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# CAREER CONNECTED ILLINOIS



Opportunities for Success

JANUARY 2023

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in Illinois prepare students by teaching real-world knowledge and skills.

**266k**  
students

**112**  
CTE programs

**16**  
clusters

**7**  
pathway  
endorsements

Career & Technical Student Organizations



*Warren Township High School FBLA members attended the Illinois Fall Retreat.*

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## **Illinois CTSO November Board Report November**

The Illinois Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) had an extremely successful and busy month in November! The Illinois Fall Retreat, Illinois FBLA's annual leadership development and networking conference, was held in Bloomington-Normal Nov. 5-6. Members heard from guest speaker Rhett Laubach, owner of YourNextSpeaker LLC, in an engaging and informative environment with over 300 members in attendance. A multitude of workshops were conducted in the realms of competitive events and team building. There was even a parliamentary procedure workshop hosted by Illinois State President Yash Sharma and Illinois State Parliamentarian Jahnvi Kolli. Additional networking and team-building activities were held at other locations, such as local favorite Bloomington Children's Discovery Museum. The following week, over 50 members from five chapters from across Illinois attended FBLA's National Fall Leadership Conference in Denver, Colorado. These chapters were from Warren Township High School, Champaign Central High School, Mount Vernon Township High School, Woodlawn High School, and Wauconda High School. This conference, which was held Nov. 10-12, welcomed over 1,400 members from 27 states across the country. The Illinois team was able to connect with the national officer team and participate in daylong educational and applied tracks to explore their leadership and business interests. Guest speaker Bryant Collier, owner of bcollierspeaks, accented the opening and closing sessions as a keynote speaker. The Illinois FBLA state officer team is beyond excited to post recaps of these events on the official @illinoisfbia Instagram and keep the state updated on our upcoming competition season.

Yash Sharma

Illinois Future Business Leaders of America and Illinois Career and Technical Student Organization Student Board State President  
[president@ifbla.org](mailto:president@ifbla.org)



*Illinois students took part in the National Fall Leadership Conference's Entrepreneurship Track.*

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## Education Day at Southern Illinois University

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is working to draw in future students to counter the nationwide teacher shortage. It attracted interested students from Shawnee, Vienna, Meridian, Johnson City, Marion, Herrin, Carterville, West Frankfort, Cobden, Massac County, Joppa, Century, Dongola, Anna-Jonesboro, Carbondale, and Du Quoin High Schools and John A. Logan Community College to learn more about teaching careers through its SIU Education Day event. ISBE supports events like this with Education Pathway grants and is part of the Southern Illinois Future Teachers Coalition with SIU, John A. Logan Community College, Shawnee Community College, and 15 area high schools. To learn more, please read [this article](#).

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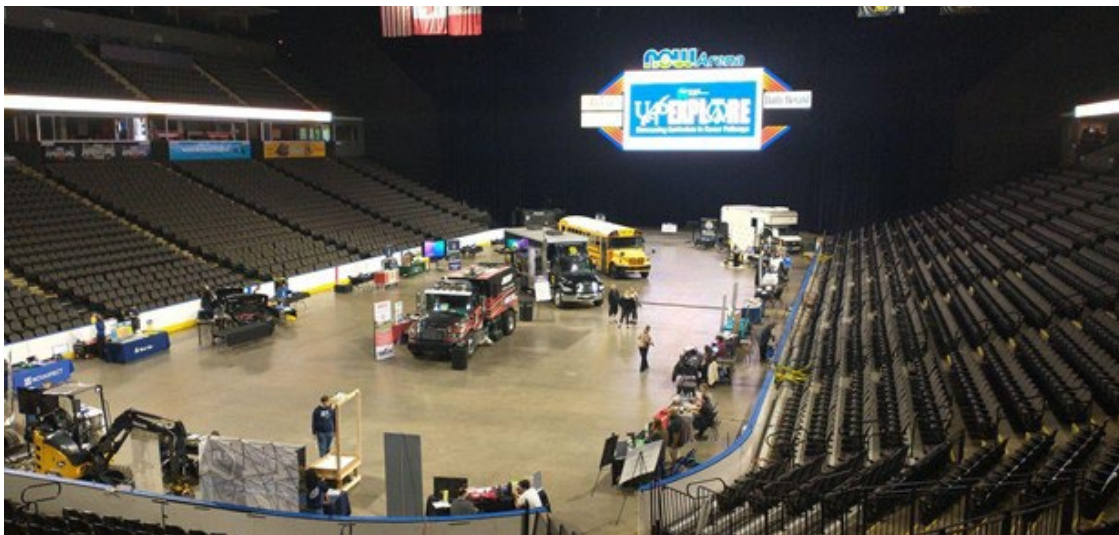
## Evolution of a Woodworking Program

The connection between Reed-Custer High School teacher Mark Smith and Jon Minnaert, president of Aetna Building Solutions, came about via social media. What came from this connection was the beginning of a change to the CTE program at Reed-Custer. The school purchased a full-sized Thermwood CNC router, and this helped transform the program from one with a recreational feel to one that offers a better preparation for careers. Please read [this article](#) for more information on how this business and school partnership has reinvigorated the woodworking program at Reed-Custer.

