

# Doing What Matters for Jobs in Solano County newsletter

Volume 1/Issue 3

SOLANO COLLEGE  
CAREER TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION

BUILDING CAREERS



SUPPORTING LOCAL  
INDUSTRY

## APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup> DOING WHAT MATTERS MEETING

The next **Doing What Matters for Jobs in Solano County meeting will take place April 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:00am-1:00pm.** We have several goals for this meeting:

1. Update all attendees on what has transpired in CTE as a result of the August 12th initiative and follow up meetings. Solano College heard you and some of your main concerns are being addressed.

2. This meeting will focus on those individuals who have expressed interest in assisting in specific areas. These areas are:

- Soft Skills for employment
- What stakeholders (employers, K-12, etc.) would like to see in someone who is the main point of contact for CTE programs and questions (i.e. Point Person).
- Marketing SCC career technical education programs to ensure steady stream of trained workers for local industries.

We are in the process of contacting individuals who specifically stated they would like to help in these areas. However, anyone with a specific interest in these areas can help. If you would like to attend this session and give us input, but did not volunteer last fall, or you have not been contacted by our team, **please call us at 707-366-2756.**

Thank you for your dedication in assisting us in our efforts to strengthen our Technical Education programs so we can better train a strong workforce for Solano County.

## CTE WINNING EXAMPLES: A PROGRAM THAT MIXES ACADEMICS WITH VOCATIONAL TRAINING

By Molly Samuel of Marketplace Radio and NPR

**Listen to online story with this link:** <https://www.marketplace.org/2016/03/10/education/program-mixes-academics-vocational-training>

More than 1,200 students come to the Carroll County College and Career Academy on any given day to take career classes. The school is west of Atlanta, near the Alabama border. Students here learn fields as varied as culinary arts, welding and auto mechanics. They all go to one of the five regular high schools in the district for their other classes, like math and history, then come here for job skills.

“This is sort of a tree,” said 11<sup>th</sup> grader Jordan Decker, who was using a torch to melt pieces of metal together, making a little shape, to practice his brazing skills. The 17-year-old 11<sup>th</sup> grader is studying heating ventilation and air conditioning maintenance and repair, or HVAC.

“Without this program, I’d still be trying to find what I wanted to do with my life,” said Decker. “This is what I want to do.”

The proportion of high school students who take classes in, say, construction, has gone down over the past couple decades. Meanwhile, employers in construction and other industries say they can't find enough skilled workers. But vocational training hasn't gone away completely. Some school districts are really emphasizing it. And it no longer comes with the old stereotype -- that it's for students who aren't college material.

Most high schools offer some kind of career training, but a lot of that is focused on things like health care, or communications. Decker's HVAC teacher, Steve McCray, said vocational training has changed.

"It used to be kind of a, I guess a dumping ground for troubled kids," he said. "Now it's for kids who want to go out there and want to get a job."

And the school encourages the students here to continue with their educations after high school, too.

"You know, in the old days, it was some kids are going to college, and some kids are going to work, and you need to treat them differently," said Bob Schwartz of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. "I think we now are beginning to understand, everybody needs something beyond a high school education, and everybody needs to be thinking from pretty early on, about a career."

Several years ago, Schwartz and a couple of colleagues did a study on how prepared young people in America were to join the workforce. They found on the one hand, even though high schools have encouraged students to pursue college degrees, plenty of students never get that far. They end up without degrees or much career direction. "From the employer perspective," said Schwartz, "they're saying, 'The skills gap is real. We simply can't find people with the skills we need to be able to grow our businesses.'"



Photo of Jordan Decker who is studying HVAC at Carroll County College and Career Academy.

Schwartz said many high school dropouts later say one reason they didn't stick with it, was they didn't see how what they were learning applied to the real world.

In the last couple decades, the percentage of students taking classes in construction, manufacturing, and other trades has gone down, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Meanwhile job prospects for people who do have those skills are good.

Take HVAC installation and repair, what student Jordan Decker is studying. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, that field will grow 14 percent by 2024, adding nearly 40,000 jobs. In Georgia, according to the state Department of Economic Development, there are more than 300 openings every year, both new jobs, and unfilled positions.

Carroll County revamped its technical education program in 2005. Since then, the school has doubled its enrollment, and the principal says a lot of that increase has been from the more academically-accomplished students deciding to come here. In 2015, more than 90 percent of the seniors who took classes here, graduated from high school. The school system’s average that year was 76 percent.

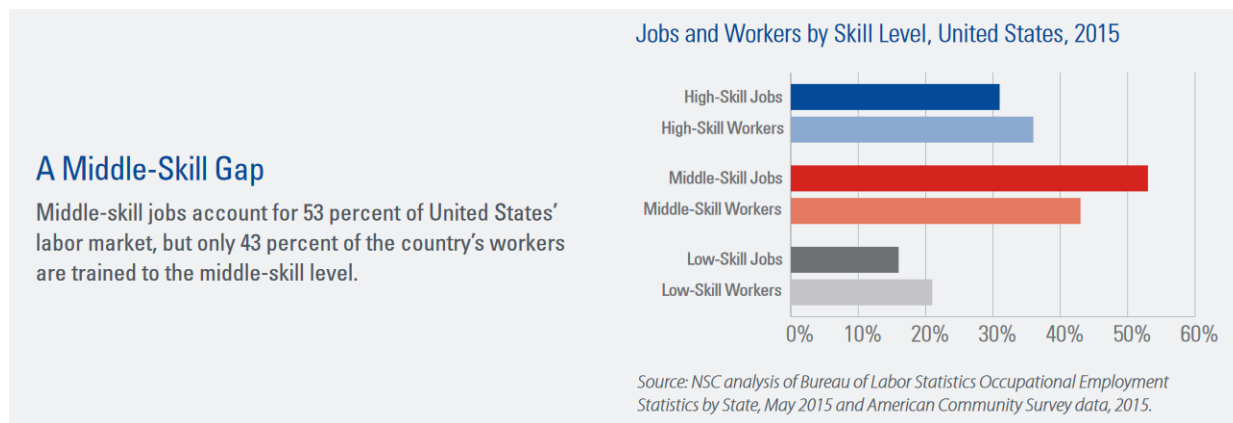
“I plan on getting a job doing this out of high school,” said Decker. “And then eventually going to college and working for either a big company or making it bigger myself.”

Teacher Steve McCray said he enjoys hearing from his former students. “It’s nice when they stop back by and they tell you, ‘Mr. McCray, look at my new truck, I’m buying my house,’” he said.

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**“By Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy,  
we deliver a Strong Workforce for California”**  
California Community College system Vice Chancellor Van Ton-Quinlivan

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## DOING WHAT MATTERS FOR JOBS IN SOLANO COUNTY STEERING COMMITTEE

- Debbie Berrett – Solano College Faculty Association
- Karen Cook - Solano College Faculty Association
- Mark DeWeerd – Workforce Development Board
- Anna Eng - Bay Area Industrial Areas Foundation
- Brian Hooker - Workforce Development Board of Solano County

- Diana Lisi - California Teachers Association
- Maire Morinec - Solano Community College District
- Jon Riley - Napa/Solano Labor Council
- Steve Savage – California Teachers Association
- Michael Wyly – Solano Collage Faculty Senate

