

Every February, the Career and Technology Education (CTE) community celebrates CTE Month to raise awareness of the role that CTE has in preparing students for college and career success. CTE Month is also a time to recognize and celebrate the achievements and accomplishments of our CTE partners at the local, state and national level.

CTE provides our students a pathway to new opportunities. Many employers seek graduates that have gained knowledge and skills that meet the demands of today’s workforce. I am a huge believer that CTE improves graduation rates, engagement, and skills for many students at the River Valley School District. Our students are given the opportunity to register for a variety of CTE classes, such as the following:

**Agriculture and Natural Resources:** Introduction to Agriculture, Aquaculture, Large Animal Science, Small Animal Science, Animal Health and Nutrition, Agri-Business, Biotechnology, Food Science, Crop and Soil Science, Horticulture, Plant Science/Greenhouse Management, Agricultural Youth Apprenticeship, or Wildlife Management

**Business:** Computer Business Applications, Entrepreneurship, Digital Marketing and Media, Employability Skills, Personal Finance, Financial Literacy, Accounting I and 2 and 3, Personal Finance, Youth Apprenticeship in Business or Healthcare, Keyboarding, Middle School Computers, Middle School Business Skills, Middle School Careers Class, Elementary Technology Applications

**Engineering/Technology Education:** Architectural Design, Building Construction, Auto Technology, Auto Mechanics for the Non-Mechanic, Welding I and 2, Basic Shielded Metal Arc Welding, Basic Gas Metal Arc Welding, Fabrication Technology, Electronics, Mechatronics, Exploring Aviation and Aerospace, Launch in Aviation, Manufacturing 1 and 2, Mechatronics 1 and 2, Principles of Engineering, Robotics Technology, Transportation, Woodworking, and Youth Apprenticeship opportunities

CTE students are given a tremendous opportunity to learn applicable skills and become equipped with core knowledge that will lead to relevant challenges in our workforce. CTE students also are given multiple opportunities to receive credit through dual enrollment, industry certifications, and even apprenticeships. The academic, technical, leadership, and work-based skills help students to become career and college ready. Approximately 20% of all students graduating from Wisconsin high schools report directly into the job market after they leave high school (<https://dpi.wi.gov/cte/resources>).

River Valley School District is also fortunate to have an incredible team of teachers to lead our vision in CTE: Carla Carmody, Pat Mahoney, Robby Jacobson, Shari Graffunder, Cheryl Ross, Lori Hoffman and TJ Wunnicke. These talented educators inspire kids each day while teaching core knowledge embedded with relevant career and technical skills. And, in today’s day and age, schools need to expose all students to work-based opportunities to bridge a gap between our community and business/industry. Within each department, each also offers independent classes (like capstone projects) in order to provide dual credit and advance standing opportunities to assist with post-secondary placement for either Madison College or Southwest Technical College.

A key word is “relevance.” For many students, understanding agricultural practices in the classroom creates relevance. For many students, understanding financial business practice builds relevance. For many students, drafting and building in various mediums creates school

engagement and relevance. During the month of February, as the State of Wisconsin honors the field of Career and Technical Education, it is incredibly important to highlight these offerings and congratulate our community on keeping CTE a crucial part of the River Valley educational experience.

Sincerely,

Loren Glasbrenner, District Administrator  
River Valley School District