

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Regulations of the Board of Regents
Governing Career and Technical Education in Rhode Island**



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1.0 DEFINITIONS

As used in these regulations, the following words and terms have the following meaning, unless the context indicates another or different meaning or intent:

1. Apprenticeship – a relationship between an employer and an employee during which the worker or apprentice learns an occupation in a structured program sponsored jointly by employers and labor unions or operated by employers and employee associations.
2. Articulation Agreement – a formal agreement acknowledging, authorizing and conferring specific academic credit, advanced standing and/or status for education or work.
3. Career Cluster – groupings of occupations and industries established by the United States Department of Education and used to organize career and technical education and career and technical education preparation programs.
4. Career and Technical Education (CTE) – organized academic and work-related education that offers students opportunities for career awareness, career exploration and career preparation focused on providing them with the academic and technical knowledge and work-related skills necessary to be successful in postsecondary education, training activities, and employment.
5. Career and Technical Education Center – a grade 9-12 public educational facility with the primary purpose of providing career preparation programs and other forms of career and technical education, either as a stand-alone institution or in conjunction with collaborating secondary schools.
6. Career and Technical Education System (CTE System) – an organized, coherent, and comprehensive set of educational opportunities that promote strong academic skills, an awareness of careers and occupations, and the mastery of rigorous and relevant technical skills that prepare students for college, careers, and life.
7. Career Innovation Programs – one of two forms of RIDE-approved career preparation programs that provide CTE academic and technical instruction and training through diverse venues and differing instructional approaches while meeting all of the outcomes defined by career preparation program standards and the program approval process.
8. Career Pathway(s) – industry sector-specific CTE programs coordinated with postsecondary education and/or training programs that provide students opportunities to attain necessary technical skills and credentials for successful entry into the workforce.
9. Career Preparation Programs – career preparation programs are the most intense level of career and technical educational services available to secondary students. Career preparation programs are of two types, 1) career programs of study and 2) career innovation programs.
10. Career Preparation Program Review and Approval Process – a RIDE-managed standards-based review process that results in a written report that includes the career preparation program's approval status.
11. Career Preparation Program Standards – Regents-adopted RIDE-published standards that provide the basis for the quality assurance process and clearly articulate the requirements for the quality, scope, and breadth of LEA-administered career preparation programs.

12. Career Programs of Study – one of two forms of RIDE-approved career preparation programs offered through the CTE System at the secondary level. A career program of study provides structured, sequenced academic and technical courses that lead to an industry-recognized credential, where available or appropriate, or a nationally-recognized certificate that validates skill attainment.
13. Certificate – documentation or credential that can be earned by a student, which validates his or her mastery of specific skills or sets of skills, completion of training requirements set forth by a certifying body, and/or that validates demonstrated readiness to enter an industry, educational setting, or the workplace.
14. Commissioner – the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.
15. Credential – a specialized subset of certificates, credentials provide portable, meaningful documentation that a student has mastered an industry-established and validated range of skills, met necessary training and education requirements, and demonstrated readiness to enter a specific industry.
16. Embedded Credit Programs – Career and technical education courses and/or learning opportunities that provide students multiple opportunities to reach and demonstrate proficiency simultaneously in technical and core academic areas including ELA, math, science, technology, and the arts.
17. Graduation Coursework Requirements – the coursework requirements set forth in section L-6-3.1 of the Regents Regulations, which can be met through enrollment in a state approved career preparation program, expanded learning opportunities, dual enrollment, on-line learning, and other non-traditional academic and career-readiness programs.
18. Individual Learning Plan (ILP) – a student-centered planning and monitoring process that guides and directs students’ goals and educational development in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social.
19. Local Education Agency (LEA) – a public board of education/school committee or other public authority legally constituted within the State for either administrative control or direction of one or more Rhode Island public elementary schools or secondary schools.
20. Resident Local Education Authority (LEA) – the LEA in which a student should be enrolled on the basis of residency.
21. State Education Agency (SEA) – state department of education responsible for ensuring the implementation of federal, state and Regents laws, statutes, and regulations.

