

Show Your Love for CTE in February

February is CTE Month. Join teachers and students across the nation in recognizing the contributions CTE makes to ensure students have the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college and careers. Find out how you can be a part of the celebration by contacting your local CTE program to ask about its related events and activities.

Join the Discussion on Using the Adult College Completion Tool Kit

The [LINCS Community](#) and the Department's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) are offering an online [moderated discussion](#) with [Lisa Rhodes](#), from Feb. 4 to 8, to discuss OVAE's [Adult College Completion Tool Kit](#). The tool kit is designed to assist policymakers at the state and local levels in implementing evidence-based solutions that increase the number of graduates who earn high-quality degrees and certificates necessary to compete for sustainable employment. Such solutions connect policymakers to the strategies, resources, and technical assistance tools resulting from the Department's work. Adult education state administrators and local practitioners are invited to participate in [this event](#). Participants may also **post their questions and thoughts in advance by accessing the [pre-activity discussion thread](#)**.

How to Solve Workforce Needs Region by Region

According to a new report, more than half the nation's states are exploring or implementing sector strategies—partnerships between employers within one industry and staff in government, education, training, economic development, labor and community organizations—to identify and solve the workforce needs of that industry within a particular region's labor market. Such partnerships create one of the "most consistently adopted approach[es] to meeting businesses' need for skilled workers and workers' need for good jobs." The report, [State Sector Strategies Coming of Age: Implications for State Workforce Policymakers](#), is a joint product of the [National Governors' Association \(NGA\) Center for Best Practices](#), [Corporation for a Skilled Workforce](#), and the [National Skills Coalition](#).

The report describes current sector strategies, discusses their difference from traditional workforce and economic development programs, and describes actions that state administrators and policymakers can take to create strategies and implement them effectively. Current state, regional, and local efforts have created over 1,000 sector partnerships in the U.S. that have helped advance workers into well-paying jobs that might otherwise have gone unfilled.

These strategies are among a small number of workforce interventions with statistical evidence showing improvements for workers in employment opportunities and in wage increases. The strategies can be used to address current and emerging skill gaps, engagement with industry, alignment of state resources for serving workers and employers, and inefficiencies in state efforts, as well as specific workforce needs in most industries. The strategies also allow policymakers to make use of career pathway programs and regional industry clusters.

Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds-Megatrends and Game-Changers and the Role of Education

A recent report, [Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds](#), is the fifth part of the U.S. National Intelligence Council's framework for "thinking about the future" by attempting to identify "critical trends" and "potential discontinuities." The report is designed to "distinguish between megatrends, those factors that will likely occur under any scenario, and game-changers, critical variables whose trajectories are far less certain." These discussions are supplemented by a discussion of "alternative worlds," based on possible "interactions between the megatrends and game-changers." Also identified are "potential Black Swans," which pose the potential for the greatest disruptive impact. Within these contexts, the report argues that the "future is not set in stone, but is malleable, the result of the interplay among megatrends, game-changers, and, above all, human agency."

At the risk of oversimplifying the complex analysis contained within the report, two general themes are noteworthy. One is optimism about the state of the world in 2030, which is higher here than in some other, similar analyses. The report acknowledges the international reaction that it had expressed too much optimism about certain trends.

A second theme is the ascendancy of the middle class throughout the world and the variety of responses to meeting the demands and aspirations of this emerging class. This seems to be the wave of the future, as seen through the eyes of the authors. One result of the emergence of this transnational class is that the powers of nation states have diminished or at least changed. The middle class has developed as the attitudes of a highly educated transnational elite advocating for globalization through personal initiative and empowerment have spread throughout populations. Global Trends 2030 characterizes this new attitude as a "can-do" and "everyone-can-make-a-difference" spirit that "has caught on with the rising middle classes around the world, which are increasingly self-reliant."

"Technology has been the biggest driver behind the scenes," according to this analysis, but "individual empowerment" is identified by the report as one of the inevitable megatrends, that is, one of those factors that can be predicted under any of the scenarios considered by the analysts. "Individual empowerment is the most important megatrend because it is both a cause and effect of most other trends – including the expanding global economy, rapid growth of the developing countries, and widespread exploitation of new communications and manufacturing technologies."

One major contributing factor to the rise of this middle class is education. According to the report, "The educational sector is likely to be both the motor and beneficiary of expanding middle classes. The economic status of individuals and countries will greatly depend on their levels of education."

Global Trends 2030 is among the mid-range forecasts that provide a thoughtful perspective on the world's future and on education's role in that emerging future. Along with similar publications, it illustrates the depth and breadth of analysis and thinking that will be necessary to meet the challenges of our mid-term future.