



# Washington State Auditor's Office

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## Workforce Development System: Secondary Career and Technical Education Outcomes and Leading Practices

### Background

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are a key component of the workforce development system. More than \$420 million in state and federal funds was spent on secondary CTE in 2014, serving about 357,000 students at middle schools, high schools and skill centers. These courses introduce students to a wide variety of occupational and technical skills in an instructional setting, preparing them to enter the workforce or continue their education at the postsecondary level.

To be successful, CTE programs in local school districts should interact with business and other local partners to help ensure course offerings align with industry needs and academic standards. The way that programs are delivered to students and the degree to which they are coordinated with employers and other program partners can vary considerably between school districts due to the decentralized nature of the state's school system and how decisions about program offerings are made at the local level. This can ultimately affect the quality and standards of similar programs offered in different school districts.

### Scope and objectives

The first audit of the state's CTE programs will use student data to examine the postsecondary outcomes of students who take CTE courses at middle schools, high schools and skill centers.

This audit will seek to answer the following question:

- What are the education and employment outcomes of Washington secondary students who concentrate in or complete a CTE program?

A second audit will attempt to identify school districts that are providing effective CTE programs that meet the needs of students and employers. We want to learn what is being done well, with the goal of developing a set of leading practices that may be useful to other districts across the state. It will ask:

- Are secondary CTE course offerings aligned with student and employer needs?
- Are there leading practices that could be identified and shared to increase the success of other program providers?

### Timing

We estimate results of the first audit will be released in late fall 2016.

Results of the second audit will be released in winter 2017.