



Exploring the Landscape of Career Development Opportunities in Washington, DC, Public Schools

December 12, 2025

DC EDUCATION
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

Welcome

Dr. Dara Zeehandelaar Shaw, Director, DC Education Research Collaborative

The DC Education Research Collaborative is a research-practice partnership. We bring together the people who conduct research and the people who will use it and be affected by it. Our mission is to generate actionable information that can advance equity and improve student outcomes in DC public schools.

About this project

- **Phase 1 (2024–2026):** Landscape analysis of career development opportunities available to DCPS students.
- **Phase 2 (2025–2028):** Detailed study of a single program to understand implementation, costs, and outcomes.

A career development opportunity (CDO) might generate or sustain students' awareness and interest in a specific occupation or career field; provide instruction in academic, technical, and employability skills; build general or specific knowledge about careers and career development; or provide experiences required to enter and succeed in various careers.

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, through Grant R305N240059 to the Urban Institute. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Urban Institute or the US Department of Education.

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Agenda

1. Opening Remarks

Glenn Starnes II, Senior Deputy Chief for Social, Emotional and Academic Development Strategy, DC Public Schools

2. Summary of Findings

3. Career Development for All: Building a Landscape of Opportunities for DC Public Schools Students (panel)

4. Closing Remarks

Clara Botstein, Chief of Staff, DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education

5. Data Walk and Detailed Findings

Opening Remarks

Summary of Findings

Methodology

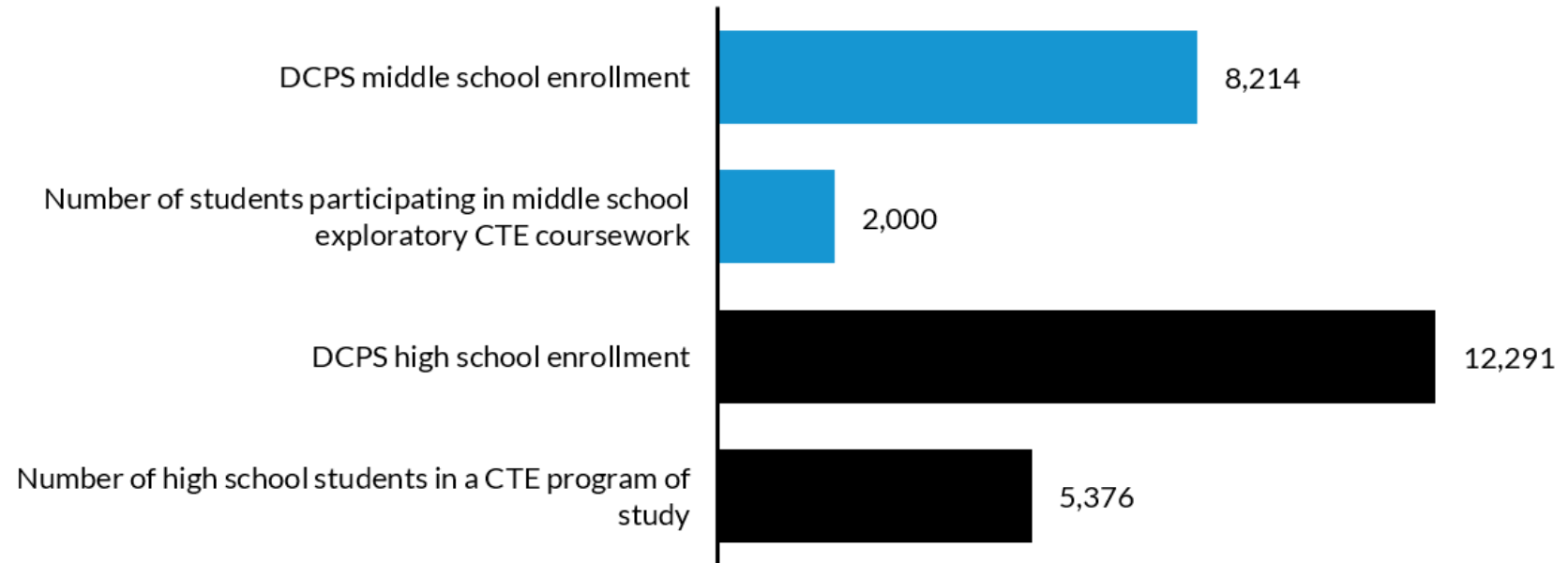
- **Focus** is on CDOs available to DCPS middle and high school students
- **Landscape analysis** examined components, activities, enrollment processes, locations, goals, and cost and management across CDOs
- **Data sources** include publicly available materials, responses to a questionnaire, interviews, and additional data requested from DCPS
- **Findings refer to school year 2023–24**, unless otherwise noted



