In anticipation of Future of CTE Summit, the eight co-convening organizations partnered on a survey on the Summit participants' understanding, perspectives and opinions on Career Technical Education (CTE). We found some both commonalities and as well as significant differences of opinions on various topics. Below is a summary of the top-line findings, based on responses from 77 participants.
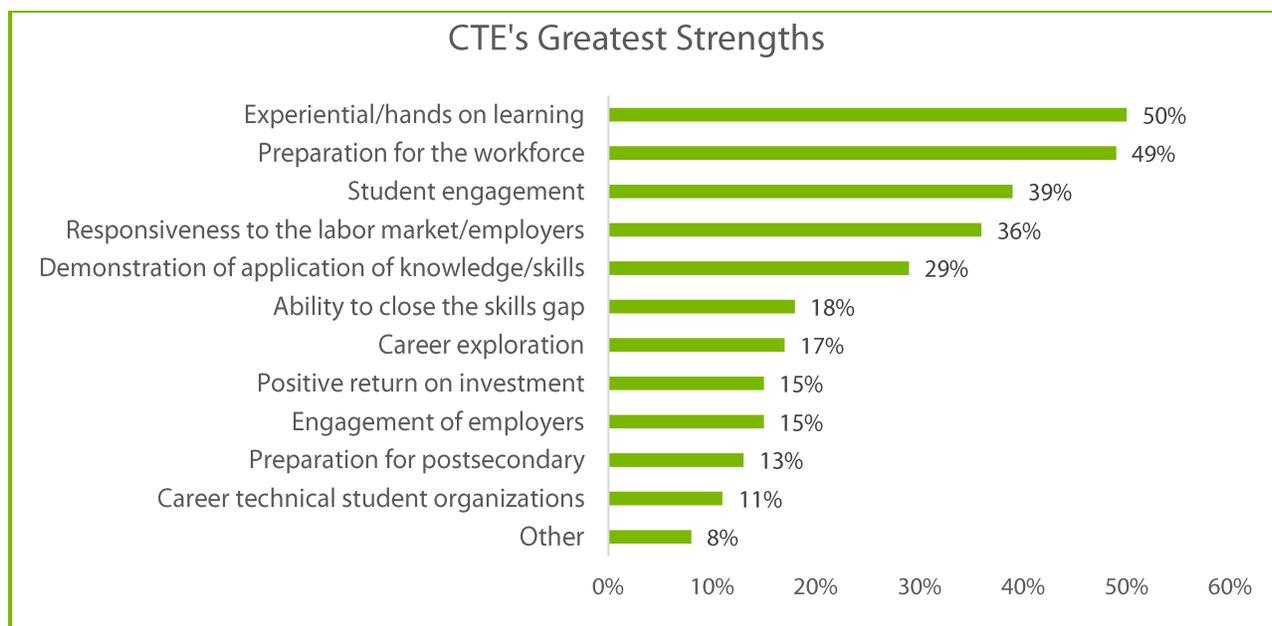
Finding 1: There was significant consistency in how participants describe CTE

Among the 11 choices provided, three were clear "winners." Overwhelmingly, the majority defined CTE in fairly literal terms as a program of study, or sequence of academic and technical courses leading to a degree or credential. The next two most popular descriptions also were very practical – career preparation and workforce development.

What Three Terms Best Describe CTE			
Sequence of technical/academic courses lead to degree/credential	73%	STEM	11%
Career preparation	68%	Vocational education	7%
Workforce development	50%	High school electives	6%
Postsecondary technical training	29%	Other	3%
Career exploration	29%	Any postsecondary education	3%
Contextualized academics	19%	Dropout prevention	1%

