

Career and Technical Education Student Opinion Survey Project

Survey, Research and Analysis Report Conducted By:

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Introduction:

The privilege of serving the great State of Maine as a Student Representative on the Maine State Board of Education was an opportunity in which I will never forget. In April of 2012 I was appointed by Governor Paul R. LePage to serve a two-year term as a Student Representative on the Maine State Board of Education and represent the Second Congressional District of Maine. My time on the Board was the most remarkable and rewarding experience of my life. I had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the functions of our State's legislative and executive branches, our system of democracy at work, and the honor of being a positive voice while representing all the students of Maine. I took every opportunity I could to expose myself to all forms of education in Maine to ensure I was representing all student voices in Maine. I attended numerous workshops, conferences, meetings, and professional development engagements as well as took on personal research to better fulfill my duties on the Board. It was a true honor and an absolute privilege to represent the students of Maine and serve our great State. The following report is a result of one of my personal research endeavors; I hope this research will help benefit not only the students of Maine, but all students across our entire Nation.

Background and Purpose:

Career and Technical Education was an avenue of education I was not greatly familiar with until working on the Maine State Board of Education. Through my experience on the Maine State Board of Education, I have gained exceptional information and insight regarding the policies and laws surrounding Career and Technical Education and have observed the tremendous impact Career and Technical Education has on our State. In December of 2012, I took it upon myself to learn more about this remarkable avenue of education to gain a greater understanding of its inside functions and responsibilities and to better represent all students of Maine. I conducted a day-long observation of Somerset Career and Technical Center and produced a report of my findings. The opportunity to observe Career and Technical Education at Somerset Career and Technical Center was an occasion in which I was able to view education in one of its greatest forms. This project allowed me to observe Career and Technical Education at one of Maine's facilities and better understand the instruction, participation, and interaction of students and leaders involved with this aspect of education on a daily basis. In just one day of observation and interaction at Somerset Career and Technical Center, I had the privilege of observing instruction, interacting with faculty and students, speaking directly with students in their respective programs, sitting in on a student leadership meeting, and facilitating a faculty meeting where I provided the opportunity for educators in this field to offer me any concerns or information they had around Career and Technical Education. One of the most pressing and most prevalent issues the center offered to me was a lack of knowledge around outside student opinion of Career and Technical Education. There was no medium or foundation of information for the facility to compare or know about what local students believed Career and Technical Education entailed or outside students' knowledge of the opportunities the facility offers to its students and the community. At the conclusion of my observation, I offered to create a survey for the facility to gain greater insight of student opinion and perspectives surrounding Career and Technical Education. I took a year and a half to conduct more research, attended conferences such as the 14th Annual Craft Championship at the Augusta Civic Center where I was able to discuss Career and Technical Education with students, instructors, college representatives, and college students while also having the pleasure of hearing Senator Angus King speak about Career and Technical Education and business. I attended Somerset Career and Technical Center's Visioning Committee Meeting that outlined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the facility, and maintained a relationship with the center. Due to my high interest and work with Career and Technical Education in Maine, the State Board of Education offered me an additional position on one of its subcommittees, the Career and Technical Education Committee, which I graciously accepted. This new position allowed me to attend monthly conference calls that offered specialized insight and knowledge surrounding pending policies, laws, initiatives and changes affecting Career and Technical Education in Maine. Combining the knowledge I obtained from serving on the Maine State Board of Education, the information I gained from my personal research, the insight I received from attending conferences and meetings, and my new experience on the Career and Technical Education Committee, I felt I was ready to produce a survey that would offer not only the facility but also the entire State greater insight on student perspectives of Career and Technical Education and serve as a model for comparative studies and analysis across our State and Nation.

Drafting, Approval Process and Implementation:

In order to produce a survey that would offer quality results and represent the largest population possible, I reserved two months for proper approval, revision, and implementation of the final survey and its supporting documents. I generated the survey questions from my personal research, themes I noted from my attendance at conferences and meetings, and aligned my questions to offer data around the concerns Somerset Career and Technical Center had voiced surrounding outside opinion. The questions I generated went through a multi-stage drafting process and with the generous revisions offered by members of the Maine State Board of Education, members of the Career and Technical Education Committee, Mr. David Dorr, who is the Director of Somerset Career and Technical Center, and many others, the final 27 question survey was ready for approval by the facilities in which I hoped would participate.

The target audience that I hoped to reach for participation was all students at each of the 5 sending schools of Somerset Career and Technical Center. I wanted to gain the largest representation possible in my data collection. By opening up the survey to all the students who would someday or already had the opportunity to apply for enrollment at Somerset Career and Technical Center, which was every student at each of the 5 sending high schools of Somerset Career and Technical Center, I knew I would be gaining the opinions and perspectives of all students, both students enrolled and outside Career and Technical Education. I attended administrative meetings that Somerset Career and Technical Center hosted to discuss my survey and my goals for the project; I met with superintendents of the sending high schools, principals of the sending high schools, and guidance directors of the sending high schools in these meetings to discuss the involvement of their respective schools in my research. Those unable to attend were sent my survey materials and the survey questions via email to ensure they were kept informed of the possibility and the opportunity to participate as well as ask me any questions or voice any concerns regarding the survey. I attended a school board meeting and a faculty meeting upon request to explain my project and my hopes for implementation. After a few weeks of meetings and discussion of my survey project, each of the 5 sending schools agreed to have their students participate in my survey; each school kindly approved and the implementation process began.

