**Intent to Close and Closure Plan for State Designated Program**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

This guidance applies to state-approved Career Technical Education Programs (C74), Career Technical Education Partnership Programs (After Dark), and Innovation Career Pathways.

1. **We are planning to close a program. Who do we notify?**

The program closure process begins with submitting the [Intent to Close](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7493851/Intent-to-Close-a-Program) to the Office of College, Career, and Technical Education. Once you submit an Intent, your CCTE Liaison will reach out to you to set up a meeting.

1. **If we submit an Intent to Close, do we have to proceed with closing the program?**

No. Submitting an Intent to Close does not obligate a district to close the program. Instead, it initiates a discussion between the school and the CCTE liaison to ensure the district makes the most informed decision.

1. **Who do I need to consult with in the school & district when considering closing a program?**

There are many considerations to program changes, which necessitates input from a variety of roles including, for example, the Superintendent, principal, and CTE Director. Any decision for an After Dark program should be made in collaboration with both school partners. If you are a member of a regional technical school district, you would want to be in communication with that district.

1. **What should we be considering when thinking about closing a program?**

There are many things to consider when thinking of closing a program including (but not limited to) your districts Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), enrollment and outcome data, labor market demand, and student interest. Considerations for program closure are largely the same as opening a program. Contact your CCTE liaison who can discuss this more with you.

1. **How long does the program closure process take?**

Districts are encouraged to take the time necessary to discuss planned closures before making a final decision. If the district decides to submit a closure plan, once submitted, the plan could be approved within a week or two. However, the process of closing the program will depend on local factors. Most closure plans are designed to officially close the program within 2-3 years of the closure plan approval, allowing enrolled students to complete the program.

1. **Can we suspend enrollment in a program temporarily? If so, what is the process?**

There is no process for temporary suspension of enrollment in a program. Schools with questions about this should reach out to their CCTE liaison.

1. **What are the reasons a school would close a program?**

Some common reasons include insufficient student interest/low enrollment; program lost instructor(s); inability to obtain a licensed instructor (for a CTE or After Dark program); and/or insufficient labor market demand. In some cases, one or more of these reasons might be coupled with a desire to gain DESE approval for a CTE or Innovation Career Pathway program not currently offered at the school.

1. **If a CTE Partnership “After Dark” program is closed, can the school continue operating the CTE “regular” program?**

Yes. Closing an After Dark program is separate from closing the CTE program itself. Closing an After Dark program has no effect on the status of that same program in the school's regular day technical programming.

1. **Can the school operating an After Dark program close the regular program but continue to offer the program as After Dark?**

No. Should a school district elect to close a C74 program, that program could no longer be offered as an After Dark partnership program. The program closure plan would include the option for all enrolled students to complete the program.

1. **Who submits an Intent to Close and Closure Plan for an After Dark program? The sending school, or the school where the Ch 74 program is offered?**

The sending district is the applicant for the After Dark designation, so the sending district would submit the Intent to Close and Closure Plan. Consultation with the partnering school should occur beforehand.

1. **Do we need a closure plan to close a career connection program (formerly called Perkins-only)?**

No. However you should let your CCTE liaison know if there is intention to discontinue a career connection program.

1. **Can a CTE program or an After Dark program that has not had students enrolled for several years stay on the books and be re-opened or must it close?**

A district should submit the [Intent to Close](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7493851/Intent-to-Close-a-Program) before a program becomes non-operational. If a program is non-operational, please submit an Intent to Close. This Intent will prompt a meeting with the OCCTE Liaison to further discuss options. Submitting an Intent to Close does not obligate a district to close the program.

1. **Will DESE close our CTE or After Dark program if we have not reported students for several years?**

The Closure Plan process is designed to prevent this scenario. OCCTE annually reviews program enrollment data. A district's own data review, low enrollment and/or a trend of diminishing enrollment would prompt a discussion before enrollment dropped to zero.

1. **What happens to our program if DESE no longer supports it as a state CTE program**?

On occasion DESE may change a CTE program. This might occur through Framework changes or because a program is no longer supported by sufficient labor market demand. This may include regulatory changes. OCCTE will keep the field apprised and be in contact with affected districts to partner for a smooth transition.