2.0 AUTHORITY, SCOPE, AND PURPOSE

The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (Board of Regents), pursuant to its delegated statutory authority under Rhode Island General Law Chapter 16-45 to establish and manage a state Career and Technical Education (CTE) system, promulgate these Regulations of the Rhode Island Board of Regents Governing Career and Technical Education (Regulations).

In furtherance of the policy set forth in Rhode Island General Law § 16-45, the purpose of these Regulations is to establish a comprehensive and coherent Career and Technical Education System (CTE System) that: provides students exposure to the world of work; offers students the opportunity to learn rigorous technical and career-based skills that are aligned to industry standards; and through the earning of credentials, prepares students for a seamless transition to postsecondary education and training programs and/or careers.

The CTE System shall provide career and technical education opportunities through a diverse delivery system. Career and technical education can be delivered in a wide array of settings including but not limited to traditional classrooms, comprehensive high schools, work- and field-based settings, career and technical centers, and virtual and electronic media. This diverse delivery system shall promote program growth while at the same time, maintain and improve the quality of Rhode Island's career preparation programs.

The CTE System shall forge and maintain partnerships with higher education, technical training programs, workforce and economic development initiatives, and regional business and industry. Through these partnerships, RIDE will promote and systemically manage career pathways in critical and emerging industries and provide education and training programs that are responsive to the needs of students, business, industry, and the regional economy.

These Regulations, along with other Board of Regents' regulations, standards, and applicable state statutes, are designed to promote and advance three career and technical education principles:

1. Rhode Island's CTE System will prepare learners for postsecondary education and careers resulting in employment that provides family-sustaining wages.
2. Career and Technical Education will support students' postsecondary success through planning, credentialing, industry partnerships, and articulation with higher education and training programs.
3. Rhode Island's CTE System will invest in high-quality, highly effective career preparation programs offered through a diverse statewide delivery system.

2.1 Elements of the Career and Technical Education System

The CTE System is composed of a spectrum of educational opportunities that include career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation.

Career awareness activities include education and counseling programs that help students make informed career choices and inform their decisions to enroll in educational and technical courses of study. Career awareness activities provide opportunities for students to explore the world of work, careers, and specific jobs. Career awareness activities may include, but are not limited to,

career interest inventories, job searches and job shadowing. Career awareness activities shall follow the guidance provided by the Rhode Island Frameworks for School Counseling.

Career exploration activities provide students with both an in-depth, focused investigation of careers and work and the opportunity to experience careers and/or learn basic job skills. Career exploration activities allow students to discover career interests and strengths and to plan the appropriate subjects, courses, disciplines and applied learning skills needed to reach their goals. Career exploration activities can be delivered in a wide array of settings, including but not limited to internships, job-shadow programs, and/or enrollment in one or two introductory career and technical courses.

In accordance with section G-14 of the Basic Education Program, all Rhode Island students have the right to access career exploration opportunities. The availability of and access to career exploration activities and career preparation programs for students in secondary grades will be reviewed as part of the Commissioner's review process as set forth in section L-6 of Board of Regents regulations, K-12 Literacy, Restructuring of the Learning Environment at the Middle and High School Levels, and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR) at High Schools.

Career preparation programs are the most intense level of career and technical educational services available to secondary students. Career preparation programs provide students with rigorous academic and technical training and deep preparation for entry into postsecondary education, training programs, and/or careers. Career preparation programs are distinguished from career awareness and career exploration programs and activities by the depth and rigor of the education and technical training provided, the number of contact hours and/or sequenced, non-duplicative courses that focus on skill development in a single career-based or occupational area, and the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in training programs or jobs. RIDE-approved career preparation programs require review by the RIDE in accordance with section 4.0 of these Regulations.

2.2 Career Preparation Programs

All RIDE-approved career preparation programs must:

1. Align to state academic standards and career readiness or industry standards;
2. Provide students with the opportunities to complete coursework that contribute to their graduation coursework requirements;
3. Adhere to the career preparation program standards published by RIDE and set forth in Appendix 1 of these Regulations;
4. Provide participating students the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in training programs or jobs; and
5. Meet RIDE-established targets for student outcomes including, but not limited to:
 - a. dropout and graduation rates,
 - b. credential and/or postsecondary credit-earning rates,
 - c. program completion rates, and
 - d. enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education and technical training programs.