The implementation of my survey was kept to a window of approximately 2 weeks, allowing adequate time for each of the 5 high schools to participate. After each of the high schools approved, an approximately 2 week window opened for data collection. The results of this survey are based off of the participation from each of the high schools during this approximately 2 week period. Reminder emails were sent to keep the administration at each school informed of the data collection window timeline, and the survey closed at 4 pm on the final day of data collection.

Throughout the drafting, approval, and implementation process of my survey, it was important to me to maintain equal opportunity and equal understanding for all those who chose to participate in my research, including administrators, educators and students alike. In order to facilitate equal understanding among administrators and educators, I created an *Administrative Letter* that each administrator received when I explained my survey project and the possibility of implementation. This letter was able to be shared via email to

those whom I was unable to meet with directly, and it was shared with fellow administrators and educators that were involved with the approval and implementation of my work. It was important to me to make sure all leaders in this research had an equal understanding of the opportunity to participate and the expectations that came with the implementation. Explained in the *Administrative Letter* for the implementation level, I created a *Survey Proctor Prompt* to be read to every student taking my survey. I tried to remove any bias or variables that could skew the data by having every educator read this generic prompt to any student that took the survey. By reading my *Survey Proctor Prompt* to every student before he or she took the survey, every educator was telling his or her students the same information about my project; the hope was that every student had the same understanding of what he or she was being asked to do, and it tried to facilitate equal opportunity among every survey participant. The *Survey Proctor Prompt* explained to educators as well as the students who participated in the survey the purpose of the survey, how many questions it entailed, where to access the survey, and what directions the students needed to know if they chose to participate.

The following 3 pages included in this report contain the
Administrative Letter and the *Survey Proctor Prompt*.

Supporting Materials: *Administrative Letter*

March 20, 2014

Kristin Bishop
Student Representative
Maine State Board of Education
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Madison, ME 04950
bishop.kristin.k@gmail.com
207-696-8029

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Kristin Bishop and I am currently a senior at Madison Area Memorial High School. In 2012, I was appointed by Governor Paul R. LePage to serve a two-year term as Maine's second congressional district's student representative on the Maine State Board of Education. My role on the Maine State Board of Education has allowed me the privilege of learning about education not only in Maine but across our entire country through the eyes of educators, education leaders, law makers, policy makers as well as students. My term has truly been the most rewarding experience of my life. I have taken every opportunity I could to learn more about education in our great State and nation to better serve the students of Maine and help positively contribute to education.

Career and Technical Education was an avenue of education I was not greatly familiar with until working on the Maine State Board of Education. Through my experience on the Maine State Board of Education, I have gained exceptional information regarding the policies and laws surrounding Career and Technical Education and have observed the tremendous impact Career and Technical Education has on our state. In December of 2012, I conducted an observation report of Somerset Career and Technical Center to better understand the instruction, participation and interaction of students and leaders involved with this aspect of education on a daily basis. I can make the report available to you at any time if it is of interest to you. I was also able to interact with students and discuss with faculty the strengths and weaknesses of the facility. In August of 2013 I joined the Career and Technical Education Committee, a subcommittee of the Maine State Board of Education, where I have been able to further my research and knowledge of Career and Technical Education in Maine. I have attended various conferences and meetings around Career and Technical Education in Maine in order to continue this pursuit of knowledge and discover partnerships between Career and Technical Education and businesses. Career and Technical Education is an avenue of education in which I am passionate.

I am writing to request the opportunity for all students at your secondary school to take an anonymous survey around Career and Technical Education. The survey consists of 27 questions, 25 multiple choice questions with comments boxes added when applicable and 2 short answer questions. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. The purpose of this survey is to gain greater insight on student perspectives around Career and Technical Education

in Maine. I have attached a hard copy of all the questions on the survey for your review. I have created all of these survey questions, and had them reviewed by the Career and Technical Education Committee, Mr. David Dorr, and other individuals familiar with the topic. With the help of Mr. Dorr, I will be using [SurveyMonkey](#) to collect, analyze, and share the responses. The link to the survey can be found on Somerset Career and Technical Center's website during the time period in which this survey will be conducted and a proctor prompt containing specific directions will be provided to you and anyone who will be helping to administer the survey. I will be in contact to see if you are interested in having your students participate in my survey. I am asking that anyone participating in the survey provide their response within 2 weeks from the official start date; I will be in contact with you and your school if you have any questions or concerns.

If you are unable to partake in the survey at this time, I completely understand. I greatly appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and consider the involvement of your school. Career and Technical Education is a remarkable avenue of education for not only Maine students but students across our entire nation. It is an honor to be able to conduct research around education in Maine and help to be a positive voice for all Maine students.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kristin Bishop
Student Representative
Maine State Board of Education

Supporting Materials: Survey Proctor Prompt

CTE OPINION SURVEY

Survey Proctor Prompt

Please read the following prompt to all students that will be taking the CTE Opinion Survey.

You are being asked to take a survey on your opinions and perspectives around Career and Technical Education in Maine. This is an anonymous survey that consists of 25 multiple choice questions and 2 short answer questions. Comment boxes are available on certain questions for you to add information if you feel necessary. The data will be used to help better understand student perspectives and opinions around Career and Technical Education in Maine. The survey should take you less than 20 minutes to complete.

