Speaker 1: Let's get started on our next session which is Connecting More Learners With High-quality CTE: Lessons from the Frontier. And we're gonna hear from Austin Estes and Kate Kreamer who are from the Advance CTE. And they are gonna be sharing with us some great innovative strategies for expanding high quality secondary and postsecondary CTE. The report is focused around rural areas. But as we talked to Austin and Kate, they had noticed through their work that really a lot of the strategies that they identified by talking to states is that a lot of these are similar across the country in all geographic contexts. So not only were these challenges and solutions for rural areas, but also for states that were maybe less rural, more urban, but had some similar challenges and potential solutions. So I want to turn it over to Austin and Kate to take it from here. And we're excited to hear your presentation, so thanks for joining us today.

Kate: Thank you for having us. Hello, good afternoon, everyone. Or I guess good morning if anybody's still on the West Coast. So just really briefly about who we are, Advance CTE. We are the longest standing national nonprofit that really focuses on career technical education. We represent state leaders from across all 50 states, DC and the US territories, who have responsibility over career technical education. And we are their professional development organization, providing opportunities for them, for those leaders from representing secondary, postsecondary and workforce development, to engage with one another. Representing them here in Washington D.C. Through federal advocacy. And then providing quite a bit around communication advocacy, more broadly, about the importance of high quality CTE. And leveraging the many, many partnership opportunities, given where CTE sits at the nexus between K12, postsecondary, workforce development, and the private sector.

Kate: So why we're here today is for the past couple of years, we have been hearing from our community that they really need help thinking through how to ensure that not only are we providing access to high-quality pathways in rural communities. But we are doing so in a way that really is looking broadly at the true opportunities within the labor market, that is really both meeting student interests with labor market needs and taking into account the access issues that really plague many of our communities, but those that are specific to rural communities, which many times are based on geography. Some based on culture, some based on lack of an employer base. And so we decided to start an initiative. So over the past year, we have conducted interviews with numerous state leaders, national leaders, local leaders, to really understand what's working, what the barriers are, what lessons have been learned from states that have been at this the longest. What are some of the innovative strategies that are underway? And have put out a series of resources to really tell those stories, but also to fill out what are those great lessons? And what are ultimately the elements of a strategy for focusing and ensuring we're closing the access and opportunity gaps within rural communities? There are four briefs, each digging into a specific issue. I encourage you to look at those. As well as a strategy guide, which we'll be kind of talking through today in terms of the strategy. There's also a cheat sheet on opportunities within federal investments for where you can find some resources for a rural community. And so, again, although the anchor and the frame is rural, and we will come back to some of those unique aspects of rural communities. We'll definitely, as you will hear, the strategies are universal if you're looking to support CTE pathways and experiences in any community where you might have barriers. The barriers might be a little bit different. But we know absolutely as a nation, we have a lot of work to do to ensure that our pathways are of the highest quality. And we've got a lot of work to do to make sure that all students have access both to those programs, but also the supports needed to be
successful through those pathways. 
So with that, I'm gonna turn it to Austin to kind of go through some of the background, some framing for this issue. And then we'll dive into some of those strategies.