Finding 2: Participants diverge on the different strengths and values in CTE
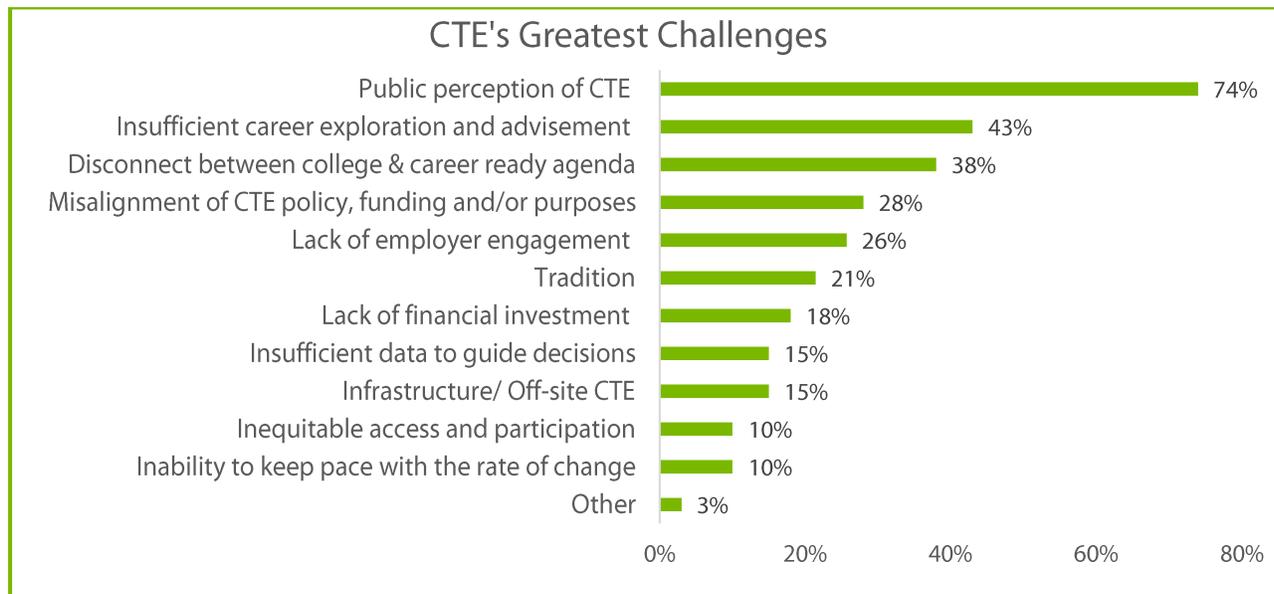
Among the 11 options provided on CTE's greatest strengths, no answer was selected by more than half the participants, demonstrating a wide view of what CTE has to offer. The strengths do trend towards positive experiences and outcomes for students.

CTE's Greatest Strengths

Strength	Percentage
Experiential/hands on learning	50%
Preparation for the workforce	49%
Student engagement	39%
Responsiveness to the labor market/employers	36%
Demonstration of application of knowledge/skills	29%
Ability to close the skills gap	18%
Career exploration	17%
Positive return on investment	15%
Engagement of employers	15%
Preparation for postsecondary	13%
Career technical student organizations	11%
Other	8%

