



MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER INTEGRATION GUIDE



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SkillsUSA Middle School Chapter Integration Guide

“SKILLSUSA IS A NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION for students enrolled in career and technical education.” You may have seen or will soon see that phrase on the SkillsUSA Website, or printed on materials in the annual membership kit. And if you haven’t seen it, know it—and own it. This student organization you’ve been asked to lead engages CTE students in personal and professional growth as they work to build and achieve an intentional plan for career success. Together, we are building students to be job-ready on day one through the infusion of the SkillsUSA Framework in all programs and resources developed by SkillsUSA. Thanks for contributing to such critical work for our world society.

Often, SkillsUSA and other career and technical student organizations are associated with high school students—which is great! We recognize, however, that there exists prime learning and engagement time with the group of students you work with—middle school students. Our workforce can’t afford to miss the critical developmental needs and hopes of middle school students. We are grateful you’re a key player in making middle school SkillsUSA experiences fully integrated into your classroom, resulting in meaningful, purposeful, connected and impactful career development for young people. You will set up your middle school students for success in high school and beyond through the integration of SkillsUSA in your classroom.

Why SkillsUSA for middle school students?

Researchers, educators, parents, employers and many general adult observers have realized many “ah-has” about middle school students in the past several years. We know they are different than the middle school students of 15, 20, 30, or more years ago. As of 2018, middle school students fall into what many refer to as the “Generation Z” classification.

Dr. Tim Elmore, founder of Growing Leaders, shares six descriptions of the students who are classified as Generation Z—and six ways in which we as adults ought to consider approaching these students (Elmore, 2017):

Generation Z has . . .

As adults we really must . . .

Grown up in a society of independent operations. They answer their own questions through online queries, they research and make purchases online independently, they can complete repair jobs by watching a YouTube video, and more.

Offer them encouragement that they can do the task ahead of them, and offer to help when needed. Let them know that we're supportive, and work specifically to not hover or supervise, but to guide and to mentor.

Recognized the pressure and stress associated with achieving an "acceptable" GPA.

Help these students keep the importance of their GPA in perspective related to their life. Teach these students how to reflect on their learning, not stress out about the numbers associated with their learning.

Experienced the receipt and delivery of more information each day than any generation before them, largely due to social media.

Guide students in thinking critically about the information they receive and send, and about their own online presence. These students need help asking questions about the reliability of the information they are receiving, the necessity of information they are sharing, and the safety and usefulness of their online connections.

Developed "fears" of missing out and of being offline.

Intentionally engage students in the present, and help them develop skills to self-monitor what's happening presently around them so that they can become okay with being connected to the people and experiences right in front of them and less concerned with being connected—always—to the world around them.

Re-developed the desire for hands-on, immediate and early learning. They crave experiences, and in general, have plans to start working earlier than the generation that precedes them. Their plans and career progression will likely look "messier" than previous generations, as they create customized education and training experiences to meet their goals and needs.

Let them. Let them learn and explore. And let them create their own plans and try them on. Let them "fail." Be supportive at each phase with encouragement and good questions—not trying to "save" them at each corner.

Recognized a perceived need for a great deal of emotion in order to have an impact. The more emotion they can share in a social media post through their word choice, emoji use, and exclamation points, the more likely they are to get their desired response.

Bring authenticity to the forefront. Help students manage their emotions, desire for attention, and efforts to bring truth to what they say and do rather than exaggerate to glean attention.

As we work to develop and grow these young people as leaders, SkillsUSA believes that there are four foundational pillars necessary to achieving the work Elmore and others suggest is necessary. The SkillsUSA four pillars of leadership are derived from what Gallup identifies as four critical needs of followers. Brian Brim, Ed.D. describes Gallup's four critical needs of followers in an October 2015 article through his employment at Gallup (Brim, 2015).

TRUST
COMPASSION
STABILITY
HOPE

SkillsUSA has adopted the four foundational pillars from Gallup and as an organization, we believe they are critical to the development of solid leaders. When compared to the researched and identified needs of middle school students, trust, compassion, stability and hope align precisely. Students need these four pillars from us—their trusted adults. Through SkillsUSA, you are set up to successfully provide middle school students with learning environments and experiences that demonstrate and build the four pillars. You can read—and have your students read—more about the four pillars of SkillsUSA in our educational resource *The Four Pillars: Your Personal Leadership Journey*.

As you use this guide, we hope to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Integrate SkillsUSA fully into your classroom.

SkillsUSA is not a standalone organization, separate from the classroom. Rather, SkillsUSA is a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) that is one of three components of Career and Technical Education (CTE). You'll find specific steps to take and sample resources to use throughout this guide.

2. Build environments and experiences that both demonstrate and foster trust, compassion, stability and hope.

We'll share some insight from researchers and from some of our very own middle school SkillsUSA advisors to help demonstrate our students' needs and desires for these four pillars and give you explicit and tangible ways you can achieve them.

3. Maximize the potential of your students in SkillsUSA while minimizing stress and uncertainty for you.

Being a CTE teacher is hard work. We respect that; we appreciate and value you for being up to the task. We are committed to providing turn-key solutions to ensure that the task is manageable for you—largely through helping you empower your students to become active leaders who you can advise and guide rather than direct and monitor. You'll find clearly outlined steps throughout this guide to help make this hoped-for outcome a reality if you.

This guide is meant to supplement the Middle School Membership Kit, so you'll see some similar language when compared to the kit, and we hope this guide makes the integration of SkillsUSA a simple, achievable task that grows you as a professional and grows your students as engaged learners and leaders.

What and Who is SkillsUSA?

SkillsUSA as an Organization

SkillsUSA is a national membership association serving high school, college, and middle school students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations, including health occupations, and for further education. SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers, and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel.



SkillsUSA Mission

SkillsUSA empowers its members to become world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens.

SkillsUSA by the Numbers

- Founded in 1965
- 335,000+ student and advisor members
- 19,500 teachers as professional members
- 4,000 local chapters
- 53 state and territorial associations
- 130 occupational areas represented
- 600 business, industry, and labor organizations support the national organization
- \$36 million are contributed annually by partners through financial, in-kind, and involvement contributions

Starting or Transitioning to a Fully Integrated SkillsUSA Chapter

- Section 1:** Secure Support from your School Administrator
- Section 2:** Connect on the State SkillsUSA Level
- Section 3:** Integrate SkillsUSA in your whole CTE Program
- Section 4:** Recruit Members
- Section 5:** Register Yourself and Your Students as Members of SkillsUSA
- Section 6:** Organize Chapter Management Structure
- Section 7:** Implement SkillsUSA Resources and
Engage in SkillsUSA Programming
- Section 8:** Connect with your High School CTE Program(s)
- Section 9:** Celebrate Success
- Section 10:** STEM Integration



Section 1:

Secure Support from your School Administrator

LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS CAN MAKE OR BREAK THE SUCCESS of any program within any school. It's important that your administrator(s) understand your hopes for the SkillsUSA chapter in your middle school CTE program—and it's equally important for you to feel confident in advocating for the integration of SkillsUSA. Here are a few questions for you to consider as you prepare to seek administrative support:

Key Question

What is your administration's experience with CTE and CTSOs?

Integration Strategy

Start having conversations with your administration to understand what their experiences and beliefs have been or are about CTE and about CTSOs.

Some administrators are products of career and technical education, and their opinions are based on their experiences—positive or negative. Some administrators have been CTE teachers. Some have been teachers or administrators in other schools with other CTE programs. This will be key in helping you frame your approach to a later conversation with them. Picture yourself asking these questions as you walk with a principal down the hallway, when you sit or stand by them for a few minutes during lunch duty, or when he or she stops by your classroom at the beginning or end of the day.

Here are a few questions to get you started:

- What do you most value about CTE in our school?
- What challenges have you faced about CTE in this school or others?
- What were your experiences with CTE before you came to this school?
- What are your hopes for CTE in our school?

Engage in the conversation by really listening and taking great notes so that you can revisit the conversation again later.

Key Question

What are student organizations and career education classes like in your school—and how might you need to make your classroom or SkillsUSA chapter align or be different?

Integration Strategy

Do your research. Know this information so that you can connect it to what you heard your administrator say informally and to what your hopes are.

About CTE in general . . .