Career preparation programs take one of two forms: (1) career programs of study or (2) career innovation programs.

Career programs of study offer not fewer than three, connected, rigorous non-duplicative career and technical education courses; deliver a curriculum aligned to both state academic and industry standards; provide instruction by appropriately certified and highly trained instructors; and provide industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in postsecondary education and training programs.

Career innovation programs offer rigorous, non-duplicative career and technical instruction and provide students the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in postsecondary education and training programs. Career innovation programs utilize non-traditional educational methods that may include, but are not limited to, instruction in diverse educational settings, utilization of unconventional curriculum and assessment practices, or community or workplace-based education.

LEAs seeking RIDE approval as a career innovation preparation program may request adaptation or modification of the RIDE program standards as set forth in Appendix 1 of these regulations. Application for standard or criteria modification or adaptation is subject to the following limitations and requirements:

- (1) Applicants must clearly identify the standards or criteria for which they propose modification or adaptation, describe an alternative method of compliance with the intent of the standard or criteria, and assure equal educational opportunity;
- (2) Applicants may seek adaptation or modification of only those RIDE program standards identified as eligible in Appendix 1 of these Regulations; and
- (3) Applicants must complete a RIDE-managed program application process as set forth in Section 4.2 of these Regulations.

All career preparation programs must meet the four requirements set forth in section 2.2 of these regulations.

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 16-45-6, RIDE shall be responsible for ensuring the quality of all career preparation programs using a quality assurance process described in section 4.0 of these Regulations.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rhode Island's CTE System shall be designed and monitored by RIDE and managed and delivered by the LEA. Both RIDE and the LEAs have distinct responsibilities described herein.

3.1 RIDE Responsibilities and Functions

RIDE shall have the responsibility for and authority to:

- (1) Establish a CTE System that promotes and ensures student access to career awareness and exploration activities for all K-12 students and career preparation programs for students in grades 9-12;
- (2) Establish and publish career preparation program admissions standards, when appropriate and applicable;

- (3) Establish and maintain a quality assurance process that includes a career preparation program review and approval process;
- (4) Establish and maintain a system of approved career preparation programs;
- (5) Establish and maintain a Statewide Career and Technical Education Advisory Board;
- (6) Maintain and annually publish the list of approved career preparation programs;
- (7) Invest state resources to support both the CTE System and approved and newly established career preparation programs in a manner that advances program quality, ensures efficient and effective use of resources, and is compliant with applicable state and federal law;
- (8) Establish and manage a funding methodology for Career and Technical Education consistent with applicable state statutes and these Regulations that is designed to support the reasonable and necessary costs for the administration and implementation of RIDE-approved career preparation programs;
- (9) Manage a state-level data system that enables high-quality evaluation, progress-monitoring, and continuous improvement at both the state and local levels;
- (10) Ensure that the CTE System aligns to and promotes statewide workforce and economic development initiatives; and
- (11) Identify critical and emerging industries in Rhode Island and promote the establishment of career preparation programs in those areas.

3.2 LEA Responsibilities and Functions

All LEAs shall:

- (1) Ensure all students have the opportunity to participate in career exploration activities;
- (2) Provide all eligible students the opportunity to enroll in an approved career preparation program;
- (3) Provide a spectrum of career and college counseling services that include career awareness and exploration activities;
- (4) Provide students and families with accurate information about the availability of approved career preparation programs and students' rights to apply and enroll; and
- (5) Provide students and families an appeals process in cases where students do not gain access to a career preparation program.

LEAs that administer RIDE-approved career preparation programs shall:

- (1) Meet the career preparation program standards and participate in the state-managed quality assurance process;
- (2) Collect and report accurate and timely CTE data;
- (3) Manage CTE-designated funding in accordance with state and federal regulations;
- (4) Adhere to RIDE-published cost guidelines in accordance with section 7.0 of these Regulations;
- (5) Provide students and families an appeals process in cases where students do not gain access to a career preparation program; and
- (6) Engage and partner with business, industry, higher education, and postsecondary training programs to improve student performance outcomes.

