



Career and Technical Education

# CTE DIRECTIONS

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) News and Information

May 2024

**Career and Technical Education provides all students access to high-quality, rigorous career-focused programs that result in attainment of credentials with labor market value.**

### **Blake Nielsen: Utah May 2024 CTE Teacher of the Month**

We are pleased to announce that Blake Nielsen, Manufacturing and Production teacher in Nebo School District at Spanish Fork High School and the Advanced Learning Center, has been selected as the May 2024 CTE Teacher of the Month. “Blake is such a forward thinking teacher. He has a great understanding of what skills are needed in the woodworking and manufacturing world and how to teach those skills in a classroom,” said Colton Williams, Education Specialist, Utah State Board of Education.



**BACKGROUND:** Blake taught in Provo School District and is currently teaching in Nebo School District at Spanish Fork High School and at the Advanced Learning Center. Throughout his career, Blake has taught construction, woodworking, mechanical and architectural drafting, and CNC machining.

**EDUCATION:** Blake went to school at Snow College and then transferred to Southern Utah University where he earned a degree in Technology and Engineering Education.

**TEACHER:** Blake teaches woodworking and drafting and provides a learning environment where students can learn and grow. The detailed instruction and encouragement Blake gives to his students is a testament to his success as a teacher.

**CLASSROOM:** Blake holds students to a high standard and works to ensure each student can safely and effectively use all the equipment in the shop. Safety is a high priority and Blake continually gives safety training and reminders to his students. Blake enjoys teaching and helping students build projects that they are proud of, while watching them advance their skills.

**STUDENT SUCCESS:** Many of Blake’s students have gone to work in industries that use CNC machines because of what they learned in his classes. Blake has set the stage for his students to be prepared and successful in the manufacturing industry. His students are able to adapt to new technologies and processes in this everchanging world.

## National Teacher Appreciation Day/Week: #ThankATeacher

Tuesday, May 7, 2024 is National Teacher Appreciation Day and May 6-10 is Teacher Appreciation Week. Utah CTE gives a big THANK YOU to the teachers throughout Utah for their commitment to the success of each student.

### Jaida: Future Engineer

“In 7th grade I was 100 percent confident that I would go into cooking and would be a professional chef, until I took College and Career Awareness (CCA). In CCA we had three different categories that we studied, one of which was engineering. CCA inspired me to enter the engineering field and continue to take CTE classes. The teacher who taught this class greatly influenced my decision. Mr. Lanham taught my CCA class and later taught my manufacturing class in 9th grade. He was genuinely interested in what everybody was doing and wanted to help where he could. He never discouraged me from going into engineering just because I was a girl. In fact, he encouraged me. It was very refreshing.

He was confident in my abilities, and he helped me learn different skills in manufacturing and in programming. He was definitely the most influential teacher I had throughout my public education. Later I had many other teachers and instructors who made my passion for engineering grow.”



Created by Wilson Joseph  
from Noun Project

**Advice to Students:** Utah high school seniors were asked, “What advice would you offer to future students about taking CTE courses during high school?”

### Jeremiah: Future Teacher

“I am so thankful for the opportunities the CTE classes offered me in high school. The classes were so valuable because they helped me find my passion and help me choose a career. I am going to college with a clear plan.

“The advice I would offer to future CTE students is simply to embrace the CTE experience. First, I would tell students to not only pick classes they are interested in, but to also pick classes that they don’t know if they’re interested in.



Photo by Jacob Lund from Noun Project

Second, I would tell students to not be afraid of challenging themselves. Through challenges you discover new skills, you have new experiences, and you learn something about yourself. Third, I would tell students to connect with other students in class. I created lifelong friendships with other students who are equally passionate about the subject matter. Finally, I would tell students to build relationships with teachers and staff. They are experts in their field, and they are passionate about what they are teaching. They want to share their passion and they want their students to succeed.”

**This newsletter will not be published in June, July, and August. In September this newsletter will return highlighting resources to assist you in promoting your CTE programs. Have a great summer! Stay safe. Stay healthy.**

### Calendar:

May 2: [Utah State Board of Education Meeting](#) – 250 East 500 South – Salt Lake City, UT

May 9: [Utah State Charter School Board Meeting](#) – 250 East 500 South – Salt Lake City, UT

[Utah CTE Calendar](#) | [ACTE Calendar](#)

Utah CTE classes are open to all qualified students without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.