

# THE CATSIMATIDIS COMMON SENSE PLAN

# Catsimatidis 2013



**A New Yorker For All New Yorkers**

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**Career and Technical Education  
(Vocational Education)**

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## Overview

Career and Technical Education, also known as vocational education, is a set of programs that directly prepare students for employment in skill-specific jobs. It is a broad educational system that covers expert training in fields from data management to high-tech manufacturing. Training young people to answer the economy's demands is the first step in ensuring a vibrant economic future for New York City.

### Why it works:

1. Focuses on skills-based education with clear results-based accountability
2. Increases graduation rates
3. Training is geared toward industry demands
4. Creates a trained workforce that is ready for employment

### Why it is necessary:

1. Businesses are struggling to find the skilled labor needed for industry and job growth
2. New York City's unemployment runs at 8.4%, well ahead of the national rate of 7.6%<sup>1</sup>
3. A skilled workforce attracts new businesses and industries
4. Home-grown talent will attract new businesses and keep them in New York City
5. New business and industry means more jobs
6. 60% of small businesses are struggling to find skilled applicants

## The Current Landscape

82.7% of all NYC public high schools offer some form of Career/Technical education. However, only 3.7% of them are actual Career/Technical institutions. Educational changes are necessary to keep pace with the changes in the highly competitive global economy.

Increasing Career Technical Education allows students to pursue an education in skilled labor starting at the high school level. To date, 29 Career/Technical schools exist in New York State, along with other similar programs offered in various academic public schools.

Enrollment in this kind of vocational education is increasing. The educational landscape is changing in response to the enormous changes in the global economy. Skilled workers who can contribute across all levels of expertise are valuable in this new economic climate.

New York's history makes it uniquely able to be a national leader in vocational education. The more career technology education that is made available, the more graduates can enter the workforce with dynamic and ready-to-use skills.

## The History of Vocational Training in NYC

New York has a long tradition of Career/Technical institutions. Some of the schools New York established between 1920 and 1937 are still in operation and offering vocational training, such as The Automotive High School, The High School of Art and Design, Chelsea Career & Technical High School and Queens

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<sup>1</sup> New York State Department of Labor web site.

Vocational High School. All of these schools graduate students who are ready to find employment in their chosen field.

An outstanding example of this kind of education is The Aviation High School (officially Aviation Career & Technical Education High School). Founded in 1925 it once supplied an impressive 12% of all workers on aircraft worldwide. As the aviation industry grew, the school and its students grew with it. From training aviation mechanics to training navigators and engineers, this school adapted to a changing industry and remained relevant. It eventually expanded to include academic subjects, as well as create a four-year aviation curriculum. In 1993 it adopted a dual certificate option, allowing students to receive both FAA certificates in Airframe and Power plant license as well as meet State Regents requirements for graduation.

It has remained a powerful example of vocational training:

- Named the number one aviation school in the nation in 1996
- Has won a number of national awards
- Achieved four straight “A” ratings by the New York City Department of Education
- Was named one of the best high schools in the nation by U.S. News & World Report

Aviation High School is a clear example of career/technical education working for both the students and the economy, supplying highly trained workers for a demanding and changing industry.

## **The Data**

As current New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg has stated, “College isn’t for everyone, but education is.” He promised that “we’ll do what no other public school system in the nation has done - create rigorous career and technical programs that start in high schools and continue in our community colleges.”

The “Next-Generation Career and Technical Education in New York City” report, compiled by the Mayoral Task Force on Career and Technical Education Innovation found that:

- 110,000 students are enrolled in 282 vocational programs (as well as in individual elective courses)
- 30,000 are enrolled in 21 career tech-designated schools
- The rest attend comprehensive city high schools
- Attendance amongst these schools exceeds citywide averages
- As of 2007, half of the 18 career tech high schools earned a grade of A or B from the NYCDOE School Progress Reports<sup>2</sup>

The City Comptroller’s Office issued a report saying:

- Vocational and Career Technical Education keeps students from dropping out
- 64.2% of students in the vocational high schools were eligible for free lunch - 13 percentage points more than students across all of New York City
- Drop out rates among the vocational schools was only 10.6%, four percentage points lower than the citywide average of 14.6%

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<sup>2</sup> *Next-Generation Career and Technical Education in New York City*, NYC Department of Education, [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/91B215BF-21F8-4E11-9676-8AFCFBB170E0/0/NYC\\_CTE\\_728\\_lowres.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/91B215BF-21F8-4E11-9676-8AFCFBB170E0/0/NYC_CTE_728_lowres.pdf).