Austin: Great, [COUGH] thanks, Kate. And just to echo what Kate had said, the lens that we're going to be addressing some of these strategies through today is addressing challenges in rural areas and serving rural students.
But a lot of these strategies and success stories are applicable in other geographic settings. So there are a lot of lessons to draw from this work. So I just wanna start by painting a picture of education in rural America. So according to the US Department of Agriculture, there is a significant education gap between rural and urban adults. Only 28% of rural adults hold an associate's degree or higher, compared to about 41% of urban adults. Additionally, four out of five low education counties are rural. And these counties are much more likely to experience high rates of poverty. And while economic activity often gravitates towards urban hubs, rural areas still offer many opportunities for gainful employment and career success. The challenge for states and for local communities is figuring out the right approach to improve access and success, and close the rural, urban education divide. So in our conversations with state leaders, as Kate has mentioned, over the past year, we learned about a variety of different issues that they're facing at the state level, as well as some issues that they've heard about from local communities and the schools.
And we bucketed these challenges into four overarching issue areas. First is ensuring that all programs are high quality and are aligned with labor market needs. Second is making sure that all learners have access to the world of work, are able to participate in work-based learning and engage with employers.
The third is making sure that all students have access to a variety of different program offerings, and that they're not limited by one or two programs that their schools are able to provide. And then, lastly, making sure that all students, all learning is facilitated by qualified instructors. And making sure that there's a strong pipeline of CTE teachers that can lead CTE classrooms.
While these challenges are heightened in rural areas, there are a lot of lessons that can be drawn and applied in other settings, as well. So I'm just gonna quickly go through some of these challenges. So in terms of quality, it's important to make sure that students who are enrolled in CTE programs of study, or other career pathways, experience quality learning, learning content that is aligned to labor market needs, and is relevant and up-to-date.
That learners have opportunities to connect with postsecondary options once they leave the secondary system, and more. And we can see success stories in virtually every setting. But the challenges that state leaders face is figuring out how to set the appropriate guardrails so that all programs can meet a standard baseline of quality.
And so that all students, no matter where they are, if they're in rural settings, if they're in urban settings, can access high quality programs. So looking across the entire country, the health of our nation's CTE programs is not bad. But there's still a lot of work to do.
You can see on the graph here that 62% of all school districts and 60% of rural school districts say that most or all of their CTE programs are structured as career pathways. Meaning that they contain a progressive sequence of courses and have connections to postsecondary opportunities. 73% of all schools districts and 67% or rural school districts say that students can earn both high school and post secondary credit.
And 46% of all school districts and 41% of rural school districts say that labor market data plays a large role in considering which programs to add. Another challenge that we looked at is employer access. We know that employers play a critical role in a student's education. They can help students explore different career options, provide guidance and mentorship.
They can offer work-based learning opportunities. And they also provide critical input into the design and curriculum for CTE program offerings. But a lot of times in rural areas there is a lack of
diverse employer base that can be drawn upon to support learners as they progress through their career pathway. Across the country, 25% of all school districts and 19% of rural districts say that employers are involved to a large, or very large, extent in providing work-based learning. And about the same say that employers are involved in hosting student field trips. So, clearly, there's a need here, and there's a lot of room for improvement.

Austin: Another challenge that we looked at is making sure that students have access to a diverse menu of different program offerings. So a lot of times, rural areas and other communities with limited staff, financial resources and student populations have to choose between offering a breadth of different program options or investing in one or two in-depth programs of study. But as Orson Wells famously said, the absence of limitations is the enemy of art. So dealing within these limitations can sometimes spark innovation and creativity. And we found through our conversations with state leaders that there are a lot of schools, and districts, and colleges, and communities in rural areas that are really thinking outside of the box, and looking at new and innovative strategies that they can expand the diversity of programs that students are able to access.

Austin: And then the last challenge probably comes as no surprise. But state CTE leaders report that strengthening the CTE teacher pipeline in rural areas is a persistent challenge. We know that CTE instructors require the academic and technical experience to be able to lead programs in their field.

Austin: Schools must be able to recruit experts from industry, train candidates to be successful in the classroom, and provide supports throughout their career so that they are able to stay up-to-date on the latest industry trends and lead the classroom success effectively. This is not only a challenge for rural communities. Across the country, 57% of school districts that have a CTE teacher opening say that those vacancies are very difficult to fill. When you compare that to academic fields, there's a pretty staggering gap.

Austin: So I’m gonna pause for a minute and do a quick poll of the folks who are on the call today. I wanna get a sense of which of these challenges that we’ve discussed so far resonate with you in your school and your community. So for the next minute, we’re just gonna leave this poll up for a minute. But if you could just click on the challenge that most resonates with you. And if there are any other challenges that we didn't discuss, if you want to just type that into the chat box, as well. That would be really helpful for us to know the kinds of issues that you are dealing with. And again just to go over those four challenges real quick.