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## U-46 Explore Event

School District U-46 partners with the Alignment Collaborative for Education each year to put on an eighth grade Explore Event, giving students and families from around the district the chance to explore career opportunities with all of the career clusters represented within the region. The district works with the village of Hoffman Estates to rent out the NOW Arena for the event, which this year included over 130 exhibitors representing over 60 companies from around the area. On the eve of the event, School District U-46 welcomed over 300 families to hear a presentation on the new Pathways model that the district will be moving to, along with the opportunity to visit with the same high school teachers and community partners that their students would visit the following day. On the day of the event, School District U-46 and the Alignment Collaborative welcomed over 2,700 eighth grade students into the event, hoping to start each of them along their career path. Students were surveyed on their potential future career prior to the event and then were chaperoned through the event for the first 45 minutes, visiting roughly 25 companies within that career field. Students were then given the last 30 minutes of their visit to explore outside of their first choice. Below are some before and during photos from the event.



*NOW Arena was the site of the major event.*



*The U-46 Explore Event drew a large crowd to NOW Arena.*

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## **Educator Prep Program in HSD 214**

NBC Chicago went to Rolling Meadows High School in District 214 recently to feature the school's Ed Prep Program. The program is part of an effort to solve the nationwide teacher shortage by getting students interested in becoming educators and providing them an affordable and accessible option to continue their education through a partnership with Eastern Illinois University and National Louis University. Here is the [story](#).

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## **Cobden Future Educators Visit SIUC**

Students from Cobden High School recently visited SIUC to learn more about becoming educators to help address the shortage of teachers in Illinois.



*Students from Cobden High School pose with a couple of real-life salukis during a recent visit to SIUC. In the back row from left are Cresli Carillo, Karleigh Ellis, Mary Pender, teacher Karen Engelmann, Makenzie Hilliard, and Allison Benefield. Rhylee Sauerbrunn and Sophie Lingle are in the front row.*

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## ISBE CTE Professional Development Calendar

We are pleased to announce the initial ISBE CTE professional development calendar for the 2022-23 school year. This calendar is considered an initial calendar because we are already adding additional events to it. We also are excited to share that there is **no cost** to participate in any of the events being run solely by ISBE and the Northern Illinois University CTE Project.

All sessions are open to all Illinois educators, including teachers, clinicians, counselors, and administrators, from early childhood through 12<sup>th</sup> grade settings as well as postsecondary educators. For example, Administrator Academy workshops are not only open to school administrators, but to all educators. Participants who complete workshops will earn Illinois professional development hours or, when applicable, Administrator Academy credit (based on the workshop and one's position).

Check out the full (and growing!) [ISBE CTE professional development calendar](#). Registration links will continually be added over the coming weeks.

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## In the Spotlight

Thank you for your nominations of outstanding students, teachers, programs, and business partners from across the state of Illinois. We are excited to recognize these individuals and celebrate their achievements. We love to hear your stories! Submit your nominations at [isbe.net](https://isbe.net). We are always accepting new submissions to include in our Spotlight section.

### Student Spotlight

We hope to get more submissions for Student Spotlight for future issues of the newsletter.

### Teacher Spotlight

Jessica Biernacki is new to Rich Township High School this year and was nominated by Antoinette Rayburn, who is Health and Human Service Academy lead at the school's STEM campus. Despite being new, Ms. Biernacki fully embodies the commitment necessary to grow an agriculture program in an area that has no history of this industry. She brings a wealth of knowledge and is getting students both in high school and middle school excited about the future opportunities in urban agriculture, horticulture, and animal science. She is single-handedly building the program with the small amount of funding she receives and creating a diverse presence for FFA participation. She embraces challenges and keeps pushing for excellence. Ms. Rayburn says she wants to encourage Ms. Biernacki in her work so that she keeps that spark, no matter what challenges come along. This is a viable career opportunity for students, especially students of color.



*Teacher Jessica Biernacki has begun an Ag Program at Rich Township High School.*

### Program Spotlight

Jami Hodge, system director for Education for Employment 560, nominated the Construction Trades Program at Marion High School for Program Spotlight. She described it as “Such an amazing program that incorporates many ‘trades’ and cross-curricular instructors, including Intro to Tech, Drafting, Welding, and, of course, Construction Trades. The students in skills and advanced courses of the program actually build a house from the ground up in the community. The MHS ‘Trades’ house is well sought after in the real estate market. Trades students learn from some of the best local community construction partners and businesses.”



*Marion High School students in the Construction Trades Program work on some of the final steps in the house constructed entirely by students.*

### Business Partner Spotlight

School counselor Amber Swanson and Superintendent Buster Barton from Byron High School nominated Generations at Neighbors. This business has partnered with the high school this year to launch an own in-house Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. The staff at Generations is the reason we are able to provide this program to our students. They have opened up their facility to our nursing aid students and have provided an incredible opportunity for clinical experiences. In the program's first year, 19 students will be eligible to sit for their CNA exam as a result of the collaboration with Generations at Neighbors.





*Generations at Neighbors is helping Byron High School students through a CNA program.*

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## **Career Guides**

Check out our Career Guides, share them, or order printed copies at [ILcareerguide.com](https://www.ilcareerguide.com).

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

# CAREER GUIDE

HIGH SCHOOL  
EDITION



## EXPLORE!

Dozens of in demand  
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## WHY CTE?

Find out why CTE  
offers so many  
opportunities

## PLAN YOUR FUTURE

Create a plan  
for success after  
high school

## CAREER ASSESSMENT

What are you passionate about?  
Use the pullout workbook found inside.



[isbe.net](http://isbe.net)



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Education



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