

CTE Concentrator Frequently Asked Questions

Currently, a student can take any three credits within a broad [career cluster](#) to earn concentrator status; however, this course-taking places the student at a disadvantage. Though the student may gain a very broad knowledge base within a certain career cluster, the student is not able to pursue deeper learning in content specific to a CTE program of study. This means a student is unable to build upon specific academic and technical skills, prepare appropriately for a capstone experience, take stackable early postsecondary opportunities, or sit for a capstone industry certification.

For this reason, effective in the **2017-18 school year**, the definition of a student who concentrates in CTE will be updated to ensure we are preparing students for postsecondary and career success. The revised definition requires that a student who concentrates in CTE complete three or more courses within a single program of study.

What does three courses within a program of study mean for a student? CTE courses are placed into [sequenced programs of study](#). These course sequences are structured to build upon the knowledge and skills obtained from one course to the next. Various programs of study have industry certifications, work-based learning experiences, and early postsecondary opportunities built within the course sequencing to ensure students are prepared to seamlessly transition into aligned postsecondary and career opportunities. An example of this sequence is provided below.

Program of Study	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Welding	Principles of Manufacturing (5922)	Welding I (6078)	Welding II ² (6033) -or- Dual Enrollment Welding (4062)	Manufacturing Practicum (5926) -or- Dual Enrollment Welding (4062)
	Industry Certification: Machining Level I - Measurement, Materials, and Safety Certification (NIMS)	Industry Certification: AWS SENSE Entry Level Welder	Industry Certification: AWS SENSE Advanced Level Welder or American Welding Society Certified Welder	

Districts will find that the updated language directly supports state board of education graduation requirements regarding areas of elective focus. The new definition also allows for all students who concentrate in CTE to concurrently complete their elective focuses. School counselors, administrators, and teachers are encouraged to review the [2017-18 programs of study](#) and consider how the appropriate scheduling of students will ensure they can engage in deeper applications of skills through upper level coursework.

Frequently asked questions about the new definition of a CTE concentrator:

Question	Answer
What is the state's new definition of a CTE concentrator?	Effective in the 2017-18 school year, a student who concentrates in CTE is a student who completes three or more courses within a CTE program of study.
What is changing in the definition of a CTE concentrator?	Currently, students can concentrate in CTE by taking three or more credits within a program of study or career cluster. The new definition replaces credits with courses and removes career cluster as an option. By having students concentrate in a particular program of study, they will be better prepared for future occupations and aligned postsecondary programs.
Does the new definition of CTE concentrator only apply to students who will be entering ninth grade in 2017-18?	No. The new definition of CTE concentrator applies to all students effective 2017-18 school year.
Will there be a grandfathering period for students who are currently taking CTE courses within career clusters and are on track to concentrate through this option?	No. Data pulled from the last three school years show that the overwhelming majority of districts are offering programs of study and progressing students through them sequentially. Based on the historical data, the new definition of a CTE concentrator will be effective for all students beginning with the 2017-18 school year.
By removing the career cluster option from the new definition, will this limit a student from career exploration?	<p>No. Students should be given access to career exploration opportunities prior to selecting a CTE program of study. Students should be (1) experiencing career exploration beginning in early grades (refer to department's work-based learning framework), (2) participating in career interest inventories in grades seven and ten (refer to the department's school counseling standards), and (3) participating in eighth or ninth grade in the Career Exploration (6166) course, which promotes the learning of various career opportunities.</p> <p>It is also important to note that each CTE program of study provides multiple career exploration standards. An entry level course details careers available in the career cluster. As the student moves through a program of study, the course progression allows for the student to narrow their focus within more specific occupational areas. Each program of study aligns to several occupations and postsecondary programs. By completing a program of study, students will be better prepared to make a seamless transition directly into the workforce and/or directly into continued postsecondary training.</p>

<p>Does a district's CTE concentrator status impact its CTE funding?</p>	<p>No. The number of students who concentrate in CTE is not tied to district funding. CTE programs are funded through the Carl D. Perkins IV federal grant. Funds are distributed to districts using a formula based on census data.</p>
<p>Does a student have to complete a program of study by taking courses in the sequence listed to earn concentrator status?</p>	<p>Preferably, but not necessarily. CTE programs of study are intentionally designed to build upon a set of knowledge and skills that deepen in content and naturally prepare and progress a student through this learning. If students are not taking courses in the appropriate sequence, students will not be as prepared and therefore will not be as successful in their capstone experiences, such as work-based learning opportunities, and industry certification exams.</p>
<p>How are students identified as CTE concentrators?</p>	<p>Students are marked as concentrators in CTE by their appropriate CTE teachers using the department's eTIGER system. Students should be marked as concentrators when they complete their third course within a program of study. For additional information on how to mark a student as a concentrator in eTIGER, see instructions here.</p>
<p>If a student does not concentrate in CTE, can they still fulfill their elective focus required for graduation?</p>	<p>Any student who completes three courses within a CTE program of study will automatically meet the elective focus required for graduation. However, districts select their elective focus areas; therefore, a student could meet the elective focus requirement for graduation without receiving CTE concentrator status, especially if his/her elective focus is in an area other than CTE.</p>
<p>If a student transfers from another district or state and does not have the opportunity to complete three courses within a specific program of study, what happens?</p>	<p>Unless the student can start and complete a program of study offered through the school, the student will be unable to complete the required three courses needed to be marked as a concentrator. If a student does not concentrate in an offered CTE program of study, then the student is not included in the concentrator file, which is what is reported to the U.S. Department of Education to report CTE student achievement.</p>
<p>If a student transfers from another district or state and does not have the opportunity to complete three courses within a specific program of study and does not have enough courses for an elective focus, can the student still graduate?</p>	<p>Districts select their elective focus areas; therefore, a student could meet the elective focus requirement for graduation without receiving CTE concentrator status by selecting course in other focus areas recognized by the district. However, if a student transfers into a district as a senior and cannot meet the requirements for any elective focus area, a district may apply for an elective focus area hardship waiver for the student and submit a transcript supporting the waiver request. If approved, the waiver allows the district to count a special sequence of courses for the student to meet the elective focus requirement for graduation. This option is for special cases only.</p>

<p>If a student has an approved elective focus hardship waiver, can the district count the approved course sequence for CTE concentrator status?</p>	<p>No. A student can only be identified as a concentrator in CTE when the student has completed three courses within a program of study.</p>
<p>If a student takes three courses and fails one of the courses in a program of study, can the student still be considered a concentrator in CTE?</p>	<p>The definition of a CTE concentrator is based on completion of courses, not credits or grades. Therefore, if a student fails to pass a course but manages to continue on and complete the rest of the courses within the program of study, the student would still meet the concentrator requirements and could be marked as such. It is strongly encouraged, however, that districts strongly consider the knowledge and skills a student would need to be successful in a program of study. If the student is failing a course within a program of study, the CTE teacher should determine if the student is ready to progress to the next course in the program of study sequence, recognizing that the knowledge and skills of each course build upon each other.</p>
<p>Since the definition of a CTE concentrator is changing, does this change the definition of a CTE completer too?</p>	<p>The term CTE completer is used by districts to mean various things; however, the department definition of a completer in CTE is a student who has taken <u>all</u> courses within a program of study. This means a student would have to take all four courses within a program of study to be considered a CTE completer.</p>
<p>If a district has an approved special program of study, can students who complete three courses within the special program of study be identified as CTE concentrators?</p>	<p>Yes. Students who complete three or more courses in an approved special program of study can be marked as a CTE concentrator in eTIGER.</p>