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PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES ON EQUITY IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

[2019 Policy Brief](#)

Explores how today’s career education programs can avoid the equity problems that plagued vocational education in the past.

Goal: “to prevent CTE, which is currently enjoying a renaissance as a route to middle-skill jobs in high-wage, high-demand fields, from becoming mired in the problems of the past, where voc-ed was often used to divert low-income or minority students away from a college education and toward low-paying fields that lacked opportunities for career advancement.”

Common challenge identified:

- How to meaningfully define equity
- How to increase equity in both access and outcomes

Defining Equity

Defined as: All students and program participants should have access to high-quality opportunities and be supported to achieve equally high outcomes, regardless of their races, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, or geographic regions.

Participants Insight:

“...as CTE becomes more popular, it could potentially reinforce existing inequities by creating a bifurcated system in which students with educational advantages fill high-quality, in-demand programs designed to provide entry into competitive, growth industries, while student with fewer options only end up in those programs that are less well designed and funded, or that are in fields more like the old model of vocational education.”

Supporting Equitable Access

Challenges	Solutions
Advising	Timing and Mapping
Information Flow	Peer Communications and Sustained, nonintrusive contact
Stigma	Rebranding and Addressing parents’ concerns
Enrollment Criteria	Bridge Programs and Set-aside seats

Supporting Equitable Outcomes

Challenges	Solutions
Soft Skills	Training in Soft Skills
Social Networks	Adult and Alumni Mentors and Peer Support and Check-ins
Employer Preparedness	Training Employers to Work with Young People and Addressing Deficit Language