4.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Commissioner shall establish and maintain a quality assurance process that focuses on the review and approval of career preparation programs. The RIDE-managed review and approval of career preparation programs shall be grounded in the career preparation program standards and will have two primary purposes: (1) promoting of program quality and continuous improvement; and (2) rendering and communicating decisions about career preparation program approval status as set forth in section 4.2 and 4.3 of these Regulations.

4.1 Career Preparation Program Standards

The Regents shall adopt career preparation program standards that are consistent with federal requirements and that reflect research and national best practice. Career preparation program standards shall be clearly and fully communicated to all LEAs and shall establish expectations in areas that include but are not limited to: (1) policies and procedures, (2) partnerships, (3) program operations, (4) staffing, certification, and professional development, (5) curriculum, instruction and technical skill assessment, (6) supplemental and support services, and (7) secondary to postsecondary transition.

Career preparation program standards shall be reviewed no less than every five years. In the event of changes to career preparation program standards, LEAs shall have no less than one year to respond before the changes take effect through the review and approval process described in section 4.2 of these Regulations.

4.2 Career Preparation Program Review and Approval Process

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 16-45, the Commissioner shall develop and manage a career preparation program review and approval process that sets forth clear standards and procedures to approve career preparation programs. The Review and Approval Process includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

1. A self-study utilizing a RIDE-published instrument;
2. Submission of key student outcome data; and
3. An LEA application for initial or renewed approval that includes detailed program design and implementation information aligned to published career preparation program standards and RIDE application requirements.

The Commissioner may approve the substitution of rigorous, nationally recognized, industry-specific program review and accreditation processes, in whole or part, for RIDE's Review and Approval process. In the event that the Commissioner approves such a substitution, the LEA shall reserve the right to select from either the RIDE Review and Approval process or the alternative approval process.

The review and approval process and all judgments rendered as a result of its administration shall be clearly aligned to and consistent with the career preparation program standards.

At the conclusion of the review and approval process, RIDE shall issue a written report that will conclude with one of three designations:

- (1) *Provisional approval*: conditional and temporary approval requiring programs to meet improvement targets and/or complete action steps to achieve full approval;
- (2) *Full approval*: for career preparation programs that have satisfied all components of the review and approval process; or
- (3) *Not approved*: career preparation programs that have been found deficient through the Review and Approval Process.

Career preparation programs that are granted *full* or *provisional approval* will be designated as a RIDE-approved career preparation program.

Career preparation programs in existence prior to the promulgation of these regulations may be eligible for provisional approval provided that such a program meets at least one of the following conditions:

- (1) Prior approval for funding as a program of study under the Perkins IV grant application process; or
- (2) Prior approval as a program of study under the RIDE program approval process.

4.3 Results of Career Preparation Program Review and Approval Process

Results of the review and approval process and/or changes in approval status will be communicated to the affected LEA in a timely manner. LEAs shall be given no more than 30 business days to respond to an initial draft of the findings of the Review and Approval Process and/or to a notification of change in their approval status.

Career preparation programs that lose *full approval* status will be afforded not more than 30 business days from the date of the issuance of the final RIDE written report to submit an improvement plan that fully addresses deficiencies identified by the review process. The improvement plan must be approved by RIDE no more than 30 business days from receipt.

Career preparation programs not granted RIDE approval have the right to due process as provided in the Board of Regents in the Board of Regents By-Laws, Chapter A-5.

5.0 ACCESS, ADMISSIONS, AND SUPPORT SERVICES

All students in grades K-12 shall have the right to access career awareness and exploration activities as described in section 2.1 of these Regulations. Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law §16-45, all Rhode Island students shall have the right to access RIDE-approved career preparation programs as defined by section 2.1 of these Regulations. No student shall be denied access to career and technical education on the basis of color, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, or disability.

