

Newsletter

CTE Month is here! “Level Up with CTE: Skills that Pay Off”

Dawn Ulmer, Strategic Projects Manager

Let's Level Up—Together

North Dakota's CTE programs are empowering students by building confidence, developing technical and employability skills, and preparing for successful futures. February 2026 is our chance to tell that story—and share the opportunities.

Visit our site for some fun resources! <https://www.cte.nd.gov/ctemonth>

It's Game Time and the rules are simple.

Print – Post – Tag- Repeat:

1) Print the “Level Up With CTE” graphic [“Level Up With CTE” Print Out](#)

- Enlarge it if you would like to
- Use the logo to customize it for your needs

2) Use the “Level Up with CTE” Print Out as a prop to snap pictures and capture the moments with:

- Students
- Industry/Business Partners
- Fellow educators
- Administrators
- School board members
- State representatives
- Community Leaders
- Classrooms
- Projects
- New equipment being used
- Every photo captures the impact of CTE across North Dakota.

3) Share photos on your social media sites, tag NDCTE, and use our hashtag #CTEMonth2026 so we can amplify your celebrations:

Tag: Our Facebook @NorthDakotaCTE or Instagram @ND_CTE_2026

The CTE Month Playbook:

- Game on! The [CTE Month calendar](#) is your guide to weekly themes and photo ideas that keep the excitement going.
- Get everyone involved!

Level Up Your Online Presence:

Game On, CTE Champions!

Power up your Zoom and Teams meetings with the official [CTE Month Virtual Background](#) and add the [CTE Month logo to your email signature](#).

We'll be making surprise appearances in meetings throughout February to see who's Leveling Up their digital space — so don't wait until the last minute!

Turn every screen and every email into a CTE Month celebration. - Why? Because CTE Month should be visible everywhere — in every meeting, every email, and every conversation.

We invite every secondary school in the state to join the celebration, share CTE stories, and help students **Level Up with CTE: Skills That Pay Off**.

Let's make CTE Month 2026 a statewide celebration of skills, success, and opportunity!



Dates of Interest

February 2026
CTE Month

February 9-10, 2026
DECA Collegiate State Conference

February 22-23, 2026
FBLA Collegiate State Conference

March 1-3, 2026
DECA State Conference

March 8-10, 2026
TSA State Conference

March 29-31, 2026
FBLA State Conference

April 12-14, 2026
FCCLA State Conference

April 19-21, 2026
SkillsUSA State Conference

Inside This Issue

CTE Month.....	1
Houston We Have a Solution.....	2
Unlocking Student Potential.....	3
From Classroom to Career.....	4
NDACTE Updates.....	5
Expanding Career Awareness.....	7
CTSO Student Perspective.....	8
Professional Learning Opportunities.....	8
Summer Opportunities.....	9
Director's Column.....	10
Assistant Director's Corner.....	11

Houston, We Have a Solution (Inside our Classrooms):

-Brad Hoffarth, Technology & Engineering Education & Information Technology Education Supervisor

Does your school have a "SHOP" class?

We still hear it today—"my shop teacher," "my shop class." It's a label we are working hard to evolve because today's educators in these rooms are **Technology and Engineering Educators**. So, what exactly does Technology and Engineering Education do?

The "Square Peg" Problem

Have you seen the 1995 movie *Apollo 13*? It tells the true story of astronauts stranded in space after their spacecraft was damaged. One of the most famous scenes involves a life-threatening crisis: the CO₂ filters. The astronauts had square filters on the command module, but they needed to fit them into the round housing of the lunar module.

Back on Earth, a team of engineers was assembled to solve the problem using *only* the equipment the astronauts had on board. They had to brainstorm, prototype, and test a solution in real-time.



Engineering vs. Traditional Science

Students in Technology and Engineering classrooms are challenged to do exactly what those engineers did: solve complex problems under strict constraints.

While many science classes use "controlled labs"—where students follow exact steps to reach a predetermined outcome—Technology and Engineering is different. In these classrooms:

- **The Problem is the Priority:** Students are given a challenge and must determine their own path to the solution.
- **Multiple Paths to Success:** Often, the instructor has one solution in mind, but students discover a completely different (and sometimes better) way to solve it.
- **Theory in Action:** Students take the theories they learn in math and science and apply them to physical, real-world hurdles.



From MacGyver to the Gateway Arch

Whether it's the "MacGyver" approach—using duct tape and ingenuity to fix a crisis—or grand-scale architecture, engineering is everywhere.

