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CTE Coalition Looking for Action, Not Rhetoric from California School Reform Leaders

*Expanding career technical education will help reverse the state's
"alarming" decline in the number of students earning a high school diploma.*

SACRAMENTO — With the Governor's Committee on Education Excellence preparing to release its recommendations and the Superintendent of Public Instruction's "Achievement Gap Summit" slated for tomorrow, GetREAL coalition leaders said they were hopeful career technical education would be an important part of the state's education reform agenda.

"Governor Schwarzenegger and Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, along with his predecessor Delaine Eastin, have spoken passionately about the urgent need to increase career technical education," said GetREAL co-chair Jack Stewart, president of the California Manufacturers and Technology Association, "But so far, there's been no real action, just rhetoric.

"With this week's focus on education reform, we're hopeful that there'll finally be some concrete recommendations for expanding CTE instruction in our schools and a genuine commitment to make it happen."

GetREAL co-chair Bob Balgenorth, president of the State Building & Construction Trades Council, said "action on this issue is vital given the steep decline in career technical education, the alarming decrease in the number of students earning a high school diploma and the failure to help more students focus on career opportunities and equip them with marketable skills."

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“Expanding CTE would encourage more kids to earn a degree by making school more relevant,” said Balgenorth. “They’ll have an opportunity to learn by doing, and to prepare themselves for rewarding careers in a wide range of occupations that are vital to California’s continued economic growth.

”Without skilled workers, our economy will wither,” said Balgenorth.

“It’s time to stop talking and start doing,” said Stewart. “In education, we value what we require, fund and measure. It’s time to make CTE an important part of this formula.”

GetREAL members include the California Teachers Association, State Building & Construction Trades Council, California Manufacturers & Technology Association, California Farm Bureau, Western States Petroleum Association, Johnson & Johnson, California Agricultural Teachers Association, California Business Education Association, California Industrial and Technology Education Association, California Space Authority, New Hope Charities, Child Abuse Prevention Center, Richmond Children’s Foundation, Chevron, California Association of Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors and Minorities in Law Enforcement.

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