We looked into ensuring the quality career pathways. So making sure that those programs are aligned with labor market need, meet criteria for quality, allow students to access post secondary opportunities, and engage with quality experiences. The second is connecting students with the world of work, making sure that there are sufficient employer relationships to help provide input into the design of programs, and also connect students with work-based learning opportunities. The third is making sure that there's a diverse menu of program offerings that allow students to pursue a path that aligns with their current interests. And then, lastly, recruiting qualified teachers.

Austin: So have we received enough responses yet that we can flip this over to see the responses?

Kate: Yes, it’s tabulating the responses now. And I’ll post it up in just a second.

Austin: Great.

Kate: Great.
Austin: And, again, as we're waiting for that data to load, if anybody has any additional challenges that they would like to add, please feel free to add that to the chat box and we can discuss that in a moment.

Kate: Or any questions you have about anything we've shared so far.

Austin: Great, well, it looks like recruiting qualified teachers takes the lead here with about 50%, followed by connecting students with the world of work. And I have to say that doesn't really come as much of a surprise.
And this was a challenge that we heard across a lot of the states that we spoke with. And it's something that has been a persistent challenge for decades.

Austin: And then we also had a comment come in about how recruiting qualified teachers is a challenge, specifically in manufacturing and engineering.
So in a lot of cases when you have those high skill, high demand industries, it's hard to pull those experts from industry to come into the classroom. So it's a particularly pressing challenge.

Kate: Yeah, and although our future slides will talk a little bit about the teacher issue, when we open it up for Q&A and for discussion on the end, we're happy to dive more deeply into that.
And certainly something we look through for this project. But also have done quite a bit of other work at looking at what are some creative ways states and communities have been about actually recruiting some of those industry experts into the classroom, kind of through formal, informal partnerships, and kind of other means and programs.
Please bring that back up during our Q&A, and we're happy to dig into that further.

Austin: Great, so moving from challenges to strategies. Through this work, we identified several key strategies to expand access to high quality CTE programs in rural areas. And, again, just to echo what we said before, while these strategies were designed with rural communities in mind, we've actually found that these are pretty common challenges across the states.
And a lot of approaches that we see in rural areas can be replicated in different settings. The strategies that we looked at include securing buy-in and commitment for new or ongoing reforms. Using data strategically to understand access gaps and assess programmatic and policy impact. Leveraging regional cross sector partnerships.
Using technology to expand access and reach. And investing resources to spark innovation.

Austin: So change is never easy. And it requires a strong vision of where you want to go. But also buy-in and support from key stakeholders in the community who are responsible for implementing the change, and who are also necessary partners and should be engaged to provide input.
To generate buy-in and build some of this cross-sector support. Some key questions to consider are looking at the degree to which expanding access to high-quality pathways is a priority in your community. Looking at the key stakeholders and champions who should be engaged at the local level. And looking at opportunities to gain commitment and support.
It's important to have the right people around the table to reach consensus on a shared vision for career readiness. And this will help lay the foundation and make sure that there's stable footing for the work ahead.

Austin: One example of this strategy in practice is Nebraska's reVISION initiative, which was launched in 2013 using funds from the state's Perkins Reserve fund.
reVISION's a five-step process, and it's designed to bring together key stakeholders and members of the community to review and assess the programs that are available within the community. And build out an action plan for aligning those programs with regional labor market needs, and ensuring
that all those programs are high quality. The state used seed funding through Perkins, which was later sustained through the state budget, to help sites execute the action plans that they developed through the reVISION process. And an important feature of the entire process is that it's very intentional about making sure that all of the seats at the table are filled.

So through the process, through a series of meetings, the local community will engage teachers, students, community members, local businesses, and employers. And there's also involvement from state leaders, including from the Department of Education, as well as the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Labor, which provide critical labor market data to help inform the action planning in the local community.