Last summer, I attended the ITEEA Conference in St. Louis and visited the Gateway Arch. It is a perfect example of a massive engineering challenge. Imagine building two legs 630 feet apart and 630 feet tall, with the requirement that they meet **perfectly** at the top so a final

piece can slide into place. Add to that a unique elevator system to carry visitors to the peak, and you have an incredible feat of human problem-solving.

Step into the Lab

So, the next time you walk by the "SHOP," I encourage you to step inside. You might be amazed at what the students are building, testing, and creating. If you have a problem that feels impossible to solve, come talk to us—we might just be able to "MacGyver" it for you.



Unlocking Student Potential: Connecting Today's Learning to Tomorrow's Dreams

-Laura Glasser, Career Resource Manager

We all know that a little inspiration can go a long way in the classroom. When students see the direct connection between their hard work and their future career goals, their motivation soars. That is why we are thrilled to announce a powerful new update to **RUReady.ND.gov** designed to inspire and empower North Dakota students!



Better Together: A Collaborative Update

This enhancement is a true team effort for our students. While North Dakota Career and Technical Education (NDCTE) provides the RUReady platform statewide, the Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) funded the addition of Lexile® (reading) and Quantile® (math) data. To bring it all together, our platform vendor, XAP, partnered with MetaMetrics® to integrate these insights directly into the tools students already use. See the [January 2026 RUReady.ND.gov Key Enhancements](#) more details.

Mapping the Path to Career Goals

This is about making the data we already have work harder for our students. By using their **ND A-PLUS** assessment results, students can now explore how their current reading and math skills align with the typical requirements of over **600 careers**.

- **Inspiring Growth:** Students can compare their current scores to the typical levels needed for their "dream job." This transparency helps them see exactly what they are aiming for and encourages them to take the next step in their learning journey.
- **A Clearer Vision:** With the **Growth Planner** tool, students can visualize their projected progress through 12th grade. It turns a standard test score into a personalized roadmap, showing them that their career goals are within reach with the right focus and effort.
- **Empowering "Choice-Ready" Graduates:** By making instruction more relevant to real-world pathways, we are helping students connect their classroom efforts today to their professional aspirations tomorrow.

A Bright Future for North Dakota

When students understand that mastering a math concept or a reading skill is a stepping stone to becoming a nurse, an engineer, or a skilled tradesperson, they are more engaged and driven to succeed.

We invite you to help your students dive into these new features at **RUReady.ND.gov**. Let's work together to inspire our students to dream big and give them the tools to achieve those goals!

Learn More: Register for the Virtual Workshop

Want to see these tools in action? Join us for a virtual workshop where MetaMetrics and XAP will demonstrate how to leverage these new integrations in RUReady.ND.gov.

- **When:** February 9, 2026 – 11:00 am to Noon CT
- **Register Here:** https://xap.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_iVvQ9OTvQOCRDKHEECdysw

If you have any questions related to RUReady.ND.gov, contact:

- Laura Glasser, Career Resource Manager at NDCTE
- Email: leglasser@nd.gov or Phone: 701-328-9733

From Classroom to Career: Experiential Learning Made Easy

-Laura Glasser, Career Resource Manager

Junior Achievement Programs: 1-hour Virtual Workshop

Students learn best by doing, and we feel like experiential learning doesn't have to be complicated.

This workshop highlights hands-on, life skill, career-connected programs that bring real-world relevance into the classroom while remaining easy to implement. Educators will explore ready-to-use experiential learning opportunities that align with CTE pathways, have dedicated support from prep to implementation, and deliver meaningful outcomes for students. Walk away with practical tools and ideas you can put into action right away!

Workshop Details

Join us for a one-hour virtual workshop led by the staff at **Junior Achievement – North** to learn about resources available from Junior Achievement that complement and expand your existing resources.

Learning Objectives

During this session, participants will:

- Explore experiential learning programs offered by Junior Achievement
- Learn how these programs align with CTE pathways and career readiness goals
- Understand how to easily implement hands-on, career-connected activities with built-in support
- Identify practical tools and resources that can be immediately applied in the classroom

Date, Time & Registration

- **February 5, 2026**
- **11:00 am to Noon CT**
- [Register Here](#)

Can't attend the live virtual workshop? This workshop will be recorded and posted on the [CTE website](#) for future viewing.