Overview of Types of CDOs

- Study includes 38 types of CDOs
- Most are administered by DCPS, with DC government agencies (OSSE and DOES) and nonprofit partners offering the rest
- Participation levels vary, with CTE coursework being one of the largest

DCPS Enrollment and CTE Coursework or Program of Study Participation



Source: DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education enrollment audit and data requested from DCPS.

Note: CTE = career and technical education; DCPS = DC Public Schools.

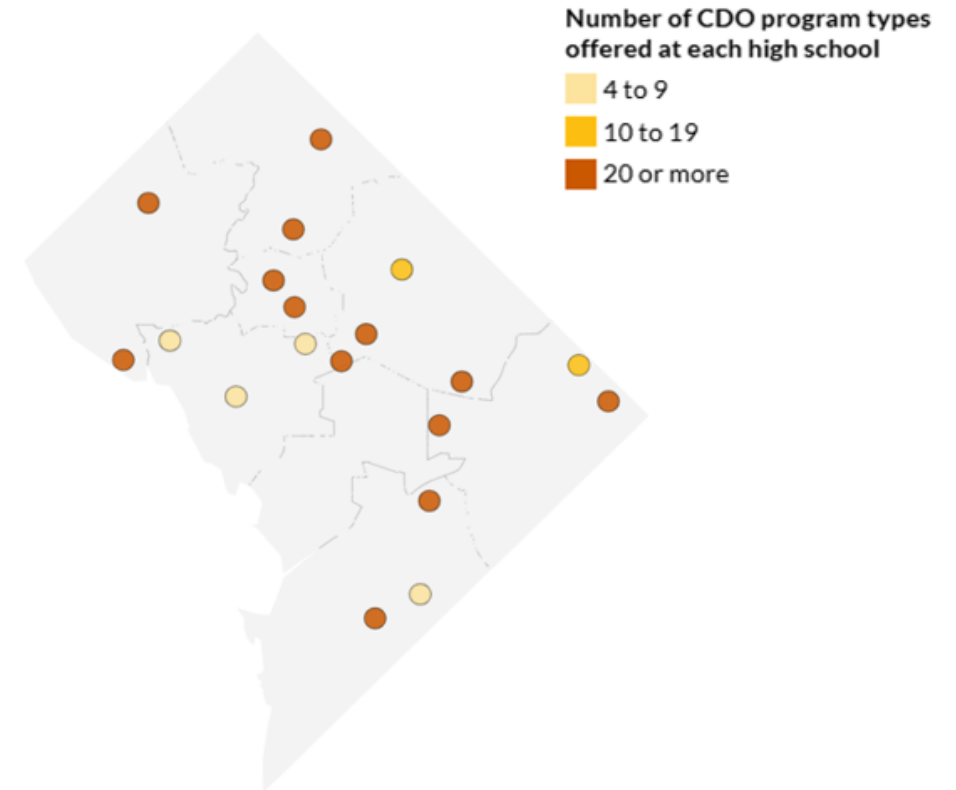
Categories of CDOs

Category	Goal	Example types of CDOs
Formal coursework	Provide structured, for-credit, classroom-based instruction	Career and technical education (CTE) programs of study
Career awareness and exploration	Build early career interest, motivation, and foundational skills	Light-touch activities: career fairs, guest speakers, job shadowing, workplace tours
Work-based learning	Obtain real-world experience, employability skills, and credentials	Paid or unpaid internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training
Postsecondary planning and supports	Identify top career interests and choose the aligned postsecondary pathway	Individualized guides, surveys, mentoring, and college & career planning

Theory of Action for DCPS Students and CDOs

- **CTE programs of study are the core,** reinforced and extended by awareness and exploration, work-based learning, and postsecondary supports
- **Middle school CDOs** mostly focus on early exposure to prepare students for informed choices entering high school
- **High school CDOs** tend to have a broader range of offerings across categories

DCPS High Schools and Number of CDO Program Types Offered



Source: Analysis of CDO questionnaire responses.

