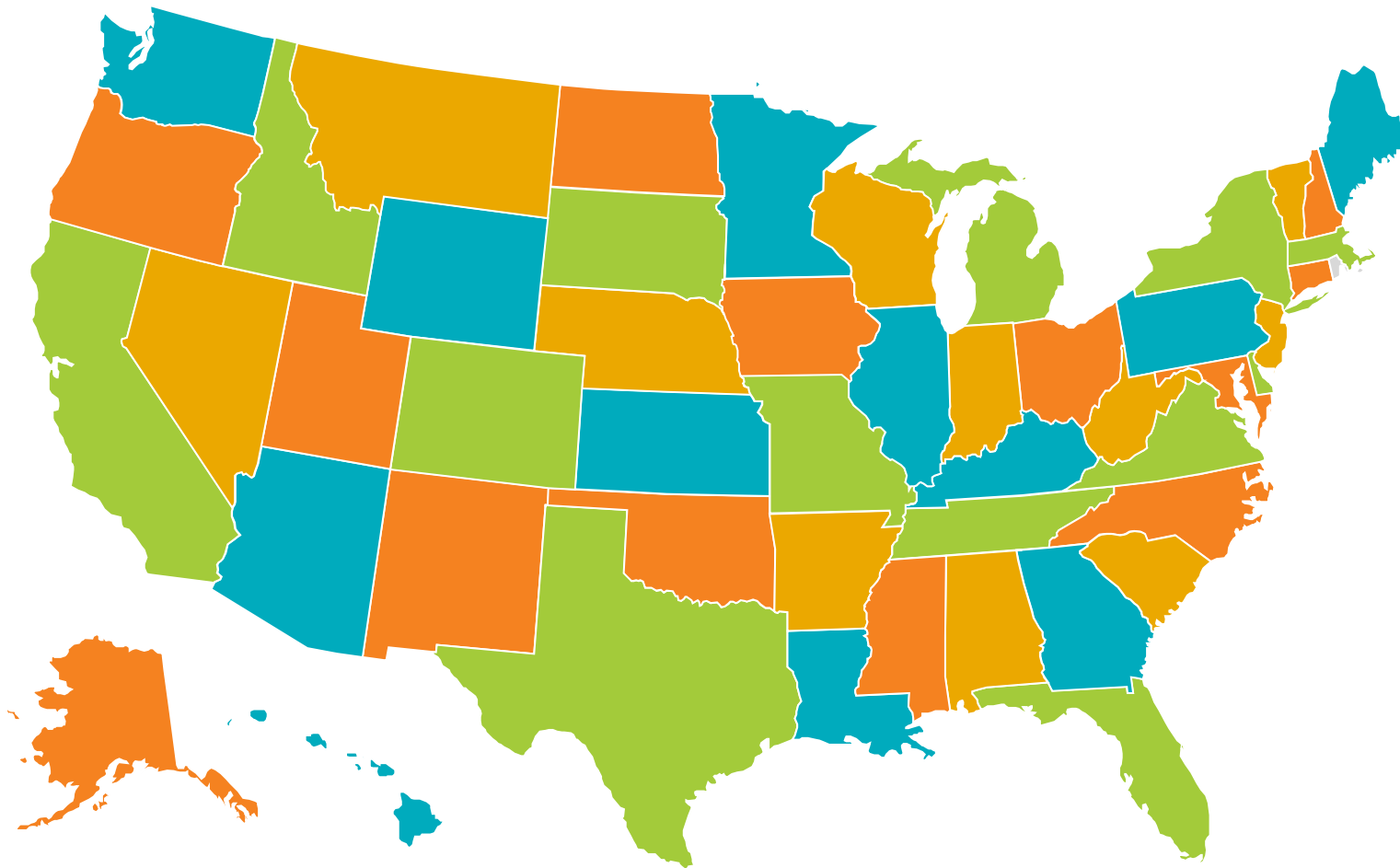


# Effectively Communicating the Value of Career Technical Education

Research and Findings  
March 17, 2025



# About Advance CTE



54 States and Territories

100+ state agencies

60+ organizations

The longest-standing national non-profit that represents **State Career Technical Education Directors and state leaders** responsible for secondary, postsecondary and adult CTE.

