



CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

**TOM TORLAKSON**  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

September 23, 2015

Dear California Career Technical Student Organization Boards of Directors:

**CAREER TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP ADVISORY NOTICE**

The Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are recognized by the California Department of Education (CDE) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), *The California State Plan for Career Technical Education*, and *The Career Technical Education Frameworks for California Public Schools*.

As described by the DOE, the term “career and technical student organization” is defined as “an organization for individuals enrolled in a career and technical education program that engages in career and technical education activities as an integral part of the instructional program.”

*The California State Plan for Career Technical Education* states the following about CTSOs:

Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO): A primary vehicle for offering support and personalization, as well as leadership development opportunities, is through the extensive and deeply rooted system of national CTSOs, already mentioned as structures that facilitate curriculum integration and career exploration. CTSOs are available to both secondary and postsecondary students, and currently exist in California in the five traditional CTE career areas listed below; a CTSO does not yet exist for students in the Arts, Media, and Entertainment area, as this is a relatively new career area.

- Agriculture Education: Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- Business and Marketing Education: DECA<sup>1</sup> An Association of Marketing Students and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)
- Health and Human Services: Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)<sup>2</sup>
- Home Economics Careers and Technology (HECT): FHA-HERO
- Industrial and Technology Education: SkillsUSA

CTSOs provide students in Career Technical Education programs with carefully structured leadership development opportunities, career skills, opportunities to participate in

<sup>1</sup> Since the publication date of the California State Plan for Career Technical Education referenced above, the following CTSO titles have been updated including:  
DECA – Emerging Leaders and Entrepreneurs

<sup>2</sup> HOSA – Future Health Professionals

competitive career-related events, and community service opportunities. They also offer connections with peers, alumni, and adults who can serve as mentors, counselors, and conduits to prospective employers.

*The Career Technical Education Frameworks for California Public Schools* defines a CTSO as:

Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO): A preprofessional organization for individuals enrolled in a CTE program that engages in career and technical education activities as an integral part of the instructional program. CTSOs develop leadership skills, provide competitive career development activities, enhance academic skills, promote career choices, and contribute to employability. Activities are an integral part of the instructional program. Examples of CTSOs include DECA, FBLA, FFA, FHA-HERO, HOSA, and SkillsUSA.

It is the expectation of the CDE that membership within the associated CTSO chapters meet the above definitions for a California recognized CTSO.

Current California CTSO chapters with members who do not meet the above enrollment expectation have the opportunity to transition to and enroll in a career technical education program.

Effective the date of this notice, all of the following shall meet the enrollment expectation:

- Any new chapters associating with or affiliating with a California CTSO
- Any future applicant for a California CTSO State Officer position

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Steven Pinning, Administrator I, Career Technical Education Instructional Support Office, at 916-322-5050 or by e-mail at [Spinning@cde.ca.gov](mailto:Spinning@cde.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Russell Weikle, Director  
Career and College Transition Division

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**CAREER TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP ADVISORY NOTICE**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

As we move forward with the CTE enrollment criteria, we wanted to provide you with a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and help provide you with some overall direction. Please know that we are committed to keeping you apprised of the latest information and we will be here to help you along the way.