Just wanna quickly share one example. So Scottsbluff's Public Schools is a remote town in Western Nebraska that was part of the initial cohort of reVISION back in 2013. And as a result of the initiative, the community was able to develop new programs in health science, education, engineering, criminal justice, and computer science.

And another notable success from Scottsbluff is that due to their intentional action planning under reVISION, they were able to retire three programs that they found were no longer aligned with post-secondary opportunities and labor market needs. So as a result of this program, and as a result of the small investment that the state has made in this community, they've been able to realign the programs that are offered and make sure that they're structured to give students access to career opportunities in the area.

Another strategy that we wanna make note of is using data strategically to understand access gaps and assess impact. Looking at performance outcomes data can help cash-strapped school districts determine where to deploy resources and supports, and be more strategic about where they put their investments. So that's why putting labor market data in the right hands can help with that alignment and make sure that programs are being assessed based on their connection to employment opportunities in the area.

State and local leaders should consider how they're using data to evaluate the reach and impact of their efforts to expand high quality CTE. And an example of this is looking at the teacher workforce. So using data strategically to see where you have teacher shortages. And where you need to invest resources to recruit experts from industry, and to strengthen that teacher pipeline.

Austin: So while we're talking about teachers, I just wanna quickly share an example from Kentucky, and how the state has been using data to strengthen the teacher pipeline. In 2016, state leaders in Kentucky had two realizations that led to this neat work. The first was that CTE teachers were leaving the classroom at uncomfortably high rates.

And state leaders wanted to do something about that, to make sure that teachers were better supported, and had less of a motivation to leave the classroom. The second realization was that the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics, which manages the state's longitudinal data system, didn't really have the capacity.

It didn't have the data collection to monitor teacher retention. And so, they wanted to build out that capacity and make sure that they're better able to keep track of teacher retention rates. So over the past couple years, Kentucky Department of Education has been working to build that data collection capacity, as well as restructure its new teacher institute program to better support teachers throughout their first two years on the job.

Previously, Kentucky had been using a new teacher institute model that was built around a five-day boot camp that was designed to prepare teachers for their first day in the classroom. But since then, and this is just in its first year, so the 2017, 18 school year is the first year that the new model has been in play.

But Kentucky restructured that system so that teachers have access to in-person and online supports, as well as pairing with an expert mentor, an experienced teacher in their field, for the first two years that they're in the classroom. And while this is the first year that that structure has been
in play, so far, Kentucky has seen a 96% retention rate for that first cohort, and expects that rate to stay about that level by the end of the year.
So that’s just one example of how Kentucky is using data strategically to identify areas where there are critical teacher shortages, and to deploy resources and supports to address those gaps and strengthen the teacher pipeline.

