

One of your critical responsibilities as a CTE leader is to promote your program. In the short term, creating a positive public image of your CTE program will make recruiting students much easier. In the long term, effective communication strategies can change the CTE narrative, making parents and students (and fellow educators) more comfortable and enthusiastic about Jump Start pathways as the gateway to college and career.

It's essential for you to develop advocacy initiatives for each of your stakeholders. Parents and students must always be your primary focus - without them there is no CTE program. But it is also critical to your program's success to promote a positive image for Jump Start among other stakeholders – educators and administrators at the school and district levels, current and potential industry partners, regional economic development organizations and community and non-profit partners.

Promoting CTE and Your Jump Start Program	
Target Audiences	Key Messages
Students Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTE is the gateway to career <i>and</i> college – <i>Jump Start doesn't limit educational opportunities</i> CTE helps students find high-paying careers after high school while they pursue additional education and training CTE makes high school more interesting and relevant – Jump Start is <i>fun</i>! CTE students achieve amazing things (showcase student accomplishments)
Administrators Teachers Counselors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTE prepares students for adult success <i>and future education / training</i> Jump Start multiplies student opportunities (doesn't restrict or track students) CTE increases student enthusiasm for / engagement in school
Current Industry Partners Prospective Industry Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTE programs will deliver your future workforce Jump Start can create a more "work-ready" workforce with your involvement Involved industry partners serve their community (showcase engaged partners)
Regional Economic Development Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTE is central to the mission of enhancing regional economies REDOs play a critical role in bringing mentors and partners to CTE programs
Community and Non-Profit Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CTE programs build strong communities of engaged, employed young people Supporting CTE programs is aligned with the mission of community partners
Communications Methods	
In-School	Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posters (in classrooms, hallways, cafeterias, etc.) Demonstrations / student presentations / "events" In-school mentor engagement (in-person, virtual) Fliers, brochures, fact sheets Presentations at teacher meetings / PD sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press releases / engaging local media (example: local media covering student work sites) Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) Community presentations (including students!) Joint messaging with local employers / REDOs
See the Academy website (www.lactealeaders.com) for best practices resources developed by other CTE leaders	

Changing the Narrative

Currently CTE is regarded by too many stakeholders – especially parents and traditional educators – as a lesser pathway for students. *This simply isn't true. We have to change the narrative.*

Parents want to hear the CTE delivers appealing career *and* college opportunities for students. They want to hear about the value of CTE programs from other parents and from guidance counselors. Parents will be receptive to positive messages about your CTE program that they can view on Facebook or Twitter.

Educators need to learn how Jump Start multiplies student opportunities, unlike the old Career Diploma that tracked students to lower-trajectory opportunities.

An effective outreach campaign will combine core messaging with real facts that will serve to dispel CTE myths.

Dispelling the Myths About CTE	
Myth	Reality
Jump Start courses are for students who under-perform academically.	Jump Start Courses prepare students of all capabilities for career <i>and</i> college. Jump Start students can find their passion through CTE, continue their education and training on an LCTCS campus, and in some cases go all the way to a four-year degree. <i>All students are career students!</i>
Jump Start students are passing up their opportunity to go to college.	Absolutely not true. Jump Start students are building a solid academic foundation, while preparing themselves to attend post-secondary campuses. Jump Start students can actually earn TOPS Tech scholarships to pursue post-secondary education
Jump Start is a new label for an old system that labels and “tracks” students.	Jump Start pathways help students complete a solid academic foundation and master the workplace skills and behaviors necessary to succeed on the job, while earning industry-based credentials that help them attain entry-level employment. Jump Start lifts students up, it doesn't limit them.
Jump Start Pathways are inflexible, forcing students to choose a pathway too early during high school.	Jump Start pathways aren't selected until the student's third year of high school. The long list of Universal courses enable students who change interests (or schools) to complete a newly-selected pathway as late as their senior year. Jump Start courses enable students to earn IBCs, providing students with a <i>competitive advantage</i> for entry-level jobs versus non-credentialed applicants.
Jump Start courses lack the rigor of academic courses.	Jumps Start courses tied to industry-valued IBCs are challenging courses. Students who complete the courses learn important skills, while gaining self-confidence and the respect of their future colleagues.
Jump Start Pathways relegate students to work in low-paying jobs as adults.	Jump Start Pathways enable students to earn IBCs that qualify them for high-wage careers in the high-demand industry sectors that will drive Louisiana's future prosperity.

Your challenge is to the change the narrative among *all* stakeholders, especially parents and educators.