5.1 Access to Career Preparation Programs

All students shall have the right to request, from their resident LEA, access to a RIDE-approved career preparation program of their choice. This right of access shall be limited only by the following three conditions:

- (1) *Availability of enrollment seats*: In the event that a student requests access to a RIDE-approved career preparation program that is fully enrolled, the resident LEA shall make every effort to identify and enroll the student in another RIDE-approved preparation program of the student's choice.
- (2) *Geographic location*: Students are guaranteed access to RIDE-approved career preparation programs. Students requesting access to RIDE-approved career preparation programs outside their established school transportation region may enroll in such programs, but the resident LEA shall not be responsible for the costs of the transportation. Students enrolled in career preparation programs between March 1, 2009 and September 1, 2012 shall maintain the transportation rights set forth under the 1991 Regulations of the Rhode Island Board of Regents Governing Career and Technical Education for the duration of their continuous enrollment in the career preparation program.
- (3) *Fair, equitable, and reasonable admission standards*: LEAs operating RIDE-approved career preparation programs are authorized to set reasonable, fair, equitable, and program-appropriate admission standards in accordance with section 5.3 of these regulations.

Any student denied access to a career preparation program shall reserve the right of appeal through the policies and procedures managed by the LEA responsible for the denial of access.

5.2 Recruitment

Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 16-45, all LEAs shall be responsible for issuing clear, accessible, accurate and timely communication to families and students informing them of all RIDE-approved CTE programs and of students' rights to access career and technical education. RIDE shall maintain and annually publish the list of RIDE-approved career preparation programs.

Representatives of RIDE-approved career preparation programs shall have access to students in all secondary schools. Recruitment access may include, but is not limited to, physical and electronic mailing lists, assemblies and other presentation opportunities, and field trips and site visits.

5.3 Admissions

LEAs operating RIDE-approved career preparation programs shall have the right to develop and employ appropriate program-specific admission criteria. All admission criteria shall comply with all relevant state and federal civil rights laws and regulations. Admissions criteria shall:

1. Be clearly derived from the academic and instructional demands of the career preparation program;
2. Represent the minimum levels of student readiness so as to reasonably ensure student success in the career preparation program;
3. Adhere to all relevant RIDE-developed admission standards; and
4. Not result in discriminatory admissions decisions.

LEAs that employ program-specific admission criteria shall develop and implement an admissions policy that is formally adopted and made publicly available. The policy shall include no less than (1) the admissions criteria used in the selection process; (2) the application process and continuing

enrollment conditions; and (3) a review and appeal process for any student denied admission to a career preparation program.

To fill available seats, career preparation programs shall use a lottery process that fairly and equitably selects students from the entire pool of applicants meeting the minimum admissions standards. When applicable, LEAs shall retain the right to prioritize program enrollment for resident students.

Students denied access to a program based on the admissions process or admissions criteria shall reserve the right of appeal and the right to apply for another RIDE-approved career preparation program of their choice.

5.4 Continued Student Enrollment in Career Preparation Programs

LEAs operating RIDE-approved preparation programs are granted the authority to establish enrollment conditions that may include a code of conduct that applies both to school and on-site work placements, attendance, and other criteria that adhere to applicable statutes and regulations. Such enrollment criteria shall not unfairly target students on the basis of color, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, disability, or district of residence. The adopted enrollment policy shall be published in the student handbook and a copy provided to each student and family upon enrollment in the career preparation program.

All career preparation program policies shall include a review and appeals process for students denied access to a preparation program due to admissions criteria or whose enrollment has been suspended and/or terminated.

6.0. INDUSTRY, BUSINESS, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND POSTSECONDARY TRAINING PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

6.1 Statewide Career and Technical Education Advisory Board

RIDE shall establish a Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Advisory Board (Advisory Board) with the primary purpose of advising the Commissioner on the development and continuous improvement of the CTE System. Membership of the Advisory Board shall include, but is not limited to, representation pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 16-45 and as described in section 2.0 of these Regulations, such membership shall be representative of all key stakeholder groups. The Commissioner or an appointed designee shall chair the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board shall have responsibility for advising the Commissioner on topics such as, but not limited to:

1. Current workplace practices and employer needs and expectations;
2. Business and industry partnerships;
3. Career preparation program design, curriculum, and instruction;
4. Expansion of student opportunity to earn industry credentials whenever applicable to the program and advanced standing in postsecondary academic and technical programs; and

5. Seamless student entry into postsecondary education and training programs through articulation agreements and postsecondary partnerships with public and private institutions and industry-based training programs.