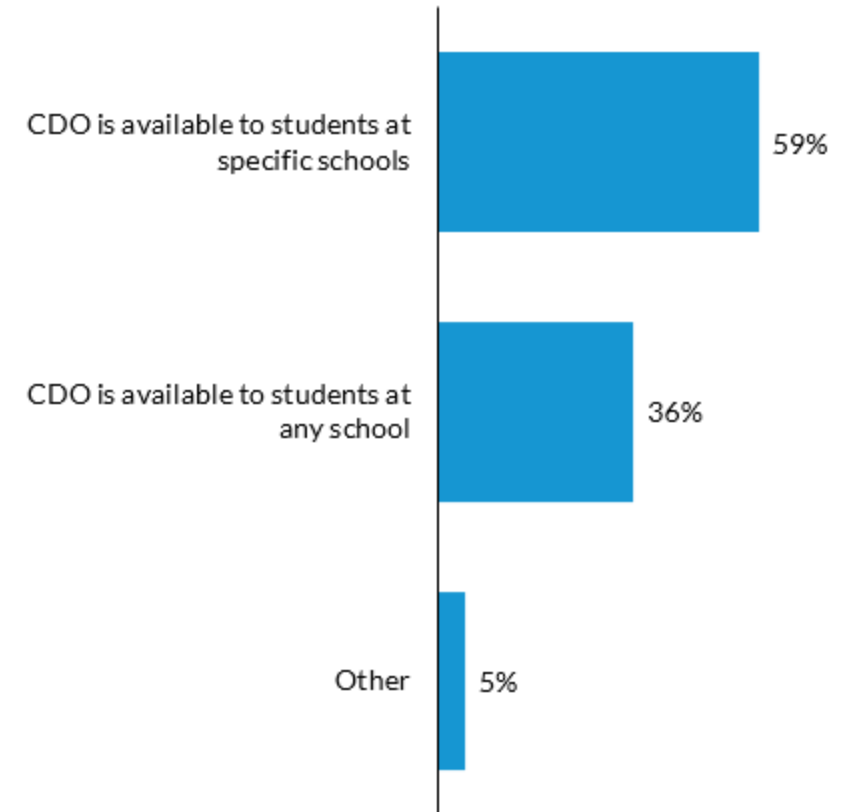
Note: CDO = career development opportunity; DCPS = DC Public Schools.

Cost and Management Structures of CDOs

- **DCPS Central Services** provides design and oversight, determining which types of CDOs are available and approving core aspects
- **DCPS middle and high schools** are responsible for implementation and operations, managing day-to-day operations and hiring
- **Funding includes a mix** of federal grants, per pupil funding, other local revenue, and private philanthropy
- **Majority of costs are for personnel**, including CTE teachers

