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Labor Market Outcomes for High School Career and Technical Education Participants: 2016

This Data Point examines the early labor market outcomes of public high school students, focusing on graduates who earned different numbers of credits in career and technical education (CTE; see definition in figure notes). The Data Point uses data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09). HSLS:09 initially surveyed a national sample of grade 9 students in 2009, with follow-up surveys in 2012, 2013, and 2016, including a high school transcript collection in 2013. This analysis is based on HSLS:09 ninth-graders who graduated from public high schools by 2013 and were not enrolled in a postsecondary credential program in 2016.

The Data Point examines five labor market outcomes measured in 2016, 3 years after graduates completed high school: labor force participation rate, unemployment rate, pay, job benefits, and job satisfaction. The pay measure is whether the graduate earned more than $10 per hour.[1] The job benefits measure is receipt of health insurance and retirement benefits. These outcomes are examined separately for graduates who earned 0.00-0.99, 1.00-2.99, and 3.00 or more CTE credits during high school.

Graduates who earned 3.00 or more CTE credits had a lower unemployment rate than their peers who earned fewer CTE credits.

Regardless of CTE participation level, about 9 in 10 graduates not enrolled in a postsecondary credential program participated in the labor force (**FIGURE 1**).

However, among graduates in the labor force, the unemployment rate for graduates with 3.00 or more CTE credits was lower than the rates for graduates who earned 1.00-2.99 CTE credits and graduates who earned 0.00-0.99 CTE credits.

FIGURE 1. Among 2013 public high school graduates currently not enrolled in a postsecondary credential program, labor force participation rate and unemployment rate, by number of career and technical education (CTE) credits earned in high school: 2016
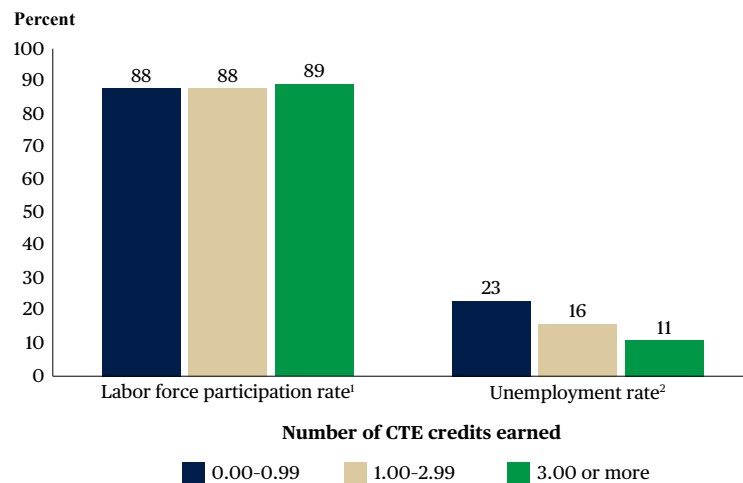
[1] The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the HSLS:09 analysis population that is (1) working or (2) not working but actively looking for work.

[2] The unemployment rate is the percentage of the HSLS:09 labor force that is not working but actively looking for work.

NOTE: Public high school graduates are defined as students who graduated from a public high school with an honors or standard diploma by August 31 of their scheduled graduation year (2013). CTE comprises coursetaking in agriculture and natural resources; business, finance, and marketing; communications and communication technologies; computer and information sciences; construction; consumer services; engineering, design, and production; health care; mechanical repair and operation; and public services. Estimates and standard errors are available at https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h247.asp.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:2009), Base-year, 2013 Update, Second Follow-up, and High School Transcript File.

Higher levels of CTE participation were not related to job satisfaction or pay, but were related to benefits.

Across the three CTE credit levels, about 8 out of 10 graduates reported they were satisfied with their current job and about half earned more than $10 per hour (**FIGURE 2**).[2]
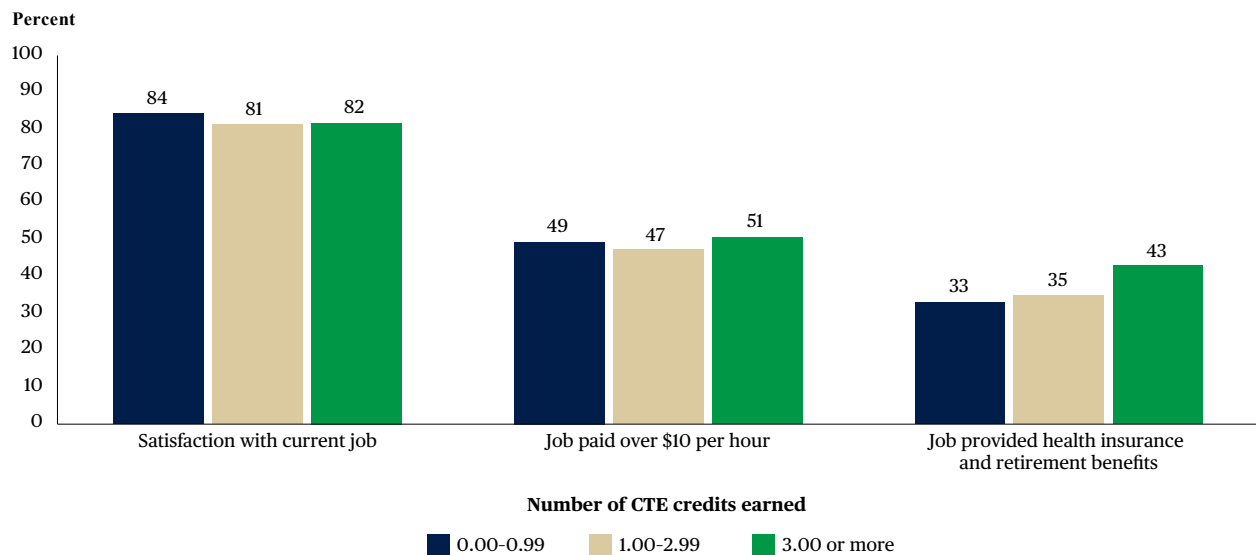
However, public high school graduates who earned 3.00 or more CTE credits received health insurance and retirement benefits at a higher rate than their peers who earned 1.00-2.99 CTE credits and their peers who earned 0.00-0.99 CTE credits.

Endnotes

[1] An hourly wage of $10.01 is 130 percent of the 2016 poverty level for a family of two living in the 48 contiguous states. This 130 percent of the poverty level aligns with the maximum household income for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility (see https://aspe.hhs.gov/computations-2016-poverty-guidelines).

[2] The median hourly wage was also not measurably different for graduates across the three CTE credit levels (see https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h250.asp).

FIGURE 2. Among employed 2013 public high school graduates currently not enrolled in a postsecondary credential program, percentage with selected job-related outcomes, by number of career and technical education (CTE) credits earned in high school: 2016

NOTE: Public high school graduates are defined as students who graduated from a public high school with an honors or standard diploma by August 31 of their scheduled graduation year (2013). CTE comprises coursetaking in agriculture and natural resources; business, finance, and marketing; communications and communication technologies; computer and information sciences; construction; consumer services; engineering, design, and production; health care; mechanical repair and operation; and public services. Estimates exclude the 25 percent of nonenrolled public high school graduates who were not employed (either not in the labor force or unemployed). Estimates and standard errors are available at https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h252.asp, https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h253.asp, and https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h254.asp.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:2009), Base-year, 2013 Update, Second Follow-up, and High School Transcript File.