

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Calaveras County High School Education

Pathways to the Future

June 30, 2024



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SUMMARY

What kind of career training is available to high school students in Calaveras County? How prepared are they for their future? The 2023-2024 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury decided to look at vocational training opportunities for high school students within the county. Given the small size and rural location of Calaveras County, the Civil Grand Jury expected to find a lack of opportunities for local high school students to receive job-ready education and training. Upon investigation, however, we found the opposite to be true. Calaveras County high school students have an extensive selection of career training courses available to them through Career Technical Education.

GLOSSARY

BHUHSD	Bret Harte Union High School District
CCCGJ	Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
CCOE	Calaveras County Office of Education
CHS	Calaveras High School
CTE	Career Technical Education
CUSD	Calaveras Unified School District

METHODOLOGY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted many interviews, reviewed high school course catalogs and websites, attended a school board meeting, and used internet searches to find needed information.

BACKGROUND

Education is a priority for parents, educators, and government officials, from local school boards to U.S. Presidents. Students engage with education in different ways. While some students choose to attend college to attain a degree, others find that Career Technical Education (CTE) is a better choice, often leading to well-paying jobs that motivate our students to remain local to live and work.

Calaveras County is a rural community. According to the U.S. Census of 2020, Calaveras County had a population of 45,292, a slight decline from 2010. Skills that serve our rural area are crucial. CCCGJ discovered CTE is a vital and thriving part of the Calaveras County educational system with as many as 60-70% of its high school students participating in various programs.

The State of California has made CTE a priority in their State Standards Curriculum. The California Education Code requires students to be “college and career ready” and for schools to provide a course of study that helps students attain entry-level employment skills in business or

industry upon graduation. The California Department of Education CTE Fact Sheet lists a myriad of benefits to students who participate in CTE courses. These include a higher than average graduation rate, higher scores on the high school exit exam, more than double the rate of college entrance for minority students, increased college enrollment rates for all student populations, and many more.

DISCUSSION

There is a wide variety of CTE programs and course offerings in our county. There is a very high number (up to 70%) of students who participate in these programs. Calaveras County high schools offer the following courses of study: medical science, fire science, culinary, agricultural mechanics, crop production, animal science, auto mechanics, engineering, computer science, welding, computer-aided design (CAD), floral design, forestry and natural resources, technical theater, audio and video production, and digital photography. The high schools provide multi-year pathways for different career programs. The schools have a successful track record of facilitating job placement with local companies for real-world work experience while still in high school, as well as helping students locate employment after graduation. In addition, there are dual enrollment programs with Columbia College, where students can attend classes and earn college credits while still in high school. There is a dedicated staff of educators at our county high schools that are facilitating these programs.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Civil Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, attending meetings, and reviewing reference documents, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1. Calaveras County schools are doing an excellent job in providing Career Technical Training opportunities.

R1. None

Required Responses

None

Invited Responses

None

F2. There is a dedicated staff of educators at our county high schools that are facilitating these programs and engaging students.

R2. None

Required Responses

None

Invited Responses

None

COMMENDATIONS

C1. The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury commends all the educators and instructors involved with Career Technical Education in Calaveras County high schools for their continued dedication to their students and the success of these programs.

REFERENCE SOURCES

Bret Harte Union High School Course Catalog, brethartebullfrogs.org

Bret Harte Union High School District Website, brethartebullfrogs.org

Calaveras High School Course Catalog, chs.custudents.net

Calaveras Unified School District Website, calaverasusd.com

Calaveras County Office of Education Website, coe.k12.ca.us

Calaverascte.org Website

California Department of Education Website, CTE Fact sheet for School Leaders,

www.cde.ca.gov/cteschoolleaderfacts

Central Motherlode Career Education Guide

Governor Gavin Newsom's Website: www.gov.ca.gov – Press release dated 11/2/2023 Ready for

Work Podcast: “Campus CTE Tour: How Calaveras High is Preparing for the Future”,

YouTube, October 2, 2022

U.S, Census, Calaveras County, <https://www.census.gov>