



# Foundations and Defining Principles of Georgia's Technical College System

*Business Partnerships, Customer Focus, Quality,  
& Innovations for the Future*

By Kenneth H. Breeden, Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education

## Letter from Kenneth H. Breeden



Greetings,

In recent years, Georgia's system of technical colleges has been receiving national attention. Our rapid growth, our new programs, and our innovative approach to working with business and industry have inspired much interest. Many of those who have inquired about our system are curious to know the origin of the Department of Technical and Adult Education, and this report is intended to help answer that question and to acknowledge the leaders and the landmark events that have combined to shape the history of our agency.

Included in this report is a timeline of our system's development, as well as some brief essays describing a few of the most significant aspects of our agency that make it unique. What I hope to highlight here are the three principles that are at the heart of Georgia's technical college system.

The first of these defining principles is that we are customer focused. This means that the leadership at our technical colleges listens and responds to the needs of our constituencies. The second principle is that we are dedicated to building partnerships with the business community to better enable us to develop new programs that keep pace with the changes in our economy. The third principle is that we're committed to quality. And underlying all these principles is our commitment to our students and the citizens of Georgia who depend on us to provide them with the skills and the training to allow fulfilling and successful careers.

Major parts of the ongoing success of our system that allow us to fulfill these principles are the members of our state board, our local boards, our foundations, and the dedicated presidents, faculty and staff of our colleges. These are the people that have helped our technical colleges become essential parts of their communities. These are the people who provide the leadership and support each day to build and grow.

We have been fortunate to have had visionary leadership since the first schools were created in the 1940s—beginning with the first technical institute in Clarkesville, and continuing through the 60s and 70s as federal and state funds for technical training were made available, allowing schools to be opened throughout the state. And since the creation of the DTAE in 1988, we have been focused on management strategies that help us increase the efficiency of our system, maximize our use of resources, and guarantee our responsiveness to the needs of our state and its people.

This report reviews the history of our technical college system. But more than that, it reviews the history of a tradition that is based on hope, dedication, and dreams.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. H. Breeden".

Kenneth H. Breeden, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



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... contribute to the economic, educational, and community development of the citizens of Georgia.



Education

# The Origins and Growth of Georgia's Technical College System

Over the past decades, the history of Georgia's Technical College System has been intimately bound up with the history of the state itself. As the needs of Georgia's businesses have evolved, the leaders of our system have responded with new strategies and new solutions that have kept our economy growing and that continue to provide valuable opportunities for our citizens.

Through the efforts of these dedicated visionaries, we have laid a foundation for Georgia's Technical College System that allows us to remain strong in times of challenge, flexible in times of change, and focused in times of success.

Georgia has always been a leader in technical education, and the first significant piece of federal legislation directed toward vocational education was the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, co-sponsored by Georgia Senator—and future governor—Hoke Smith. Georgia's economy had recovered from the devastation of the Civil War, agriculture was flourishing, and Smith recognized the need for training in the methods of modern industry if the state was to progress. The decline of the cotton economy and the onset of the Great Depression made that need more urgent.

On the eve of World War II, significant federal funds were made available for developing programs in vocational education. In 1943, Dr. M.D. Mobley, then the State Director of Vocational Education, succeeded in getting the State Board of Education to approve his recommended plan for a system of Area Trade Schools, and by 1944 the first school opened in Clarksville—North Georgia Trade and Vocational School.

Four years later, a second school opened in Americus, South Georgia Trade and Vocational School.

In the early 1950s, W.M. Hicks, the State Supervisor of Trade and Industrial Education, watched as returning veterans from Korea and rural folk displaced by the increasing mechanization of agriculture created an increased demand for technical training. Hicks saw that Georgia needed a more aggressive system of vocational training. He carried out numerous studies and recruited the help of elected officials and industry experts. He lobbied among PTA organizations, teachers' groups and civic clubs. Finally, in 1958, he succeeded in having the State Board of Education approve a set of policies for establishing what would be called Area Vocational-Technical Schools.

By the late 1960s, thousands of Georgians were enrolling in the 19 schools that had opened in Georgia during that decade. At the same time, legislation created Quick Start, a unique workforce-training program.