- SkillsUSA is only possible if there is first at least one CTE classroom that exists to which the chapter can connect
- Classrooms and laboratories are the first component of a whole CTE program; their primary purpose is to develop technical skills and knowledge of a student in their desired career path
- Work-based learning programs and workplace experiences are the second component of a whole CTE program; their primary purpose is to engage students in authentic experiences that aid in career preparation through the application of what's being learned in the classroom
- CTSOs are the third component of a whole CTE program, and their primary purpose is to develop leadership and career readiness skills in students and to recognize technical skills and knowledge

About SkillsUSA specifically . . .

- Career readiness skill development is at the core of all SkillsUSA programming, as demonstrated by the SkillsUSA Framework model
- SkillsUSA is a national career and technical student organization (CTSO) that works to develop students as world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens
- SkillsUSA is a professional organization for CTE students and teachers
- The organization includes over 400,000 student and professional members

Key Question

Why do you want to integrate SkillsUSA into your CTE program?

Integration Strategy

Prepare your “why”. Administrators, parents, community members, other teachers and students will likely be more prepared to listen to you if you lead with your “why.” Interested in a great video that supports this concept? Check out what Simon Sinek has to say about how great leaders inspire here (2009).

Consider and prepare answers to the following questions:

- What needs do the students in your school demonstrate that could be met through SkillsUSA?
- How does the SkillsUSA Framework align with the beliefs, mission and efforts of your school?
- How might the Career Essentials Suite (Foundations curriculum, Experiences curriculum and Assessments) benefit your students and your school's work to prepare career-ready students?
- How might programs like Jump into STEM!, the Chapter Excellence Program, and Activate help develop and grow your students?
- How does middle school SkillsUSA integration and student involvement set students up for success in their high school CTE programs?
- How might your students benefit from leadership and career-readiness curriculum integrated directly into your content area classroom?
- How might you benefit from the professional programming available for teachers through SkillsUSA?
- How do CTE and SkillsUSA align with the expectations of Perkins, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, and the Every Student Succeeds Act?
- How do CTE and SkillsUSA align with your local economic and school development efforts?

Key Question

How and when can you share what you know and believe with your administration in a more formal meeting to request support of integrating a SkillsUSA chapter?

Integration Strategy

Set up a meeting with your administrator. Consider what you hope and need to discuss, and request an appropriate amount of time between 30-60 minutes. Here are a few talking points to consider sharing during the meeting:

- Explain how the content of your classroom (and possibly that of other CTE teachers' classrooms) could be better connected to the development of students' career readiness skills through the integration of SkillsUSA
- Share a copy of the Administrator Flier with the administrator prior to the meeting, and visit it during the meeting
- Create and take with you a plan for any suggested changes you have to courses that could be taught to better support the local economy, trends in industry, and student goals
- Create and take with you an annual chapter plan demonstrating how the chapter may be structured and a list of monthly events
- Continue reviewing your answers to the questions above and the information you have about SkillsUSA; consider connecting with another SkillsUSA advisor or the state director of your state's SkillsUSA association to answer additional questions
- Ask about the level of support at the administrator level, and inquire about next steps from the administrator's perspective
 - Offer to conduct a survey of students and parents in the school to gauge interest
 - Collect information from area schools about the costs associated with having a SkillsUSA chapter in their school, and how the costs are covered
 - Collect information from area schools about the benefits they witness through SkillsUSA
 - Offer to host an informational meeting for parents and students

Refer to the following resources included in this guide to aid you in completing these integration steps as well:

[Getting to know my administrator ...](#)

[CTE Model](#)

[My Research ...](#)

[My Why ...](#)

[Administrator Meeting Agenda](#)

The annual Membership Kit and the SkillsUSA Website provide the following resources. Access them as you prepare for these Integration Steps:

Guide for Administrator Meeting
Outline and Talking Points for Administrator Meeting
SkillsUSA Administrator Flier
Annual Chapter Plan

Hopefully after your meeting (or a series of several meetings) with your administration, you are able to secure their support and begin working to establish the SkillsUSA chapter that will be connected to your classroom. Don't plan on convincing them and getting all questions answered in one 60-minute meeting. Helping stakeholders understand the value of CTE and associated CTSOs takes time—sometimes multiple years.

Listen closely to your administration's questions, and work alongside them to get answers. Identify people in your community who can serve in an advisory capacity to bounce ideas off of, and who can help advocate for the program in your school and community. Engage the parents of current and potential students to communicate what's possible for their child(ren). Connect older students with younger students to stimulate interest in the program. Collaborate with other CTSO advisors in your school to find ways you can collaborate.

Then, when you're ready, dig back into your Membership Kit and this guide to explore the other steps involved in integrating a SkillsUSA chapter into your CTE program.

Integration Strategy to Secure Support from your School Administrator

1. Getting to know my administrator . . .

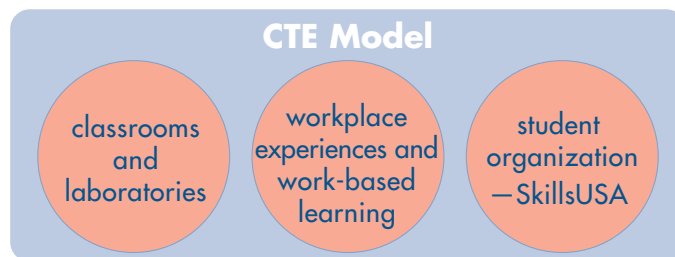
What have you most valued about CTE in this school?

What challenges have you faced about CTE in this school or others?

What were your experiences with CTE before you came to this school?

What are your hopes for CTE in our school?

2.



3. My Research ...

4. **My Why . . .**

What needs do the students in your school demonstrate that could be met through SkillsUSA?

How does the SkillsUSA Framework align with the beliefs and efforts of your school?

How might the Career Essentials Suite (Foundations curriculum, Experiences curriculum, and Assessments) benefit your students and your school's work to prepare career-ready students?

How might programs like Jump into STEM!, the Chapter Excellence Program, and Activate help develop and grow your students?

How might your students benefit from leadership and career-readiness curriculum integrated directly into your content area classroom?

How might you benefit from the professional programming available for teachers through SkillsUSA?

How do CTE and SkillsUSA align with the expectations of Perkins, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, and the Every Student Succeeds Act?

How do CTE and SkillsUSA align with your local economic and school development efforts?

5. **Administrator Meeting Agenda**

Given what you've learned about your administration, CTE, and SkillsUSA, what are the primary points you plan to address during the meeting with your administrator?

6. Annual Chapter Plan

Late spring or summer

- Identify a teacher or team of CTE teachers to serve as an advisor or team of advisors for the chapter
- Secure a minimum of 10 students to join the chapter in the initial start-up
- Identify student members to serve as officer - chapter leaders - of the chapter
- Complete the chapter charter application and chapter constitution with the initial student members and confirm chapter establishment with the state director of SkillsUSA

Late Summer

- Coordinate with the chapter co-advisors and student leaders to establish a vision for the year of the chapter; train the student leaders to help them establish goals and roles to achieve them
- Lead the initial members in organizing a chapter informational and recruitment event
- Promote the informational and recruitment event to parents and students

August

- Guide the chapter leaders in hosting the informational and recruitment event
- Share the SkillsUSA opportunity in your classroom as the school year begins; announce monthly meetings and activities
- Establish a monthly meeting schedule between advisor(s) and officers/student leaders
- Establish a monthly chapter meeting
 1. Consider when the ideal time is for meetings (during lunch, before school, after school, during a home room period, evenings, weekends)
 2. Plan to meet as a chapter for one hour each month

September

- Continue working with the officer/student leadership team to promote membership
- Guide the officer/student leadership team in planning for, promoting and hosting a Program of Work planning meeting
- If the chapter will have multiple teachers serving as co-advisors, use the Program of Work to distribute adult guidance accordingly to each program or event

October

- Take your students to an area Fall Leadership Conference

November

- Hold or start a chapter fundraiser
 1. Consider how you can bring members of the community and school to your CTE program as a part of the fundraiser
 2. Consider how you can raise funds without selling a specific product or set of products
 3. Consider how your CTE program and trade area could serve members of the community to generate funds
- Use a chapter meeting time to develop ideas for ways your program can promote support for CTE and SkillsUSA through education and fun during February's CTE Month efforts and SkillsUSA Week opportunities
- Enter membership information through the national SkillsUSA membership system