# Advance CTE Messaging Portfolio



**Messaging Research**  
**2016, 2020**  
learner/family national  
surveys and focus  
groups on CTE  
impacts & messages



**Support for the Field**  
Public resources;  
technical assistance to  
four cohorts totaling  
17 states

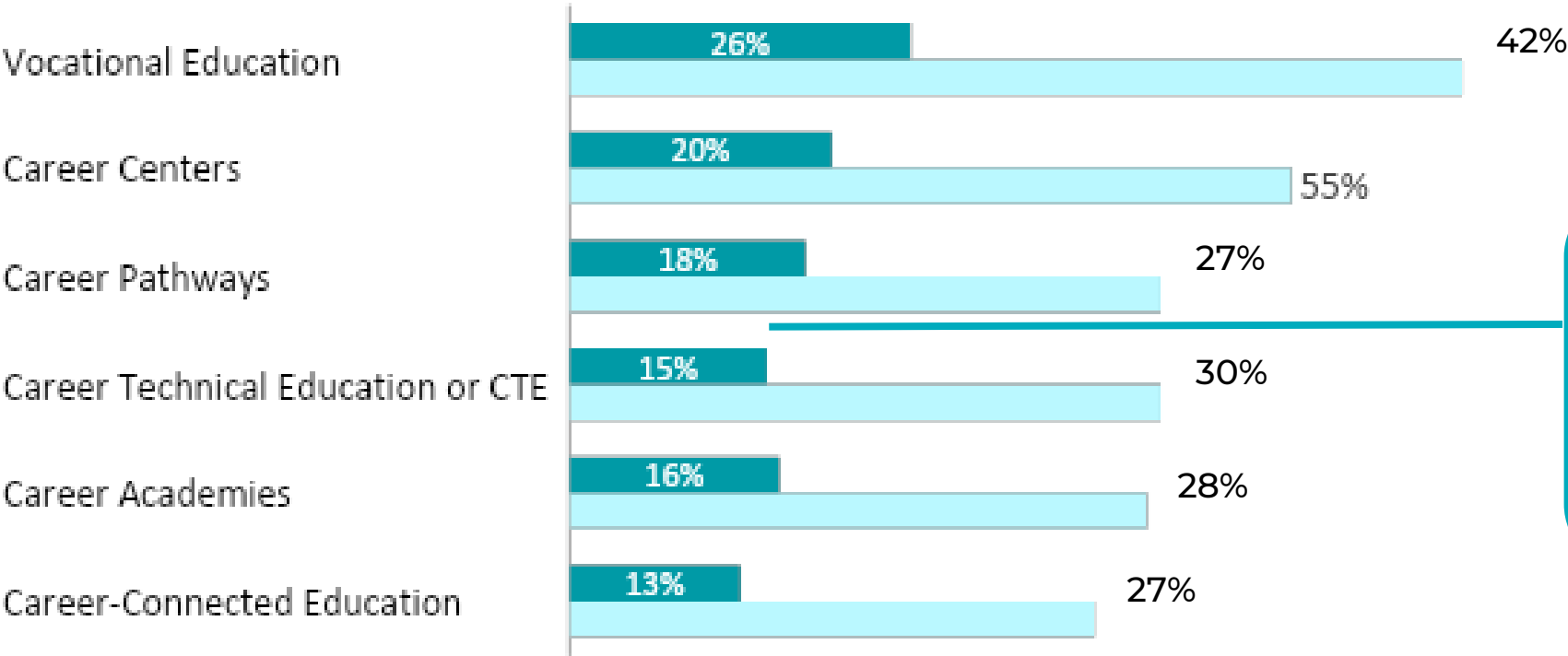


**Perceptions Survey**  
National survey of  
adults on perceptions,  
messages about CTE

# Career Education Still Lacks a National ‘Brand’

How aware are you of the following educational options?

Know a little      Know a Lot



**2023**  
**11%**

**2024**  
**14%**

# Good News: Awareness of CTE is Growing

More likely to  
“know a lot/  
a little”

Black/AA **61%** Hispanic  
**52%**  
Gen Z **58%** Men  
**50%**  
Parents\* **56%**