The growth continued, and soon another major landmark was reached in 1984 when Governor Joe Frank Harris created the State Board of Postsecondary Vocational Education, which ultimately led to the creation of the Department of Technical and Adult Education in 1988. That same year, the state's adult literacy programs were transferred to the newly created DTAE, to work side by side with the technical schools and Quick Start. For the first time in Georgia history, a state agency was now dedicated to the full scope of workforce development

services—literacy, technical education and economic development.

These developments marked a new way of thinking about technical education in Georgia. We recognized the need to link technical education to the needs of Georgia's businesses and industries, its people and its communities. No longer were Georgia's technical schools just teaching trades. Technical education became a key component in economic and community development around the state.

By the year 2000, more than one billion dollars had been invested in modernizing the system. Students were flocking to the new campuses that were being built. And in that same year legislation allowed our technical institutes to change their names to technical colleges and provided a funding formula that would accommodate our phenomenal growth in enrollment. The legislation also expanded Georgia's unique HOPE scholarship program, making financial aid more available to all technical college students. And in 2002, the Gwinnett County Board of Education and the State Board of the DTAE agreed to transfer governance of Gwinnett Technical College to our state system.

Today, guided by our three defining principles—customer focus, partnerships with business and industry, and a commitment to quality—the system's 34 technical colleges are at the center of the state's economic development team, providing careers for Georgia's citizens and guaranteeing success for Georgia's future. ●



### 1994

- DeKalb Technical Institute begins three-year phase-in to state governance.
- Georgia Business Expansion Act passed.



### 1995

- First Annual Manufacturing Appreciation Week Awards held in March



Manufacturing Appreciation Week

- Distance-learning satellite receivers and GSAMS classrooms operating at all institutes.



- Student-centered collaborative agreement signed with the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia.
- Georgia Postsecondary Education Collaborative Council begun.
- Partnership with Georgia Department of Corrections established.
- Certified Manufacturing Specialist (CMS) program developed.



### 1996

- Sandersville Regional Technical Institute opens.
- Certified Customer Service Specialist (CCSS) program developed.



### 1997

- Atlanta and Savannah Technical Institutes convert from local to state governance.
- Georgia Quality Workforce Business Alliance established.



- Fatherhood Initiative begun.



- First Service Industry Academy (SIA) opens.



- Certified Construction Worker (CCW) program developed.



### 1998

- Georgia Virtual Technical Institute (GVTI) created.



- School-to-Careers program initiated.

- The Carl Vinson Institute of Government engaged to evaluate agency performance in order to guarantee quality.



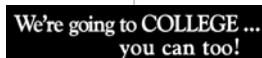
### 1999

- Performance Accountability System (PAS) and Performance Accountability Review (PAR) replace Institutional Effectiveness System (IES) and Institutional Effectiveness Review (IER).
- Technical Institute Foundation Trustees Association (TIFTA) formed.
- Microsoft selects DTAE to host the national pilot for the Academic Professional Development Center.



### 2000

- "Georgia's Continuing Commitment: Adult Literacy for the New Millennium" conference held.
- Schools change names to technical colleges.



- Funding formula and expansion of HOPE grants initiated to accommodate record enrollment growth.
- All technical colleges begin offering associate degrees.
- U.S. Department of Education awards first grants to the Office of Adult Literacy for English Literacy/Civics and Citizenship Education Program.
- The Professional Development Center begins training DTAE instructors in certification programs for organizations such as Microsoft, Sun Microsystems, Comptia, and Cisco.

### 2002

- Gwinnett County Board of Education and the State Board of the DTAE agree to transfer governance of Gwinnett Technical College to the state system.
- DTAE partners with Prosoft and begins offering Certified Internet Webmaster (CIW) training.



### 2001

- Georgia Aviation Technical College opens.
- First Leadership Conference held.
- Georgia's Technical College System Leadership Conference
- Certified Warehouse and Distribution Specialist (CWDS) program developed.