Finding 3: There was overwhelming agreement that CTE has a perception challenge
Three-quarters of participants identified the public perception among policymakers, parents and students as one the greatest challenges facing CTE. Generally, most of the more commonly-selected answers were externally-focused – perception, policy disconnect, misalignment of systems – although insufficient exploration and advisement and lack of employer engagement are identified challenges that exist within the CTE system.
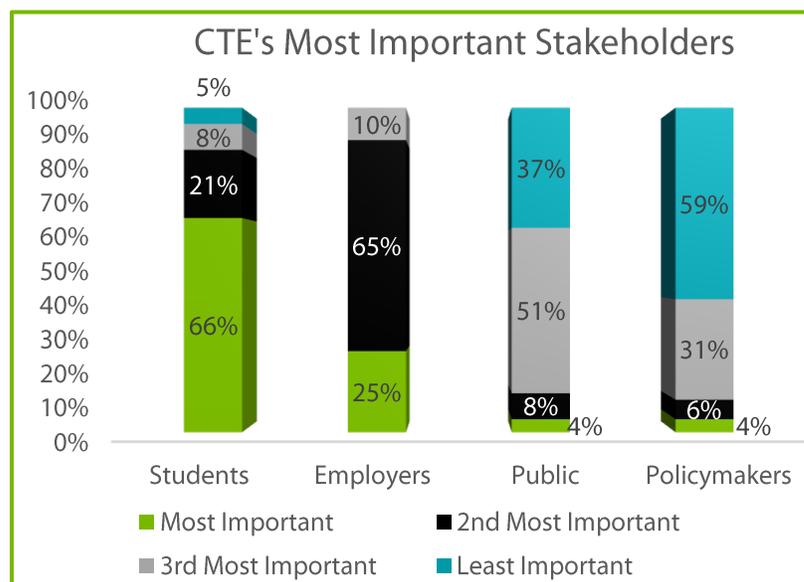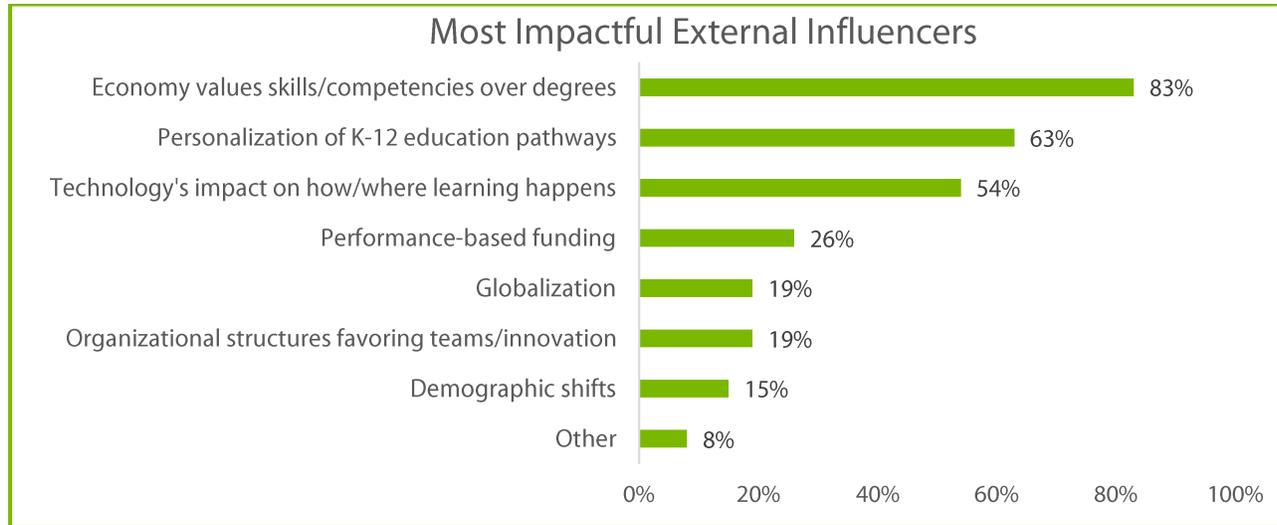
CTE's Greatest Challenges

Challenge	Percent
Public perception of CTE	74%
Insufficient career exploration and advisement	43%
Disconnect between college & career ready agenda	38%
Misalignment of CTE policy, funding and/or purposes	28%
Lack of employer engagement	26%
Tradition	21%
Lack of financial investment	18%
Insufficient data to guide decisions	15%
Infrastructure/ Off-site CTE	15%
Inequitable access and participation	10%
Inability to keep pace with the rate of change	10%
Other	3%

