



Testimony of Kelly Mosley  
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Before the  
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives

**“Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy”**

January 18, 2024

Chair Bean, Ranking Member Bonamici, and members of the subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me here today and giving me the opportunity to share about Career and Technical Education in Clay County, Florida.

My name is Kelly Mosley and I serve as one of two Supervisors of Career and Technical Education for Clay County District Schools where our goal is to prepare students for college and careers.

### **Overview of Career and Technical Education in Clay County**

Clay County has nearly 120 CTE teachers in secondary schools. We are fortunate to have College and Career Coaches as part of our CTE team who work at all 7 high schools to support CTE students and teachers. CTE programs are also offered at Bannerman Learning Center, the alternative school, through Clay Virtual Academy, and the 7 junior high schools. There are over 11,000 students enrolled in CTE programs. There are 33 different CTE programs offered across the county representing the Career Cluster areas of:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Automotive
- Architecture, Construction, and Engineering
- Arts, A/V Technology, and Communication
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Education
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Law, Public Safety, and Security
- Manufacturing

In Clay County, students are on a 6-period school day and they can choose to take CTE courses as their electives, in addition to their academic courses. Students can also take art, Band, Chorus, PE, ROTC, etc as their elective classes as well. They can continue to take CTE courses that build upon each other as part of a CTE program of study throughout their high school career or they can choose to explore another CTE program or elective.

### **Career Exploration Opportunities**

Exploratory CTE courses are offered at the junior high level where students can take semester-long CTE courses during their 7th and 8th grade school years. These courses relate to the courses offered at the high school level and are an important part of the workforce pipeline. College and Career Coaches and School Counselors visit the junior high schools to share with 8th-grade students about the CTE program offerings at the high schools each January before making course selections for 9th grade. Field trips to the high schools and Freshman Expos are also held to showcase CTE programs and allow families to learn about the opportunities each high school has to offer. Business Partners and Post-secondary institutions are part of the Freshman Expos to show students an example of what their entire career

pathway could look like if they choose various CTE courses. Promotional videos and print materials are developed to share with the students, online, and on social media to further engage students and families in making decisions about their high school career.

### **Industry Certifications**

Students in Clay County's Career and Technical Education programs prepare for a variety of nationally recognized industry certification exams from the Florida Department of Education's Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Funding list. Industry certifications earned come from agencies such as the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), American Welding Society, Intuit, Florida Board of Nursing, AutoDesk, CompTIA, Adobe, National Restaurant Association, and more. Last school year, over 1,400 industry certifications were earned by Clay County students. This is a "win-win-win" for everyone - most importantly for the student who now has a nationally recognized credential to give them an advantage when applying for jobs, scholarships, and college. Many of the industry certifications provide students with college credit through statewide articulation agreements with state colleges. It also has a positive impact on the school's grade from the Florida Department of Education because industry certifications have been calculated in the acceleration component of the school's score just like Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment, and Cambridge AICE pass rates. Finally, each certification passed generates bonus state funding that must be used by the program in which it was earned. This has allowed our department to provide updated equipment, computer labs, technology, software, and more for our CTE students, teachers, and programs.

### **Work-Based Learning Opportunities**

Clay County offers several Work-Based Learning opportunities. Students can join Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) and other leadership opportunities such as FBLA - Future Business Leaders of America, HOSA - Future Health Professionals, SkillsUSA, The National FFA Organization, TSA - Technology Students of America, and FCCLA - Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, National Technical Honor Society (NTHS), and Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Mentoring. Students can participate in pre-apprenticeships with the Northeast Florida Builders Association and Electrical Training Alliance Jax. School-based enterprises provide students the opportunity to work in on-campus businesses such as child-care centers for students in the Early Childhood Education programs, catering events for students in the Culinary programs, Floral Design for students in the Horticulture program, Graphic design and production for students in business programs, and more. Students can also apply for short and long-term internships with Garber Automall, VyStar Credit Union, Clay County Utility Authority, Clay County Sheriff's Office, Clay County Emergency Management, and the Town of Orange Park.

### **Business Partner Involvement**

Clay County has 14 Advisory Boards where business and community partners advise, assist, and advocate for CTE programs. The advisory boards represent various industries in the region and they are the foundation of business partner involvement. Business partners support CTE

programs in a variety of ways including providing guest speakers - virtual and in-person, hosting field trips, providing industry/business Hype Videos, participating in the annual Career Fair where students can "Enroll, Enlist, or get Employed", participating in College and Career Night, Mock Job Interviews, giving financial support and sponsoring events, providing internships, hosting Business Clothes Closet drives, serving as judges for competitions, donating equipment, attending High School Community Tours each semester, providing scholarships for CTE students, hosting clinical rotations, offering Dual Enrollment, and providing technical assistance for teachers.

## **Conclusion**

Even though we are constantly trying to overcome the obstacle of the nationwide CTE teacher shortage, our department collaborates with regional workforce partners to determine in-demand career fields as we develop new CTE programs. Recently, we have expanded health science, construction, information technology, and communications programs in the county and we look forward to expanding manufacturing programs in the future. Please continue to support CTE. CTE programs provide something for every student. CTE programs provide real-world hands-on experiences to prepare students for college and careers. CTE classes are the reason many students come to school every day. CTE teachers have the unique opportunity to serve as their students' teacher for their entire high school career and forge great relationships with students that impact attendance, discipline, and academic achievement.

I could share Clay County CTE Student success stories for days, stories of how a student ended up going into a certain career because of a field trip they took, or how they earned a college scholarship because they were well prepared for the scholarship interview due to the mock interviews they had during their CTE program, or the job offer they were given because they were able to network with industry professionals and that job turned into a career that helped them overcome generational poverty. I could share stories of how students who participated in internships were hired as permanent employees and are now model employees for local businesses where they are given tuition reimbursement, health benefits, and more, but I will leave you with this one story of a former Clay County student who excelled in 2 different CTE programs while he was at Middleburg High School. He excelled in multiple CTSOs and the ACE Mentoring program and met various people who would offer him employment in the construction industry. He was a project manager who helped to build the latest hospital in Clay County and was able to experience a full-circle moment ten years later. He shared with current CTE students on a field trip to the construction site about the opportunities Clay County CTE provided him that led him to the team who was building the two million dollar hospital that will provide services for our entire county. The numbers and statistics are important, but stories like these are even more important because they represent lives changed and communities impacted and I appreciate the opportunity to share our story today.