- Department of Technical and Adult Education chosen to be the regional provider of certified Microsoft training.
- Georgia voted No. 1 in U.S. for workforce development in survey by *Expansion Management* magazine, credited largely to Quick Start and Georgia's system of technical colleges.

64,101

69,327

74,907

81,355

88,801

93,431

101,194

118,496

142,074

. . . we became convinced that we needed to look for ways to move more of our instruction to the workplace.



## Partnerships

## Building Partnerships with the Business Community

One key feature that makes our system unique is that we recognize the need for representatives from business and industry to be intimately involved in our entire process. We do this in two ways: First, our local boards and foundations provide an operational structure for engaging the business community. This lets us benefit from their leadership and resources. Second, our partnerships with the business community allow us to use real industries as a laboratory, using the workplace itself as a classroom.

This approach took shape more than a dozen years ago when a group of our presidents, along with the vice chairman of the State Board, the governor's senior education aide and the commissioner, traveled to the Federal Republic of Germany to study that country's Dual System, their national apprenticeship and training program. One of the unique aspects of this program is that while it includes one or two days per week of classroom instruction, virtually all the rest of the technical and skills training takes place in industry settings. Much of this on-site training is still done in classrooms and labs, but by actually being located within the plants and businesses, the learning experience has a real-world quality that benefits students immensely.

Recognizing the value of this approach, technical college presidents and DTAE officials began to study how these practices might enhance Georgia's technical training delivery system. Everybody recognized that one of the most significant features of the German system was the

strong connection to the business community. That relationship was essential for achieving a higher level of technical training. The study group knew it would be difficult to replicate the Dual System on a broad scale in the United States, but it was convinced of its value and was determined to emulate it to the extent possible.

Later, another study group traveled to Japan to observe how that country operates its technical college system. It was seen that the Japanese system differs from the German system in that much of the technical training in Japan takes place in industry-owned institutions. For example, the NEC Technical College, a two-year technical college, is wholly owned and operated by NEC, the Japanese computer company.

However, while dramatic differences were found, there was one essential common thread that existed between these two technical education systems: both relied heavily on business and industry as a location for, and a partner in, the training process. At the time, this was radically different from the American approach to technical training (except in the case of healthcare programs, which generally require lengthy internships in the workplace).

From these studies, it was concluded that Georgia's system of technical education needed to find ways to move more instruction into the workplace.

One of the early pilot programs that grew out of this new approach was Applied Manufacturing Technology. Working closely with Shaw Industries, North Metro Technical College quickly saw significant success with the program. Another successful program was implemented in conjunction with Southwire. Currently, similar efforts are being developed for dental assistant and veterinary assistant programs. The dental and veterinary communities are enthusiastically supporting the development of these programs, convinced that learning in private clinics will be more efficient than training in off-site classrooms. In addition, Georgia's innovative Technical Certificates of Credit programs (see p. 11) offer additional opportunities for delivering instruction and training to the workplace. Many of these programs are delivered in the industries they serve.

Moving training into the workplace will not replace the one and two-year campus-based programs that make up most of our technical college curricula. This approach does, however, allow Georgia's technical colleges to work efficiently and quickly to respond to the needs of the marketplace. They also allow for significant expansion of our programs, even in times of limited funding for equipment and facilities. ●

...our ultimate quality control is based on customer satisfaction that our product meets the specifications.



Quality

## Customer Focus and a Commitment to Quality

When Larry Comer was appointed as the first chairman of the State Board of Postsecondary Vocational Education, he was already a successful businessman. He had started a small business manufacturing fluorescent light fixtures in the mid 1960s, and by the time he sold the business in the 1980s, it was grossing more than \$140 million per year and employed more than 1,000 people.

When he became involved with technical education, he brought with him an understanding of fundamental values that have proven essential to the success of the technical college system. To Larry Comer, the fundamental value that gave his business—or any endeavor—a strategic advantage was quality. It was he who helped define the basic philosophy of applying the value of “quality” even to the design of instructional and training programs at Georgia’s technical colleges.

“Quality is not an abstract term,” Comer once said. “It is a simple, measurable term. Quality simply means meeting your customer-driven specifications.”

Coming from the light fixture business, Comer cast his wisdom in the metaphor of his own industry.