6.2 Local Advisory Boards/Program Advisory Committee

LEAs may form local advisory boards to provide advice, assistance and support to school personnel in order to improve the planning, management, and evaluation of programs.

6.3 Career and Technical Education’s Role in State Workforce and Economic Development System

Rhode Island’s CTE System shall be responsive to state and regional workforce and economic trends and business and industry demands. It shall be the responsibility of the Commissioner to ensure that current labor market data is analyzed to inform the creation or expansion of career preparation programs in critical and emerging industries. In selecting the key economic growth areas serving as a focus for program expansion, the Commissioner shall make every attempt to coordinate with other relevant workforce and economic development initiatives.

7.0 FUNDING FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND

7.1 SEA Support for the Career and Technical Education System

RIDE is hereby instructed to manage state and, where allowable and appropriate, federal funds in such a manner as to support: career preparation programs; the development of innovative delivery models; incentives for the development of programs in critical and emerging industries in Rhode Island; and/or expansion and improvement of the infrastructure upon which the CTE system rests.

The Commissioner, in accordance with RIGL§16-45, shall establish and manage criteria for distribution of funding with goals that include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Transformation of existing career preparation programs and create new career preparation programs and career pathways in critical and emerging industries;
- (2) Offsetting of extraordinary capital expenses and expenses associated with equipment maintenance; and
- (3) Offsetting of expenses for career preparation programs found, through the benchmarking process, to have extraordinary costs for administration and maintenance.

RIDE shall prorate the state funds available for distribution among those eligible school districts if the total approved costs for which school districts are seeking reimbursement exceed the amount of funding available in any fiscal year.

7.2 LEA Support for the Career and Technical Education System

RIDE shall ensure the effective use of resources through a rigorous program review and approval process. Career and technical education programs that are not RIDE-approved career preparation

programs are ineligible to receive reimbursement from resident districts in accordance with provisions of this section.

To ensure an empirically based and equitable cost structure for students choosing to attend RIDE-approved career preparation programs, RIDE will establish cost benchmarks for RIDE-approved career preparation programs. The cost benchmarks will be established using financial and industry data including Rhode Island's Uniform Chart of Accounts (UCOA) and data from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES). Cost benchmarks will be updated every three (3) years or more frequently if deemed necessary by RIDE, using the same data sources. An adjustment using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the uniform chart of accounts data will be applied to the benchmarks when a full data update does not occur.

In the event that a student enrolls in a RIDE-approved career preparation program outside his or her resident district, the LEAs administering RIDE-approved career preparation programs shall be reimbursed by the resident LEA in accordance with the cost benchmark for the assigned program in which the student is assigned. The resident district shall also provide reimbursement for actual incremental services associated with student needs as defined by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). Resident districts will reimburse the LEAs administering RIDE-approved career preparation programs based on a methodology established by RIDE using UCOA if the benchmarks are not available.

State, local and allowable federal funds shall be directed toward, but not limited to, the development and improvement of programs of study and to associated operating costs of high quality, relevant, and high cost RIDE-approved career preparation programs. Based on the availability of funding, one-time grants may be awarded to cover start-up costs for prospective career preparation programs and/or one-time costs of construction and equipment.

Appendix 1: Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Career Preparation Program Standards

Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Career Preparation Program Standards

The Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Program Framework and the United States Department of Education (USDOE) Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) Program of Study Design Framework informed the development of the Rhode Island Career and Technical Education (CTE) Career Preparation Program Standards. Rhode Island's Career Preparation Program Standards support the development and implementation of effective career preparation programs. These program standards shall guide the planning, implementation and improvement of career preparation programs and shall be the criteria that form the basis of the review and approval process.

Career preparation program standards shall be clearly and fully communicated to all LEAs and establish expectations in areas that include but are not limited to: (1) policies and procedures, (2) partnerships (3) program operations (4) staffing, certification, and professional development (5) curriculum, instruction and technical skill assessment, (6) supplemental and support services, and (7) secondary to postsecondary transition.

