

# Career and Technical Education: College Readiness and Cost Effectiveness

How should the success of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program be measured?

The CTE program provides opportunities for students to acquire 21st century academic and technical skills needed for entry into the global workforce and into postsecondary education. At first sight, it appears that the success of the CTE program could be measured by comparing workforce participation and postsecondary enrollment of graduates who concentrated in CTE courses with those of graduates who did not. However, graduates seeking to obtain employment or enroll in a postsecondary school could confront obstacles unrelated to the effectiveness of the CTE program. As this report compares the college readiness\* of 2010 to 2011

**CTE Concentrators**

The seniors in this study were considered CTE concentrators if (a) their 4-year plan of courses reflected the intent to take a sequence of two to three CTE courses for three or more credits, (b) they took one of the CTE courses in the sequence prior to their senior year, and (c) they either took an upper level CTE course in the sequence their junior year that met the credit requirement or they took such a course their senior year. If the 4-year plan included a Tech Prep course (i.e., with articulated credit at the postsecondary level) the student was coded as a 3. If the upper level course was not articulated, the student was coded as a 2. Code 2 and 3 seniors were chosen as a unit of study for CTE program evaluation because the sequential course of study provided the student with a foundation for a career as opposed to CTE code 1 seniors who took random CTE courses, and CTE code 0 seniors who did not take any CTE courses. Any seniors not identified as code 2 or 3 were considered non-CTE.

Figure 1. No significant difference existed between the college readiness of Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators and of non-CTE seniors.

Of these 7,778 (15.8%) were CTE concentrators. However, only 4,582 (93%) of all seniors had available Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores in English language arts (ELA) composition, and mathematics (math) and SAT or American College Test (ACT) scores from which to calculate college readiness. Of the seniors with college readiness data available, 768 (16.8%) were CTE

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