NDACTE Updates

-Carla Hixson, NDACTE Director

NDACTE Awards are Open for Nominations

North Dakota ACTE is conducting a statewide search for excellence in CTE to highlight outstanding educators as part of our annual awards program during the ND CTE PDC. We are seeking nominations from all divisions, positions and content areas this spring 2026 for the following awards:

- North Dakota ACTE Teacher of the Year
- North Dakota ACTE Postsecondary Professional of the Year
- North Dakota ACTE New Teacher of the Year
- North Dakota ACTE Teacher Educator of the Year
- North Dakota ACTE Administrator of the Year
- North Dakota ACTE Counseling and Career Development Professional Award
- North Dakota ACTE Carl D. Perkins Community Service Award
- North Dakota ACTE Lifetime Achievement Award
- Agriculture Education New Teacher of the Year
- Business Education New Teacher of the Year
- Career Development New Teacher of the Year
- Family and Consumer Science New Teacher of the Year
- Health Sciences New Teacher of the Year
- Marketing New Teacher of the Year
- Special Populations New Teacher of the Year
- Technology and Engineering Education New Teacher of the Year
- Trade and Industry New Teacher of the Year

Learn more about the nomination guidelines and how to submit a nomination for the awards above online here: [North Dakota - ACTE Awards](#). Award recipients will then be judged and North Dakota ACTE award winners will have their nominations forwarded on to be considered for the ACTE Region V Awards.

Innovative Program Award

This award recognizes innovative career and technical education programs from each Region V state that are unique, novel, and are serving to improve and promote the image of career and technical education.

PURPOSE To recognize innovative career and technical education programs from each Region V state that are unique, novel, and are serving to improve and promote the image of career and technical education.

CRITERIA

- The program must demonstrate a capacity to prepare graduates to perform successfully in an occupational field.
- The program should exemplify the highest standards within its occupational field.
- Staff must be involved in an in-service program to keep abreast of technological changes in their occupational field.
- The program must have been in operation for at least three years.
- The instructor(s) in the program must have been a member of NDACTE for at least three consecutive years.

ELIGIBILITY

Any career and technical education program that meets the criteria listed above.

Go to www.NDACTE.com for Innovative Career and Technical Education Program Nomination Form. Under Awards.



Deserving candidates for these awards have demonstrated their commitment to CTE through their innovation, accomplishments, and contributions to the CTE community. We are accepting nominations until **May 1, 2025**. If you have any questions, please contact North Dakota's Awards Committee Chair, Ashley Michael at Ashley.Michael@k12.nd.us or Carla Hixson NDACTE@outlook.com

NDACTE Updates

-Carla Hixson, NDACTE Director

North Dakota ACTE - Award Winner Spotlight - Mark Wagner Lifetime Achievement Award

- **How long have you been teaching in CTE?** Total years with teaching and administration is 43 years
- **Can you talk a bit about a program / initiative that you are most proud of?** CTE program visions visit process.
- **Why did you join NDACTE?** I joined NDACTE as I thought it was my professional obligation, but it turned out to be so much more. An organization to connect with a community of passionate educators who are committed to advancing Career and Technical Education in North Dakota. Being part of NDACTE allows me to collaborate, share ideas, and stay informed about best practices, legislative updates, and professional development opportunities. It's a peer group that helps you develop personally and professionally.
- **What advice do you have for new CTE teachers or NDACTE members?** Get involved and lean into this professional community. Don't be afraid to ask questions, seek mentorship, and share your experiences. CTE is all about real-world learning, and that starts with building strong relationships—with students, industry partners, and fellow educators. Stay curious, be adaptable, and remember that your work is shaping the future. NDACTE offers incredible resources and connections to your advantage!
- **Anything else you would like to add?** Thanks NDACTE for all your work to make CTE a success!



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CTE PROFESSIONALS:

ACTE's National Policy Seminar: Celebrating 100 Years of CTE Advocacy

March 22-25 - National Policy Summit, Crystal Gateway Marriott Arlington, Virginia [NPS 2026 - ACTE Online](#)
Join career and technical education (CTE) professionals from across the nation at ACTE's National Policy Seminar (NPS), March 22–25, in Arlington, Virginia. Together, we'll shape the future of CTE, advocate for strong programs and celebrate a century of CTE advocacy.

Secure your spot and take advantage of early bird rates when you register by Feb. 18. [Learn more](#)

April 29-May 1, 2026 - ACET's Work Based Learning Conference, Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, Rhode Island [ACTE's Work-based Learning Conference - ACTE Online](#) - February 13 – Early bird rates end



ACTE Region V Conference

April 8–11, 2026 in Salt Lake City, Utah

In Utah, we don't shy away from the climb — we embrace it. CTE educators lead the way, taking bold steps to try new tools, strategies, and technologies in the classroom. Like scaling a new peak, there's risk and uncertainty — but also growth. Each challenge met, each lesson learned, helps our students climb higher toward success in the real world. Utah ACTE is thrilled to welcome you to the **ACTE Region V Conference**.