1. **What happens if a school loses the teacher for a CTE program?**

Although CTE programs may not operate without an appropriately licensed teacher or an annual waiver of this requirement, lack of a licensed teacher would not close a program by default. Because circumstances are unique to programs and schools, please contact your CCTE liaison to support you in addressing this situation.

1. **Can we operate a closed CTE program as a Perkins-funded career connection program?**

According to Massachusetts Technical Education Regulation [603 CMR 4.04](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr4.html?section=04)(6), with Department approval, a program that has been discontinued through an approved program closure may be offered as a regular education program. A program whose approval has been revoked may not be offered as a regular education program. Some programs may only operate with CTE approval. Please contact your districts CCTE liaison if you want to offer a closed CTE program as a career connections program.

1. **What are the programs that can only operate with CTE approval?**

The secondary level programs that can only operate with CTE approval are currently: 1) Animal Science, 2) Aviation Maintenance Technology, 3) Cosmetology, 4) Early Education and Care, 5) Electricity, 6) HVAC, 7) Plumbing, and 8) Veterinary Science.

1. **Can a school district offer grade 12 cooperative education but no other technical classes for the last year of the program’s operation?**

Technical education classes must be provided to allow students who are not participating in cooperative education to continue developing their knowledge and skills. If seniors normally have an option to participate in cooperative education, this option should continue.

1. **Once a CTE program is closed, are there restrictions on how we dispose of program equipment and supplies?**

The early local discussions should include how, when, or if to dispose of or donate equipment and supplies. In some cases, a district may still use some or all of the equipment. Disposal of equipment depends on the funds used to purchase the equipment, the age of the equipment, and other factors. You may contact your CCTE liaison with questions.

1. **If we are closing a CTE program, when do we stop offering that program as an Exploratory option?**

Please be certain to submit an [Intent to Close](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7493851/Intent-to-Close-a-Program) and consult with your CCTE liaison before taking any steps. Once you are certain you wish to close a program, eliminating it from the list of Exploratory options is one of the first steps you should take. Every new student accepted into a program is a student who must be allowed to complete the program.

1. **Can a district disapprove a nonresident tuition application if they have the approved program, even if it is planned for closure?**

This would be examined through the CTE Request for Review process. Please see [Non-Resident Tuition Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/policies/admissions/default.html#nonresident).

1. **Are nonresident students afforded the same rights as resident students to complete a CTE program that is planned for closure?**

Non-resident students, like resident students, must have options to complete their CTE technical education program. If the program has non-resident students enrolled, the closure plan should include communication to the district of residence of the planned closure including plans for the student to complete the program.

# Closure Plan Information

Following a discussion with DESE initiated by the district submitting an intent to close, the district will be asked to submit a closure plan. The closure plan should include the information below. Note: For CTE Partnership Programs, this closure plan is submitted by the district that sends students to the program.

## General

* Name of District
* Name of School in which the program(s)/pathway(s) operates
* Type of Program
* Program/Pathway Title(s)
* Name of Person completing this form
  + Role (of person completing this form)
  + Email address
  + Phone number
* Name(s) of DESE OCCTE staff that were consulted on the plan to close the program
* Names and roles of district and school level staff who were consulted on the decision to close the program. This must include the Superintendent.

## Rationale

* Provide the reason(s) the district is closing the program.
* Include how the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, Pathways Strategy, and other strategic plans supports the closure of the program. Please provide a summary of any data collected and considered in your plan development.

## Current Students

* Provide the Option(s) for existing students to complete the program.

## Communication Plan

* Provide when, how, and messaging that will be used to inform currently enrolled students (and their families) that the program will close, including their option(s) to complete the program.
* Provide when, how, and messaging that will be used to inform the wider community that the program is being closed.
* Provide when, how, and what messaging will be communicated with employer, higher education, and other community partners and stakeholders.
* If applicable, Provide the outreach plan to districts that are paying tuition for nonresident student(s) in the program.

## Timeline

* Include a date which the program will be closed. This cannot be while students are still enrolled.
* Provide a timetable for all communication and action items.