Kate: All right, our next strategy is really focusing on partnerships. And obviously, in order to do this work in any setting, in any community, partnerships are, and particularly cross-sector partnerships are critically important to the success of the CTE pathway.
And we mean cross-sector, so there are a couple of words I wanna kind of define, right? So the cross-sector is making sure that we’re thinking across secondary and post-secondary. If we mean to have seamless transitions for students between a secondary component and a post-secondary, you need need to have that partnership and those agreements in place.
We also need to be partnering with not only business and industry, but as through the Nebraska example, workforce development, economic development to have regionally focused conversation that are allowing you to look at, yes, the employers, yes, the opportunities in your town. But also taking a broader look and providing more opportunities.
So this really is the heart of what we’re talking about. But it’s critical not only for making sure that the pathways are designed correctly, they’re anchored in the right expectations, but also that you’re providing economies of scale. They’re able to think about, are there ways that you can be sharing facilities, for example?
Can you be sharing faculty across secondary and post-secondary institutions, to build capacity and make sure that you have those resources available? For example, this is not a unique example, but outside of Philadelphia, in kind of close to Camden and New Jersey, there is the Gloucester Technical Institute is a four-year high school, that is a full-time CTE high school that is co-located on a campus with Rowan County College.
And has led to an amazing partnership and clear Incredibly seamless pathway between those two institutions. Certainly area technical centers, shared technical centers are a very common approach to really kind of pulling and pulling resources. But really thinking about kind of what is in your community that you can be tapping into.
What are the structures partnerships that are already there, whether it’s your workforce investment board. Whether it is other kind of opportunities that could be tapped that have not been tapped. And then, really thinking through how can you use those to expand access and opportunities for students? Another way to think about this in an urban setting is thinking about, can you be opening up open enrollment, right, across your high school?
And giving students flexibility in terms of where they’re getting their CTE program. So it may not make sense for you to invest in every program in every school in a community, but if you can have schools identify their competitive advantage and kind of break up which pathway, which clusters they’re focusing on, but then provide those flexibilities for students to be able to travel across the district.
And another one that we’re seeing great success in Rhode Island statewide has kind of opened up access both within high schools and community colleges. And actually bringing in some third party nonprofit partners to also provide additional course and work based learning experiences. So a specific example, a really unique example and one that is just kind of fascinating to us, is the Dakota Nursing Program in North Dakota.
And so ultimately, this was a program that was designed to address as many facing for the steep healthcare professional crisis, a real shortage. It attempted to do two things. S one, is that it provides access for students and two is engaging directly with employers and healthcare providers within the community.
So the way that it works is if I’m a student in North Dakota, and one of the four community colleges that is partnering through this effort. If I live within driving distance, I can go to that campus, I
could be part of this program, I can take my classes there. And my classes might be in person but they also might be delivered virtually, which enables kind of this cross-community college partnership to leverage single instructor through multiple classrooms. So for example, there was only one certified professor of obstetrics that was available in North Dakota. So they were able to have her teach students virtually through the state supported kind of virtual network, essentially a kind of video conferencing platform that allows us for real-time interaction and leveraging kind of an economy of scale. But if I’m a student that is not within driving distance of one of those four community colleges, I might be in one of the 13 communities that has created a satellite sites which are located at local hospitals, critical care facilities, nursing homes, and other health care facilities that have fine MOU with this program and are willing to serve and provide a classroom space for me as a student to get that instruction virtually. They're also providing my clinical hours that are necessary for either the LPN or registered nurse, that they both have clinical hour requirements. And then offering up a mentor in that facility, who can kind of be the point of contact with me as the student. So what this is done is it's opened up tremendous access about 2,000 degrees and certifications have been awarded in the past 15 years or 14 years since it's launched. It's so successful that the patch rates on the licensing exams are both higher than the national in North Dakota average. And they've worked with a number of local facilities to not only be part of the solution, but then also to be able to feed their own pipeline.

