



# Pinellas Education Foundation

Inspired minds transform lives

## Career Technical Education



### What We Do

The Pinellas Education Foundation has a rich history of preparing students for success beyond high school, and Career Technical Education (CTE) is a vital path to achieving that goal. Today you will find Career Academies at every high school throughout Pinellas County. These multi-year programs offer students rigorous, relevant and challenging academic courses to prepare for in-demand jobs. Students combine traditional coursework with technical training to earn high school credit, college credit and industry certifications. Academies span a wide range of careers—from automotive to culinary to nursing, veterinary, engineering, manufacturing, construction, and more.

Today, more than 100 different certifications are available. Well over 10,000 certifications were earned in 2020-21. These numbers demonstrate the success of our CTE initiative. Yet at the same time, approximately 40% of our seniors graduate without indicators of college or career readiness. Our vision at the Pinellas Education Foundation is that every student is prepared for life after high school, whether the choice is to attend college, enter the workforce or obtain technical training.

### By the Numbers 2020-21

**96%** of students graduate from the Career Academies in Pinellas high schools

**10,244** industry certifications earned in 2020-21, up from 2,500 10 years ago

**16%** increase in students earning industry certifications before graduating from high school since 2009

### A Program History

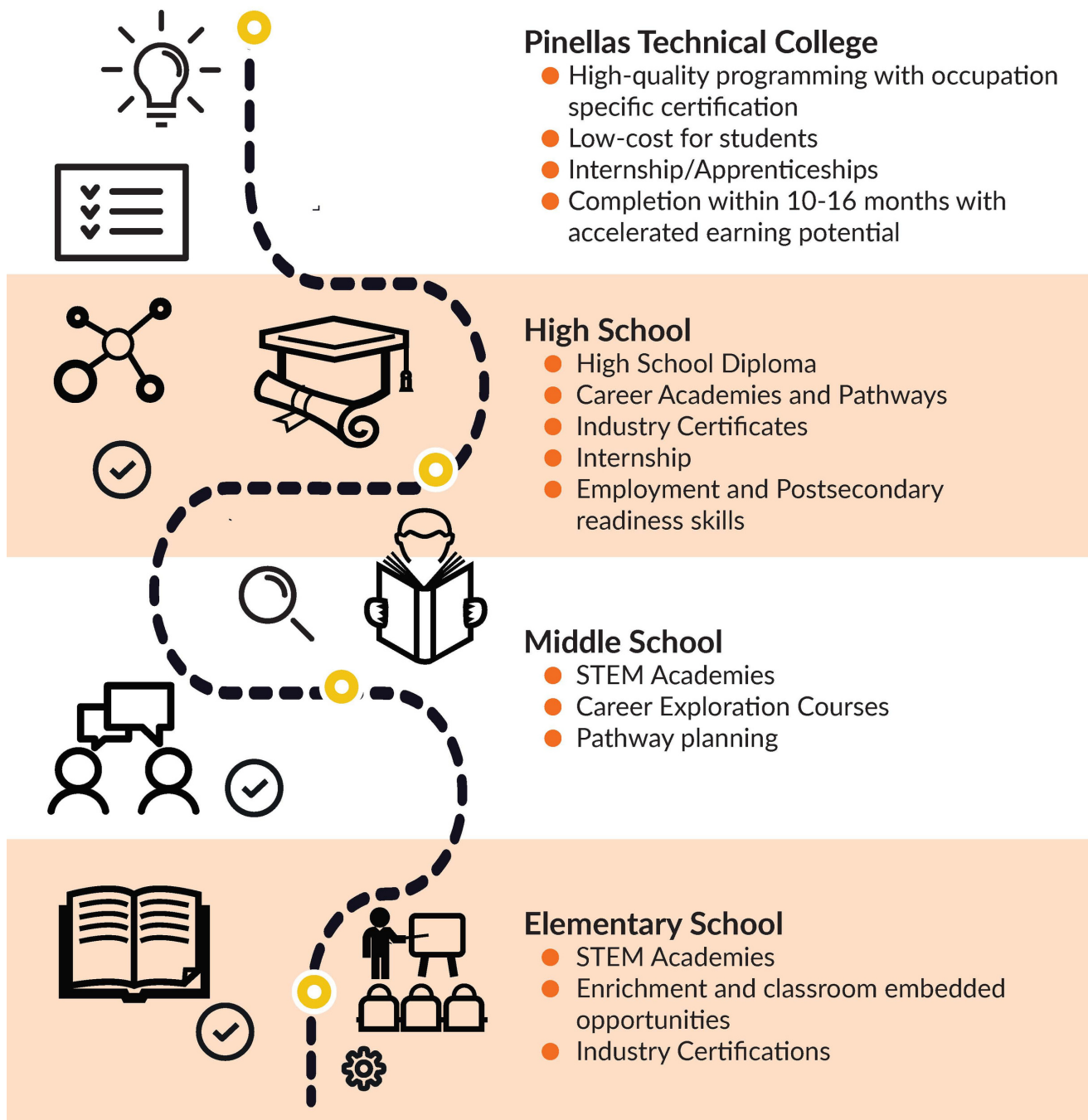
In 2009, a national movement called Goal 2025 began to draw collective community action toward our nation's growing need for talent. The goal is to increase to 60% the percentage of working-aged Americans who hold degrees, certificates or other high-quality postsecondary credentials by 2025. The Pinellas Education Foundation responded with an expanded focus on increasing career technical education certifications.

