environment, **LEAs may prioritize CTE students in certain programs to attend school in-person during a Limited In-Person scenario.**

LEAs should prioritize in-person learning for students in the programs that cannot be adequately taught through distance learning. The table below can serve as a rough guide for which career clusters to prioritize for in-person instruction under a Limited In-Person scenario. Career clusters labeled “High Priority” are most likely to require in-person learning; clusters labelled “Low Priority” can be done virtually with less of a negative impact on student learning. The RIDE team created this table after analyzing the CTE Board Standards, and the likely need for students to be in-person to meet those standards. If you have any questions, or believe your program has alternative models of meeting these standards that RIDE may be unaware of, please feel free to reach out to [cte@ride.ri.gov](mailto:cte@ride.ri.gov).

It is worth noting that while this table can serve as a general guide, these prioritization decisions ultimately need to be made at the LEA level. Decisions about which CTE students to prioritize for in-person learning will depend on the design of a school's CTE program, course sequence, and student access to equipment and technology. That decision-making process should include confirming that all



software programs required to achieve CTE Board standards are supported on students’ devices. (For example, some required software packages might not run on Chromebooks.)

Career Cluster	Priority Level for in-person instruction under “Limited In-Person” reopening scenario	Notes
Architecture and Construction	High	May need access to equipment and consumable materials for guided instruction
Environmental and Life Sciences	High	May need access to equipment and consumable materials for guided instruction
Health Sciences / Medical Pathways	High	May need access to equipment and consumable materials for guided instruction
Manufacturing	High	May need access to equipment and consumable materials for guided instruction
Marine Technology	High	May need access to equipment and consumable materials for guided instruction
Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics	High	May need access to equipment and consumable materials for guided instruction (particularly for automotive programs)
<i>Project Lead The Way (multiple career clusters)</i>	Medium	Programs using Project Lead The Way curricula may need to do performance-based assessments in-person
<i>P-TECH (multiple career clusters)</i>	Medium	P-TECH programs may require students to be in-person for completing deliverables
Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications	Low	
Business Management, Administration, and Finance	Low	
Education, Training, and Human Services	Low	
Hospitality and Tourism	Low	
Information Technology	Low	
Law, Public Safety, and Government	Low	
STEM/STEAM	Low	

## Work-Based Learning

All CTE programs have a work-based learning (WBL) requirement that students must complete before graduation. The requirements for work-based learning are outlined in the [Governor’s Workforce Board WBL Guidance](#).

At this time, RIDE, the CTE Board, and GWB have not issued any changes or modifications to the WBL Guidance related to COVID-19. If programs are unable to carry out their normally-planned work-based



learning programming, they can explore alternative methods of meeting the standards outlined in the guidance. This may include doing virtual work-based learning, postponing some work-based learning to another time in students' high school career, or other options that maintain high expectations but take a flexible approach.

If programs do not feel their work-based learning requirements can be met given the realities of COVID, they can bring a proposal to their relevant CTE Board Industry Advisory, through the process described in the previous section.

For more information on conducting successful WBL during the pandemic, see [ACTE's Work-Based Learning planning guide](#).

## Useful Resources

- RIDE's CTE website: [www.ride.ri.gov/cte](http://www.ride.ri.gov/cte)
- [COVID-19 Planning Guide from the Association for Career & Technical Education \(ACTE\)](#)
- For questions, contact [cte@ride.ri.gov](mailto:cte@ride.ri.gov)