Please go to the following website: <http://skowhegan.mainecte.org/> and click the words **CTE Opinion Survey**, listed in gray text as the *last item* in the list towards the middle of the page (please be sure you select the *CTE Opinion Survey*). This text will bring you directly to the survey for you to complete. Please remember to select **DONE** at the end of the survey when you are finished before closing your web browser.

Thank you for your time.

Survey Questions

The final survey questions were uploaded to SurveyMonkey, a medium that can collect and analyze survey responses. The questions that students were asked to answer in the survey are listed as they appeared on the survey in the following documents. The survey consisted of 27 total questions, 25 multiple choice questions, with comment boxes offered on certain questions when applicable, and 2 short answer questions at the end that were marked as optional. *Questions that offered comment boxes are indicated on the questions individually.*

**Please Note:* Question 7 was listed under the multiple choice section even though it only contained a comment box, as it requested only a simple, one or two word response so did not classify as a short answer question.

The following 5 pages include the survey questions that participants were asked on the actual survey; text formatting and punctuation may vary in the reproduced pages.

Final Survey Questions

Question 1: Please select the school that you attend

- Carrabec High School
- Madison Area Memorial High School
- Maine Central Institute
- Skowhegan Area High School
- Upper Kennebec Valley High School

Question 2: What grade are you in?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Fifth year / Other

Question 3: Have you ever been or are you currently enrolled in a Career and Technical Center Program like those available at the Somerset Career & Technical Center?

- Yes
- No

Question 4: Has your guidance counselor ever spoken to you about the benefits of Career and Technical Education?

- Yes
- No

Question 5: The word career and the word job are interchangeable to me.

- Yes
- No

Question 6: Are you aware of all the programs/courses offered at the Somerset Career & Technical Center?

- I am aware of all of them
- I am aware of most of them
- I am aware of some of them
- I am not aware of any of them

Question 7: What kind of programs/courses would you like to see offered at the Somerset Career & Technical Center?

[Comment Box]

Question 8: How did you hear about Career and Technical Education?

Guidance Counselor

Teacher

Friend

Family Member

I have not heard about Career & Technical Education

Other (please specify)

[Comment Box]

Question 9: I have visited Somerset Career & Technical Center as part of a trip within my school system.

True

False

Question 10: Career and Technical Education courses offered at Somerset Career & Technical Center are listed in my high school's course directory.

True

False

I don't know

Question 11: Certain courses required for graduation at my high school can be met by taking a program at Somerset Career & Technical Center.

True

False

I don't know

Question 12: Required high school courses have interfered with my ability to enroll in a program at Somerset Career & Technical Center.

True

False

I never intended/do not intend to enroll in a Career & Technical Center

Other (please specify)

[Comment Box]

Question 13: Did you know Career & Technical Education programs offer certain state and national industry recognized certifications/credentials?

- Yes, I know
- No, I did not know

Other (please specify)

[Comment Box]

Question 14: If I was going to pursue employment in a technical field, I would feel more prepared if I enrolled in a relevant technical program offered at Somerset Career & Technical Center.

- True
- False

Question 15: I think Career & Technical Education programs are for students that will not attend college.

- True
- False

Question 16: I have been informed by my high school or the Technical Center of potential employment opportunities surrounding the Career & Technical education programs offered at the Technical Center.

- Yes, I have been informed
- No, I have not been informed

Question 17: I have been informed by my high school or the Career & Technical Center of all post-secondary opportunities surrounding Career & Technical Education fields of study.

- Yes, I have been informed
- No, I have not been informed

Question 18: Are you aware that Career & technical Education programs can offer college credit?

- Yes, I am aware
- No, I am not aware

Question 19: I feel that I could gain employment in a Career and Technical Education related field in my local community.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 20: I would say my peers support students who express an interest in Career and Technical Education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

[Comment Box]

Question 21: I would say that my school community, including my guidance counselor, educators and school officials, supports and encourages students who express an interest in Career & Technical Education.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

[Comment Box]

Question 22: I would be more likely to enroll in a Career & Technical program if the Technical Center was on the same grounds as my high school.

- Yes, I would be more likely
- No, I would not be more likely
- My high school and the Technical Center are on the same grounds

Question 23: I applied for Career & Technical education program but was not accepted for enrollment.

- True
- False
- I have never applied

Question 24: I find my Career & Technical program to be more challenging than my regular high school classes.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I am not enrolled in a Career and Technical program

Question 25: My Career & Technical program is relevant to my future employment aspirations.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I am not enrolled in a Career and Technical education program

OPTIONAL:

Question 26: I feel that more students would enroll in Career & Technical education programs if.....

[Comment Box]

Question 27: Students that participate in Career & Technical education programs.....

[Comment Box]

Survey Access and Location

The Administrative Letter and Survey Proctor Prompt were essential in maintaining equal access to the survey across the 5 different facilities that administered the survey and establishing a fair location. The Administrative Letter explained that the virtual survey would be using the survey tool SurveyMonkey and explained to administrators where the link to the survey would be located. The letter also outlined the 2 week window of time that the survey would be open for response collection. The Survey Proctor Prompt explained to the proctor and the survey participants where the survey was located, how to access the survey and offered other logistics and specifics to make sure that all students who took the survey had a clear understanding of how to access the survey and what to do when they completed the survey so that their results would be submitted. The survey link was posted on Somerset Career and Technical Center's website to maintain an equal point of access for all the schools that administered the survey and establish a uniform location. The link to Somerset Career and Technical Center's website was given to proctors and survey participants in the Survey Proctor Prompt. All schools were given the Administrative Letter and Survey Proctor Prompt prior to the approximately 2 week response collection period. The collection period was open for approximately two weeks and ended in April 2014, closing in the evening on the last day.

