

Department of Education
Susan Castillo
Superintendent of Public Instruction



Bureau of Labor and Industries
Brad Avakian
Labor & Industries Commissioner

Press Release

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21 Schools Win 21st Century Job Education Grants

First awards from new grant fund to impact 21 schools from Eugene to Enterprise

PORTLAND- Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian and State Schools Superintendent Susan Castillo today announced the first recipients of grant awards to re-establish hands-on learning and job skills training programs in Oregon middle and high schools. Eight grant awards will benefit 21 schools that will launch or expand vocational education programs featuring skills training and career exploration in a variety of fields, including agricultural science, industrial automation, marketing, engineering, building and construction trades and visual art design.

“Access to 21st Century shop classes is the key to 21st Century economic competitiveness,” Avakian said. “Every sector of our economy benefits from young workers with hands-on experience and job skills, and that is shown in the wide range of industries that stepped forward to offer community support and matching funds for these opportunities to connect Oregon’s future workforce with their interests and talents at a younger age.”

[Last year](#), the Oregon legislature dedicated \$2 million to revitalizing career and technical education programs in Oregon schools, building opportunities for students to access high-wage, high-demand jobs much earlier in their careers.

“These grants provide an invaluable opportunity for students to explore possible future careers through high-quality, hands-on career and technical education,” Castillo said. “These programs play a critical role in connecting classroom learning with real-world application and will help our schools graduate students ready to compete and succeed in the 21st Century workplace.”

The breadth and depth of support for the revitalization of hands-on learning and job skills training in public schools is great in communities around Oregon: forty-three proposals were eligible for grant awards, totaling more than \$11 million in requests for support. Just the eight grants awarded leverage a total of \$796,993 in matching funds from the community and business partners.

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“These grants are a crucial investment in our schools and our economy,” said Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), a leading advocate for applied learning and career education. “Kids in CTE programs graduate at much higher rates than their peers, and they are more successful in college and in the workplace. This is an investment that will pay off for our communities and for our employers.”

The Bureau of Labor and Industries and Oregon Department of Education jointly administer the Career and Technical Education Revitalization Grant Fund to support restoration and expansion of high-quality career and technical education options to all Oregon middle and high schools. When the legislature convenes in 2013, advocates will be asking for a larger investment in the grant fund to energize programs in even more schools around the state, with an ultimate goal of ensuring all Oregon students have access to high-quality hands-on learning options.

“This first step is huge, and we’re looking forward to taking many more,” said Dave Baker, Training Director at the Central Electrical Training Center in Tangent and a community partner in the Linn County Regional Trades Academy program that is being funded. “Every student should have the opportunity to gain job skills and explore career options before they graduate.”

A summary of the grant proposals that are being funded in this inaugural award cycle is available at www.oregon.gov/BOLI/docs/CTE_Grant_Recipients.pdf.

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