“You can have quality in a \$5 fluorescent light fixture to the same degree that you can have quality in a \$1,000 chandelier. You can have quality in a 500–student technical school to the same degree that you can have quality in a 30,000–student university.”

He then posed the question: “How do we apply this to our business of training people for jobs?”

The answer provided one key element that makes up the philosophy that underlies Georgia’s Technical College System: we find out what a customer needs, and we provide the solution. If a business or industry needs a certain set of skills, the system will design an instructional program to meet those specifications. To guarantee customer satisfaction, there is consistent and ongoing review and evaluation to ensure those specifications are met.

This strategy for creating quality and achieving customer satisfaction is one of the unique virtues of Georgia’s Technical College System. By being customer focused, Georgia’s Technical College System produces a level of quality that it could otherwise not achieve. And those customers include both the students and the businesses of Georgia.

But quality is not an intangible. Georgia’s Technical College System is based on the principle that quality can be measured. For example, using the ASSET test (Assessment of Skills for Successful Educational Transfer), guarantees that a student meets certain skill levels at the beginning of his or her training program. Then, skill and performance tests measure success during a training

program that has been designed according to state-approved standards. This approach provides assurance that not only are the students receiving the training they will need to successfully perform on the job, but it also guarantees that the needs and requirements of specific areas of business and industry are being met. That is quality: giving the student the skills specified for the job.

Vigilant oversight of program design and instructional strategies helps to ensure these quality standards. The programs at Georgia’s technical colleges are designed in close partnership with the business community and are consistent with the needs of these customers. These customer-driven program standards are applied uniformly to all programs, and this allows us to provide the ultimate in quality assurance: our guarantee. Just as an automobile manufacturer provides a written warranty with any new car, asserting that the product meets the specifications, Georgia’s technical colleges promise that if a graduate does not meet the customer-driven specifications, that student will be retrained at no cost to anyone.

We make this promise of quality to our customers. And we guarantee it. ●

... (TCCs) should prepare people for new or better jobs, and they should be responsive to the needs of business and industry.



Technical Certificates of Credit

# Georgia's Technical College System - Innovations for the Future

One initiative that embodies the three defining principles of Georgia's Technical College System is the development of the Technical Certificates of Credit (TCC). The TCCs are an excellent example of how our system responds quickly to customer needs, works in close cooperation with our partners in business and industry, and provides a mechanism for guaranteeing the consistency and quality of training.

In addition to providing trained workers for employers, the TCCs also serve to offer training programs that fit the needs of students. Many students need a quicker, more accelerated path to the job market. They might not have time to complete a degree or diploma program. They need training in basic skills, and they need it delivered in an efficient, effective way. And these workforce certification programs fit the bill.

As a response to this need, Georgia's Technical College System created the TCCs as a form of "just-in-time" education. This has proven to be a very popular strategy that allows students to maximize the return on their limited resources and limited time.

The TCCs also fit within Georgia's model of "career ladder" programs. This model is structured in such a way that students can earn a technical certificate—even while still in high school—and then proceed to earn a diploma or degree as their time and ability allows. In many cases, the TCCs are a subset of other instructional programs that are designed to provide maximum flexibility. The TCCs also fit within Georgia's model for

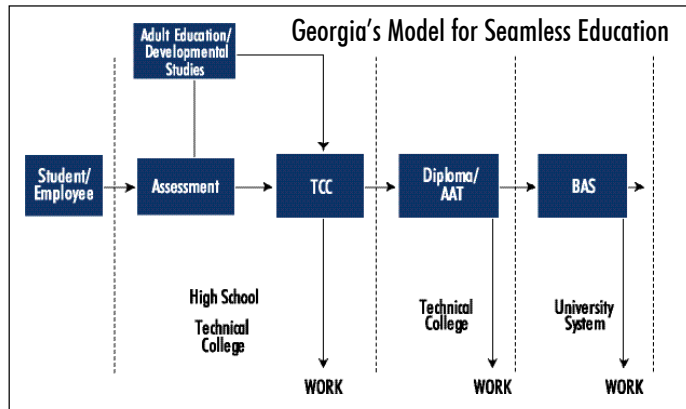
programs to be initiated and the same kind of rigorous scrutiny is applied to the TCCs as is applied to any other program. This is training with a focus on fundamental skills and long-term value.