Location: [Little American Hotel](#), Salt Lake City, Utah

[Region V Early Bird Registration Rates \(through Feb. 15\)](#)

Member: \$450 and Nonmember: \$500

North Dakota ACTE - Online Learning Center

NDACTE provides CTE professionals with continuing education opportunities. Whether you are looking for engaging professional development or a more convenient way to obtain continuing education credits and advance your career, CTE Learn online learning center courses are designed for you. This online professional development tool offers over 190 self-paced courses for CTE professionals that have the potential to earn college credit. CTE Learn was created by CTE Professionals for the CTE community. CTE Learn is open to all ND CTE professionals and the CTE Learn's suite of free professional development resources are available to all NDACTE members with no charge.

To learn more about CTE Learn go to North Dakota ACTE - Online Learning Center. <https://nd.ctelearn.org/>

Expanding Career Awareness Through Immersive Field Trips

-Laura Glasser, Career Resource Manager

We are pleased to share an exciting statewide opportunity to support career awareness for students across North Dakota. Building on the state's commitment to innovative education and workforce readiness, every K-12 student in North Dakota now has access to immersive field trips through the **CareerViewXR** platform.

These experiences bring real workplaces directly into the classroom, helping students explore a wide range of career possibilities before making critical academic and career decisions. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Levi Bachmeier and Wayne Sick, Director of the Department of Career & Technical Education, both recognize the importance of supporting every student in understanding the vast opportunities that exist within and beyond North Dakota.

"One of our greatest responsibilities is helping students see what's possible for their future," Bachmeier said. "Tools like CareerViewXR remove barriers to exploration and ensure every student, regardless of location, can access meaningful career experiences. These early connections help students build purpose in their learning and make more informed decisions about their pathways."

Sick explained that the platform expands students' horizons by allowing them to step inside the state's diverse workplaces without leaving their desks. "By experiencing these environments firsthand, students can more confidently connect their learning to their future career goals," Sick said. "I encourage you to explore the new resources available in CVXR."

Support & Resources

To support implementation, the following resources are available to all North Dakota educators:

- **Access:** Simple instructions for accessing the platform through **RUReady.ND.gov** are provided below.
- **Curriculum:** A collection of [ready-made lesson plans and classroom activities](#) is available from CareerViewXR.
- **Professional Development:** A free [professional development course](#) on how to use the platform is available.
- **Direct Support:** The CareerViewXR team is happy to assist you and your peers should you have any [questions or concerns](#).

CareerViewXR at a Glance

- **100+ field trips** showcasing a variety of careers and industries.
- Includes content filmed with **real companies located in North Dakota**.
- **Accessible on any device:** laptops, tablets, smartphones, smartboards, & VR headsets.
- **Remote Friendly:** The web platform can be used from anywhere at any time.
- **Integration:** Fully integrated with RUReady.ND.gov for ease of access.
- **Hardware:** All middle and high schools were [donated a VR headset from CareerViewXR](#) in 2024.

How to Access CVXR Now

Middle school and high school students can currently access CareerViewXR through NDCTE's existing [RUReady.ND.gov](#) education & career planning platform. They simply log into their RUReady account and visit the Career Planning page to access CareerViewXR. Select interactive, web-based CareerViewXR field trips are also embedded directly into RUReady career listings to be viewed alongside the platform's typical content like average salary, education level, similar careers, and more. An elementary-specific hub is currently under development for the RUReady platform, stay tuned for more details.

Activity & Lesson Plan Inspiration

New tools are great, but how do you put them to use in the classroom? A collection of example lesson plans and activities designed to support career-connected learning with CareerViewXR has been compiled in CareerViewXR's [Educator Center](#). This library includes examples developed by the CareerViewXR team as well as submissions from educators like you. Jump in to get inspiration on how to implement in your classroom [here](#).

If you have any questions related to RUReady.ND.gov, contact:

- Laura Glasser, Career Resource Manager at NDCTE
- Email: leglasser@nd.gov or Phone: 701-328-9733



CTSO Student Perspective

FFA has been where I truly found my family. I never could have imagined the number of meaningful and lasting connections I would make. Through FFA, I've learned invaluable skills such as leadership, determination, and the value of hard work. The experiences I've had and the relationships I've built through FFA and my agricultural education classes will stay with me for a lifetime. I genuinely can't imagine what my life would look like without them.

