

## Why Districts Should Consider Technology Applications Credit

**Background:** The passing of HB3 by the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature removed the state graduation requirement for Technology Applications (Tech Apps). As a result, students are no longer required by the state to take Tech Apps to graduate from high school. While school districts must continue to offer the Tech Apps courses, students are no longer required to earn the credit.

**Recommendation:** School districts should consider adopting a local policy to require Tech Apps for graduation for the following reasons.

- **State Funding** - Districts will be able to draw additional funding from the state for students enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) courses that satisfy Tech Apps credit. The state provides weighted funding of 1.35 to districts for students enrolled in CTE courses.
- **Local Control** - By removing the state requirement, districts were granted more flexibility in determining how to best equip students with technical skill attainment in high school. Requiring the credit locally ensures weighted funding and that students are taught proper use of technology and prepares them to take industry-recognized certification exams. By requiring local credit, districts can determine which courses satisfy this credit. Credit by examination is an option for awarding credit.
- **The Myth About Computer Savvy Students** - While most students have access to a computer, surf the Internet, instant message, or tweet, there is little evidence to suggest they have skills necessary to succeed in college and the workplace without being trained in the proper use of computers, data analysis and reporting in a work setting. Students can receive college credit in most computer related courses by earning an 80 or above.
- **College and Career Readiness** - Texas Career and College Readiness standards define cross-disciplinary skills needed for success in college and beyond. These include basic computer skills including knowledge of operating systems, use of software, information management, data analysis, reporting and communication. Such analytical and technical skills are not readily accessible in traditional academic courses.
- **Designing Tech Apps Into Pathways** - Districts can design graduation pathways tailored to student interest using coherent sequences of courses to earn state required graduation and elective credits. These programs of study may incorporate Tech Apps to ensure technical skill competencies and prerequisites students need to succeed in more advanced courses. The State Board of Education recently approved a new slate of 195 rigorous and relevant courses in CTE. Districts have the opportunity to design pathways that combine even a single course in basic computer skills that will offer students the career and college skills they need to be successful.

CTE offers academic and technical skill instruction in every school district in Texas. Funded by the state and the Carl D. Perkins Act, CTE programs improve student performance and lead to college credit, industry-recognized credentials and leadership opportunities through student organizations.

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The Career and Technology Association of Texas (CTAT) is unified with the national Association for Career and Technical Education. CTAT is a 501(c)6 professional membership organization promoting quality instructional partnerships in career and technical education that prepare students for the rigors of college, the workplace and active citizenship.