The success of this innovative training solution is evident not only in our graduates, but in the fact that numerous other states are licensing the programs from Georgia. Our programs for Certified

Manufacturing Specialist and Certified Customer Service Specialist have become recognized models for the nation, consistently praised by business and industry leaders as programs that produce genuine results.

And this is just the beginning. As we remain dedicated to our fundamental principles, as we remain customer focused, committed to quality and partnered with business and

industry, we will be able to respond to the needs of a changing economy. A trained workforce is essential for economic prosperity, and technical education is essential for creating that trained workforce. As long as we remain flexible, creative and innovative, Georgia's Technical College System will be able to create the solutions to meet any challenge. ●



seamless education, allowing credits to be shared between the state's university system and technical college system.

The TCCs meet the same criteria as longer diploma and degree programs. They are designed to prepare individuals for new or better jobs, and they are broadly applicable to a range of industries; they are not just focused on the needs of one specific company or facility. Approval of the State Board is required for these

# Georgia's Technical Colleges



North Georgia  
Technical College  
1944



South Georgia  
Technical College  
1948



Athens  
Technical College  
1958



Southwest  
Technical College  
1958



Savannah  
Technical College  
1959



Albany  
Technical College  
1961



Augusta  
Technical College  
1961



Chattahoochee  
Technical College  
1961



Columbus  
Technical College  
1961



DeKalb  
Technical College  
1961



Coosa Valley  
Technical College  
1962



Flint River  
Technical College  
1963



Griffin  
Technical College  
1963



Swainsboro  
Technical College  
1963



Valdosta  
Technical College  
1963



Moultrie  
Technical College  
1964



Central Georgia  
Technical College  
1966



Lanier  
Technical College  
1966



Northwestern  
Technical College  
1966



Okfenokee  
Technical College  
1966



West Georgia  
Technical College  
1966



Appalachian  
Technical College  
1967



Atlanta  
Technical College  
1967



West Central  
Technical College  
1968



East Central  
Technical College  
1970



Middle Georgia  
Technical College  
1974



Gwinnett  
Technical College  
1984



Heart of Georgia  
Technical College  
1984



Altamaha  
Technical College  
