



Protect and Expand the Pipeline of SKILLED WORKERS from BOCES CTE Programs

Students who attend BOCES Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs are our state's future healthcare workers, electricians, welders, skilled manufacturers, commercial drone operators, alternative energy experts and more. They represent the workforce that New York will need to compete in a modern economy. However, one of the primary ways that we invest in that workforce has not been updated in more than a generation. Districts are only eligible to receive state aid on \$30,000 of a CTE instructor's salary, a limit that has not moved since it was first established in 1992. This constrains investments in CTE programs by forcing unnecessary choices between these opportunities and other educational services. BOCES of New York State joins with the Board of Regents and many other statewide educational advocacy organizations in calling for this cap to be increased in light of the need to invest in a skilled and professional workforce and promote equity in educational opportunities across our state.

BOCES OF NEW YORK STATE POSITION:

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Increase the aidable salary for CTE instructors to \$60,000, with a comparable increase in special services aid, over the next three years.

"CTE programs are opening doorways where parents and students have educational and career options. With the rising costs of college, we are seeing more students seek our CTE programs."



David Furletti, Superintendent, York Central School District

"Bringing in new talent is key to sustaining this sector. It is critical to highlight the trades and make young professionals aware that they can have fulfilling and lucrative careers in these fields. We are honored here at Miller Mechanical to have young welders from the BOCES CTE program intern with us. When we put them together with our senior staff, we are building our next generation of tradespeople."

Elizabeth Miller, President/CEO of Miller Mechanical Services, Inc., WSHWE BOCES Business Partner



"As educators, we are all about making sure every student has access to the experiences and opportunities that will set them up for a promising future. We are part of the solution to the shortage of skilled workers in many sectors of our economy. Updating this investment structure for a new generation is critical."



Marie Wiles, Superintendent, Guilderland Central School District



"Like many businesses, Hardinge is experiencing the predicted exit of the baby boomer generation. We are competing with other businesses to recruit and hire skilled machinists but are limited by the availability within our local area. We rely heavily on BOCES CTE programs in several ways, including teaching valuable skills like the machining trade to students who would have no other exposure to this career field through their normal coursework."

Jenine Cleary, HR Director of Hardinge Inc., GST BOCES Business Partner

"When students are given a pathway to develop their skills in an area of their passion and interest, they are more motivated and engaged in their learning and they thrive. The economy needs more than just workers to solve its workforce shortages, it needs skilled talent and individuals with a passion for the work. CTE programs develop that in students every day."

Lars Clemensen, Superintendent, Hampton Bays Public Schools





Missed Opportunities and Inequities

While the cost of sending students to programs has grown since 1992, the limit on reimbursement has stayed the same. This diminished state investment in support for CTE programs has real impacts at the district level. With funding for these opportunities not keeping pace with costs, schools have to make choices about what to do with limited resources. Local school leaders must choose between providing students with CTE programs they are interested in or addressing other educational priorities. Further, this issue contributes to inequities across district lines, as districts with varying resources and student needs are forced to make different choices about CTE offerings and other programs and services for students.

“The Talent Shortage”

Government officials, economists and business leaders have all pointed to a concerning gap between the workforce needed to power our economy and the availability of workers to fill that need. In a 2020 survey, The Manpower Group found that 69% of U.S. companies were “struggling to fill positions.” A leading global workforce solutions company, The Manpower Group refers to the current challenge as a “talent shortage.” As our economy changes and baby boomers retire, the need for a skilled workforce is not expected to change. BOCES programs are widely recognized as an important part of the solution.

In the 2020-21 school year, more than 38,500 students developed college- and career-ready skills through BOCES CTE programs. Many of the programs created in recent years are directly connected to high-growth industries like health care, construction, computers and mathematics, renewable energy, education and service industries. A total of 6,040 New York business served on BOCES CTE advisory councils across the state, providing direct input into programs designed to provide students with the training and skills necessary to serve their industries in the future. The Washington-Saratoga-Hamilton-Warren-Essex BOCES’ “Women in the Trades” initiative is just one example of many across that state of how BOCES and business partners are doing everything possible to draw more of our talented young people into these critical areas.

Conclusion: Invest in the Future

The cap on aidable salaries is not about educators’ salaries, but a mechanism for expanding the capacity of our overall system to meet student needs and develop the future workforce. BOCES is one of many engines of economic growth and opportunity in our state. More than 70 years ago, New York lawmakers had the knowledge and foresight to create the BOCES system. A skilled and professional workforce is the backbone of our state and local communities. Modernizing the reimbursement structure would help meet two pressing priorities: Overcoming a “talent shortage” to propel our state’s economy and providing today’s young people with every opportunity for future success. Updating this outdated cap is one of the wisest investments our state could make.

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