Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are an integral component of Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTSOs are not "clubs," to which only a few CTE students belong, but intra-curricular/ co-curricular student organizations that are integrated into the CTE curriculum and classrooms. NCCTE recognizes the importance of providing students with leadership and career development through CTSOs as it assists students achieving the North Carolina State Board of Education’s guiding vision that “every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.”

CTE classrooms that use CTSOs as an intra-curricular/ co-curricular instructional method will:

* Provide curriculum-based competitive events that reinforce national and industry standards
* Integrate service-learning activities or opportunities in the curriculum
* Plan instructional time dedicated to collaborative learning and projects within the classroom
* Incorporate CTSO programs and initiatives into daily lesson plans
* Use authentic career exploration and career development experiences
* Encourage leadership development of all student through real-world application

This diagram illustrates how CTE instructional programs consist of three overlapping parts: classroom instruction, work-based learning activities, and CTSO activities. Each element of the diagram is a distinct part of the CTE, but they are so thoroughly intertwined that they cannot be fully separated for high-quality CTE programs. When integrated into the CTE curriculum, the CTSO is a powerful instructional method that offers organized curriculum-oriented activities that help students maximize employability, gain leadership opportunities, and develop personal skills that enable them to develop into productive members of society.

CTSOs contain valuable leadership programs and challenging competitive events that reflect current curriculum standards and competencies for the instructional programs they serve. Teachers infuse the CTSO's activities into the instructional activities, thereby helping students see the real-world value of their academic studies. CTSOs are committed to the growth of students enrolled in all CTE career pathways.

NCCTE recognizes the following seven nationally recognized Career and Technical Student Organizations: DECA; Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA); Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA); the National FFA Organization; HOSA – Future Health Professionals; SkillsUSA; and Technology Student Association (TSA).

NCCTE encourages CTE programs to continue to affiliate with a CTSO and collect student dues during remote learning. All North Carolina CTSOs will offer their programs, conferences, and student leadership development experiences in either a virtual or in-person format based on the situation. North Carolina CTSOs are committed to their continued support of intra-curricular/ co-curricular integration into the CTE curriculum and providing student leadership and career development opportunities on the school, state, and national levels.

Please contact your CTSO state advisor for more information about how to integrate CTSOs into the in-person or virtual CTE classroom.

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