

Good morning,

My name is Angela Mike, and I am currently Executive Director for Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Pittsburgh Public Schools. I have served in this capacity since 2010.

CTE's goal is to empower its students to confidently and successfully transition into post-secondary education and career opportunities and to become positive, contributing members of society. CTE prepares students for career pathways in the global marketplace by offering experiential learning, post-secondary credits and industry certifications.

Pittsburgh Public Schools offers 16 Career and Technical Education programs of study in 6 high schools. Each program of study is linked to a state-identified high-priority occupation. Fifteen of our programs are offered using the 3-year model: Students are in our programs for 3 periods/day, 5 days/week for 3 years.

Through CTE, students can gain:

- Stackable Industry-recognized certifications
- Transcribed dual enrollment credits
- Preparation for high-wage, high-skill, high-demand careers

CTE students receive hands-on instruction in labs equipped with state-of-the-art equipment that mirror real-world work environments. Taught by teachers who are industry professionals in their respective fields, our students learn how to use the tools, techniques, software and hardware necessary to enter the world of work.

CTE provides academic and career counseling supports along with career preparation resources to help students obtain the competence and the confidence to successfully transition into their chosen career paths.

CTE Outcomes Include:

- Increased graduation rates
- Career and college readiness
- Equity for underserved students
- Student motivation and engagement
- Academic and technical proficiency
- Critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills
- Access to entry-level, career laddering jobs

The work that we do and the impact of our programs would not be possible without the funding support we receive from our government.

At the federal level, we have received **short-term support** from the **ESSER grant**, the **Business Education Partnership grant**. We receive **annual funding** from the **Perkins grant**.

At the state level, we annually receive **subsidies** for every student enrolled in a program of study (10th grade and above). We receive a **Supplemental Equipment Grant**. The state recently re-instated funding

for dual enrollment costs, and that funding will benefit CTE students. We received a grant from the **Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund**. We also recently received a **2-year grant through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor**.

How has this funding helped our programs and our students?

At the Federal Level:

Perkins funds covers salaries for our Career Counselors, English and Math Integration Teachers, and one of our Co-Operative Education Coordinators. Perkins funding is also used to pay for industry certification vouchers and testing, student transportation for job exploration field trips, equipment and technology for our learning labs, plus state-provided professional development for Perkins-funded staff.

ESSER funds were used to cover the cost of air conditioning (in 5 programs) and new lighting (in 3 programs). As I mentioned our programs are located in 6 buildings and those buildings have aging infrastructure. Though we have 16 programs, we had to prioritize which programs were in most need of air conditioning and lighting. ESSER funds covered the cost of 2 tiny house kits which have been instrumental in helping our Carpentry students build capacity.

The Business Education Partnership grant, which we received through Partner4Work (our workforce development Board), provided supplemental support for a pilot program with Allegheny Health Network that allowed our Health Careers Technology seniors to receive training as Patient Care Technicians (PCTs). Through this program, the trained seniors became paid externs earning \$16.50/hour as PCTs at Allegheny General Hospital and West Penn Hospital. Successful externs were offered the opportunity to be hired as full-time PCTs after graduation. The grant helped cover costs for onboarding certifications and student training.

At the State Level:

The **annual subsidies** help cover costs not funded at the federal level. These include CTE student supplies, uniforms, equipment and equipment replacement, specialty furniture, field trips, SkillsUSA membership fees and competition costs, and other student supports.

The **Supplemental Equipment Grant** covers the cost of equipment recommended by industry members of our Occupational Advisory Committees. The advice provided by industry helps our labs to reflect what our students will find in today's workplace, so that their training aligns with industry expectations. The last allocation was used to purchase a downdraft table for the Carpentry Program at Pittsburgh Westinghouse; a Glue Pull Repair Collision System for the Automotive Body Repair program at Pittsburgh Brashear; and an ECG Simulator, Catheterization Simulator, Human Skelton and a Human Torso Model – for the Health Careers Technology programs at Pittsburgh Carrick, Pittsburgh Perry and Pittsburgh Westinghouse.

GEER funds helped cover the cost of virtual reality simulation systems for several of our programs. The **SimSpray Powder Training Bay** was purchased for the Automotive Body Repair students at Pittsburgh Brashear (pictured below). This is a safe and cost-effective virtual reality training tool for painters and coaters, allowing students to learn to use a paint spray gun without expending consumable supplies in the process. Hands-on experiences are emphasized, while clean-up and prep are minimized.