List of Current SCTC Course Offerings

The following courses/programs are currently offered at Somerset Career and Technical Center. *Details about each course can be found on Somerset Career and Technical Center's website at the link below.

- ❖ Automotive Technology
- ❖ Cooperative Education
- ❖ Culinary Arts
- ❖ Digital Graphic Arts
- ❖ Early Childhood Education
- ❖ Electrical
- ❖ Health Care Careers
- ❖ Information Systems Technology
- ❖ Outdoor Leadership and Skills
- ❖ Residential Construction
- ❖ Welding

**Programs and program details found on Somerset Career and Technical Center's website at:
<http://skowhegan.maine.cte.org/programs/>*

Demographic Information for Survey Participants

In order to provide the most detailed analysis of the survey results possible, I collected and have included school profiles and/or school information for each of the 5 schools that had students participate in the CTE Opinion Survey. I hope that by providing this information, this analysis will offer greater detail about the educational backgrounds and educational influences of all the survey participants.

Student Populations and Participation Percentages

The following data represent the number of students who participated in the CTE Opinion Survey from each school.

Name of School	Approximate Number of Students Enrolled	Number of Survey Participants Per School	Percent of Participation By School
Carrabec High School	250	158	63.2%
Madison Area Memorial High School	300	184	61.3%
Maine Central Institute (MCI)	440	19	4.3%
Skowhegan Area High School	800	501	62.6%
Upper Kennebec Valley High School	70	35	50%

**The number of survey participants per school is based on the survey responses from the first question of the survey, which asks what school the student attends. It is possible for students to answer some questions and skip others, which occurred with the first question. 897 of the 902 survey participants answered the first question. 5 students did not identify which school they attend.*

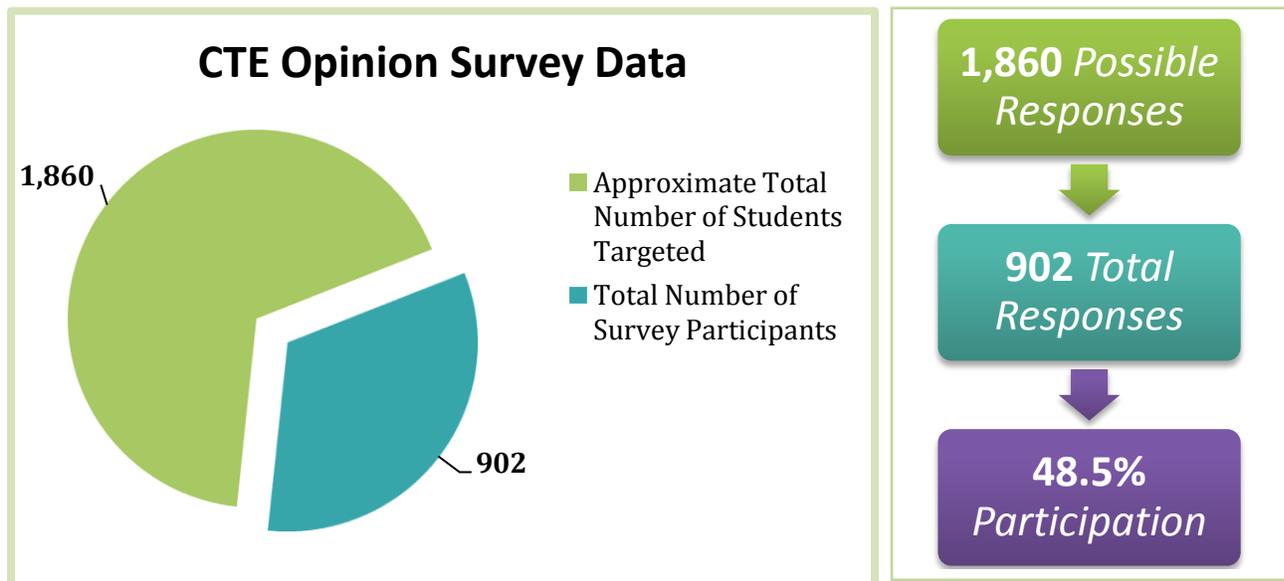
Approximate Total Number of Students Targeted:

1,860

Total Number of Survey Participants:

902

Percent Participation: 48.5%



Overall Survey Results

The following data represents the opinions of 902 students who took the CTE Opinion Survey, 48.5% of the whole student population across the 5 schools. For the most detailed analysis of the data possible, the survey responses have been broken into 2 sections. The first section provides an analysis of the responses from all 902 survey participants. The second section offers an analysis of survey responses broken down by school and then by grade level. By breaking the data down into multiple levels, I hope to offer the most detailed data possible.

Filtered Data

By School and Grade Level

In order to offer the most complete and detailed analysis possible, I have filtered the data for each of the schools individually and by grade level. By breaking the data down into multiple levels, I hope to offer each school the most relevant information possible.