- The graduation rate for these schools ran higher than the citywide average, with 59.7% citywide and 61.9% for Career Technical Education

On the negative side:

- 47% earned progress reports of C or below
- 3 schools earned a grade of F
- 7 schools had attendance ratings of under 80% (citywide average is 84.7%)
- Only 60% of CTE students earned 10 credits or more in the first year
- Fewer than 6 in 10 students graduated in a 4-year term

The Task Force on Career and Technical Education Innovation has a strong vision to turn this around. It identifies 5 major goals:

1. Meet 21st Century Standards
2. Expand paths to graduation
3. Engage and empower industry leadership
4. Prepare graduates for post-secondary success
5. Increase opportunity and access

The City Polytechnic High School of Engineering, Architecture and Technology, which opened fall of 2009, demonstrates how this can work. A five-year secondary school that allows graduating students to receive both a high school diploma and an associate's degree, the school is a hybrid of vocational training and traditional academics. Its courses focus on career and technical education, as well as advanced courses in computer systems and architectural technology. Some of its innovations include courses taught by trained architects, high level student design projects, a drop-in writing center staffed by volunteers, and online courses for foreign languages, including Mandarin. This kind of school achieves all five goals for success.

## **Inspiration**

Various countries around the globe are creating new educational models and engaging in reform. Germany has worked to create a dual system in which both academic and vocational education are equally valued. Work-study, internships, and apprenticeships are valid educational routes for young people.

This kind of dual-education system is geared around industry demands, from pharmacology to agriculture. Apprenticeships and work-study programs often lead to full time employment upon graduation. The industries themselves help fund the programs through partnerships and grants, thus supporting the students' training and gaining valuable workers upon their graduation.

Closer to home, Chicago is engaging in reform at the community college level, an approach applicable to New York high school needs. Chicago will look toward industry itself to help design and staff these education programs. This workforce training initiative will tackle the gap between industry demand and skilled labor.

These programs will prepare graduates for jobs in high-growth industries such as:

1. Healthcare & Social Services: 138,390 projected new jobs 2010-2020
2. Professional and business services: 94,710 projected new jobs 2010-2020
3. Transportation

4. Logistics
5. Information technology
6. Accommodation and food services: 31,970 projected new jobs 2010-2020<sup>3</sup>

They will eventually include other areas of increasing growth, including culinary arts and tourism.

Business and industry leaders will help fund and sponsor these programs. For example, students will train in transportation logistics with funding and resources from delivery giant UPS, Canadian National Railway, and AAR, a commercial aviation company. Corporate employees will also be made available to teach courses where appropriate. Course focus will be tailored to industry needs based on growth and demand.

### **The Catsimatidis Plan**

Increasing vocational and career technical education is necessary for economic growth and increased employment. Funding these programs can be achieved through partnerships with the private sector that can 'adopt' a school or sponsor programs.

New York needs to incentivize private investment by demonstrating the benefits to business and industry, and create a climate in which career education is friendly and responsive to private enterprise.

In lending their name, funds, and expertise, corporate partners gain access to a highly skilled workforce that has been educated with their needs in mind. The students' expertise is matched to industry demand. These public-private partnerships link education and employment. Additionally, industry-sponsored internships and work-study programs which train students on the job can lead to employment opportunities upon graduation.

Through these partnerships, New York can guarantee to every business that if they come to New York and help fund career tech and vocational education, New York can provide the training programs needed for them to have an effective workforce.

The industries will get qualified workers, and the city will get funding and assistance with curriculum development and resources. Working in tandem, this will attract more businesses, create more investment, and build jobs.

A clear example of the private-public partnership working in a mutually beneficial way is The Automotive High School, located in Brooklyn. Toyota, Mercedes, Chrysler, Pontiac, and others have donated both equipment and money, as well as hired its highly trained students. The school also arranges for ongoing internships with automotive dealerships and repair shops throughout Brooklyn and Queens at minimum wage.

To develop and secure this kind of funding, the city needs to:

1. Target corporations who need skilled labor

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<sup>3</sup> *The State of Career and Technical Education in New York City: 2013-2014*, NYC Department of Education, [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F978F471-B0F0-4D4C-B8A2-0DBC91A68D46/0/StateofCTE\\_online.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F978F471-B0F0-4D4C-B8A2-0DBC91A68D46/0/StateofCTE_online.pdf).

2. Target corporations and industries with a presence in New York or who wish to establish a strong presence in New York
3. Create tax incentives and tax credits that will encourage industry investment in vocational programs, and represent their business interests
4. Create work opportunity tax credits if the industries hire graduates from these schools
5. Attract industries that are growing such as health and IT by committing vocational programs to its needs
6. Develop industry-ready curriculum and shared goals
7. Create relationships between business and education that gives reciprocal access to the resources of both partners
8. Encourage industry participation through student apprenticeships and work-study
9. Work with labor unions to work with high schools on apprenticeships