



Celebrating 100 Years of CTE

Honoring Our Legacy, Building What Comes Next

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CTECS Community of Practice | September 2026



A Centennial Is More Than an Anniversary

ACTE's 100th anniversary is a rare and powerful moment — not simply to look back, but to draw meaning from where we have been and use it to shape where we are going. This milestone gives our entire community an opportunity to:

Celebrate

Honor the educators, leaders and partners who built CTE into the vital force it is today.

Preserve

Capture and share the stories, decisions and breakthroughs that shaped our profession.

Demonstrate

Show how CTE has continually adapted to economic and societal change over a full century.

Commit

Make a renewed promise to students, employers and communities for the century ahead.

□ The most meaningful way to celebrate our past is to prepare for what comes next.



Planning ACTE's Centennial Celebration

ACTE's centennial planning has brought together members, state associations, partners and CTE leaders from across the country to across the country to create a celebration worthy of 100 years of impact. The national celebration culminates at **CareerTech CareerTech VISION, Dec. 2–5, 2026, in New Orleans.**



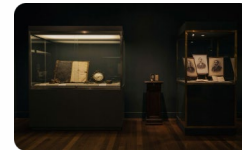
Commemorative Publication

A definitive document of ACTE's history, milestones and the people who shaped CTE.



CTE Documentary

A film featuring the voices and impact of CTE professionals and learners across generations.



Centennial Showcase

An exhibit of artifacts, images and milestones tracing 100 years of CTE progress.



Special Programming

Dedicated sessions, recognition events and opportunities to preserve today's today's CTE story for future generations.



What Centennial Planning Has Taught Us

Reflecting on a century of CTE has reinforced lessons that are as relevant today.

ACTE's history is not a straight line, it is a continuing story of reinvention driven by people who refused to stand still.

CTE succeeds because it adapts

Every era brought new economic demands, and CTE responded with purpose and creativity.

Employer engagement is central

Strong CTE programs have never existed in isolation from the world of work.

Progress is built locally, accelerated nationally

Local innovation is the engine; national collaboration is the catalyst that spreads it.

Our greatest asset is CTE professionals

The expertise, dedication and creativity of practitioners have always been the field's true foundation.



Five Commitments for CTE's Next Century

As we look forward, the next hundred years of CTE will be grounded in five foundational commitments: a shared framework for every educator who believes in CTE's power to change lives. **No single organization can accomplish these goals alone.**

1

Access for Every Learner

Ensure every student, in every community, can access high-quality CTE programs.

2

Work-Based Learning

Make meaningful WBL a core component of every career pathway, not a bonus.

3

High Quality CTE Defined

ACTE's HQ Framework establishes clear standards for rigorous, relevant, equitable CTE programs of study.

4

Invest in Educators

Develop the leaders and educators who make high-quality CTE possible every day.

5

Stronger Connections

Build lasting networks among national organizations, states, schools and schools and employers.



Work-Based Learning Has Moved to the Center

Work-based learning is no longer a niche strategy — it is rapidly becoming a shared priority across priority across every segment of education and workforce development. Its growth spans the full spans the full learning continuum:

Where WBL Is Growing

- Middle and high schools
- Community and technical colleges
- Universities
- Adult education and workforce programs
- Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship initiatives
- Employer talent-development strategies

The Central Question

Expansion alone is not enough. The field has has moved past debating *whether* students students should experience work-based learning.

The question now is whether every experience will be **intentional, equitable and high quality**. That is precisely where CTE's expertise becomes essential.

- ❏ Growth without quality is not progress. It is just volume.



CTE Brings Quality to Work-Based Learning

CTE has spent decades building the connective tissue between education and employment. That accumulated expertise is what distinguishes a true work-based learning experience from a simple job placement. **A workplace experience becomes work-based learning when the work is connected to intentional learning.**



Embedded in a Program of Study

Experiences are integrated within a coherent career pathway, not added on.



Standards-Connected

Tied to relevant academic and technical standards with clearly defined learning outcomes.



Supported by Partners

Backed by prepared educators and committed employer partners who co-design the experience.



Accessible to All

Deliberately designed to reach students from every background, not just not just those with existing connections.



Quality Requires More Than Placement

Placing a student in a workplace is the beginning, not the end. A truly high-quality work-based learning system is held together by five interconnected elements that CTE professionals are uniquely positioned to ensure remain connected.



CTE professionals bring the knowledge to design, coordinate and continuously improve each of these five elements — ensuring the whole system works together for every student.



Building a National WBL Professional Community

ACTE's **Work-Based Learning Division** provides a national home for practitioners are advancing WBL policy and practice at every level. The Division connects:

→ Coordinators & Educators

WBL coordinators, apprenticeship specialists, and secondary and postsecondary faculty.

→ Administrators & Agency Leaders

Program administrators and state education education and workforce agency representatives.

→ Business & Community Partners

Employers and community organizations who co-design and deliver WBL experiences.