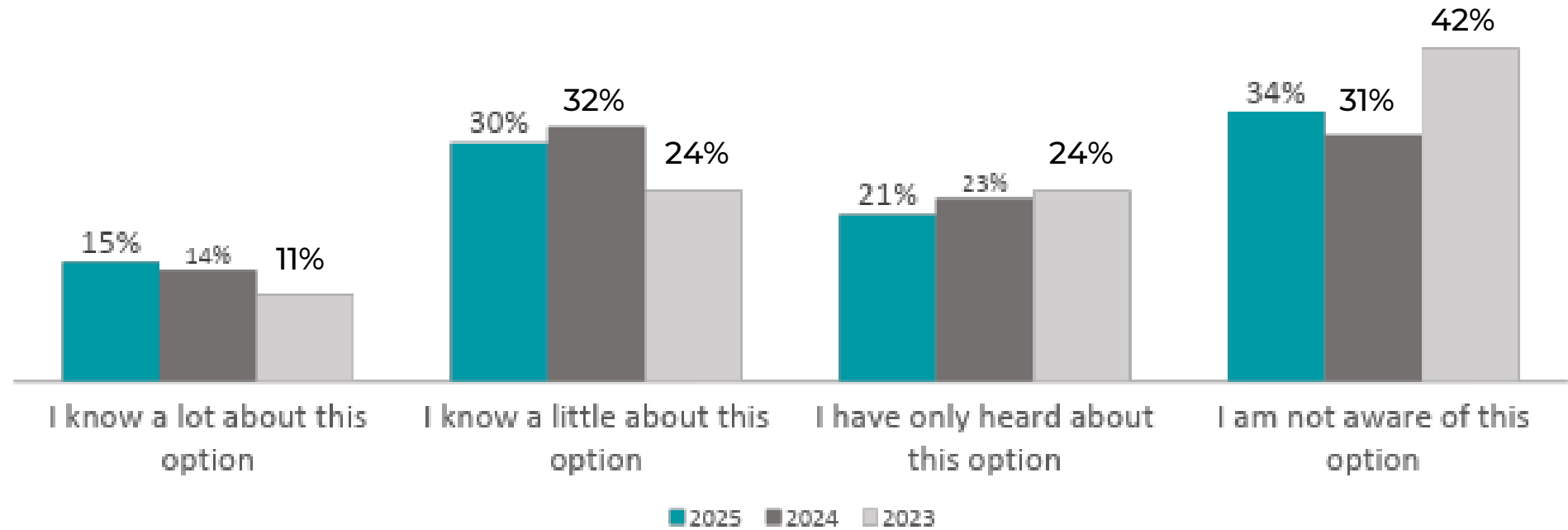


How aware are you of Career Technical Education (CTE)?