Comment Boxes

Comment boxes appeared on the questions listed in the chart below; the corresponding number in the right column shows how many survey participants chose to write out an answer in the comment box provided and/or select a multiple choice answer. In the following pages, a summary of the each of the questions' raw answers can be found. The raw answers have been grouped, categorized, and summarized for the reader's convenience when possible, but the categories were created with the intention of maintaining the integrity and accuracy of the raw answers.

Question Number	Number of Comments
7	611
8	49
12	46
13	6
20	14
21	12

Question 7

Question 7, reproduced below, had 611 total responses. Question 7 had no multiple choice components, just a comment box, but was kept in the multiple choice section as it only required a one or two word answer and did not meet the same requests as a short answer question. The 611 responses that made up the raw data for this question have been grouped into 44 broader categories with the number of survey participants who provided a response connecting to one of those categories in the right column. In order to provide the most representative analysis possible, a survey response must have occurred in similar or identical form at least 3 times in order to qualify as a category. By following this rule, the data represented below better represents a popular majority. Off topic or inappropriate responses were excluded.

**Please note: Even if certain programs/courses suggested by survey respondents are currently offered at Somerset Career and Technical Center, the respondents' answers were still included to maintain the most accurate data representation possible.*

What kind of programs/courses would you like to see offered at the Somerset Career & Technical Center?

Survey Question Responses (Grouped by Category)	Approximate Number of Occurrences
General Health & Medical	29
Nursing/CNA	19
Medical Lab Services	8
Dental	4
Physical/Occupational Therapy	9
Pharmacy	3
Criminal Justice	11
Legal/Political Science	4
Engineering	28
Computers (Engineering, Programming, Gaming, Hardware Design, Software Coding, etc.)	34
Pulp and Paper	3
Plumbing	4
Electrical	8
Outdoor Resources and Skills	22
Veterinary/Animal Sciences	37
Fashion Design	4
Music, Theater, Performing Arts	17

Business, Business Management and Accounting	9
Home Economics	8
Early Childhood Teaching	17
Cosmetology	8
Forestry/Logging	15
Art (Digital Graphics)	12
Art (Not Digital)	14
Forensics	12
3	
Film Studies and Production	3
Photography	9
Athletic Studies	16
Psychology, Counseling, Philosophy	11
Agriculture/Farming	14
Science, Biology and Environment	7
Automotive/Mechanics	30
Public Service (EMT & Firefighter)	3
Military	6
Culinary	17
Welding	21
Carpentry	14
HVAC	3
Masonry	3
Cooperative	5
Education/Career Search	
Writing	6
Heavy Equipment/ Truck Driving	4

Question 8

Question 8, reproduced below, had a multiple choice component as well as a comment box. For the purpose of this section, comment box answers will only be analyzed. Question 8 had 49 total comment box responses. These responses have been grouped and counted by a general category and the number of responses that fit within each of the general categories is represented in the right column. If a student put more than one source in his or her response, both sources were counted. Off topic or inappropriate responses were excluded. Categories are organized in descending order.

How did you first hear about Career and Technical Education?

Name of Source	Approximate Number of Occurrences
School Visit/Tour of SCTC	18
School (in general)	8
Educator at Respective School	4
Sibling/Family Member	3
Poster/Brochure	2
SCTC Open House	1
Peers Enrolled at SCTC	1
Peers	1
Educator from SCTC	1
Upperclassmen	1
Guest Speaker	1

Question 12

Question 12, reproduced below, had a multiple choice component as well as a comment box. For the purpose of this section, comment box answers will only be analyzed. Question 12 had 46 total comment box responses. These responses have been grouped and counted by a general category and the number of responses that fit within each of the general categories is represented in the right column. If students put more than one class or reason in their response, all classes/reasons were counted separately. Some responses reflect issues students saw their peers face, instead of themselves, and were counted. Off topic or inappropriate responses were excluded. Categories are organized in descending order.

Required high school courses have interfered with my ability to enroll in a program at Somerset Career & Technical Center.

Conflict	Approximate Number of Occurrences
Named A Specific Class /Expressed Conflict with a Required Class	7
Too Many Other Courses/Scheduling	5
Not Old Enough to Enroll	5
AP/Honors Courses	4
Must Sacrifice Study Halls	1
Courses Needed for College	1
Told CTE Course Not Rigorous Enough Compared to Other Courses	1

Question 13

Question 13, reproduced below, had a multiple choice component as well as a comment box. For the purpose of this section, comment box answers will only be analyzed. Question 13 had 6 total comment box responses. These responses have been grouped and counted by a general category and the number of responses that fit within each of the general categories is represented in the right column. If a student expressed knowledge of certification in more than one subject area in their response, both areas were counted separately. Off topic or inappropriate responses were excluded. Categories are organized in descending order.

Did you know Career & Technical Education programs offer certain state and national industry recognized certifications/credentials?

Level of Certification Understanding	Approximate Number of Occurrences
Expressed Some Knowledge	3
Expressed Knowledge of a Specific Certification	2
Expressed No Knowledge	2

Question 20

Question 20, reproduced below, had a multiple choice component as well as a comment box. For the purpose of this section, comment box answers will only be analyzed. Question 20 had 14 total comment box responses. These responses were too broad to be grouped into general categories, so the chart below offers quotes from respondents that reflected the question asked. Off topic or inappropriate responses were excluded as well as responses that stated that the respondent did not know what to say or had nothing to say regarding the topic. To maintain the most accurate representation possible, the responses below were reproduced as close to the raw data as possible with only spelling and grammar corrections including but not limited to subject-verb agreement and capitalization.

