

Bloomfield Dual Track CNA Pilot Program

Work-based learning and dual track training models offer a potential solution to Connecticut's unspoken crisis of youth disconnection.

Recent research found that roughly **one in five young people in Connecticut were either at-risk or disconnected** from education and employment systems.¹ Disconnection at an early age has lifelong economic and social impacts that harm the young person, their households, and the broader community.

Connecticut's 119K Commission has recommended the expansion of career-connected learning and pathways from education to work as a primary strategy to address youth disconnection.² Career-connected learning, such as dual track training models that combine academic instruction with occupational training, can drive higher student engagement and academic achievement. **The Bloomfield Dual Track CNA Pilot Program offers a promising and replicable example of high-quality dual track programming that delivers meaningful results for young people.**

Dual Track Programs are designed to allow students to explore a range of academic and vocational interests, earning both high school diplomas and college credits or industry-recognized certifications **without incurring student debt or committing to lengthy training periods.** This model reflects the Bloomfield School District's commitment to preparing students for a successful future, whether they choose to pursue higher education or enter the workforce directly and is growing in interest in Connecticut to address business and industry's needs for a more robust future talent pipeline.

The Bloomfield Dual Track CNA Pilot Program was implemented in early 2024 as a partnership between Bloomfield School District, Capital Workforce Partners [program management], Northeast Medical Institute [training provider], and EDSI [case management]. The pilot served 20 students with core outcomes of CNA credential attainment, HS credit attainment and HS completion, and postsecondary plan development.

CNA jobs are among the most in-demand in the region, and the CNA position is a key entry point into many other career fields in clinical healthcare settings such as Registered Nurse, Medical Assistant, and various medical technician roles. Bloomfield students received the state standard level of CNA training and upon program completion are fully qualified to work with any of the hundreds of employers seeking CNAs. While the Bloomfield pilot was focused on CNA, **the dual track model can be tailored to fit any entry-level career pathway.**

The pilot model integrates in-school instruction with extracurricular occupational training. Students enrolled at the end of the school year (June '24) and started training and clinical internships in the summer, also receiving case management and supportive services. In the fall semester (Sep '24), students enrolled in a Healthcare/Workforce Readiness elective course at the high school, which was a credit-bearing course delivered by a certified teacher. In the spring semester (Feb '25) students will continue engaging in clinical internships, preparing for and passing CNA licensing exams, and working with their

¹ Dalio Education & Boston Consulting Group. 2023. Connecticut's Unspoken Crisis: Getting Young People Back on Track.

² 119K Commission. 2024. Young People First. <https://www.ccm-ct.org/YoungPeopleFirst/Young-People-First-Report>.

case managers to coordinate placement into employment or further postsecondary education. **9** students have already attained their CNA license.

In the words of Bloomfield High School Principal Jesse White: "Bloomfield High School is at the forefront of the dual track program, and we are thrilled by the success of our students enrolled. The success of Bloomfield's Dual Track program is evident in its ability to seamlessly integrate academic excellence with practical career skills, ensuring students graduate with both a strong educational foundation and hands-on experience. This dual approach empowers learners to navigate the competitive workforce with confidence, fostering a generation of well-rounded, industry-ready professionals."

Dual track training models are proven, replicable, and scalable. Connecticut's young people deserve high-quality opportunities to explore and prepare for careers that promote prosperity and self-sufficiency.