Finding 4: Participants agree that students and employers are CTE's two most important stakeholders
Over 90 percent of participants identified students or employers are the most important stakeholder CTE, and only 4 percent believed either stakeholder was the least important.
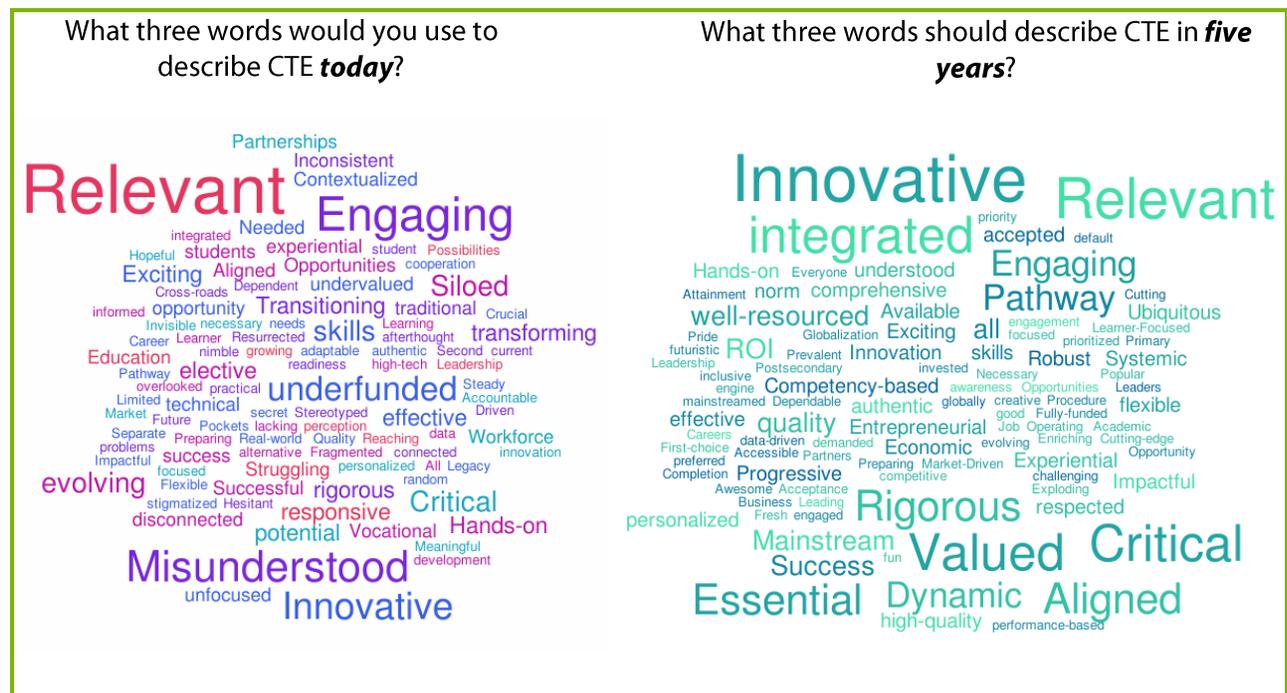
Finding 5: Participants agree that the demands of a skills-based economy can and will have the greatest influence on CTE's future
The transition to a focus on skills and competencies – both on the job and in the classroom – is the most impactful influencer identified by participants. Some other unique responses for external trends/influencers included the 'continued dissatisfaction with the debt burden on a general education pathway' and 'growing business awareness of the value/need for CTE.'

CTE's Most Important Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Most Important	2nd Most Important	3rd Most Important	Least Important
Students	66%	21%	8%	5%
Employers	25%	65%	10%	—
Public	4%	8%	51%	37%
Policymakers	4%	6%	31%	59%

Most Impactful External Influencers

Influencer	Percentage
Economy values skills/competencies over degrees	83%
Personalization of K-12 education pathways	63%
Technology's impact on how/where learning happens	54%
Performance-based funding	26%
Globalization	19%
Organizational structures favoring teams/innovation	19%
Demographic shifts	15%
Other	8%

Finding 6: CTE is relevant but evolving today – and integrated and valued in the future

What three words would you use to describe CTE *today*?

What three words should describe CTE in *five years*?

About the Survey Participants

Of the 77 survey participants who responded:

- Thirty-eight percent work for a state agency/government, 21 percent at an education reform/advocacy organization and 18 percent represent business and/or workforce.

- Sixty percent have the most experience at the secondary level, 26 percent at the postsecondary level and nine percent in adult education or workforce development.

- Eighty-four percent self-identify as "expert" or right below compared to only five percent of respondents who self-identify as "novice" or just above