I would say my peers support students who express an interest in Career & Technical Education.

Responses

“Peers in my school only support those who show interests in Career & Technical Education and extracurricular activities”

“A lot of people do think that we just go there because we don’t have a future. They are truly mistaken.

“I’ve never heard a conversation involving it.”

“It’s not really something that needs peer support.”

“I don’t think they care.”

“Depends on who they are.”

“I would say ‘my peers’ really don’t care either way.”

“It really depends on who the person is.”

Question 21

Question 21, reproduced below, had a multiple choice component as well as a comment box. For the purpose of this section, comment box answers will only be analyzed. Question 21 had 12 total comment box responses. These responses were too broad to be grouped into general categories, so the chart below offers quotes from respondents that reflected the question asked. Off topic or inappropriate responses were excluded as well as responses that stated that the respondent did not know what to say or had nothing to say regarding the topic. To maintain the most accurate representation possible, the responses below were reproduced as close to the raw data as possible with only spelling and grammar corrections including but not limited to subject-verb agreement and capitalization.

I would say my school community, including my guidance counselor, educators and school officials, supports and encourages students who express an interest in Career & Technical Education.

Responses

“My school community only supports those who show interests in Career & Technical Education and extracurricular activities.”

“Depends on the student.”

****“They don’t like us coming into class late...”**

“I feel that some teachers are not as supportive as they can be.”

“Taking a SCTC course is challenging enough so it’s hard to get all of your schoolwork done with the addition of work from SCTC.”

***The school day at SCTC is shorter than a traditional high school day. Some students, after returning to their respective high schools from SCTC, may try to fit in a class that is running at their respective high school at the end of the day. In doing so, SCTC students may miss a few minutes of the beginning of a class due to the timing of scheduled classes and transportation time from SCTC back to their respective high schools.*

Short Answer Questions

Two short answer questions were included at the end of the survey and were marked as *Optional*. These questions prompted students to complete an ambiguous statement and gave survey participants a new opportunity to answer a question with their own unique ideas and opinions. The partial statements were guided with a beginning clause but were worded ambiguously in order to facilitate an opportunity for respondents to offer a lengthy response that reflected their unique perspectives and influences. Since these questions had such high participation, not all responses could be included. The responses that were selected for inclusion within this report were selected because they eloquently represented reoccurring answers or themes, best represented a popular majority among responses, or had a notable component whereby sharing their response would provide great insight for Career and Technical Education in Maine. These responses were too specific to be paraphrased, and therefore are reproduced below in almost identical form to which they appeared. To maintain the most accurate representation possible, the responses below were reproduced as close to the raw data as possible with only spelling and grammar corrections including but not limited to subject-verb agreement and capitalization. The following pages are dedicated to the responses to these short answer questions.

Question 26

Optional Short Answer Question

Question 26, reproduced below, had a total of 757 responses. Of the 757 responses, approximately 30 have been selected for inclusion within this report.

I feel that more students would enroll in Career & Technical Education Programs if.....

Selected Responses

“There was more information about the benefits given by the Career & Technical Education programs.”

“The center was on the school grounds themselves or did not take up as many school blocks.”

“More programs were available...More students would also enroll if students were not forced to take extra classes to fill study halls.”

“Our regular school schedules were more flexible.”

“If they were on the same grounds as our high school.”

“It was more closely classified in their career options.”

“If it didn’t cut into honors classes. Also if it was easier to get in.”

“They could take higher level courses with it.”

“There was more of a selection of choices for other interests.”

“There were more things offered. They do have a lot of stuff at the SCTC. But they are missing some key jobs that a lot of kids are looking for.”

“If you could take both AP and honors classes at the same time.”

“The programs were not every other day. Therefore, I can’t take honors and AP classes which is why I won’t enroll in it.

“They didn’t have to worry about taking the required classes.”

“Other classes needed to graduate weren’t ‘in the way’. For me, my schedule is too full to take a program, but I would like to.”

“It did not interrupt regular classes that are required to graduate from high school.”

“If not as many students applied because it puts a lot of applicants on the waiting lists...”

“There wasn’t a stigma attached about people that went to a VOC school wouldn’t go to college.”

“We offered more programs that interested students. As it is, we have a lot of students enrolled. But maybe if we could offer more courses. If something interested me and was offered through SCTC, I would definitely enroll.”

“They specified what careers they could help in, and that they would give you college credits.”

“I feel more people would enroll if they knew more of the fun facts of the programs, for example job shadows, and receiving certification.”

“The credits would transfer to more colleges.”

“Students were made aware that the programs offered can give them the necessary skills to start them on a career path.”

“There were less required core classes.”

“They were eligible to do it at a younger age.”

“They could still take challenging classes in school.”

“It didn’t interfere with our regular classes.”

“Honors and AP courses could be taken along with SCTC.”

**“The classes you take... counted as something more than just elective credits...”

“I feel that more students would enroll in Career & Technical education programs if they did not fear they won’t get accepted to higher ranking colleges for taking such programs.”

“There was a higher chance of getting in and they accepted more people.”

***At some schools, Career and Technical Education courses count as elective credits.*

Question 27

Optional Short Answer Question

Question 27, reproduced below, had a total of 709 responses. Of the 709 responses, approximately 45 have been selected for inclusion within this report.