What the Division Provides

The Division creates a space for practitioners to exchange resources, address policy challenges and strengthen professional practice nationally. It also supports states using WBL as a Perkins program-quality indicator or within other accountability frameworks — ensuring that national policy and local practice stay in sync.





Preparing the Next Generation of WBL Leaders

The **ACTE Work-Based Learning Leadership Alliance** is a year-long, cohort-based leadership development experience designed for accomplished WBL practitioners who are ready to take on broader roles in shaping the field. The inaugural 2026 cohort represents an investment not only in individual leaders, but in the future capacity of the entire WBL community.



Personalized Mentorship

Participants receive one-on-one guidance from experienced national WBL leaders.



Peer Collaboration

Cohort members engage with peers from across the country to examine emerging WBL challenges together.



Capstone Project

Each participant develops and publishes a capstone project that contributes to the national WBL conversation.



Leadership Readiness

Graduates are prepared to assume broader advocacy, policy and practitioner-leadership roles at the state and national level.



Strengthening WBL Leadership in the States

Strong national capacity means nothing without strong state capacity to match it. ACTE's **State WBL Division Initiative** is designed to help state ACTE associations develop or significantly strengthen their own WBL professional communities — creating the connected national network that the field needs.

Practical Toolkit

A ready-to-use state WBL division toolkit with guidance for recruiting, organizing and sustaining members.

Governance Models

Sample leadership structures and governance frameworks that states can adapt to their own context.

Professional Development

Programming and PD models that engage members, build expertise and keep the community active.

Employer & Agency Engagement

Strategies for connecting with employer partners and state agencies to expand WBL reach and credibility.

Sustainability Resources

Communications, membership growth and long-term sustainability frameworks for lasting impact.

❏ The goal is a connected national network with strong, empowered WBL leadership in every state.



Why ACTE and CTECS Belong Together

ACTE and CTECS are natural collaborators. Each brings distinct strengths that, when combined, create a more complete and powerful resource for CTE professionals and learners. ACTE is already identified among CTECS's organizational partners: a foundation to build upon. CTECS's mission emphasizes industry-based resources that improve CTE and workforce-development instruction, instruction, assessment, certification and delivery.

ACTE Contributes

- A national network of CTE educators and leaders
- Professional development and convening capacity
- State association and Division networks
- Practitioner knowledge and field-based insight
- Advocacy, communications and dissemination

CTECS Contributes

- Expertise in occupational analysis
- Industry-validated standards and assessments
- Workplace-readiness resources
- Competency-based instructional tools
- A consortium model for state collaboration



From Partnership to Strategic Alignment

ACTE seeks to move beyond a shared mission and into genuine strategic alignment with CTECS. Our goal is to connect what employers require, what educators deliver and what learners experience. Four shared priorities provide the framework for this deeper collaboration.

1

Quality

Establish clearer, shared expectations for what high-quality CTE and work- and work-based learning look like in practice across states and institutions.

2

Relevance

Connect instruction and WBL experiences directly to validated workplace competencies that employers recognize and value.

3

Capacity

Equip educators, WBL coordinators and state leaders with practical, field-practical, field-tested tools and professional development resources.

4

Scale

Help proven approaches spread efficiently across states and institutions rather than being reinvented in isolation.



Opportunities for Joint Action

Strategic alignment becomes real through concrete, visible work. The following represent high-potential areas where ACTE and CTECS can demonstrate shared value — starting with a focused set of achievable projects that build momentum and trust.

Joint Professional Development

Co-designed PD for WBL coordinators and CTE educators connecting competency frameworks competency frameworks to classroom and worksite practice.

Shared Resources

Jointly developed tools linking workplace-readiness competencies to structured WBL WBL experiences and assessment.

Practitioner Review

Engage ACTE Division members in reviewing and improving CTECS standards, assessments and instructional materials.

State Pilots

Launch collaborative pilots in select states to demonstrate and document high-quality WBL models at scale.

Event Collaboration

Joint sessions at ACTE and CTECS events that bring practitioner insight and industry expertise into the same room.

Research & Publications

Co-authored research, case studies and publications that give credibility and reach to our shared findings.

Division–State Connections

Strengthen communication pathways between ACTE WBL Division members and CTECS member state contacts.

Shared National Message

A unified public narrative about quality, relevance and learner outcomes that both organizations carry forward together.

□ Our next step: select a small number of achievable joint projects and demonstrate their value together.



The Future We Can Build Together

As ACTE enters its second century, the vision is clear; a CTE system that reaches every learner, meets the highest standards of quality and connects quality and connects education and work with genuine purpose. That vision belongs to all of us.



Every Learner Connected

Every student can connect education to a meaningful, rewarding future regardless regardless of zip code or background.



Every WBL Experience Quality

Work-based learning meets a consistently high standard, intentional, equitable equitable and tied to real learning outcomes.



Every Educator Supported

Every CTE professional has access to the tools, resources and professional development they need to excel.



Every State Learning Together

States share knowledge, strategies and solutions , no community reinvents the wheel alone.

The first 100 years established the power of CTE. Our shared responsibility is to expand that power, strengthen its quality and ensure that it reaches every learner.