**2025: 45%** know at least a little about CTE

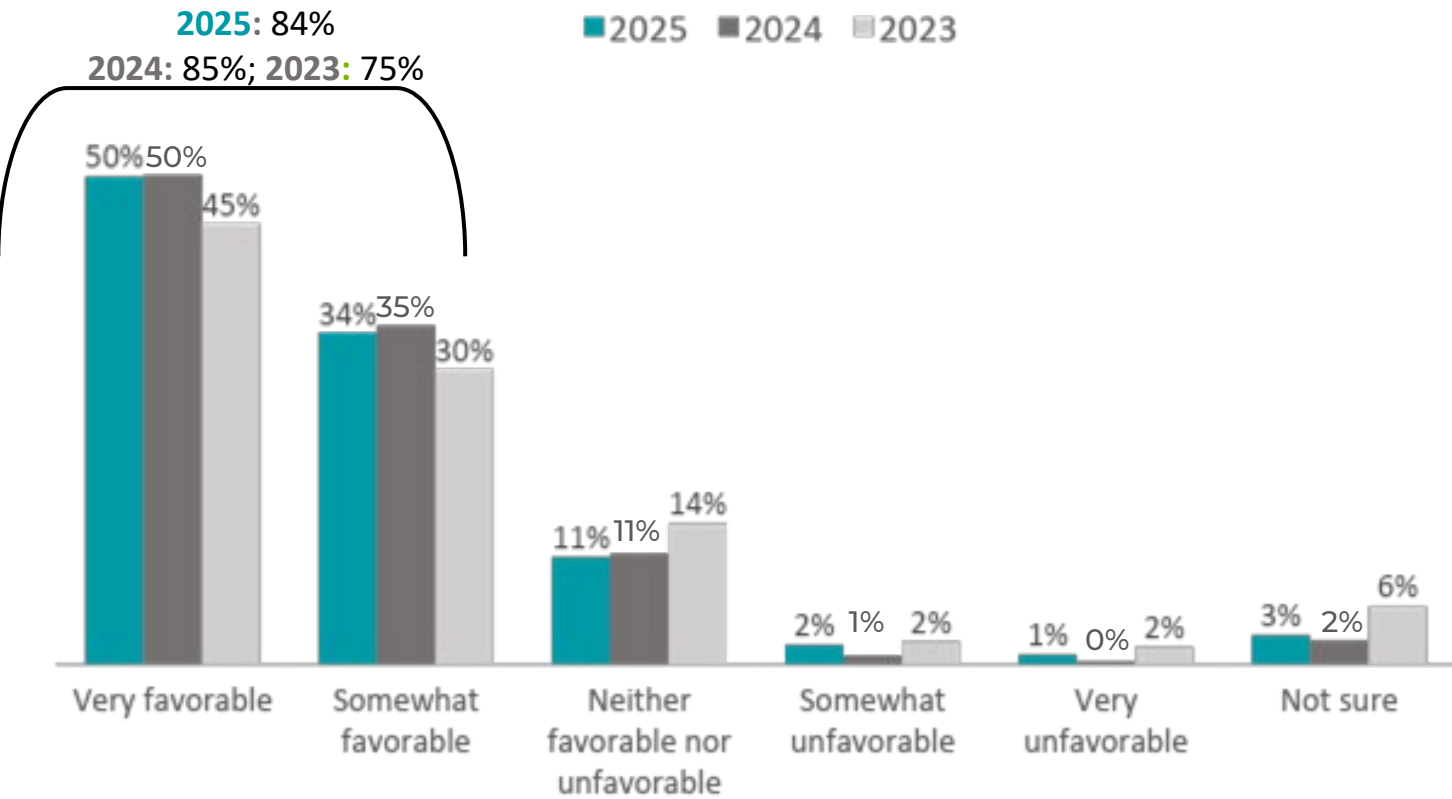
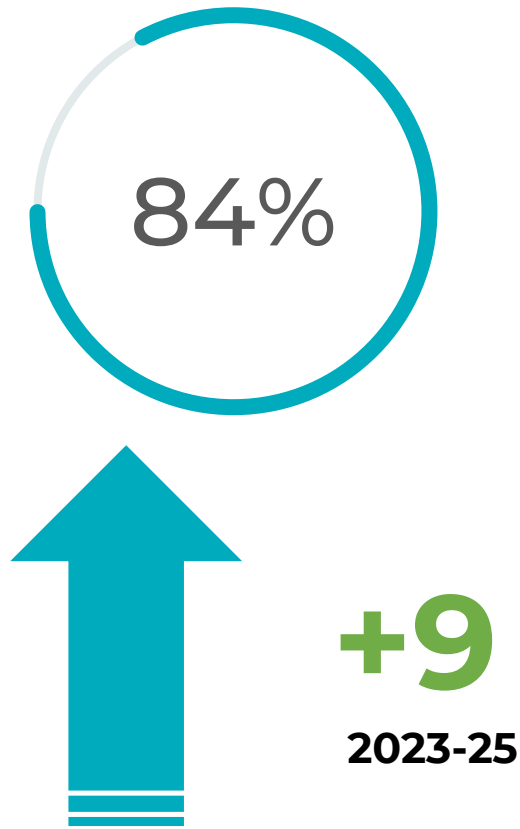
2024: 45%

2023: 35%



# Even Better News: Favorability of CTE is also growing

Based on the description, how favorable or unfavorable is your impression of Career Technical Education?



