

Substantially Similar CTE Programs

CTE Board of Trustees

January 9, 2026

**RHODE
ISLAND**

Substantially Similar CTE Programs: Background

Rhode Island's career and technical education (CTE) laws (16-45-6.1) were amended, effective July 9, 2021. These amendments clarified that students have a right to enroll in state-approved CTE programs outside their district:

“All students retain the right to enroll in a state approved career and technical education program approved by the CTE board of trustees in communities outside their community of residence” RIGL 16-45-6.1(d)(1)

This right applies if there is not a “substantially similar” program in-district:

“Students may request access to state CTE board-approved career preparation programs outside their school district if their home district does not provide a substantially similar state-approved CTE program.” RIGL 16-45-6.1(e)

What is the responsibility of the CTE Board of Trustees?

As prescribed in the legislation, the substantially similar list will be published by the RIDE and the CTE Board of Trustees (CTEBOT) annually in January 15 for the following school year. **This document outlines the criteria that RIDE and the CTE Board will use to generate the substantially similar program list.**

- *“Effective January 15, 2022, and every year thereafter, the CTE board of trustees and the department of elementary and secondary education shall publish a detailed list of substantially similar CTE programs for the upcoming school year. The list will be used to support students and their families in accessing CTE board of trustees approved career and technical education programs. There will be a thirty-day (30) period for schools and districts to appeal the substantially similar designation to the board of education.” RIGL 16-45-6.1(d)*
- **Full legislation is available on the [RI Legislature website \(linked here\)](#)*

CTE Board of Trustees Adopted Criteria

The following criteria was adopted by the CTE Board of Trustees during the December 2022 meeting.

1. Program type

- Programs Approved under the same Industry Standard

2. Information on the occupation that the student will be prepared for

- Prepares students for the same specific occupation(s) within the approved Industry Standard

3. The credentials the student will earn

- Provide students with the same credentials (or set of credentials) under the Industry Standard

- Use an external, nationally validated curriculum as defined by the CTE Industry Standards (e.g., Project Lead the Way or equivalent)

CTE Board of Trustees Adopted Criteria

The following criteria was approved during the December 2022 CTE Board of Trustees Meeting.

4. The type of work-based learning that the student will be provided access to

- Same combination of types of work-based learning experiences (internships, apprenticeships, service learning, industry projects, or school-based enterprises). Note: these types of work-based learning are set by the Governor's Workforce Board's guidance.
- Access to the same industry-level facilities and equipment
- Other factors beyond the above will not be considered. This includes: the number of hours beyond 80, the specific employer, scheduling details, etc.

5. The ability to access advanced course experiences

- Allowed to access relevant coursework that offers college credit

6. OPTIONAL CRITERIA: "Such additional factors as the CTE board of trustees deem to be relevant, including postsecondary attainment, industry partnerships and advisory boards, and program quality."*

*CTE Board has chosen not to implement this criteria.

Annual Preparation of the Substantially Similar List

How does RIDE identify Substantially Similar CTE programs?

For a CTE program to be identified as substantially similar to another CTE program, RIDE applies criteria 1-5 as outlined by the legislation and further clarified by the CTEBOT.

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 1 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources	Bioscience	Pawtucket / Shea	Biomedical Science
Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources	Bioscience	Scituate / Scituate HS	Biomedical Science
Architecture & Construction	Pre-Apprentice Electrical	East Providence / EPACTC	Electrical Technology
Architecture & Construction	Pre-Apprentice Electrical	Providence / PCTA	Electrical Technology
Architecture & Construction	Residential Construction	Burrillville / Burrillville HS	Construction Technology
Architecture & Construction	Residential Construction	Westerly / Westerly HS	Construction
Architecture & Construction	Residential Construction	Newport / NACTC	Residential Carpentry
Architecture & Construction	Residential Construction	Providence / PCTA	Carpentry & Home Building