Availability of Career Development Opportunities

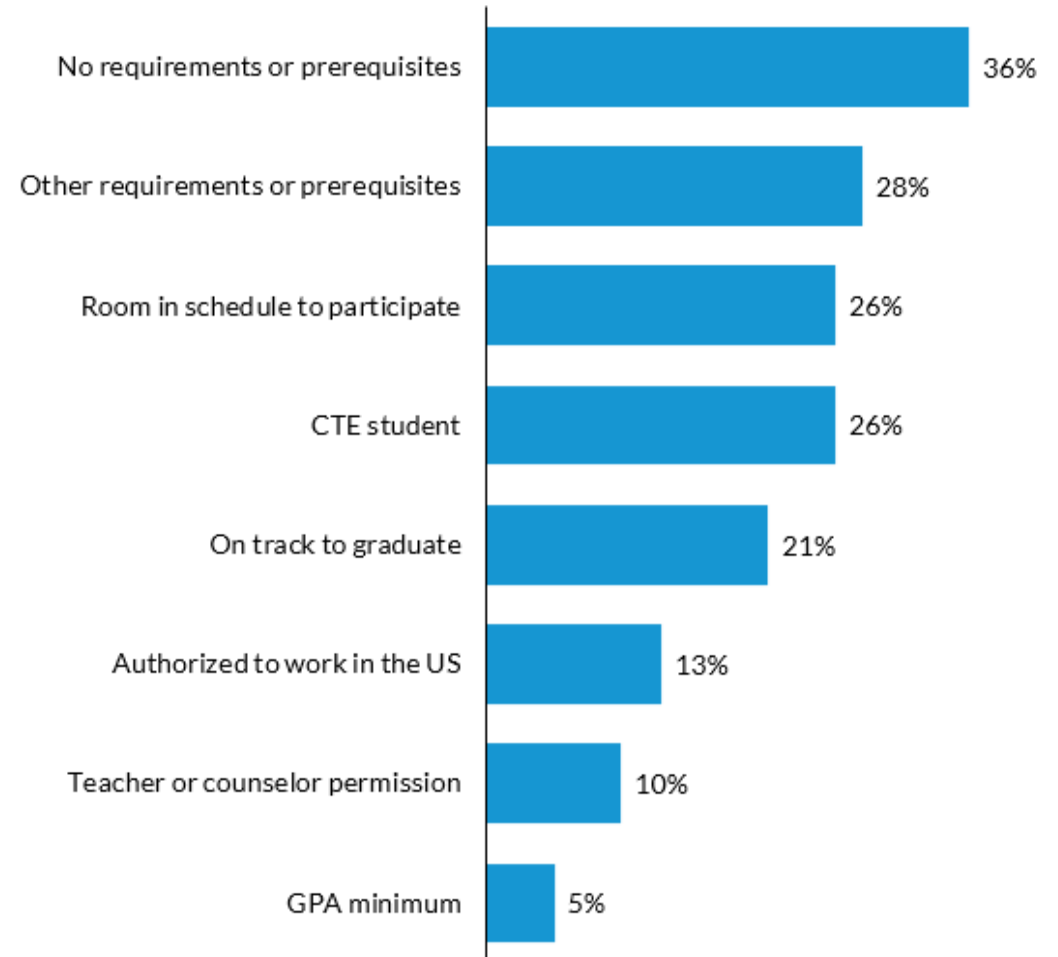
- Participation in most CDOs is determined by the school that a student attends
- The number of CDO program types offered is largely in line with school grade span
 - Most middle school students have 4 or 5 types of CDOs available to them; most high school students have 20 or more
 - Exception: students at high schools with specialized programs can access far fewer CDOs
- The number of CDO types offered at DCPS high schools is unrelated to schools' share of economically disadvantaged students



Source: Analysis of CDO questionnaire responses.
Note: N (CDO types) = 38

Access to Career Development Opportunities

About two-thirds of CDO types have at least one prerequisite or entry requirement, such as a student being on track to graduate, having time in their schedule, or already completing some portion of a CTE program of study



Source: Analysis of CDO questionnaire responses. N(CDO types) = 38

Wages in Occupations Associated with CTE Programs of Study

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education lists between one and eight occupations aligned to each CTE program of study.

Each occupation has wage data in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics dataset for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metropolitan statistical area.

- Most schools offer more than one program of study, with associated occupations that have a **range of average median wages**. For example, a single school may offer programs of study in graphic design and illustration (average median wage of associated occupations: \$75,613), biomedical science (\$101,842), and finance (\$130,056).
- The average median wages of occupations associated with the CTE programs of study is **not related to a school's share of economically disadvantaged students**.

Panel
*Career Development for All:
Building a Landscape of Opportunities for
DC Public Schools Students*

Panelists



Regina McClure
*CTE Director of STEM NAF Academies,
Jackson-Reed High School*



Candice Mott
*CTE Performance Accountability Coordinator,
Office of the State Superintendent of Education*



Jennie Niles
*President and CEO,
CityWorks DC*



Glenn Starnes II
*Senior Deputy Chief for SEAD Strategy,
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Jennifer L. Steele
*Professor, School of Education,
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Moderator



Marian Wilkins
*Principal,
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Closing Remarks

Data Walk