December

- Evaluate program and chapter progress with co-advisors if applicable
- Generate a plan for guiding the chapter officers/student leaders
- Guide students in continuing to plan for SkillsUSA Week and CTE Month

January

- Finalize plans for February
- Guide chapter officers/student leaders in planning for a chapter excellence celebration banquet later in the spring; identify which students, administrators, community supporters, parents, and other teachers could be recognized or thanked
- Complete the Chapter Excellence Program award application

February

- Assist students in hosting SkillsUSA Week and CTE Month activities
- Spend time reflecting on the success and challenges following each activity to consider in planning next year
- Continue guiding officers and leaders in planning for the chapter excellence celebration banquet

March

- Conduct interviews with a committee of adults and students to select next year's chapter officer/student leadership team
- Work with co-advisors to revise and establish the officer training plan for the new team of leaders
- Prior to class registration, hold a classroom event for students who may be part of your classes in the next school year; engage SkillsUSA members to be present during the visits

April

- Hold chapter excellence celebration banquet
- Host a special capstone event for students who will be transitioning to the high school in the next school year; seek their feedback about their middle school CTE experience and their hopes for the program in the future
- Register for NLSC and Activate

May

- Begin training with the new chapter officers selected through interviews prior to the banquet
- Begin coordinating summer chapter events

June

- Host a community service project and membership fun night
- Attend the National Leadership and Skills Conference, including taking your chapter officers to the Activate chapter leader conference

July

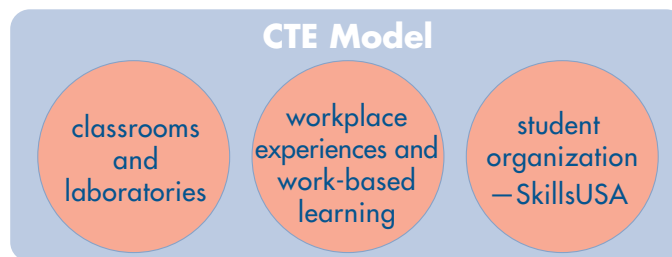
- Host a chapter informational/recruitment event



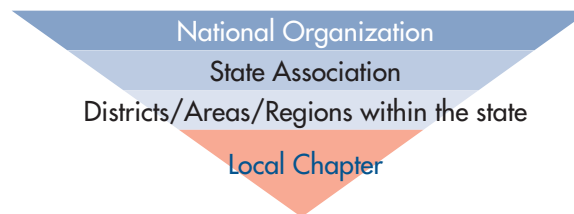
Section 2:

Connect on the State SkillsUSA Level

CAREER EDUCATION FOLLOWS SIMILAR MODELS—even within different career fields and different student organizations. In the last section, we explored the CTE model.



CTSOs follow a model as well—regardless of which career and technical student organization we’re looking at.



Key Question

Who supports your local chapter at the state level, and how?

Integration Strategy

Understand the structure of the organization and connect with the people and resources that can help.

The national headquarters of SkillsUSA provide staff who lead and support efforts at the national level—for national, state, and local programming. This guide, for example, is a local programming resource provided by the national organization. Local programs make decisions about what works best for them, and those decisions are informed by opportunities, guidelines, and policies that are established at the local, state, and national

levels. The national level sets expectations of consistency within the organization, and when those are met by states and local chapters, then there are opportunities for additional expectations and programs at the state and local levels. Ask questions. Share ideas. Collaborate with others. You're sure to find a like-minded advisor who can help you develop and integrate SkillsUSA within the unique arrangements of your local school.

- Call or email the SkillsUSA state director in your state
 - The state director is the person within each state who serves as a leader of SkillsUSA program respective to his or her particular state
 - This individual has some roles of serving as a liaison between the national organization and local teachers and program
 - Introduce yourself and share with the state director which school you represent
 - Communicate that you are interested in starting a SkillsUSA chapter within your school
 - Share what steps you've taken so far (think back to the administrator meeting and any work you did surrounding that meeting)
 - Ask any questions you may have about SkillsUSA in your state
 - Ask for any CTE-specific resources that can help you communicate within your school and community about CTE and SkillsUSA

These may include: career readiness standards, technical content standards, initiatives surrounding CTE in your state, Perkins funding guidelines, average days of extended contracts of CTE teachers in your state, suggested local due amounts, professional development available to CTE teachers, industry partnerships, and more

Once you have any information needed from the state director, they will likely encourage you to complete and submit a chapter charter application and a chapter constitution. Remember that these documents should really be completed through the engagement of students, and not only by you as the advisor. Also consider—would your administration benefit from a phone call or personal visit with the SkillsUSA state director?

- Organize a meeting with a few students who are excited about starting a chapter, and who demonstrate leadership ability
- Explain to students what the two documents are that need to be completed: Application for Chapter Charter and Chapter Constitution
- Engage students in completing the two forms
- Consider publishing a press release or article in the school newsletter or website to share with the school and community where your program is in the process of establishing a SkillsUSA chapter
- Provide the necessary documents to the state director
- Your chapter will be considered established after the state director accepts your chapter's charter application and your chapter's constitution

The annual Membership Kit and the SkillsUSA Website provide the following resources. Access them as you prepare for these Integration Strategies:

Directory of state SkillsUSA directors
Application for Chapter Charter
Sample Suggested Local Constitution

Once you have submitted your application for chapter charter and your constitution and they have been accepted and approved by your state director, the next phase of implementing your chapter begins. Keep in mind that implementation isn't the only goal. The goal that lies ahead of that is integration, and if you've used the integration strategies so far, you're well on your way to having an integrated chapter, which will serve your students, school, and community very well.

Refer to the following resources included in this guide to aid you in completing these integration steps as well:

[Questions for my state director](#)

[Potential Student Leaders](#)

[An Explanation for Students of the Application for Chapter Charter](#)

[An Explanation for Students of the Chapter Constitution](#)

[Sample Article to Share with the Public](#)

Integration Strategy to Connect on the State SkillsUSA Level

1. Questions for my state director

2. **Potential Student Leaders**

What students in your school are enthusiastic about starting a SkillsUSA chapter?

What CTE students are you connected with who do great work? What students have positive influence with other students?

3. **An Explanation for Students of the Application for Chapter Charter**

A chapter charter is an official document that indicates your local organization's membership within the larger state and national organization. The charter records information about when the chapter is starting, and who the initial members of your local chapter will be. This document indicates that we are one small piece of something (an organization) that is much larger than us! As a result, we will get access to resources, professional development, supplies, and more from the state and national levels of our organization.

4. **An Explanation for Students of the Chapter Constitution**

The chapter constitution establishes guidelines and rules for us to following in operating our chapter. These rules are established by the members, reviewed annually, and revised as necessary. The constitution document serves as a layer of consistency within our chapter even though new students will join the chapter each year, and the advisor may change from time to time. We use the constitution to think through different scenarios our chapter may face, and to establish planned procedures as best as we are able so that when we face a given situation, we already have a plan in place for how to handle the situation. Sometimes we will find ourselves working through a new type of scenario, and we may need to edit the constitution, present it to all of our members, and have it re-approved.

5. Sample Article to Share with the Public

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dear *(insert news/media outlet here)*,

With great excitement, the *(insert school name here)* school announces that *(teacher name)* and his/her students have completed an Application for Chapter Charter for the new SkillsUSA Chapter.

SkillsUSA is a national youth organization with more than 400,000 members working to grow as world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens. Several students in our school demonstrate interest in being part of our local chapter, which is also part of the SkillsUSA *(state name)* association and the national SkillsUSA organization.

SkillsUSA is designed to be an integral component of our CTE program. Students will learn technical and career readiness skills and knowledge through our CTE classes *(list them here)*. Students will apply the knowledge and skills they are learning through work-based learning programs and workplace experiences. SkillsUSA will engage students in developing their personal, workplace, and technical skills through school- and community-based activities, as well as through state- and national-level programming and resources. Our chapter and students will apply skills through authentic demonstrations and we will be recognized for individual and chapter successes through the organization.

In the months ahead, as our chapter begins, here are a few programs and events to watch for and learn more about:

The use of the SkillsUSA Framework to teach career readiness skills

Jump into STEM!