Students that participate in Career and Technical Education programs.....

Selected Responses

“Are likely to be well adapted to work in real life that applies to the course of their enrollment.”

“Get a strong background in the career that they are going to pursue.”

“Gain experience for their intended field of study”

“Gain a better insight on a specific field and gain experience and knowledge needed to further enter the field and apply themselves.”

“Gain knowledge about what they want to do in college and get a great background of experience.”

“Learn in a different style than those who decided not to use the program provided.”

“Most of the people that I know are very into the program that they are in. They seem to really enjoy doing it. From what people tell me about it, it is a very fun learning experience. I have never seen negative feedback about programs that interest me when I ask other students that have been in the program.”

“Put more time and effort into their education and show that they really want it. It pays off and is good for college and the real world. It helps get experience.”

“Typically do not go to college.”

“Students that participate in the Career & Technical Education programs are more likely to get a job sooner than most, and able to work while going through college, if they consider attending a college.”

“Get a lot of experience doing things they love at an early age.”

“Feel more prepared and get a better understanding for what they want to do for a career as an adult.”

“Are more prepared when going into secondary education. They already have background in the field and may already be certified in an area that most college students have not.”

“Students that participate in Career & Technical education programs seem to have more confidence in school. They seem to have a happy day because they know that they actually learned instead of reading from a book. Students can’t always just learn from a book because it can be challenging.”

“They are probably more likely to be prepared for a job, and that can probably help them find a job easier.”

“Seem more interested in a hands-on interactive environment of their educational and career interests.”

“Have an opportunity to try new things.”

“Are more likely to go on to college and get a job related in that field, or skip college, and try to get a job related in that field considering they’d have some experience.”

“Are more educated with a certain career before they go to college for the same subject.”

“I believe that students that participate in CTE have a better understanding of how they want to further their education, either they want to go to college or they want to stay residential and just do work around their area.”

“Realize a better sense of commitment and deadlines and determination. People in the CTE programs realize what it is like to be a part of society and to be a responsible...adult with priorities and problems, it is a good real life learning experience that directly prepares you for your future.”

“Are, in my opinion, better off in their future careers they want to pursue by getting a head start on their life after high school while in high school.”

“Are only kids that want to be mechanics and electricians, or health care providers.”

“From the people that I know that go there they go because they find it to be something easy and quick to do. I’ve heard a lot of people say they go because it’s free and they don’t want to pay or go to college. However I’d go for the experience and certificate of a CNA nurse. I think it’d look nice on a resume.”

“Have amazing opportunities in the field that they have chosen. I know a few friends that have wonderful jobs because of their experiences with their program.”

“Have a better chance in getting into a college.”

“Don’t get to be in advanced classes.”

“Have a very high chance of getting a job after high school.”

“Usually do not go to college.”

“Are better prepared for college.”

“Will probably have more college credits and get into a higher graded college.”

“May have an easier connection to local jobs in their community.”

“I think are challenging themselves and really want to go to college with a career that they took as a course in the SCTC center.”

“Are usually students who don’t plan on attending college to get a degree and just want to get some sort of title for when they graduate so they can start working.”

“Have more to put on their resume than normal students. They have certain certifications that can help them receive a job they want in the field of study that they want to achieve.”

“Students that participate in Career & Technical education programs are more experienced than other students when they further their education into a college. I feel like they are better prepared and have background knowledge when they move on.”

“I feel that students that participate in the programs have good grades and actually want to do something with their life after high school. Most of the students want to go to college or they take an educational program so they can get a job right out of high school. Like the CNA program allows you to get a certificate so you can actually work as a CNA out of the schools grounds.”

“Are looking for a hands-on approach to things and they find that they certainly do get a lot of hands-on experience.”

“Are more likely to have an advantage in finding a career when students graduate high school or go to college.”

“Learn valuable information and enjoy them. These programs are useful whether one chooses to go on to college or not. I have never heard a negative comment about SCTC courses.”

“Get a good education in whatever field they chose to go in.”

“Gain a lot of education that is used in real life. I have learned more in Co-op class about taxes, insurance, working, and real life experiences than I have anything in my other high school classes...”

“Are able to see if they really enjoy the career that they previously believed they did. They are able to see if that is something they really want to go into without having to spend the money on college classes and then figuring out that they don’t want to do that.”

“Have the benefit of learning skills needed for specific careers before entering them.”

“Students that participate in these programs I think are going to succeed in life. Only because they had that little jump start before they go to college or secondary-school. They can earn college credits in SCTC which could also bring down the cost of college, making it more accessible for people to get schooling after high school.”

Analysis of Short Answer Questions

Both short answer questions were designed to allow students to expand on a partially started sentence and use the opportunity to express their own opinions and perspectives surrounding Career and Technical Education. The first short answer question prompted survey participants to explain why they felt some students did not enroll in Career and Technical Education programs or explain circumstances that would encourage or result in higher student enrollment. The most common theme among the survey responses was connections between lower enrollment and schedule conflicts. These scheduling inconveniences commonly included Career and Technical Education courses conflicting with required graduation courses, required college courses, or advanced level courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) or honors. Some students expressed that they wished for a broader range of course offerings, where others wished the center could accept more students for enrollment. Unfortunately there were a few concerns raised by survey respondents that expressed the presence of the stigma that students that pursued Career and Technical Education programs would not attend college. Few respondents expressed a concern that they would not be accepted for enrollment at some postsecondary education institutions if they enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs. The inability to take Career and Technical Education courses in conjunction with AP, honors, or required courses for graduation or high school was the theme that prevailed in this question.