Cole was a member of the Rugby FFA Chapter for 5 years and is currently serving as the ND FFA State President. Cole will be attending North Dakota State University in the fall majoring in Mechanical Engineering.



Cole Anderson

Professional Learning Opportunities: Minicourses Now Available!

-MBA Research

Work at your own pace: Explore MBA Research's resources through flexible, asynchronous [professional learning](#) designed to support your own growth and help you work towards potential CEU credit. Designed for busy educators, these **minicourses** allow you to master key concepts through interactive knowledge checks and practical assignments.

Earn a digital badge for every milestone and a certificate of completion upon finishing a collection—perfect for your own schedule!

Collections currently available:

- **Ethics Education Resources:** Highlights ethics resources developed by MBA Research
- **MBA Research Resources:** Explores key resources from MBA Research and how to use them in the classroom
- **New Teacher (Or New to Us):** *Coming Soon!*
- **The MBA Learning Center:** *Coming Soon!*

Ready to start? Register with your name and email address to gain access and begin learning on your own schedule!

We've got you: If you're looking for easy-to-follow steps for using the MBA Learning Center, State's Connection, or our website resources, we have set up simple "how-to" guides available on our [website](#)

Helping Students Find Summer Opportunities with Compass

-Laura Glasser, Career Resource Manager

As you know, summer is a great time for students to gain valuable hands-on work experience that may help them make decisions about their future. From summer jobs to job shadows, they can use these opportunities to learn more about careers, employers, important job skills, and what they enjoy.

Here are some tips for students using Compass in RUReadyND to find summer opportunities:

1. **Update their profiles for the most accurate matches.** Encourage students to take a few minutes to add recent classes and activities, complete their personality assessment, and review their Holland Codes.
2. **View work-based learning (WBL) offerings.** Go to Opportunities > Work-Based Learning, click on the button to view the list of WBL, and then select View All. Students can filter by a variety of categories, such as Type, Industry, Location, or Matches. It's also a great time to browse Career Profiles and see where those WBLs can lead.
3. **Apply for opportunities.** Students can click on an opportunity for more information and then select Apply. They should regularly check their email and Compass following an application to stay informed.
4. **Contact employers directly.** Sometimes an employer is open to summer opportunities, but they don't have it listed in Compass yet. Encourage students to go to Opportunities > Employers and then filter by Connection Options. They can select everything from Summer Job to Job Shadow or Internship. They can also view the employer profiles to find contact information and call or email them.
5. **Reach out to employers on behalf of your students.** If your school offers summer WBL and you are still seeking more opportunities, we've created a flyer to help. Send a quick email to a few employers your school enjoys working with, include a [link to this flyer](#), and encourage them to add summer opportunities for your students to Compass.

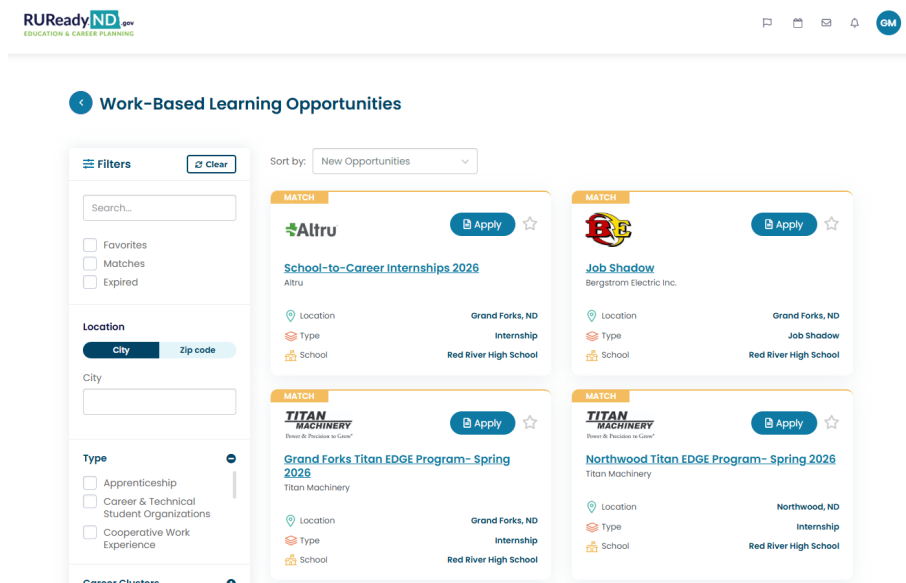
Golden Path's monthly employer email for February will feature best practices for offering summer experiences for students.