Courses being offered

(insert)

Chapter Excellence Program

Chapter recruitment event

(insert month)

Community service project

(insert project name)

Students in Industry Day

(list business partners who will participate)

Chapter fundraiser (list what the funds will help cover and what the fundraiser will be)

We look forward to sharing more with you as our chapter grows, and we hope we can count on each of you as a partner in our CTE program and in our new chapter. Watch for ways you can connect with our SkillsUSA chapter, and let us know how we can best serve you—the members of our school and community.

Respectfully submitted,

(Student name)

Chapter Reporter



Section 3:

Integrate SkillsUSA in your whole CTE Program

UP TO THIS POINT, YOU'VE BEEN WORKING to integrate SkillsUSA through your conversations, and through your language; through your actions, and through your ideas. Now that your chapter has been approved at the local level by your administration and at the state level by the state director, it's time to work even harder at integrating your SkillsUSA chapter.

What's the big deal about integrating your chapter? In short, a SkillsUSA chapter can't exist alone. Without a highly qualified teacher working every day in a classroom, there can be no SkillsUSA chapter. In addition, CTSOs are designed to function in, alongside, in support of, and as a function of your CTE classroom. SkillsUSA provides opportunities for authentic assessment of what you're teaching in your classroom. The organization also supports the technical knowledge and skill development through the focus on leadership and career readiness skills. SkillsUSA completes the career preparation that students do at the middle school level.

We asked local teachers and advisors of middle school SkillsUSA chapters a few questions about their middle school students and how SkillsUSA meets the needs. Here's what they had to say to some of the questions:

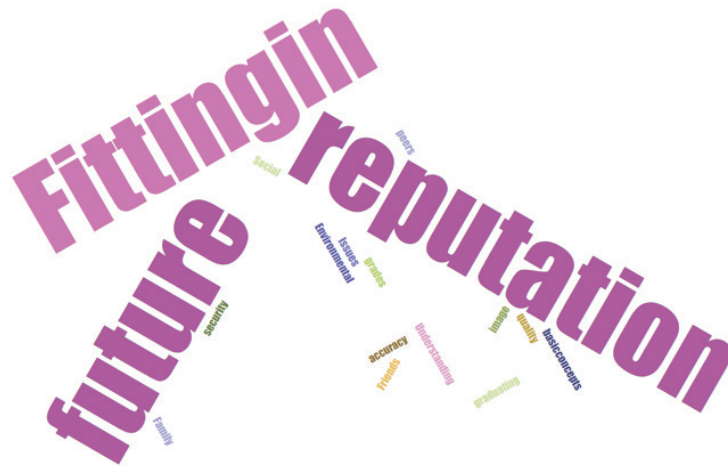
What are three characteristics you know to be true about middle school students?



What are your middle school students most excited about?



What are your middle school students most concerned about?



How do you describe the social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of middle school students?



Key Question

How do I integrate SkillsUSA in my classroom?

Integration Strategies

Identify the courses you currently teach and what careers students can connect those courses to; create a visual and communicate these connections to students, administration and parents.

- These two actions generate trust
 - Parents trust that the course is worth their student's time
 - Administrators trust that students are having a purposeful experience
 - Students trust that the course is worth their investment
- These two actions generate hope
 - Parents are hopeful that their child is more prepared for high school and their career
 - Administrators are hopeful that their students will enter the high school more prepared
 - Students are hopeful in their explorations and connections between your course, the others they are taking, and their goals

Establish classroom rules and guidelines that you can also apply at chapter events

- This action exhibits your compassion, demonstrates stability and establishes trust
 - Middle school students will be grateful (even if they don't speak it) for the consistency you demonstrate from classroom to SkillsUSA event
 - Administrators will feel confident in what they can expect when you take students outside of the building for chapter events if they know how your classroom operates and that you are consistent
 - Your relationships with your students will strengthen because they don't have to worry about what to expect from you; parents will be grateful for a valued adult in their child's life
- Use SkillsUSA curricular resources to connect student learning in your classroom to technical standards and to the SkillsUSA Framework of career readiness skills.
- Use the Job-Ready, Day One lesson plan developed and provided by SkillsUSA to guide students through a personal career interest assessment, exploring the career path through videos of workers in the field, and in the development of a resume and cover letter
- Use SkillsUSA's *Jump into STEM!* curriculum to connect your middle school students and all they are learning with elementary students (and your upcoming middle school students)
 - There are 44 developed sessions for your middle school students to lead elementary students through a 20-minute hands-on experience to help the elementary students draw connections between STEM concepts, future potential careers, and information about SkillsUSA information
- Discuss with the high school teachers who will work with your students after middle school to explore how they could build the SkillsUSA Career Essentials: Foundations or Career Essentials: Experiences into their syllabus
- Connect your courses and connected careers to the authentic demonstration assessments offered through SkillsUSA
- Promote SkillsUSA opportunities by announcing them in class and by planning for a couple of class periods to allow students to explore the SkillsUSA organization and opportunities available through it.
- Include chapter meeting dates and times in your class syllabus
- Send a letter home to parents of your students to communicate about the SkillsUSA opportunities at the beginning of the term (or before it starts)

- Make regular connections between classroom content and the SkillsUSA Framework
- Offer reminders about local SkillsUSA deadlines and events
 - Payment of membership dues
 - Completion of fundraising efforts
 - SkillsUSA Week activities
 - Chapter meetings
 - Team practices
 - Community service activities

Key Question

How do I integrate SkillsUSA into workplace experiences or work-based learning programs that involve my students?

Integration Strategies

Connect with the industry partners your students are connected with to take your classroom to them. Think about the industry partners down the street from your school—in your local community.

- Develop connections to work-based learning and workplace experiences
 - Identify workplaces in your local community that connect to the technical content being taught in your classes
 - Connect with workers and employers in those businesses and arrange for them to visit your class(es) or for students to visit the workplace to conduct interviews, complete job shadows, and to experience the work being done

Guide students in developing, analyzing, revising, and working toward a career plan that connects your class(es) to their goals and the workplace experiences or work-based learning program in which they are engaged.

- Teach the Job-Ready, Day One lesson plan and engage students in completing and using the self-assessment within the lesson
- Lead students in developing two or three goals that contribute toward their larger career goal
- Guide students in identifying and considering entrepreneurial ventures or internship-type arrangements that are of interest to them (considering student-worker laws)

Choose and plan chapter activities that support your classroom content and use the career interests and strengths of the chapter's members.

- Choose community service projects that meet needs of the school and community and use students' technical skills and knowledge when possible
- Establish chapter fundraisers that connect to the work students do in your classroom and through local workplace environments

Key Question

How can I integrate my classroom and students' workplace experiences back into the chapter?

Integration Strategies

Plan chapter recruitment events that are engaging to students of all interests that are represented in your community and school

Consider what classroom work can connect to chapter work

- Are there class projects that can be completed that mutually benefit the students' learning of content and the chapter?

At a chapter celebration, recognize chapter members for success in the classroom and in workplaces

Establish mentor/mentee relationships arranged through the chapter that are connections between students and industry partners

The annual Membership Kit and the SkillsUSA Website provide the following resources. Access them as you prepare for these Integration Strategies:

- Sample Parent Letter
- SkillsUSA Brochure Template
- SkillsUSA Framework Flier
- SkillsUSA Framework Graphic
- SkillsUSA Framework Video
- Job-Ready Day One Lesson Plan
- Career Transitions

Refer to the following resource included in this guide to aid you in completing these integration steps as well:

[Course Connections Chart](#)

Course Connections Chart

COURSE NAME	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CAREER CONNECTIONS
List your course title	List course outcomes here	List careers that students gain helpful skills and knowledge to contribute to through this course
List your course title	List course outcomes here	List careers that students gain helpful skills and knowledge to contribute to through this course
List your course title	List course outcomes here	List careers that students gain helpful skills and knowledge to contribute to through this course



Section 4:

Recruit Members

IT'S EASY TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF WE DON'T HAVE MEMBERS, we don't have a chapter. It's more difficult to understand what the best ways are that members can be recruited into a local SkillsUSA chapter. It is common for chapters to have a specific recruitment event, and a deadline associated with paying membership dues—especially if we're working to meet the November 15th membership deadline with the national organization. As you work to fully integrate your SkillsUSA chapter into your whole CTE program, consider how you can make recruitment an ongoing effort in which you and members of your chapter foster an environment of trust, compassion, stability, and hope.