Kate: So the next strategy is really about technology, which obviously it can be kind of a two sided blade, is that the phrase? Something like that, right? And that it provides great opportunity, but requires an intense amount of quality control, and understanding what you're using technology for. The two ways that we've particularly seen technology used. One is about providing more access to employers. Virtually, particularly if you're in a rural community and there specifically aren't employers kind of in that community, or if you wanna be able to extend access to learners where there might be employers. They may not address every single industry or as you're thinking about work based learning opportunities. Although as we saw the employers being involved in field trips, which we consider to be very low level on the low end of career exposure of work based learning. And still only that 25% of districts actually that's even happening. But think about the more intensive work based learning internship, use apprenticeships, which simply put, there aren't enough placements for every single student in a school to be able to naturally do those. The technology can play a role in connecting and providing kind of a range of opportunities. I'm happy to talk about what it looks like. But really the two core questions is, how is this really supplementing both your pathways and the CTE experiences [INAUDIBLE] seems to have. But then really how are you making sure up front to identify what quality looks like and what the impact is. So the example we're gonna dive into is actually more on the pathway end, which is the Idaho CTE Digital. This is a statewide program, it's a learning academy that's been around for a few years to offer virtual courses kind of a number of subject. But a few years ago created a six courses in CTE particularly. These were developed by PD teachers, who were brought in to write the curriculum. And although a number of states that created digital courses or virtual course, what we think is unique about Idaho, is it's incredibly strategic about the design of this courses and how they're delivered. They purposely design them to be entry level the first year, introductory courses in health science, IT, a few other clusters. Because one, that concept's a bit broader. They're requiring students that are taking those courses to have an in-class hands-on experience, whether that's through work-based learning, whether it's participation in [INAUDIBLE] student organizations. But there is some kind of in-person experience. And then it frees up capacity of the teachers within these schools to teach the second, third, fourth
level courses.
So intentionally, that is the intro courses that are, again, not as Deep in terms of the content.
Don't necessarily need as much, although certainly need qualified instructors, but it's a different
level of expectation. So again, we just think it's a very strategic approach and kind of thought about
what the quality, what the impact, what implementation would look like at at the front-end of the
design of these courses.
So our last and probably the most exciting strategy is really about investing resources and doing so
innovatively, right? Both thinking about how we make sure that there is good equitable funding, and
that's a whole other conversation. But how can you target a federal and state investment?
Strategically, to really spark innovation, close, and focus on a specific gap.
So really thinking about where can you use the least amount of money to have the most impact?
Coming back again to the Nebraska revision. Those are $5,000 grants, right? Those are very or
started as a very low investment, that now has gone more interesting allowed them to get money
from the state legislature to the scale and to expand.
But it's really, and there's another example for example in Maryland that's interested in youth
apprenticeship. They give out two $5,000 grants to two communities to develop the apprenticeship
programs. And I remember, they are often called it as kind of fairy dust that they have. They are
seeing tremendous impact from such small investment.
So little investments with strategic direction and engaging it, employers particularly can go a long
way. So the example we have here is from South Dakota. This was a couple years ago. First lead by
the Governor, who put aside eight and half million of discretionary funds towards this workforce
education fund.
Let's just make sure more money into it. They're biannual grants given out by the state. Local
districts, as well as kind of group districts that come to our schools can apply for a range of things
that really are about. Addressing individual needs in your community. So they can be, those that just
wanna upgrade their programs and want some new equipment, wanna close some gaps.
It can be those that are looking for a full redesign or creating new programs. And they've seen
what's really exciting about this is not only are they very clear about their criteria, they've got the
rubrics, you can see how each and every application's scored, how the priority area's accessed being
one of those priority areas.
But then, they're very intentional about communicating and working with the schools and districts
when they're applying to realize that there are some out there that don't have the resources and
capacity to put aside a full-time grant writer like other, maybe larger or more well resourced
districts can. So finding that technical assistance and communications upfront from the state down
to locals has enabled there to be, and in a particularly rural state, but have a good diversity of those
communities that have been able to get grants.

Kate: So with that, we're gonna stop talking and turn it over to you to see if you have any questions,
any comments. We're also gonna have some time for some open discussion on kinda the next slide.
But wanted to just pause. I've been seeing there's a lot of comments about engaging and paying and
certifying.
Different teachers were happy to dig into any of those issues if you're interested, but just want to
open it up.

Austin: So again, if you have any questions, please type those into the chat box. And as they come
through, we'll try to address some of those. If you have any questions about some of the challenges
that we identified in this research, or if there are any promising strategies that you heard today that
you would like us to go into a little bit more detail about, we'd be happy to do that while we're here
with you on the call.

Austin: Otherwise, and as those questions come to mind, feel free to drop those into the chat box.
But we also wanted to open it up and give you all an opportunity to share some of the promising work that's happening in your communities. So if anybody has a story that they would like to share, or if there's something that kind of resonated with them that we shared about today and you would want to share with other folks on the phone as a success story, just raise your hand. There's a little visual right here that demonstrates how to do that. And then, we can unmute you so that you can share a little bit with the other folks on the call.

