

2024 State Officer Candidates' School

WRITING EXERCISE

Instructions: Candidates will have 60 minutes to complete a writing exercise which places them in a situation they may encounter as a state officer. Possible writing assignments include (but are not limited to) a blog post, magazine article, written testimony relating to the National FFA Delegate process, etc. The exercise will also require candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the particular topic and how it relates to all themes (agriculture, FFA, and American education).

Value of Hands-On Career and Technical Education in an Increasingly Virtual World

Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students with the opportunity to develop critical skills through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on learning experiences, and equips students with the tools necessary to be successful in the workforce.

CONTEXT

There is no one-size-fits-all postsecondary path for every high school student, so it's critical that they're prepared for whatever path they take after graduation - whether they continue their education, enter the workforce, or join the military.

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the labor market has caused significant anxiety for graduating high schoolers, college students, and their families. According to labor market analytics company Burning Glass, [entry-level college hiring fell 45 percent since the start of the pandemic](#), adding to existing concerns about higher education's return on investment. Is a college degree really worth the cost if there's no guarantee of a well-paying job after graduation?

College graduates continue to out-earn their peers who earned a high school diploma, but there's a growing recognition that all students need to be better prepared for the workforce. With labor shortages in many high-skill, high-wage industries, post-college success depends more on the skills you've developed than the school you attended or the major you pursued.

Today, more than ever, employers want to hire entry-level employees who can hit the ground running. This is where career and technical education (CTE) comes in. CTE students enter the workforce already equipped with practical, hands-on training and skills. CTE prepares students for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies in a real-world, applied context.

WRITING EXERCISE

Scenario and Instructions

As a State Officer, you've been presented with the opportunity to write a guest blog post for the Career and Technical Education Association of New Jersey (CTEANJ). They've asked you to write a piece that will explain the importance of hands-on CTE education and its role in preparing students for career success, even in a changing work environment. They've also asked you to incorporate your personal experience with CTE to the best of your ability. In your post, be sure to hit the following points:

1. What is CTE, and why is it beneficial for students?
2. Why is the hands-on education provided by CTE an important component?
3. What has your experience with CTE been like? What skills do you feel you've gained and how have you personally benefited?

If needed, you can adopt the title of "New Jersey State FFA Officer" for description purposes. You will have thirty minutes to complete this exercise. No outside materials or resources are to be provided or utilized. Once thirty minutes has expired, you must submit your article regardless of completion status.

RESOURCES

- Flynn, E. (2021, February 19). What is Career and Technical Education, and why does it matter? Education Northwest. Retrieved May 17, 2022, from <https://educationnorthwest.org/news/what-career-and-technical-education-and-why-does-it-matter>
- What is CTE? ACTE. (2022, March 28). Retrieved May 17, 2022, from <https://www.acteonline.org/why-cte/what-is-cte/>