I believe career and technical education acts as a gateway to endless opportunities for students. CTE allows students to explore new career paths and learn through meaningful, hands-on experience. CTE courses teach students many different technical skills, but they also teach many life skills that classes outside of CTE do not focus on. I believe that students who participate in CTE are more confident and prepared to enter the workforce.

Have you ever thought “I’ll get to that later” while working on a project and then waited just a little too long to get back to that task? In the engineering program at my school, students are challenged to complete a year-long project, and every year they are warned that they’ll run out of time. I was placed on an engineering design team, and everything went well for the first month or two. We met in class and worked through the phases of brainstorming and prototyping a new school attendance system, but after winter break, our momentum was lost. After a few weeks with little progress, I began to panic when I realized just how much work we had to complete! I knew that work ethic would be the key to success for my team. We started focusing our efforts on work that brought us closer to our goal instead of exploring unrealistic solutions. We tried to pace ourselves and make sure we were productive. We challenged ourselves to reflect on our progress and to identify our next steps. We watched as some of our classmates realized they were running out of time. Everyone’s projects were completed, but my team’s work ethic allowed our project to shine. Our engineering project acted as an endurance race, but it taught us the important role work ethic often plays in both success and failure.