Since the adoption of a master plan for career education in Pinellas County Schools in 2011, great progress has been made to connect students at all levels to careers and career technical education. The plan was developed and organized by the Stavros Career Education Committee of the Pinellas Education Foundation and the district's Career Technical and Adult Education department.

Industry leaders, nonprofit executives, students, and community advocates worked alongside district leadership to create this plan. With adoption of the plan, Career Academies were established at all Pinellas high schools in 2009.

# Building Pathways From Kindergarten to College

As illustrated in the graphic below, exposure to career technical education is occurring from K-adult education. For younger populations in middle and elementary schools, education is happening through STEM Academies, added career exploration in the classroom, and the opportunity for younger students to begin earning industry certifications. The emphasis in high school continues to be on Career Academies. And, we continue to enroll students in short-term certification programs to fill in-demand jobs at Pinellas Technical College.



# Key Areas of Focus for Expansion

The Pinellas Education Foundation, in partnership with Pinellas County Schools, worked with representatives from industry and school leaders to outline key focus areas for expanding access to and strengthening career technical education for students. The key programmatic expansion areas include:

**Teacher Externships:** Most teachers come to the classroom with little to no experience in industry. By creating summertime, teacher externships, the Foundation seeks to expose teachers to real-world workplaces and jobs. As a part of the initiative, teachers will design lesson plans and activities that reflect their experiences in the externship to student learning in the classroom.

**Industry Advisory Boards:** Critical to the success of a Career Academy is the linkage and input from businesses who have jobs in the industries represented by the academy. The Foundation is working to enhance industry connections to the Career Academies through recruitment, training, and academy specific engagement opportunities for businesses and educators.

**Enrollment in Pinellas Technical College:** Pinellas Technical College (PTC) provides nearly 5,000 students with high quality career education at campuses in Clearwater and St. Petersburg, as well as extension and clinical locations. Emphasizing postsecondary education, PTC offers more than 40 career areas and 60 programs. However, one barrier to growth is the number of high school graduates enrolling right after graduation. Approximately 8% of high school graduates go directly to Pinellas Technical College upon graduation. Our goal is to increase this to 20% by 2025.



**Summer Career Acceleration Program:** The Summer Career Acceleration Program also aims to ensure that rising seniors graduate prepared to enter the workforce with real-world experience. In addition to a paid summer internship, students participate in career readiness skills training and a financial literacy workshop. To date, 352 students have completed the program. The Pinellas Education Foundation and Pinellas County Schools have partnered with numerous businesses, nonprofit organizations, and city and county agencies including the City of Largo and the City of St. Petersburg, to host student interns.

# Career Technical Education in Action

**Youth Connect:** Many at-risk youth and young adults are faced with tremendous obstacles that make them vulnerable to dropping out of school, unemployment or underemployment, and a lifetime of poverty. Youth Connect, under the auspices of CareerSource, is a work-readiness program that provides guidance and financial resources needed to change lives. Students may attain their GED and/or train in technology, mechanical and healthcare programs that lead to industry certifications and technical degrees, breaking the cycle of poverty. Youth Connect provides services and resources to assist qualified youth, between 16 and 24, to enroll in and successfully complete educational and training programs in order to transition into employment. Program services are free of charge, and may include counseling, assistance with educational costs and expenses, and job placement services. The bottom line: Youth Connect puts students on the pathway to being productive and contributing members of society.

Watch a video of Youth Connect students in action at Pinellas Technical College: [https://youtu.be/Ifw6D6\\_tEgg](https://youtu.be/Ifw6D6_tEgg)



**Richard O. Jacobson Technical High School at Seminole:** This unique, state-of-the-art school is supported by a landmark \$5 million gift in 2018 from the Richard O. Jacobson Foundation to the Pinellas Education Foundation. Tech High offers Pinellas County high school students the opportunity to step out of their normal high school day and into classes which offer a unique, real-world education. Hands-on learning combines with academic know-how to help equip students with job skill advantages right out of high school. Classes offered include: Building Construction Technology; Commercial and Digital Arts; Game and Simulation Programming; Nursing; and Veterinary Assistant.

**Culinary Arts Programs:** Providing students with training in the culinary arts or a career in hospitality, students explore and study international cultures while developing specialized skills in food identification, selection, purchasing and preparation. Students have the opportunity to receive certification in culinary work as they prepare for advanced postsecondary culinary training or a career in food preparation and restaurant management. Full culinary programs—complete with commercial kitchens—are available at four Pinellas County high schools and at both the St. Petersburg and Clearwater campuses of Pinellas Technical College.



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