Key Question

How do I make recruitment of chapter members an ongoing effort throughout the entire year?

Integration Strategies

Step back and look at your entire CTE program to find all appropriate opportunities to encourage SkillsUSA membership and course enrollment.

- Recruit students to your class before you try to recruit them to the chapter
- Revisit the connections you made between the courses you teach and future careers. Consider how other CTE courses taught by other teachers might also connect to programs within SkillsUSA.
- Build rapport with school administrators, school counselors, and other teachers so that they can assist you with recruiting students by encouraging enrollment in your courses
- Include regular communication to parents of middle school students about the connections between classroom work and SkillsUSA programming (both upcoming and just completed) so that they can see the connection
- Watch the successes of students in the school in other activities and efforts. Be intentional about communicating with those students to congratulate and encourage them and make the connection between their success outside of SkillsUSA and how they could take it farther through the organization and your courses.
- Regularly discuss with chapter leaders ways to engage new students.
- Guide leaders in identifying the benefits of membership at the local level so that they can communicate that information to other students
- Generate a plan to help provide dues for students who may be unable to pay their own so that dues are not a prohibiting factor in membership

Section 4: Recruit Members

- Guide chapter student leaders in creating a recruitment event or activity that includes fun, as well as information
- Invite parents and guardians to be a part of the event, and design programming specific to them
- Help current members see how the chapter recruitment activity meets the requirements of an Essential Activity of the Chapter Excellence Program Level 2 Chapter of Distinction

The annual Membership Kit and the SkillsUSA Website provide the following resources. Access them as you prepare for these Integration Strategies:

Membership Recruitment Ideas

Meeting Promotional Flier

Kickoff Video

Student Video Message from Tim Lawrence, SkillsUSA executive director

SkillsUSA PowerPoint

Ideas for Using the SkillsUSA PowerPoint

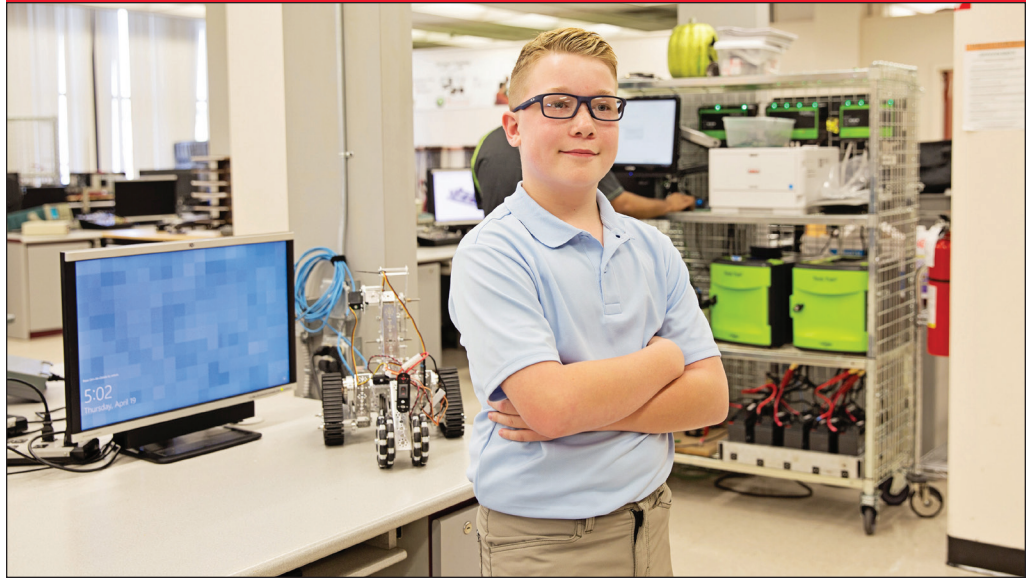
Refer to the following resource included in this guide to aid you in completing these integration steps as well:

Continuous Membership Promotion: Questions to Consider

Integration Strategy to Recruit Members

Continuous Membership Promotion: Questions to Consider

- Have I included key meeting dates within my course syllabi?
- Have I created a letter or email to send to parents of my enrolled students before classes start to share SkillsUSA opportunities with them?
- What SkillsUSA announcements can I include on my classroom bulletin boards, white board, or verbal announcements on a daily and weekly basis?
- How can current SkillsUSA members regularly connect with students who are not SkillsUSA members?
- When is the best time to host a recruitment event? Do we need multiple events to allow all interested students to attend?
- How will my current members get the word out about our recruitment event? What incentive can the chapter can provide to encourage current members to bring new potential members?
- What benefits of membership are my students prepared to communicate to potential members?
- How can I connect parents of current members with parents of potential members?
- What conversation(s) can I have with our school counselor or administrators prior to course enrollment to ensure all students have an opportunity to enroll in my CTE courses and/or be part of SkillsUSA?
- What other CTE teachers in the school would make great SkillsUSA advisors? How can I encourage them?



Section 5:

Register Yourself and Your Students as Members of SkillsUSA

NOW THAT YOU HAVE A PLAN for conducting some specific recruitment efforts and hopefully an ongoing recruitment plan, it's time to complete the technical task of registering yourself and your students as official members of SkillsUSA.

The SkillsUSA Membership Kit provides ample information about the benefits of membership, the structure of membership fees, and key dates to be aware of with respect to the membership processes.

Key Question

What process will I use to collect needed information from students for their membership?

Integration Strategies

Develop a system that works for you and your officers to collect membership information ahead of you needing to enter the information in the membership system.

- Create an online form for students to enter their information with their parents
- Create a sign-up form and place it in your classroom
- Use a sign-up form or poster at an official chapter recruitment event where parents can help their child register
- Consider having a list of events that you will need parent help with available at the same time so that parents can sign up as well
- Consider what incentives students may earn at different sign-up deadlines; ideas may include
 - Register prior to August 1: 50% off the cost of chapter t-shirt
 - Register prior to September 1: 25% off the cost of chapter t-shirt
 - Register prior to October 1: 10% off the cost of the chapter t-shirt
- Enlist the help of chapter officers to enter information from written sign up methods to an electronic version
- Introduce the officers to the Chapter Excellence Program prior to planning a recruitment event so they are aware of how to plan the event well, and what to think about as they enter the information in the CEP application
- Create a plan for collecting dues payments from members and include regular announcements in school news for the month prior to local deadlines



Section 6:

Organize Chapter Management Structure

IT MIGHT BE TEMPTING TO THINK or believe that you, the chapter advisor, has to manage your local SkillsUSA chapter. Consider your title. Advisor. You are a trusted adult in the lives of local SkillsUSA members, and your role is to guide and lead—to advise—them in the programming and growth of the local chapter.

Why is it easy for a chapter advisor to slip into the sole-manager role? More than likely, you'll be around the chapter longer than any current member has been or will be, comparatively. You're also an adult with more life experiences and may have greater skills and knowledge than students to manage a program like a SkillsUSA chapter. You are the central point for the chapter since the members come to your classroom, and adult stakeholders look to you for information and insight. We could keep adding to this list, but the point is, we have to make a conscious choice to help our students use their SkillsUSA experience to develop some management skills. Use this section of the guide to help yourself assume a role of managing your local chapter officers and advising them in managing the larger chapter.

Key Question

What factors need to be considered with respect to chapter management?

Integration Strategy

Create a management plan that addresses the following questions:

- When will your chapter conduct well-planned, regularly scheduled chapter meetings?
- When and how will your chapter select officers?
- How will your chapter officers be trained?
- How will the officer team engage chapter members in developing a chapter program of work calendar for the year?
- How can chapter members serve in leadership roles on committees associated with the program of work?
- What income and expenses can the chapter anticipate within its budget?