1988



North Metro  
Technical College  
1988



Ogeechee  
Technical College  
1988



Southeastern  
Technical College  
1989



Sandersville  
Technical College  
1996



Georgia Aviation  
Technical College  
2001

## University System Colleges with Technical Divisions



Coastal Georgia  
Community College  
1971



Dalton  
State College  
1973

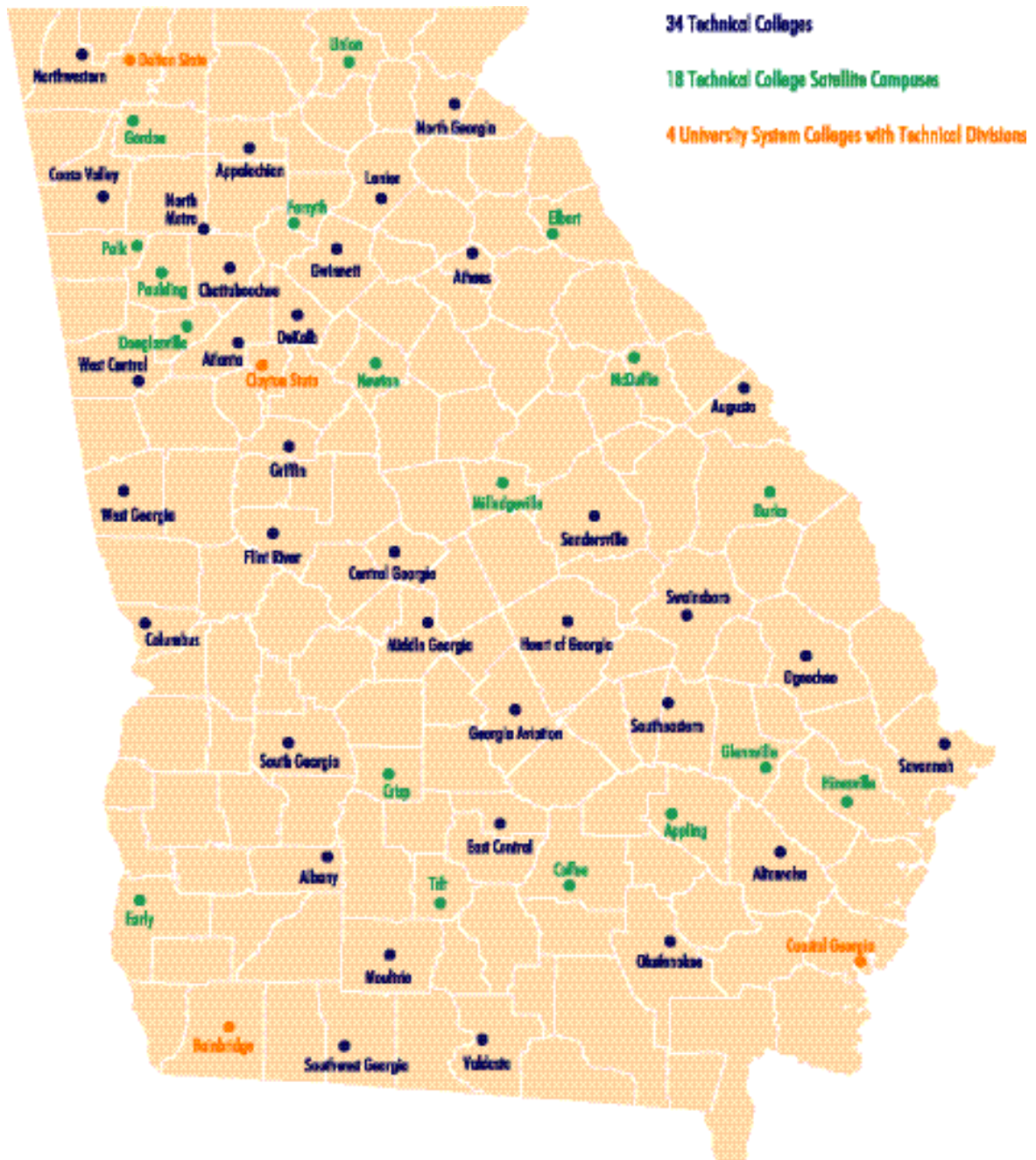


Bainbridge  
Community College  
1974



Clayton College  
and State University  
1981

# Georgia's Technical College System



# Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education

## Mission and Values

### Mission

The mission of the Department of Technical and Adult Education is to contribute to the economic, educational, and community development of Georgia by providing quality technical education, adult literacy education, continuing education, and customized business and industry workforce training to the citizens of Georgia.

### Values

*The values that are fundamental to all DTAE plans, programs, services, and operations include:*

- Belief in the value of the individual
- Belief that all people should have access to equal educational opportunity
- Belief in the value of education as a benefit to individuals and society as a whole
- Belief in the value of work as an integral and necessary part of healthy and growing individuals, cultures, and economies
- Belief in the value of local community input and involvement in education
- Belief that literacy and English proficiency are essential for people to function well and be self-sufficient in today's society
- Belief that the vast majority of Georgians should gain training beyond a high school diploma in order to gain satisfying employment and adequate wages
- Belief that DTAE should fulfill its mission by serving students, employers, and economic developers as its primary customers
- Belief that DTAE should design programs and services to meet the needs of its customers and thereby provide training that satisfies business and industry specifications
- Belief that DTAE should incorporate use of leading-edge technology into all programs, services, and operations
- Belief that DTAE should provide training in occupational competencies that enables students to become technically proficient and that DTAE should also provide education in work ethics and attitudes that enables students to become responsible employees and employers

Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education  
1800 Century Place, Suite 400  
Atlanta, Georgia 30345  
404 679-1600  
[www.dtae.org](http://www.dtae.org)