The **SURVIVR immersive virtual reality platform** for situational police training was purchased for use in our Emergency Response Technology program. SURVIVR is currently being used by several law enforcement agencies, and has a contract with the U.S. Air Force Security Forces to build the most realistic de-escalation simulations to date. The SURVIVR system will allow our students to more actively engage with the law enforcement component of the curriculum and gain a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of public safety officers.



We were awarded a 2-year **Schools-to-Work grant** from the **Pennsylvania Department of Labor** in support of our state-registered Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship program (which was the first pre-apprenticeship program for high school students in the state). This grant helps cover costs that will help students transition into the Carpenter’s Union Apprenticeship program (driver’s education to help students earn their licenses, first-year apprentice toolkits, work boots and more).

Allow me to give you a few examples of the impact this funding has had on our students:

- **Aniya Givner**, a 2022 CTE Cosmetology graduate from Pittsburgh Perry passed is a licensed cosmetologist, owns 1K Styles Salon, and is an online content creator. The training she received through CTE saved her almost \$30,000.



- **Madina Mada** is a 2023 CTE Health Careers Technology graduate. Not only did Madina successfully complete the AHN Junior Scholars program, she was also accepted into the Nursing Program at Carlow University. Madina accepted the entry-level position as a Patient Care Technician (which has career laddering benefits) and will work while she is enrolled in school. CTE helped open both these doors of opportunity. Funding support for the AHN program was provided by the Business Education Partnership grant.



- **Ibrahim Shumbushu** (pictured 2nd from the left) is a 2023 CTE Carpentry graduate. Ibrahim transitioned from pre-apprentice to apprentice with the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters. Ibrahim and his family are from Rwanda. Ibrahim worked past language barriers and other challenges to get where he is today, bringing pride to his family and starting on a path of success that will help them all move forward. Through the Schools-to-Work grant, we were able to cover the costs of his initial apprenticeship fees, his work boots and his first-year apprenticeship tool kit. The ESSER-grant funded tiny-house kit provided the opportunity for him to further develop his carpentry skills while working on a project that will be habitable when completed. The project also allowed him to learn directly from Union carpenters who are partnered with CTE.



- **Keshawn Brooks** (pictured 4th from the left) is a 2016 CTE B.A.S.E. program graduate (Pittsburgh Westinghouse). Keshawn went on to attend Thiel College and now works for Reach, a violence prevention initiative that partners with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police to help prevent violent incidents in Pittsburgh high schools while also working directly with community engagement officers to provide meaningful support to high schools that have been impacted by violence and threats of dangerous behavior.



There are thousands of success stories like these that could be shared by the CTE providers in our state.

But there are challenges in continuing to provide quality programs that will yield the kind of results that our students need and that our economy demands.

CTE programs are expensive, and that expense continues to grow.

- Large equipment can cost as much as \$30,000 or more.
- Transportation (field trip buses) have more than doubled in price over the past 3 years.
- The cost for industry certification vouchers has increased.
- The cost to cover the latest technologies in our programs have increased.

We are doing as much as we can with what we have, but we need more support to help our students to be career ready.

Here are a few ways you could help us:

1) **Allow more flexibility in the use of state-sponsored equipment grant funding.**

The state currently offers CTE providers the opportunity to apply for the Supplemental Equipment Grant and the Career and Technical Education Competitive Equipment Grant.

Most career education programs are eligible for the Supplemental Equipment Grant. But the Competitive Equipment Grant requires staff to write the grant and it also requires a grant match. Many CTE programs do not have the staff resources or the partnership connections to apply for the competitive grant.

Could the funds from both grants be combined and distributed according to need, without the matching grant requirement?

2) **Allow more flexibility in the state funds allocated for career and technical education.**

- a. Provide funding to cover CTE program start-up costs.
 - i. Current funding covers existing programs and hinders our ability to keep pace with labor market needs.
 1. 2 CIP codes for aviation/aeronautics were recently added (47.0609 and 49.0101). Though these program offer an exciting opportunity, the costs are prohibitive.
 2. A new CIP was added for Education (13.0101). We could help address the nation-wide shortage of teachers through this program, but cannot afford to offer it.

Thank you for your time and attention.