Credentials Matter is groundbreaking, first-of-its-kind research. While not exhaustive, it is the most comprehensive examination of industry credential attainment in high school CTE programs.

Credentials Matter findings and recommendations represent a critical first step to helping a range of stakeholders understand the current landscape of credentials earned and evaluate whether those credentials have currency in the job market.

Despite the growing importance of industry credentials in student pathways, there has been no analysis of which ones matter most to employers.

Research Questions and Data

The research seeks to answer the following questions:	The data used to answer these questions includes:
How many states are collecting data on student credential attainment and what data collection methods are they using?	**Data Collection:** States collecting data and how they are doing so.
Which credentials are being earned by students?	**Supply:** Credentials earned by students in high school, generally in state CTE programs provided directly by state education agencies.
What is the employer demand for credentials?	**Demand:** Employer demand for credentials according to actual job postings sourced from the Burning Glass' proprietary job postings database.
How do credentials earned align with employer demand?	**Alignment:** Comparing supply to demand to determine how the credentials students earn align with workforce demand in each state.

Findings

- Only about half of all states (28) collect quantitative data on the attainment of credentials.
- Of the 24 states where data was made available, no state is *highly aligned* in terms of supply of credentials earned by high school students and demand for those credentials in the job market.
- States do not have consistent definitions for what constitutes an industry-recognized credential—even though high school students earn hundreds of thousands of credentials each year.
- Many credentials are not explicitly requested in employer job listings, despite the fact that the credentials may be required or desired for the position.
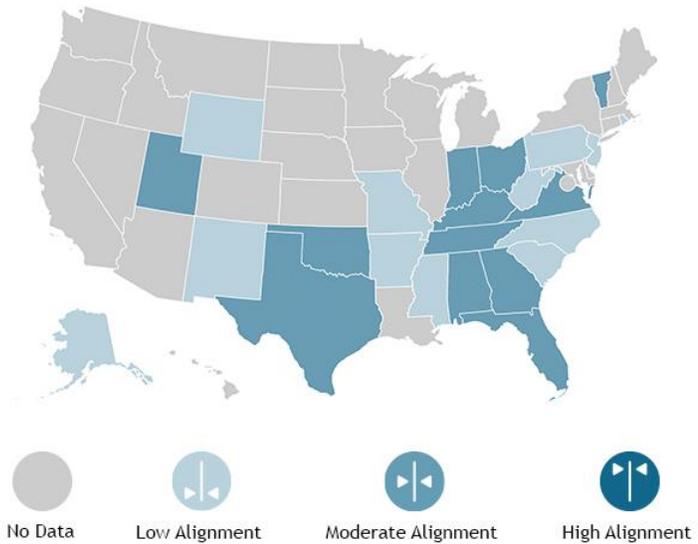
Recommendations

- **States**: Convene stakeholders to implement policies and processes that leverage data on credential attainment and workforce demands to ensure alignment between education systems and the workforce.

- **Districts, Schools and Postsecondary Institutions:** Improve alignment between program offerings, credentials available and workforce demands.

- **Business and Industry**: Improve employer signaling to better communicate specific needs and the advantages that various credentials provide.

- **Credentialing Entities:** Increase capacity and willingness to provide states with data that can be integrated into their data systems to evaluate the return on investment of credentials for students and the workforce.

Click on the graphics below to download or download a zip file of all four graphics.

State of Credentials: Alignment

Are high school students earning credentials that align with workforce demand?

No Data   Low Alignment   Moderate Alignment   High Alignment

SOURCE: ExcelinEd and Burning Glass Technologies, *Credentials Matter Report 1: A National Landscape of High School Student Credential Attainment Compared to Workforce Demand, May 2019*

State of Credentials: Data Collection

How are states collecting data on credentials?

No Data   List   Secondary   Secondary And Postsecondary

SOURCE: ExcelinEd and Burning Glass Technologies, *Credentials Matter Report 1: A National Landscape of High School Student Credential Attainment Compared to Workforce Demand, May 2019*
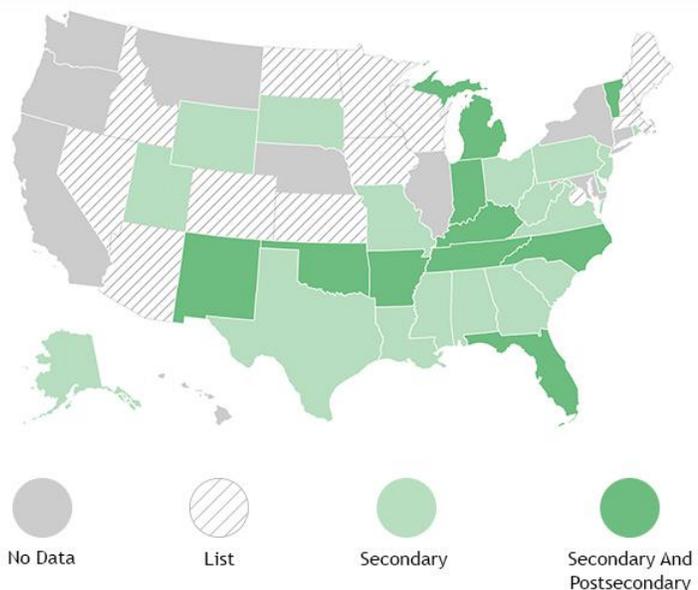
Career Growth Projection and Earnings

	Floral Design	Hairdressers, Hairstylists and Cosmetologists	Licensed Practical or Vocational Nurse	Computer Support Specialist	Food Preparation and Serving Workers	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
Associated Credentials	License Certification	License	License	Certification	Certification	Certification
Employment # (2016)	55,000	617,300	724,500	835,400	3,452,200	749,900
Median Pay (2017)	$26,350	$24,850	$45,030	$56,275	$20,180	$39,550
Projected Growth (2016-26)	-6%	13%	12%	10%	17%	6%

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2017

License   Certification

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2017

Top 10 credentials demanded and earned nationally:

Very Undersupplied   Moderately Undersupplied   Supply Meets Demand   Moderately Oversupplied   Very Oversupplied

	Top Credentials by Demand	Credentials Demanded	Supply/Demand Category
1	Microsoft Office Specialist	4,046,879	Very Undersupplied
2	Commercial Driver's License	594,563	Very Undersupplied
3	Licensed Practical Nurse	364,610	Very Undersupplied
4	Dental Assistant	182,377	Very Undersupplied
5	Certified Medical Assistant	181,281	Very Undersupplied
6	Automotive Service Excellence Certification	170,866	Very Undersupplied
7	Adobe Certified Associate	168,901	Supply Meets Demand
8	Adobe Certified Expert	168,901	Very Undersupplied
9	Certified Pharmacy Technician	142,835	Very Undersupplied
10	Electrician License	127,812	Very Undersupplied

	Top Credentials Earned	Credentials Earned	Supply/Demand Category
1	Microsoft Office Specialist	129,895	Very Undersupplied
2	W!SE Financial Literacy Certification	67,208	Very Oversupplied
3	NCCER - Core Curriculum	60,350	Very Oversupplied
4	Adobe Certified Associate	52,189	Supply Meets Demand
5	Virginia Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth	42,313	Very Oversupplied
6	Basic First Aid	36,102	Very Oversupplied
7	NCCER - Carpentry	33,392	Very Oversupplied
8	IC3 Certification	22,840	Very Oversupplied
9	Automotive Service Excellence Certification	22,726	Very Undersupplied
10	ServSafe Certification (Manager/Food Handler/Allergens/Alcohol)	21,597	Moderately Undersupplied