- 1) Q. When will the CTE enrollment requirement take effect?**
  - A. The beginning of the 2016-17 school year. The 2015-16 school year will be used as a transition year for schools. Please note that student enrollment in a CTE class as a requirement for participation in a CTSO has always been a Federal and State guideline, however it had not been enforced.
- 2) My students are not currently enrolled in a CTE class, does this mean that my students cannot participate in a CTSO this year?**
  - A. No, remember that 2015-16 is a transition year, your students may still participate this year.
- 3) What is considered a CTE class?**
  - A. A CTE class includes coursework that is aligned to the Anchor and Career Pathway standards of the California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards. The California State Plan for Career Technical Education specifically states the criteria for CTE: curriculum is explicitly designed to prepare students for employment, whether after postsecondary education or training or directly after high school; over 50 percent of the curriculum content is career knowledge and skills; and curriculum is directly informed and validated by industry.
- 4) I am an advisor that holds the proper CTE credential or a Single Subject Credential, and I teach CTE classes, what do I have to do to meet the CTE enrollment requirement?**
  - A. Students that are enrolled in your CTE classes already meet the enrollment requirement, there is nothing more for you to do and your students meet the CTE enrollment requirement.
- 5) I am an advisor that holds the proper CTE credential or a Single Subject Credential, and I teach CTE classes, but I have students in my CTSO chapter who are not enrolled in my class?**
  - A. You have options to think about. First, your students who are not enrolled in your class this year may continue to participate through the end of the 2015-16 school year. Next year beginning with the start of the school year in 2016, your students in your chapter, must either 1) be enrolled in your CTE class, 2) be enrolled in another CTE class at your school site that is properly aligned to the related area of instruction, or 3) previously been enrolled in a CTE class related to the CTSO area of instruction.
- 6) Since my classes are for juniors and seniors only, I have recruited freshmen and sophomores to be part of the CTSO to get them excited about the CTSO, and so that they will take CTE classes in their junior and senior year. What do I do now?**
  - A. You may still include freshman and sophomores in your local school CTSO activities. However, beginning with the 2016-17 school year, all students who participate in leadership, regional, district, state and international conferences must be in enrolled in or previously enrolled in a related CTE class.
- 7) What if my students were previously enrolled in my CTE class last year, but are not in my class this year?**
  - A. They are eligible to participate.

**8) What if I do not hold the proper CTE or Single Subject Credential?**

- A. We are trusting the district and school to assign appropriately qualified instructors to their CTE classes. We defer to the district teaching assignment.

**9) My school says that clubs must be open to all students to promote equal access?**

- A. CTSOs are not clubs, CTSOs are co-curricular Career Technical Student Organizations through which classroom instruction is tied directly to CTSO activities. Therefore, participation in CTSOs is limited to those who are enrolled in a CTE class associated with the CTSO instructional areas.

**10) What is the field doing to push back on the CTE enrollment requirement?**

- A. It is important to understand that the California Department of Education (CDE) holds the Charters that are issued by the national Career Technical Student Organizations which authorizes the CTSOs to operate in the State of California. As the Charter Holder, the California Department of Education maintains oversight of the CTSOs in the State of California and as such CDE has the responsibility to ensure that the CTSO programs, are operated in accordance with the Federal and State requirements, U.S. Code › Title 20 › Chapter 44 › § 2302, (6) Career and technical student organization (A) In general: The term "career and technical student organization" means an organization for individuals enrolled in a career and technical education program that engages in career and technical education activities as an integral part of the instructional program. Although separate from the CDE, the role of the California CTSO Board of Directors is to ensure the correct operation of California CTSOs including its programmatic content. The California CTSOs Boards of Directors are working closely with the California Department of Education to find workable solutions and options to fulfill the CTE enrollment requirement. Please understand that this is a requirement documented by Federal and State government and it is not an option, nor is it negotiable.

**11) Who can we appeal to at the California Department of Education?**

- A. Due to the CTE requirement being documented by Federal and State guidelines, U.S. Code › Title 20 › Chapter 44 › § 2302, (6) Career and technical student organization (A) In general: The term "career and technical student organization" means an organization for individuals enrolled in a career and technical education program that engages in career and technical education activities as an integral part of the instructional program, there is no appeal process. However, if you have additional questions that have not been answered in this document, please direct your inquiries to:

Cindy Beck, HOSA State Advisor at [cbeck@cde.ca.gov](mailto:cbeck@cde.ca.gov) or (916) 319-0470

Dr. Lloyd McCabe, FFA State Advisor at [lmccabe@cde.ca.gov](mailto:lmccabe@cde.ca.gov) or (916) 319-0673

Michelle McIntosh, DECA State Advisor at [mmcintosh@cde.ca.gov](mailto:mmcintosh@cde.ca.gov) or (916) 319-0675

Clay Mitchell, SkillsUSA State Advisory at [cmitchel@cde.ca.gov](mailto:cmitchel@cde.ca.gov) or (916) 445-5568

Gary Page, FBLA State Advisor at [gpage@cde.ca.gov](mailto:gpage@cde.ca.gov) or (916) 319-0499

Melissa Webb, FCCLA FHA-HERO State Advisor at [mwebb@cde.ca.gov](mailto:mwebb@cde.ca.gov) or (916) 319-0773