The annual Membership Kit and the SkillsUSA Website provide the following resources. Access them as you prepare for these Integration Strategies:

- Sample Meeting Agenda
- Officers and Elections Guideline
- Membership Interest Survey
- Program of Work Descriptions
- Committee List and Report Form
- Sample Chapter Budget
- Sample Chapter Program of Work
- Sample SkillsUSA Chapter Calendar

Refer to the following resource included in this guide to aid you in completing these integration steps as well:

[Sample Chapter Management Guide](#)

Integration Strategy to Organize Chapter Management Structure

Sample Chapter Management Guide

April

- Celebration banquet or event for chapter successes during the school year
- Selection and installation of new chapter officers
- Hold a monthly chapter meeting with an activity from Accelerate
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times

May

- Local and/or training of new chapter officer team
- Plan for engaging members and potential members at recruitment events
- Plan for engaging members in the development of a program of work
- Establish goals the team hopes to achieve during the upcoming year
- Hold a monthly chapter meeting with a kickball game
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times

June

- Attend the National Leadership and Skills Conference with your students
- Register your chapter officers ahead of time for the Activate Conference happening prior to NLSC
- Plan to visit the Championships floor at NLSC to see authentic applications of classroom content
- Connect your students with industry partners at the NLSC TechSpo

July

- Hold a summer chapter officer team meeting to plan for July and August chapter meetings
- Hold a summer fun and recruitment event for SkillsUSA members and their families; invite potential members and their families
- Hold a summer chapter meeting and complete a summer service project within the community

August

- Hold a welcome back to school chapter meeting with an ice cream social

September

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and pizza work night to engage all members in establishing plans for the annual program of work
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times

October

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and SkillsUSA Trivia Match
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times

November

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and Thanksgiving games
- Conduct a chapter fundraiser
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times
- Set up times for middle school students in your classes to work with elementary students or potential members by using *Jump into STEM!*

December

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and cookie decorating contest
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times

January

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and hot chocolate party
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times
- Guide officers to complete the Chapter Excellence Program application

February

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and activity from Accelerate
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times
- Conduct SkillsUSA Week activities each day of SkillsUSA Week

March

- Hold a chapter officer team meeting prior to the chapter meeting to plan
- Hold a chapter meeting and activity from Accelerate
- Reflect on the year with the current officer team
- Hold the selection interviews for new chapter officers
- Include announcements of upcoming chapter opportunities in daily class times

April

- Enjoy starting a new year!



Section 7:

Implement SkillsUSA Resources and Engage in SkillsUSA Programming

PROGRAMMING IS AVAILABLE FOR TEACHERS to use in local CTE programs and SkillsUSA chapters through the state and national levels of the SkillsUSA organization. Dig in! Ask questions and seek information about the programming that is available to you and your students.

Key Question

What is the Chapter Excellence Program (CEP), and how does it help integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program?

Integration Strategy

The CEP recognizes achievement as it relates to the integration of the SkillsUSA Framework in program of work activities of the chapter. Use the Framework to guide students in planning activities of the chapter and be intentional about reflecting with students the development of their personal, workplace and technical skills. Help the students understand how and why they learn each of the Essential Elements during chapter activities.

Key Question

What is the Career Essentials suite, and how does it help integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program?

Integration Strategy

Connect with the high school CTE teachers to ensure that they are using the Career Essentials suite and to see how you can complement their curricular programming. The Career Essentials suite is comprised of three segments—Foundations, Experiences, and Assessments.

Career Essentials: Foundations includes a rigorous set of lesson plans that are teacher-led and engage students in extensively exploring the Essential Elements of the Framework. The lesson plans include direct integration strategies to connect the Framework to the classroom, workplace experiences, SkillsUSA chapter, and learning outside of SkillsUSA.

Career Essentials: Experiences is comprised of a set of fundamental and advanced project-based learning experiences that are a combination of on-line and off-line components; the experiences are a blend of teacher-led and student-led segments. The experiences provide students with a tangible way of exploring the Essential Elements of the Framework.

Career Essentials: Assessments includes technical skill assessments as well as the Career Ready Assessment. The Career Ready Assessment is designed to evaluate the learning of students following the fundamental set of Career Essentials: Experiences.

Key Question

What is *Jump into STEM!* and how does it help integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program?

Integration Strategy

Jump into STEM! includes a series of STEM-related activities that can be used to engage younger students. Connect with high school SkillsUSA members and ask them to lead some of the sessions found in the *Jump into STEM!* materials, and then engage middle school students in leading some of the sessions for younger students.

The connection between SkillsUSA members and students who aren't members and/or who are younger creates an excellent premise for recruitment of students. The learning is engaging, hands-on, and provides a touch point with current members. What's more, is that every career uses content that is connected to science, technology, engineering, and/or math. *Jump into STEM!* can help students see the connection to their career field of interest.

With explicit connection between the SkillsUSA Framework and specific careers, *Jump into STEM!* is a purposeful and useful way to engage existing and potential members. Consider how you can engage your middle school students with teaching a 20-minute lesson to an elementary classroom once each week. With 44 lessons to choose from, there are plenty to use.

Key Question

What is the Student2Student mentoring program, and how does it help integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program?

Integration Strategy

The Student2Student Mentoring program allows you to connect middle school students with younger students. The mentoring program provides a way to connect younger students with your technical program and with your students. Your students are able to share what they have learned about each Essential Element, their technical skill and knowledge development, and the fun and learning experienced within the SkillsUSA chapter.

Key Question

What is SkillsUSA Week, and how does it help integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program?

Integration Strategy

SkillsUSA Week happens annually in February and is a time to celebrate and advocate for the organization right alongside celebrating and advocating for CTE during CTE Week, which also occurs in February.

So how does the week help integrate SkillsUSA into your CTE program? Make your classroom the host site of many of your SkillsUSA Week events so that members and non-members alike recognize your classroom as the "home" of SkillsUSA in your local school.

Make SkillsUSA Week bigger than being about SkillsUSA. Communicate about CTE at the same time that you're communicating about SkillsUSA.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Host an appreciation breakfast for teachers and supporters of the chapter
- Record interviews with a local radio station to promote CTE, the happenings of your classroom, and SkillsUSA
- Set up booth to promote trades of SkillsUSA members and classes offered at the school that connect to them
- Designate a day as your local chapter t-shirt or red blazer day
- Hold a special lunch for SkillsUSA members
- Post a daily trivia question about your classroom content and SkillsUSA in your school announcements and accept answers from students who are not SkillsUSA members; reward them with a small prize

Key Question

How does the National Conference pin and t-shirt design challenge help to integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE Program?

Integration Strategy

One option could include announcing the opportunity and promoting it within your classroom. You could also consider setting up competitions between your classes or small groups within your classroom and vote to select one design to submit.

Communicating SkillsUSA opportunities in the classroom helps those students who aren't yet members to know what is possible through membership. Presenting many opportunities also helps to communicate the wide variety of opportunities available to people with all kinds of strengths and interests.

Key Question

How does the National Week of Service help to integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE Program?

Integration Strategy

All students can serve, and a service project is a great way to engage SkillsUSA members and those considering membership. Encourage your SkillsUSA members to invite potential members to help with the service project. Promote the opportunity in class and reward all students with Popsicles or ice cream after the event.

Key Question

How does the President's Volunteer Service Award help to integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE Program?

Integration Strategy

The Presidential Service Award is presented to individuals, families and groups in recognition for their achievement of a certain standard of service. This standard is measured by the number of hours served over a 12-month period or hours served over the course of a lifetime.

Challenge the members in your class to give—of their time and talents. At the start of the school year, promote the President's Volunteer Service Award as a program available to students in your school—individually or as a class or small group. Help the members develop service ideas and track their service throughout the next year. Then hold a time dedicated to helping members complete their application for the award.

Key Question

How does the CareerSafe program help to integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE Program?

Integration Strategy

No matter which occupation our students are preparing for, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rules and guidelines will affect them. Build into your curricular plans the time and expectation for students to complete the OSHA course. Students will learn to recognize potential safety and health hazards in the workplace. By completing the OSHA 10-hour training, students will receive an industry-recognized credential card from OSHA.

Key Question

How do the SkillsUSA Educational Resources help to integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE Program?

Integration Strategy

There are many SkillsUSA educational resources available that teachers and students can use within the classroom and SkillsUSA chapter. Commit to implementing and integrating one new educational resource each semester of the school year to develop the habits of doing so. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Use Jump Start to start each class period with a Framework-based bell-ringer
- Guide students in using Accelerate to choose an engaging activity for members to do near the end of each chapter meeting
- Use the Leveraging Your Leadership series to teach your students parliamentary procedure, public speaking, and more

Key Question

How can SkillsUSA conferences and trainings help me integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program?