As indicated on the next two pages, using social media for advocacy (and sharing / using best practices resources developed by CTE leaders) is a low-cost, high-impact strategy for changing the narrative.

Tips: Using Social Media for Advocacy

Using social media for advocacy is a low-cost and effective way to get your message out to key target audiences. We've developed some practical tips on using social media for advocacy to help you succeed.

Before and while you use social media to spread the word, ask and answer these three questions:		
Q1) Who am I talking to?	You want to spread the word about something – but who do you want to tell? Parents? Students? Fellow educators? Industry stakeholders? Local political leaders? Even if you have the same news to share with different stakeholders, you probably have to think about how you tell each group this information in the way they can best hear it.	
Q2) What key message(s) am I trying to communicate?	You need to determine the message(s) you’re sending to your target audience(s). Try to frame your message(s) using the following guidelines.	
	What’s the least I can say?	There might be many reasons why something is important, but not all of them need to be said at once. Ask yourself: what’s the single, most important and most compelling reason I’m reaching out? And how concisely can I make this point?
	Will this grab their attention?	The news you want to share can be important for lots of reasons. Determine what’s going to matter <u>the most</u> for each target audience.
	How can I make it easy to understand?	Visual images (including photos, memes, gifs, and emojis) and local jargon can enhance the clarity of your message, while establishing commonality (and even trust) with your target audience(s).
	How can I be memorable?	Create “grabby” messages that are positive and unobjectionable (see the next page for examples).
		Tell a story, because people respond more to stories than to facts. Stories have a beginning (your “grabby” message), an ending, and a morale (typically how others can experience this same positive outcome).
Repetition, repetition, repetition. “Message discipline” means repeatedly communicating the key messages you’ve decided are most important.		
Q3) “Where” (i.e., which social media platforms) am I mostly likely to be speaking to my target audience(s)?	Different audiences use social platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) in their own ways. Make sure you’re using the right platform for the audience you’re trying to reach. Generally speaking, parents (and educators) use Facebook more frequently than students. Students use Snapchat and Instagram more frequently than parents, but to consume more than to post. Many people use Twitter, but primarily to tap into conversations they’re interested in (or to follow opinion leaders they admire). Professionals looking to network and/or change jobs actively use LinkedIn. <i>If you’re intending to send the same message to multiple audiences, figure out how to create that message in multiple formats appropriate for each platform.</i>	



Best Practices: Advocating for Your CTE Program



Examples of “Grabby” Messages

Developing a “grabby” message that is positive and unobjectionable is perhaps the critical advocacy challenge.

Examples of “grabby” CTE messages might include:

- Our high school graduates earn \$40,000 per year
- Earn more than your parents
- College students earning thousands each month
- College students with new trucks *and* money in their pocket
- Fun jobs that pay thousands

The goal is for your headline to spark interest, so that any additional text provides more details about something that your intended audience might actually be interested in reading.

Remember: fewer words is better. Your key headline should never be longer than 10 words.

Don’t be afraid to be visual. We’re in a world of photographs, gifs, emojis and memes. Use images if they enhance your messages. ***Just be careful the images, gifs, emojis and memes are unobjectionable.***

Staying Safe . . . And Smart

Here are two final thoughts on making sure your advocacy efforts are most likely to succeed.

First, share with trusted advisors before releasing a social media initiative. It always helps to have a small circle of trusted advisors who you can use as “test markets” for your intended messages. If you have trusted advisors in each of your target segments (parents, students, educators, industry allies) you can bounce the advocacy concepts / messages your considering off each of them to receive their constructive feedback.

Second, after you launch stay engaged, disciplined, and positive. Once you launch your message, you’ll track the responses to monitor the reactions your outreach achieves.

When you receive positive responses, “re-Tweet” / recirculate them to your intended audiences. When you receive negative or doubtful feedback, *stay positive*. Don’t get into a mud-slinging contest. Acknowledge the message and politely counter with a positive and uplifting response.

Most importantly, don’t engage in conversations that stop being constructive. Negative comments can turn into positive ones if met with thoughtful, positive, and considered responses. But if it appears the person on the other side of your conversation just wants to pick a fight (and not solve a problem), move on.

Best Practices Library of Advocacy Messages and Images

If you have posted what you believe is an effective advocacy message, please send it to www.laceteleaders.com

The CTE Leadership Academy will create a library of advocacy messages and images that tell the CTE and Jump Start stories in the best, most compelling ways.

CTE leaders and teachers can then customize these messages and use them in their classrooms, schools, districts and communities.