The second short answer question prompted survey participants to complete another vague statement offering their opinions and beliefs about students that enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs. The most dominant belief among participants proved to be that students that enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs would be more career ready, have superior resumes and workforce preparation, and specialized knowledge in careers that aligned with their Career and Technical course studies. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents reflected an assumption that students who enrolled in Career and Technical Education courses would pursue a college education and would be more prepared in their post secondary educational pursuits. Many students believed that students who participated in Career and Technical Education courses would be more prepared for college, and would get into better schools than those who did not partake in a Career and Technical Education program. There were some survey participants who expressed a belief that students who enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs would not go to college or do not take higher level courses such as AP or honors. Some students highlighted the hands-on learning aspects of Career and Technical Education courses and spoke highly of the knowledge they gained in this fashion. Most survey respondents felt that students that enrolled in Career and Technical education would be sufficiently more prepared for college, workforce, and future work related endeavors than their peers who had not enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs and would be able to apply the knowledge they gained from their Career and Technical Education in any future field of work or endeavor, regardless of their decision to pursue that particular area of study.

Variables

I felt that it was imperative to note any variables that, to my knowledge, could have potentially affected the survey data. The following variables could have impacted each survey respondent differently and therefore could have affected the data:

Survey Proctor Prompt: The Survey Proctor Prompt was created in the hopes of removing any influences or variables that could have affected one student group differently than another student group. The intention of the Survey Proctor Prompt was to allow each student taking the survey to have an equal understanding, and remove any influences or bias from the introduction or discussion of the survey. The Survey Proctor Prompt explained to the proctor and the survey participants where the survey was located, how to access the survey and offered other logistics and specifics to make sure that all students who took the survey had a clear understanding of how to access the survey and what to do when they completed the survey so that their results would be submitted. If the Survey Proctor Prompt was not read, not all students would have heard all the same directions and could have been presented the survey differently with the influences or biases of their unique environment.

Future Pathways Day: Somerset Career and Technical Center organizes a phenomenal event each year for freshmen across local high schools to attend. One of the focuses of the day is to allow area students to be exposed to different professions that relate to Career and Technical Education. This day was hosted in the middle of the data collection period of this survey. It is important to note that not all freshmen that participated in this survey participated in the event; some may have, some may not have. The survey results could have been impacted by attending or not attending the event, as some students may have gained knowledge around Career and Technical Education because of their attendance where others may not have the same knowledge due to their lack of attendance. Only freshmen would be impacted by this variable, as this day is only for freshmen, but it is important to note that this event has occurred for a number of years, so upperclassmen that did or did not attend this event when they were freshmen could have also impacted the data for the same reasons.

Conclusion

The opportunity to conduct research around Career and Technical Education in Maine was not only an honor but also a true privilege. It is my greatest hope that the research I have conducted will help to better represent the perspectives and opinions of all students in Maine and help to contribute positively to education in our State and across our Nation. When I was first appointed to the Maine State Board of Education in 2012, Career and Technical Education was an avenue of education with which I was not greatly familiar. Today, with almost two years of research and knowledge behind me, Career and Technical Education is one of my greatest passions. It has been a true honor serving the State of Maine in this role, and I thank the Maine State Board of Education for granting me such a remarkable opportunity.

Special Thanks

The ability to conduct this research would not have been possible without the help, support, guidance, and dedication of so many remarkable individuals. It is because of the support I have received from so many people throughout this research that I was able to produce this work.

I would like to give special thanks to Mr. David Dorr and Somerset Career and Technical Center for allowing me observe instruction, work with the students and faculty, and work with the facility over the past two years. From my interest in conducting an observation report of the facility to my interest in conducting this survey, Mr. David Dorr has been instrumental in the success and implementation of all my research endeavors and has offered me assistance, support, and guidance through each step in the process. As the Director of Somerset Career, Mr. Dorr works hard to make Somerset Career and Technical Center the remarkable facility that it is. I appreciate Mr. Dorr's work, Mrs. Thiboutot's work, and the work of the entire faculty and administration at Somerset Career and Technical Center, and I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with them.

I would like to give special thanks to the Maine State Board of Education and the Career and Technical Education Committee for allowing me to conduct this research. The members of the Maine State Board of Education, the Career and Technical Education Committee, Mrs. Margaret Harvey, and Mrs. Mary Becker were instrumental in the support of this work, the revision of the survey materials and questions, and the implementation of this work. Without them this work would not have been possible. The passion and dedication each and every one of them gives to education is inspiring.

Administrators at Carrabec High School, Madison High School, MCI, Skowhegan High School, and Upper Kennebec Valley High School supported me in the implementation of this work and are truly the ones that made this research possible. With the approval from each of the schools, my research was able to reach the largest audience possible and represent the number of voices that it did. I thank them for allowing me this opportunity.

I would like to offer my deepest appreciation and gratitude to everyone who made this research possible. Thank you for all that you did, and all that you do.

Contact Information

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Career and Technical Education Student Opinion Survey Project

Survey, Research, and Analysis Report Conducted By:

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