Integration Strategy

Engage your students and yourself in at least one SkillsUSA conference annually. Consider taking your chapter officer team to the National Leadership and Skills Conference and register them for Activate—a pre-NLSC leadership conference for young chapter leaders. While your students attend Activate, spend your time in Engage—a teacher professional development experience that will help you grow in your pedagogy and in your ability to implement the SkillsUSA Framework.

In addition to these national conferences, contact your state director to learn more about leadership programming available for students within your state and teacher professional development opportunities available for you. Make sure you support your own chapter officers with adequate training and development to prepare them for each of the tasks you'll ask them to complete as chapter leaders.

Students also have the ability to demonstrate their technical skills and knowledge through authentic assessments known as Championships. These are competitions to measure technical skill ability. Some competitive events are available to middle school students, and you can use the standards outlined for each of the competitions to design your own classroom assessments. Remember that technical skills mean little to industry partners if not coupled with high quality leadership and employability skills found in the SkillsUSA Framework. Be intentional about engaging students in conversations about technical, workplace, and personal skill development. The competitive events students participate in should be directly aligned with their career goals and be connected to their CTE course content.

The annual Membership Kit and the SkillsUSA Website provide the following resources. Access them as you prepare for these Integration Strategies:

- Chapter Excellence Program (CEP) participation details
- Career Essentials resources details and CEP connections
- Jump into STEM!* participation details
- Student2Student Mentoring program details and CEP connections
- SkillsUSA Week details specific to the year
- National Conference Pin and T-shirt Design Challenge participation details
- National Week of Service program participation details and CEP connections
- President's Volunteer Service Award participation details
- CareerSafe participation details
- New Educational Resources feature



Section 8:

Connect with your High School CTE Program(s)

MIDDLE SCHOOL IS A TIME OF TRANSITION for students. It's often awkward, and sometimes there are aspects that are challenging. Your students are no longer elementary students, and they are not quite yet high school students. As educators, we must work to understand how we can help students maximize the time transitioning from elementary to high school and help set them up for success in their next educational adventure.

Key Question

How do I integrate my middle school CTE program and SkillsUSA chapter with the high school CTE program and SkillsUSA chapter?

Integration Strategy

The Middle School Membership Kit gives some great ideas on how to connect with your high school feeder program(s). The strategy here is . . . do it. Connect, intentionally so, with those school(s) that your middle school students will attend next.

- Make sure that your classroom curriculum prepares students to experience the next curriculum
- Expose your students to opportunities in SkillsUSA so that they can readily jump in and be part of their high school chapter
- Find collaborative work your middle school chapter and the high school chapter can do together

CTE programs often must show their value in a school system in order to remain supported. Look for ways to publicize and communicate the good happening in your chapter.



Section 9:

Celebrate Success

TEACHERS AND SKILLSUSA ADVISORS of middle school students tell us how important it is for middle school students to have a place where they can try, fail, and succeed. They need a champion working right alongside of them too—for encouragement in difficult times and for celebration in times of “winning.”

Earlier in this guide, we outlined a few ways that you as a teacher can establish an environment that builds trust, exhibits compassion, demonstrates stability, and generates hope. Do you want to take that a step farther? We hope so.

Key Question

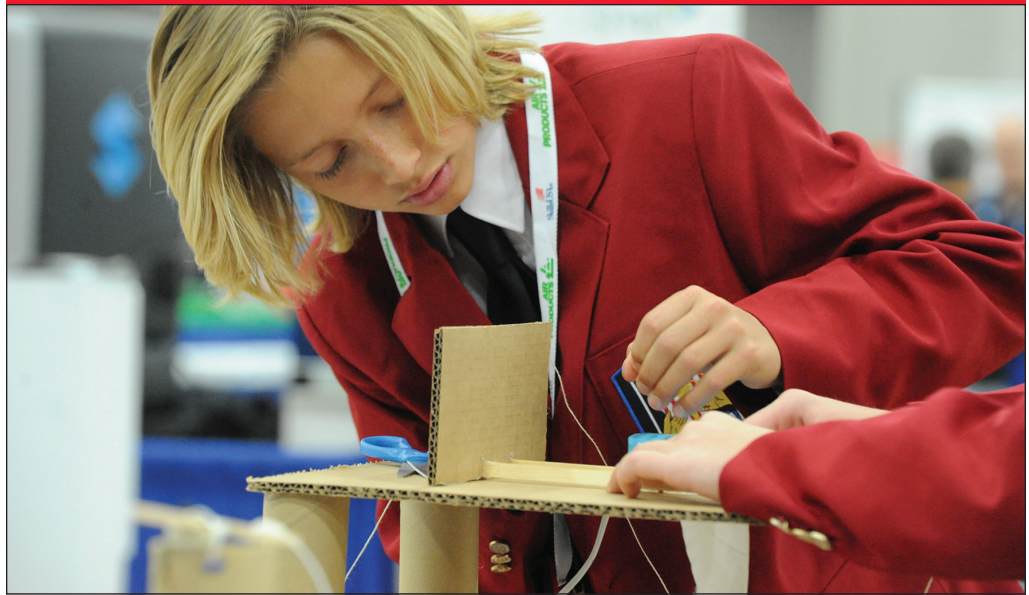
How do I integrate SkillsUSA into my CTE program through the celebration of student success?

Integration Strategies

With the help of the suggestions in the Middle School Membership Kit as well as your own knowledge of your own students, look for ways that you can celebrate individual students in ways that are meaningful to them.

- You can build trust with students by celebrating them in an environment that they appreciate. For some, that means being recognized in front of a large group—like their class. For others, it means receiving a note that was mailed home. For still others, it means an encouraging word spoken with genuine enthusiasm. Integrate SkillsUSA into your CTE program by recognizing classroom success at chapter events and by recognizing member success in your classroom.
- You can exhibit compassion by being present in your students’ journeys to success. Ask your students what they are enjoying about working toward a specific goal. Ask them what they are challenged by. Encourage your students. When your student perceives they have failed, compassionately help them create a plan to work toward success again. When they achieve their defined success, celebrate with them knowing exactly what they went through to reach the success.
- You can demonstrate stability by celebrating with all students whatever their successes are. Different students are working constantly toward different “wins.” While the wins may be perceived from the outside as bigger or smaller, often times, the student’s applied effort is big—regardless of the size of the win. If you want to demonstrate stability through celebration, stay in-tune to what your students are celebrating and how they want to be celebrated.

- You can generate hope for the future by engaging your students in the creation of the future. Communicate with your students about how their actions and their messages about their CTE and SkillsUSA experience impact what adult stakeholders know and believe about the program—and that future students will benefit (or not) from the investments of the current students. Engage your current students in visioning discussions and ask them to share with you what they hope exists within the program for future students to experience.



Section 10:

STEM Integration

STEM. IT'S THE HOT TOPIC AND BUZZWORD of the past several years—both in industry and education. States have developed industry and education initiatives to promote “STEM careers,” “STEM jobs,” “STEM classes,” “women in STEM,” and other group- or topic-specific STEM efforts. There are even variations of STEM. Choose your favorite web browser and search “variations of STEM,” and you’ll likely find acronyms for STEM associated to art, the environment, robotics, law, and more. The acronyms look like these: STEAM, iSTEM, iSTEAM, eSTEM, STREM and several others.

STEM refers to engaging in three-dimensional learning and building scientific understanding, to using and applying technology tools and concepts, using the designing processes associated with engineering, and solving and communicating problems through the use of mathematics concepts and processes.

Different groups, organizations, and educational content areas developing and promoting their own version of the STEM acronym and initialism speaks to the importance of integrating science, technology, engineering and math content into all content areas. The connections to those content areas and groups are clearly present to the experts in given fields. If we really think about it, there are perhaps no careers that exclude science, technology, engineering and mathematics content.

What careers are you preparing your students for? Which ones don't require students to exhibit some level of proficiency in content and processes associated with science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics?

As educators, we are all responsible for incorporating the content and processes connected to science, technology, engineering and mathematics into our learning environments—and we're responsible for helping students make a personal connection between their interests and goals and all of the content they'll need to support their achievement of said goals.

Key Question

How do I promote my CTE program as a way for students to develop their STEM knowledge and skills?