# CTE Remains a High Priority, Growing Interest

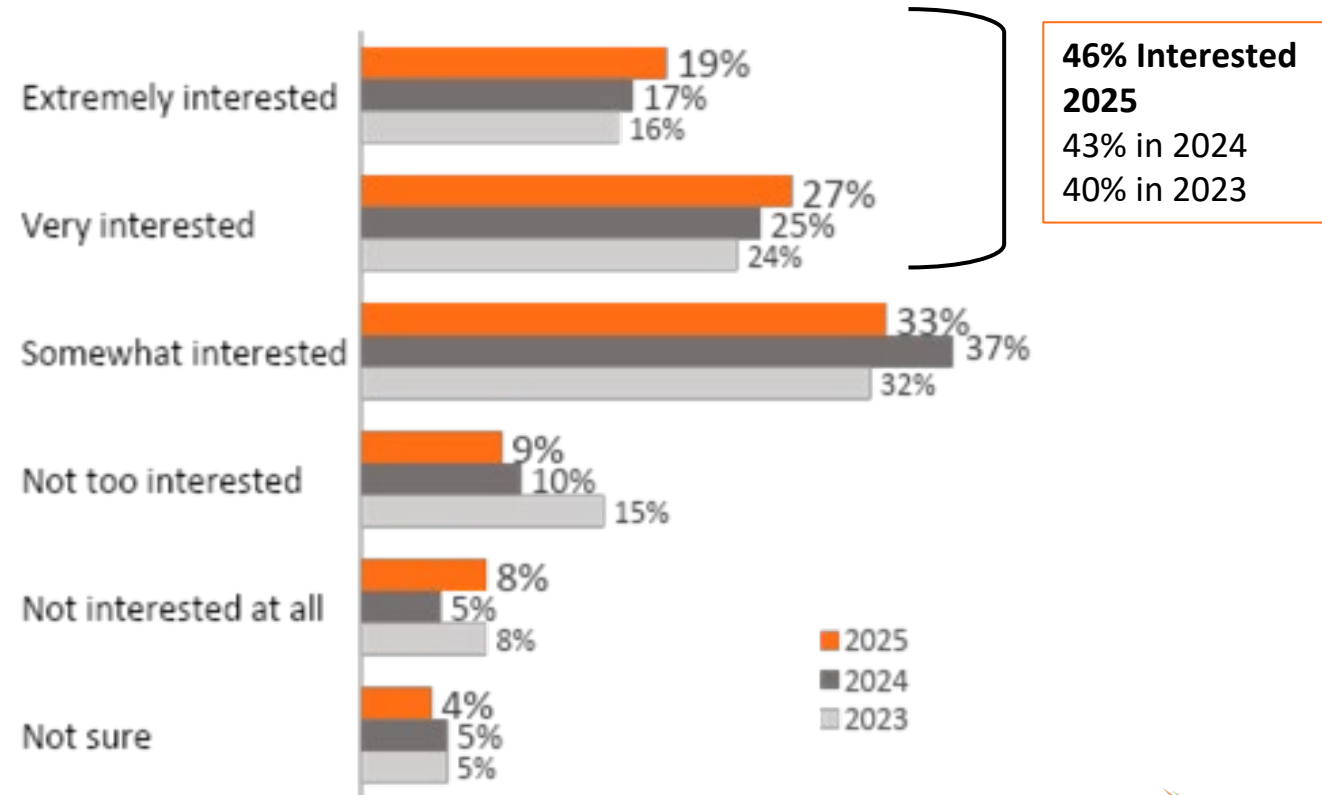
How important are each of the following to you when it comes to your student's education?

*Among Current MS and HS Parents (n=123)*

| Phrase  | Ranked #1-3 |
|---|-------------|
| Classes that focus on gaining skills in a specific field        | 35%         |
| Classes that allow you to explore different careers of interest | 35%         |
| Comprehensive advising that meets each students needs           | 31%         |
| Participating in sports   | 31%         |
| Earning college credits while in high school                    | 29%         |
| Participating in clubs/extracurriculars                         | 25%         |
| AP, IB, or other advanced classes                               | 24%         |

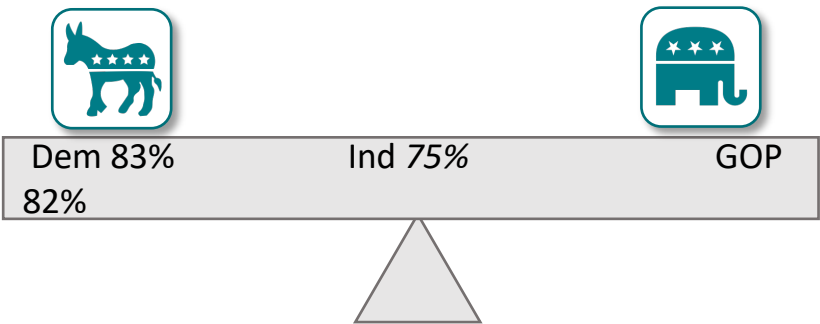
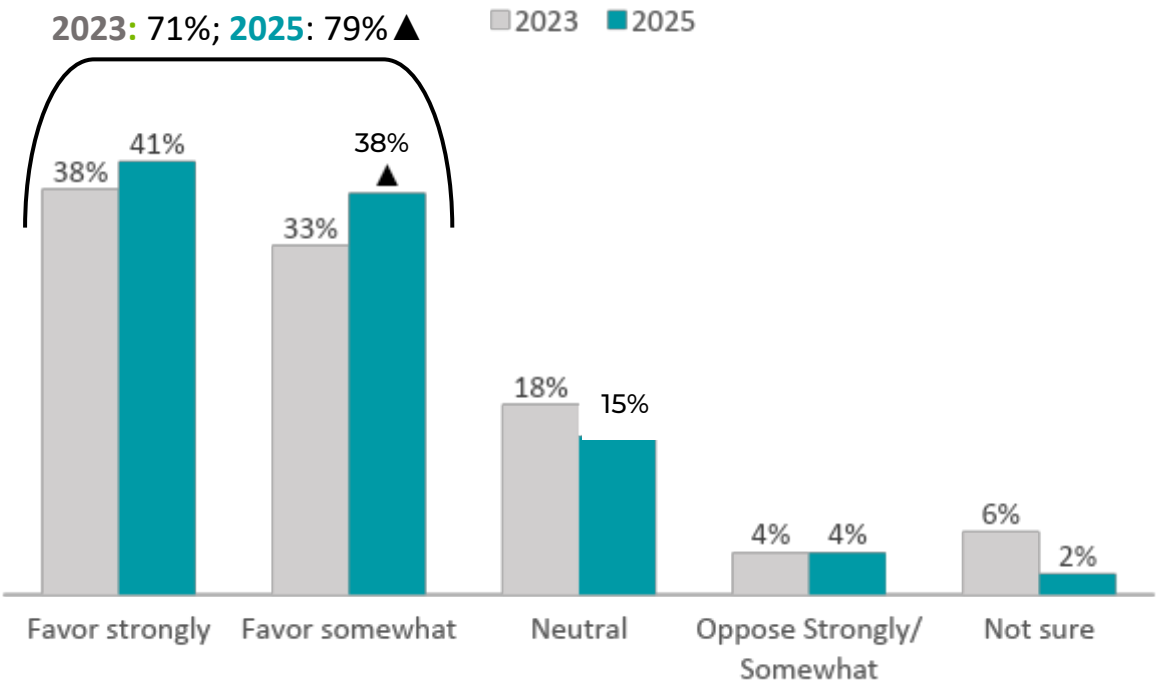
How interested are you in a CTE program for your student?

