**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**TWO OR MORE STORIES**

**ELEVATOR SPEECH**

Many believe Arizona’s school system is failing. They don’t see much positive in the way we educate our children. There is no doubt that Arizona must do a better job in our schools. But there are some bright spots and successes in our education system that are often overlooked. One very bright spot in Arizona education is Career and Technical Education, or CTE. CTE programs around the state are working! CTE students are succeeding! They succeed regardless of their income levels, ethnicity or family background. They graduate from high school and continue on to college and post secondary programs at much higher rates than other students. They enter the workforce committed and well trained. They will provide the majority of technical and high tech manufacturing workers in the state. We should be broadcasting their success from the rooftops. Instead, we are going in the opposite direction.

CTE programs are in peril. In the latest State Budget, the Legislature made deep and unequal cuts to CTE programs. The cuts were so serious that districts will be forced to end many CTE classes. Both our students and our State will suffer. Without focus and a future, many students will drop out or develop no skills. By destroying one of its most successful educational initiatives, one with real economic returns, Arizona will not be able to provide the workers companies need to relocate or expand operations here. Talk about throwing the baby out with the bathwater! This is not only tragic, it’s just plain dumb!

But there is good news. These drastic and ill-advised cuts to CTE can be reversed. To do so, we must mobilize now! We must spread the word about CTE, its overwhelming successes, and its essential role in insuring that Arizona is truly Open for Business. We must contact our Legislators and the Governor to let them know that CTE is critical to Arizona’s future and that funding must be restored. Now!