Integration Strategies

- Share a letter with parents of students and potential students to communicate the STEM opportunities available through your classroom and SkillsUSA.
- Publish an article in your local newspaper to engage stakeholders in understanding how SkillsUSA, your classroom, and STEM connect.
- Engage your middle school students in hosting a *Jump into STEM!* Night for elementary students and their parents, or coordinate with elementary teachers to identify two times each month that your middle school students can take the *Jump into STEM!* curriculum to their classrooms—or they can come to yours!
- Grow your program through grant applications that encourage and enable STEM integration.

Key Question

How do I integrate STEM content and processes into my classroom and SkillsUSA chapter?

Integration Strategies

- Choose resources and learning methods that are interdisciplinary in nature. Identify specific science, technology, engineering or mathematics concepts that contribute to or can be drawn from a content piece you're teaching now and call it out to the students. Create opportunities for your students to apply what they learn outside of your classroom to what they learn within it. Here are a couple of examples to get you started:
- What mathematics concepts make even the simplest construction projects your students are engineering successful? What science and technology processes are they applying to the project?
- How can you integrate applying the process and science of photosynthesis when a product your students are learning about or using is a plant-based product?
- Identify existing connections between your classroom content area standards and those standards associated with science and mathematics. What other connections can you make?
- Identify the standards and outcomes associated with local, state, and national SkillsUSA activities; make and communicate distinct connections to your classroom standards—especially those that you connected to other content area standards.
- Design learning experiences and encourage chapter programming and tasks that model the world's real-work environments. Create opportunities for your students to start their learning by facing a problem, and opportunities for them to collaborate in creating a solution. Scientists solve problems daily. Technology results from the identification of a tool that can solve a “problem.” Engineers of all kinds must anticipate problems and work to achieve solutions that are preemptive. Mathematicians' work is defined as “problem solving.” Regardless of the exact problem one is solving, the problem-solving process is applied similarly, and that's a critical skill for students to develop.
- Create resources for parents to engage in conversations about STEM concepts with their child at home. Help the parents play a key role in intentionally integrating all of their child's learning and connecting their sources of learning to one another.
- Lead your students in identifying how they do or will build scientific understanding, use technology, apply design processes, and solve problems within their coursework or future career. Help all students in your classes create and host an “I am STEM” showcase and invite other teachers and students to attend the showcase in your classroom—a “STEM classroom” all of its own.
- Invite local business partners to brainstorm and list ideas of ways that scientific understandings, technology use, design processes, and problem solving practices are exhibited in their places of work. Create an opportunity for students, their parents, and other school stakeholders to hear about the STEM connections to a variety of workplaces right in your own community.

- Partner with the science and mathematics teachers in your school. Swap classrooms from time to time by bringing their students to your classroom to contextualize their math or science learning and send your students to them to provide students with an experience where they can identify the application of specific math and science concepts.

It's easy to consider the connections to STEM as being the obvious—in technology and engineering careers, and in science and math classrooms. Through our classrooms and associated SkillsUSA chapters, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to help our students make relevant connections between all they do or learn about and their future career goals. Help them find purpose in their coursework, in their parents' instruction and rules, in your classroom content and design, in their volunteer efforts, and in their SkillsUSA involvement—and do it by helping them understand how they'll serve others through their profession.

Refer to the following resources included in this guide to aid you in completing these integration steps as well:

[Sample STEM Promotion Letter to Students' Parents](#)

[Sample STEM Integration Newspaper Article](#)

[Sample Grant-writing Guide](#)

Sample STEM Integration Letter to Parents

Dear _____,

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with your son/daughter in my career education classroom. I am passionate about the _____ content that is part of my classroom, and find it highly rewarding to connect student to their potential careers through that content.

What is it that you think of when you think of (insert content area)? You may or may not think of this classroom as being connected to STEM as well. Here are some ways in which it is. While in my classroom, your child will experience the following:

Building of Scientific Understanding

(Insert the science concepts addressed through your course content)

Application of Technology Tools and Concepts

(Insert examples of technology tools and/or concepts students will experience in your course content)

Using Designing Processes

(Insert examples of design processes students will use in your course content)

Solving and Communicating Problems through Mathematics Concepts

(Insert examples of the types of problems students will solve by using math concepts and/or processes)

Your child will also visit elementary classrooms regularly during the school year to teach lessons from a resource called *Jump into STEM!* Please ask your child about their planning and teaching efforts when our work with that project begins.

STEM concepts are all around us in the world. I'm committed to helping your child see how they are part of STEM and how STEM concepts are part of their world—today and in the future.

Thank you for trusting me with your child and for allowing me the opportunity to invest in a their future through the experiences they will have in my classroom.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

Sample STEM Integration Newspaper Article

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dear *(insert news/media outlet here)*,

What do you think of when you hear “STEM”? Do the words science, technology, engineering and math enter your mind? Students of the *(insert school name here)* are learning STEM concepts through the _____ classroom the SkillsUSA chapter every day.

Here are a few ways that our middle school students have learned STEM concepts and skills this school year:

Building of Scientific Understanding

(Insert the science concepts addressed through your course content and SkillsUSA chapter)

Application of Technology Tools and Concepts

(Insert examples of technology tools and/or concepts students will experience in your course content and SkillsUSA chapter)

Using Designing Processes

(Insert examples of design processes students will use in your course content and SkillsUSA chapter)

Solving and Communicating Problems through Mathematics Concepts

(Insert examples of the types of problems students will solve by using math concepts and/or processes in your course content and SkillsUSA chapter)

Middle school students enrolled in _____ coursework at _____ Middle School are also visiting the (elementary) classrooms each week to teach brief lessons to the elementary students from a curriculum called Jump into STEM! So far, students have taught lessons on topics such as (insert a few topics here).

Our CTE program thanks the community for your support of career education and our SkillsUSA chapter. Please make plans to join us at the following engagement opportunities:

(List upcoming dates here)

If there is a way that you believe our classroom or SkillsUSA chapter can serve you or someone in the community, please feel welcome to share your ideas with me at *(insert email address here)*.

Sample Grant-writing Guide

Is there a grant you're interested in applying for to achieve some new goals focused on STEM? Or is there a project your program is hoping to complete that needs some additional funds? If you are considering the possibilities of a grant award, consider the following in preparation of seeking or completing a grant application:

- Know your purpose and your “why”
- Connect with a grant writer in your community who might be willing to provide feedback on your application
- Identify potential grants
- Compare your project goals with the specifications of the grants you're considering
- Communicate with the potential funder
- Create a thorough outline of the proposed project
- Create a plan to evaluate the project
- Prepare a project budget and sustainability plan
- Complete grant application(s)
- Consider using online grant-writing guides for additional information about completing specific sections of grant applications

Try it!

In an ASCD article, Thomas Armstrong painted a picture of the needs of middle school students. Armstrong (2006) recommends that in designing middle school experiences, we consider the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of students. Safe. Personal. Engaging. Relational. Community-centered. Respectful. These are the words Armstrong used to describe the type of environments needed by middle school students.

In an April 2011 article, Rick Wormelli provide tips for developing teacher mindsets that support the needs of middle school students and tips to guide students through transitional periods. (2011)

In reality, what middle school students need is not all that different from what elementary students, high school students, college students and adults need. Rather, we're called to blatantly recognize that the middle school time frame is rather short, and is very much about transitioning from one type of experience to another. When we choose to engage with middle school students with intentionality for where they are, with recognition of where they've been and where they're going, we'll be able to better serve them than we will if we work to pull them out of elementary school or push them into high school.

SkillsUSA programming can assist you as a teacher in meeting the needs of middle school students, and with your leadership, it can help middle school students move confidently from elementary to high school.

Grab your Middle School Membership Kit. Read it alongside this supplemental guide. Schedule time for yourself to review, create and implement resources that will help you develop a middle school career and technical education program where you can offer relevant and rigorous coursework, engage students in workplace learning experiences and integrate a SkillsUSA chapter within your larger CTE program. And when you have a success, share it. Collaborate with other middle school teachers working to navigate the needs of these students—both within your school and within other schools.

We know you can be successful at integrating SkillsUSA—and all of its programs—right alongside the technical content you teach. And we know your students will be stronger leaders and learners because of your work.

References

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In keeping with a tradition of respect for the individuality of our members and our role in workforce development, SkillsUSA strives to ensure inclusive participation in all of our programs, partnerships and employment opportunities.

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