*Parents of Students w/o CTE (n=204)*



# Funding More CTE is Highly Bipartisan

Do you favor or oppose additional public funding for CTE?





# Large Majorities Agree We Need More CTE

**84% agree**

Investing in more CTE has  
a positive impact on  
**public education**  
(46% strongly agree)

**87% agree**

“Our country needs more  
CTE to prepare our  
students for the jobs of  
today and tomorrow”  
(53% strongly agree)

**85% agree**

“CTE will help fill demand  
for highly skilled workers”  
(49% strongly agree)

# Misconceptions Persist on Who CTE is For

Who do you think **currently** participate in CTE?

VS

Who do you think **should** participate in CTE?

| Category                                 | Currently in | Should |
|--|--------------|--------|
| High School Students                     | 58%          | 65%    |
| Want a job immediately after high school | 56%          | 65%    |
| Trade School Students                    | 44%          | 53%    |
| Community College Students               | 42%          | 49%    |
| Students who want to earn a trade        | 34%          | 45%    |
| 4-year college students                  | 12%          | 17%    |
| College-bound students                   | 9%           | 17%    |
| High-achieving students                  | 10%          | 15%    |
| Middle School Students                   | 10%          | 13%    |

## 'Should' Variances

Gen Z: 16%, 22%

Millennials: 24%, 19%

# Motivations & Message Testing

- Gain skills and experience that lead to financial security and independence
- Get hands-on learning in the classroom and workplace
- Build skills and connections for your career and for continuing your education
- Explore careers, discover what's right for you
- Gain life skills that employers' value
- Be prepared for the real world
- Create personalized education for career you want
- Find your career passion
- Get an education with lasting value
- Have a meaningful career that makes your community a better place

**Question:** Select the one statement that is the MOST and LEAST motivating a reason to participate in CTE

**Method: Max Diff Analysis**

Messages Chosen based on 2020 messaging research, state cohort message development and testing

# Top Motivations

**Gain skills and experience that lead to financial security and independence**

**Get hands-on learning in the classroom and workplace**

**Build skills and connections for your career and for continuing your education**

# Toplines



CTE has **limited but growing awareness**, and strong support from those familiar with it.



There is **bipartisan support** for increasing CTE funding, and **widespread recognition** of its societal impacts



**Gen Z's generational skepticism** extends to the value of Career Technical Education



Messaging to families should emphasize **financial independence, hands-on learning, and building real-world skills**



CTE is still seen as only for '**some students**', but there are signs of improvement among younger adults.



Key components of CTE are a **top priority** for parents, yet don't translate to strong interest.

# CONTACT US

## GET IN TOUCH:

<https://careertech.org/>

[swhitehouse@careertech.org](mailto:swhitehouse@careertech.org)



Recent Advance CTE  
Releases