As a reminder, school professionals in North Dakota access Compass through the [RUReady.ND.gov Professional Center](#). If you need assistance accessing or creating a professional account, contact Laura Glasser, career resource manager at NDCTE, at leglasser@nd.gov. You can also reach [Golden Path Solutions](#) at info@goldenpath.net.

Sidebar option:

Quick Tip!

Before asking students to update their Compass profile or Four-Year Rolling Plan for the new semester, be sure to update your class list. From the [Professional Center](#), go to Compass Console > My Class Lists and make any necessary changes, including adding classes, deactivating classes, changing names, etc.



State Director's Column

-Wayde Sick, Director, North Dakota Career and Technical Education



2025 Consolidated Annual Report Approved by State Board for Career and Technical Education

The North Dakota State Board for Career and Technical Education has officially approved the **2025 Consolidated Annual Report (CAR)**, covering the program year July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. This report highlights the impact of federal Perkins V funding on Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across the state.

Key Highlights from the Report:

- **Strong Graduation Rates:** Secondary CTE concentrators achieved a graduation rate of **97.94%**, surpassing the target of 97.44%.
- **Work-Based Learning Success:** **62.9%** of CTE concentrators participated in work-based learning experiences, exceeding the target by more than 22%.
- **Science Proficiency Gains:** Academic proficiency in science reached **62.99%**, outperforming the target by nearly 5%.
- **Non-traditional Program Participation:** Secondary non-traditional enrollment rose to **34.47%**, above the target of 31.8%.
- **Postsecondary Achievements:** Nontraditional program concentration at the postsecondary level reached **18.04%**, exceeding the goal of 16.1%.

While notable progress was made, the report also identifies areas for improvement, including reading/language arts and mathematics proficiency at the secondary level and credential attainment at the post-secondary level.

Perkins Consortiums that did not meet Performance Measures will be notified and will be asked to provide the Department with corrective action.

The Board remains committed to advancing high-quality CTE programs that prepare students for success in both education and the workforce.

To review the full report, please visit [ConsolidatedAnnualReport2025.pdf](#).

Please contact me wasick@nd.gov if you have any questions.

Wayde Sick
State CTE Director

Leadership Starts Here: CTSOs and Student Voice in ND CTE

Career and Technical Education has always been about more than technical skill development. At its core, CTE prepares students to lead — in the classroom, in the workplace, and in their communities. One of the most powerful ways we do this in North Dakota is through Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs).

CTSOs are not extracurricular add-ons. They are an extension of high-quality CTE programs and a critical component of leadership development. Through CTSO participation, students practice communication, teamwork, professionalism, and decision-making in authentic, career-aligned settings.

Each spring, CTSO leadership opportunities come to life across the state. From March through June, students step into roles that mirror real-world expectations. DECA high school students gather March 1–3 in Bismarck, applying marketing and business concepts in competitive, problem-based environments. TSA students follow March 8–10 in Bismarck, demonstrating innovation, collaboration, and technical design skills.

Later in March, HOSA students convene March 22–24 in Grand Forks, where future health professionals showcase both technical competence and professionalism. Leadership opportunities continue with FBLA (March 29–31 in Bismarck), FCCLA (April 12–14 in Bismarck), and SkillsUSA (April 19–21 in Wahpeton). Each event challenges students to lead, adapt, and represent their programs with confidence.

The season ends with the FFA State Convention, June 1–4 in Fargo, bringing together leadership, service, and career preparation in a way that reflects North Dakota's strong agricultural and workforce roots.

These experiences are about more than competition. Students are running meetings, serving as officers, managing projects, and presenting to industry professionals. Often, they discover their leadership potential because of their engagement within their CTSO.

As we continue strengthening career pathways statewide, intentional support of CTSOs remains an investment in student leadership, workforce readiness, and the future of North Dakota.

As these CTSO events take place across North Dakota this spring, they also present an open invitation to our industry and school partners. These conferences offer a firsthand look at how students are applying technical skills, practicing leadership, and preparing for the expectations of the workforce.

We encourage business, industry, postsecondary, and community partners to attend, volunteer, judge events, or simply observe the incredible work happening in their local communities. There is no better way to understand the impact of CTE than by watching students lead, collaborate, and perform in real-world settings.

These moments matter — for students, for employers, and for the future of North Dakota's workforce.

John