Austin: We did have a question that came in from, it looks like Leslie Long, about offering additional training to teachers who need assistance with pedagogical and cultural sensitivity training. So in our work, we were mostly looking through the state lens and how state leaders are building out pipelines and providing supports. Although, I do know there are a couple of states that are focusing specifically on anti-biased training and on supporting teachers beyond the technical knowledge, the technical content, and looking at how they can be better communicators to students in the classroom and to build relationships with all of their students.

Kate: And we were actually, Austin and I were a meeting this week with a number of states. And Massachusetts is in the process of creating a two-day training for school counselors, really, and other career counseling professionals who want to be more engaged in their new individual learning plan called MICAP, which is, many of you I'm sure have career and academic plans. And they have a two-day in what they are developing right now and kind of got up in front of the room and said we are planning to add quite a bit about cultural and implicit bias in our training for those counselors. I think they'll also be some teachers in the room, but it's largely for counselors and kind of intentionality.

I mean, I think that something we've seen, and something that came up, and this come often to the data, is when you think about the teacher issues and your pipeline challenges, how much of it is a recruitment challenge? How much of it is a retention challenge? And so, where we're seeing more states, where states have been investing largely is their recruitment, right?

In terms of creating, 92% of states have alternative certification policies and are allowing individuals to come in more quickly. Increasingly, states are looking at providing pathways into the classroom through co-teaching or part-time teaching. But where they're increasingly leaning in, like Kentucky, Missouri's been at this for quite awhile, Oklahoma's been at this for quite awhile, is really focusing on what happens when you get there on day one to have the strong induction, pairing them with a mentor to make sure that they are supported. But filling in those gaps, right? Particularly those that coming directly from industry who don't have the pedagogy, don't kind of have the understanding of what it means to work with students just generally, let alone kind of from a cultural perspective. So that's a slower moving ship, but I think we're seeing quite a few states be more intentional as they start to look at the data and realize that, yes, there is a recruitment challenge, but if we can keep them there, right, because we know if they're not supported, given that they're also being paid less, they will leave and go back to industry. So how do you make sure that they're equipped to be successful, and then want to stay?

Austin: Is there anybody on the call who has some success stories from their community, specifically in regards to teacher prep that they would like to share in closing those teacher shortage gaps? Or again, is there anything else that folks on the phone would like to share related to some of the topics that they've heard today? If so, just click on the raise hand icon, and we can unmute you so you can share with the rest of the participants.

Austin: Otherwise, I do see that there was a comment that came in from Ellen Hogarty Gomez about the CTE teacher pathway grants that OCTAY is currently administering. This is definitely something that we've been keeping a close eye on. It's only in the first year of implementation, but Tennessee and New Jersey, I believe, were the two state departments that
received the grant. The rest of them were for local school districts and education service agencies. But they have put together pretty comprehensive strategies for strengthening teacher pipelines that include partnerships with post-secondary teacher prep programs.

Tennessee is working to build capacity at the district level to help train and certify CTE teachers. As well as looking at New Jersey's looking at ways to certify teachers that are trained for academic courses to teach CTE courses. Tennessee's working on expanding grow your own teacher pipelines in high schools.

Essentially, education focused programs of study that build that interest and start to build skill at the high school level, and then connect high school students with post-secondary prep opportunities so that they can come back to their communities and teach. Sometimes in the same schools where they themselves were once taught.

So there are a lot of really interesting and innovation strategies that are being implemented through the grant. And it'll still be a few more years before we see the results of those efforts, but definitely one to keep in mind, especially if the teacher pipeline is a pressing issue for communities

Speaker 1: All right, well, it looks like there aren't any additional questions. And we are right about time, so I just wanna take the opportunity to really thank both Austin and Kate for providing this really helpful information to the group. We thank you very much for your time on this presentation