While it is the expectation that all career preparation programs will be designed and implemented to meet the qualities described in section 2.1 of these regulations, career innovation programs may seek modification or adaptation only against the following standards: 4) Staffing, Certification and Professional Development; 5) Curriculum, Instruction, and Technical Skill Assessment; and 7) Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions. Career innovation programs must petition the Commissioner for flexibility in meeting these standards prior to submitting a request to RIDE for program review and evaluation.

1. Policies and Procedures

Administrative policies and procedures promote Career and Technical Education preparation program development and implementation.

Local Education Agency (LEA) policies will:

- Include formal procedures for the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of career preparation programs.
- Clearly describe admissions, policies and procedures, selection criteria, enrollment conditions, and appeals processes.
- Ensure that all students have opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in training programs or jobs.
- Ensure the review and evaluation of student outcome data including achievement gaps.

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2. Partnerships

Ongoing relationships among secondary and postsecondary education, business, families, special populations and other community stakeholders are central to career preparation programs.

Collaborative partnerships will:

- Include formal and/or informal relationships as necessary for supporting quality programs.
- Reflect the community and be representative of key stakeholders.

3. Program Operations

Career preparation programs shall operate with appropriate supports and resources necessary to meet or exceed OSHA and program-specific standards and quality.

Career preparation programs will:

- Ensure the health and safety of students at all school and technical facilities used for instruction and training.
- Provide access for students to adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment, and supplies.
- Ensure that facilities and equipment used for instructional or training purposes are current with business and industry standards.
- Provide all students with access to up to date technology.

4. Staffing, Certification, and Professional Development

Career preparation programs ensure students have access to sufficient instructional staff qualified in the knowledge and skills necessary to provide rigorous academic and technical instruction.

High quality preparation programs ensure:

- Teacher certifications will meet RIDE Educator Certification regulations.
- Staffing levels are consistent with program requirements and/or business and industry standards and sufficient to meet the needs of students.
- Teachers or instructors are trained in the academic and technical knowledge and skills aligned to industry standards in areas to which they are assigned.
- Teachers and instructors remain current in academic and technical skills through participation in regular professional development activities.

5. Curriculum, Instruction and Technical Skill Assessment

Innovative and creative approaches to secondary curriculum, instruction, and assessment facilitate students' successful completion of career preparation programs and transitions to postsecondary education and training careers.

A comprehensive and rigorous career preparation program curriculum will:

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- Align to state adopted academic standards and skills.
- Include experiences and instruction necessary for all students to attain work-readiness and fundamental technical knowledge and skills.
- Ensure a minimum of three non-duplicative courses, or the equivalent, that result in opportunities for earning industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program, and/or postsecondary credits, and/or advanced standing in training programs or jobs.

Effective instruction and learning strategies will:

- Integrate academic, technical, and industry standards, knowledge, and skills.
- Employ contextualized work-based, project-based, and problem-based learning approaches.

Well-developed technical skills assessments will include:

- Multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate technical skill proficiency.
- National and/or industry-approved technical skills assessments offering opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials whenever applicable to the program.

6. Supplemental and Support Services

Comprehensive supplemental services enable all students to access academic, personal/social, and career supports to maximize their potential for success.

Supplemental support service systems will ensure:

- Students have access to the system of supports and services described in state statutes and regulations.
- Students have the opportunity to engage in a goal setting and planning process that supports their academic, career, and personal/social goals and individual needs.
- Students have access to the services provided through a Comprehensive School Counseling program.

7. Secondary to Postsecondary Transition

Effective programs ensure that students graduate college- and career-ready and are prepared to transition to postsecondary education and training and careers.

To prepare students for postsecondary success, effective programs:

- Align curriculum with applied learning and career readiness skills, state adopted and nationally recognized academic standards, and industry-recognized technical standards.
- Provide student access to career-based and work-site learning experiences.
- Provide students with embedded credit earning opportunities that integrate academic and technical skill development opportunities.
- Maintain formal articulation agreements with higher education and business partners that earn students early college access and/or access to postsecondary training programs or job placement.