

ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE

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Career-Connected Learning (CCL) in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) – Talking Points

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The Opportunity:

Career-Connected learning - career and technical education (CTE) relaunch throughout the district kindergarten (k) through 12th grade with a transition to post-secondary learning.

Career-connected learning emphasizes the importance of career exploration and experiences that allow students to understand what careers are available to them and what learning experiences they need during high school and in post-secondary programs to be successful in those careers. Career-connected learning provides the reason for the course a student is taking. Being career ready means that you not only have a strong academic foundation, but that you also know why you have that foundation and how to use it to reach your goals.

Career Exposure in grades kindergarten through fifth grade.

Career Exploration in grades six through eighth.

Career Experience in grades ninth through 12th.

Economic and job projections within the community should drive what programs of study should be offered and this relaunch is aligned with the economic priorities and pillars of the New Mexico Public Education's strategic plan.

Relaunch:

The goal of the relaunch within APS is to build out career-connected programming that is equitable, sustainable and efficient.

- Quality programs of study
- Deliberate career education and guidance from elementary to high school

Consideration of current offerings within the district, career guidance throughout the district, current resources allocated to support district career and technical education programming, the APS Office of Innovation's and Community Schools initiatives, APS Board strategic planning goals that are informed by community input, and current research on best practices for districts has informed the reimagining of the high school experience through career-connected experiences.

Strategy:

High quality programs of study within career pathways are currently offered at the APS Career Enrichment Center (CEC), which has reached physical capacity. There are also dozens of smaller

programs of study within these pathways that are being offered at comprehensive high schools throughout the district. These smaller programs are consistently in precarious situations due to staffing and budget volatility, and are in constant danger of collapse, resulting in thousands of wasted dollars. In that if a teacher leaves or a school's resources change these programs close. Closing of these programs results in thousands of dollars from various sources being wasted. Expansion of the CEC *model* to include a professional hub or another campus will allow the district to do the following:

- Centralize high quality programs of study to include work-based learning opportunities, industry relevant certifications, post-secondary learning experiences.
- Centralize teacher expertise, equipment and materials to allow for professional learning communities (PLC) specific to pathways and programs of study. Consolidating these PLC supports sustainable professional development, leading to high-quality student learning experiences aligned to industry standards and could potentially support teacher recruitment for these programs.
- Provide more access to programs of study by bringing students to the campus rather than restricting them to what their comprehensive high school can provide.
- Provide access and full use of specialized equipment that may not be sustainable for use or installation at comprehensive high school facilities.
- Provide business and community partners a more targeted location for education and recruitment within the school district.

References:

- Bierly, C, & Smith, A, (2022). *Taking flight: How to maximize the potential of career-connected learning*. Bain and Company. <https://www.bain.com/insights/taking-flight-how-to-maximize-the-potential-of-career-connected-learning/>
- Bierly, C, & Smith, A, (2019). *Making the leap: How to take the promise of career connected learning to scale*. Bain Company. <https://www.bain.com/insights/making-the-leap-how-to-take-the-promise-of-career-connected-learning-to-scale/>