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 2 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
Education	Education, K-12 Education, Teacher Assistant	Cranston / Cranston West	Educational Pathway
Education	Education K-12 Education, Teacher Assistant	Cranston / Cranston East	Educational Pathway
Finance	Business/Commerce; General	Cranston / Cranston West	Entrepreneur-ship
Finance	Business/Commerce; General	Cranston / Cranston East	Entrepreneur-ship
Health Science	Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	South Kingstown / SKHS	Allied Health
Health Science	Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	West Warwick / WWSHS	Emergency Medical Technician
Hospitality & Tourism	ACF Culinary Arts	Warwick / WACTC	Culinary & Baking Arts
Hospitality & Tourism	ACF Culinary Arts	Westerly / Westerly HS	Culinary Arts

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 3 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
*Hospitality & Tourism	ACF Culinary Arts	Providence / PCTA	Culinary Arts
*Hospitality & Tourism	ACF Culinary Arts	Chariho / Chariho Area CTC	Culinary Arts
*Hospitality & Tourism	ACF Culinary Arts	Central Falls / Central Falls HS	Food Entrepreneurship
Hospitality & Tourism	ProStart Culinary Artist	Cranston / CACTC	Culinary Arts
Hospitality & Tourism	ProStart Culinary Artis	East Providence / EPACTC	Culinary Arts
Hospitality & Tourism	ProStart Culinary Artis	Newport / NACTC	ProStart Culinary Arts Academy
*Hospitality & Tourism	ProStart Culinary Artis	North Kingstown / North Kingstown HS	Academy of Culinary Arts

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 4 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
Information Technology	Software Developer	Cumberland/ Cumberland HS	IT/Computer Science
*Information Technology	Software Developer	Johnston / Johnston HS	Computer Science Academy
Information Technology	Software Developer	Scituate / Scituate HS	Academy of Computer Science
Information Technology	Software Developer	Warwick / Toll Gate HS	Computer Science/Data Analytics
Information Technology	Software Developer	Providence / Mt. Pleasant	CTE Computer Science
Information Technology	Software Developer	Providence / JSEC	CTE Computer Science
Information Technology	Software Developer	Cumberland / Cumberland HS	Information Technology
Information Technology	Graphic Comms Tech: Print Manufacturing Production	Coventry / Regional CTC at Coventry HS	Advertising, Marketing & Design
Information Technology	Graphic Comms Tech: Print Manufacturing Production	Cranston / CACTC	Graphic Communications

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 5 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
Information Technology	Information Technology Specialist	Central Falls/ CFSHS	Computer Science / IT
*Information Technology	Information Technology Specialist	Narragansett / Narragansett HS	Information Technology Specialist
Information Technology	Information Technology Specialist	North Providence / NPHS	Computer Science
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Military	Cranston / CHSE	JROTC-Army
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Military	Providence / Hope HS	JROTC-Army
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Law Enforcement & Corrections Officer	Coventry / Regional CTC at Coventry HS	Criminal Justice
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Law Enforcement & Corrections Officer	Central Falls/ CFSHS	Law and Advocacy Pathway

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 6 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	Bristol-Warren/ Mt. Hope HS	Engineering PLTW
STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	East Providence / EPACTC	Pre-Engineering
STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	Portsmouth/ Portsmouth HS	Academy of Engineering Design
STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	Providence / PCTA	STEM / Pre-Engineering
STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	Providence / Mt. Pleasant	STEM / Pre-Engineering
STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	Tiverton / Tiverton HS	Engineering Academy
*STEM	General Pre-Engineering / Design	Woonsocket / WACTC	PLTW - Engineering

2026-27 Substantially Similar List (Page 7 of 7)

The following RIDE-Approved CTE programs have been determined via the criteria to be “Substantially-Similar”:

Program Information			
<i>Career Cluster</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>LEA / School</i>	<i>Program Name</i>
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	Automotive Service Advisor	East Providence / EPACTC	Automotive Technology
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	Automotive Service Advisor	Newport / NACTC	Automotive Technology
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	Automotive Service Advisor	Warwick / WACTC	Automotive Technology
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	Automotive Service Technician	Chariho / Chariho Area CTC	Automotive Technology
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	Automotive Service Technician	Providence / PCTA	Automotive Program