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## Utah's tech-ed programs get top grade

*U.S. official calls career training vital in global economy*

By **Tiffany Erickson**

Deseret Morning News

Career and technical education programs in the United States needs to be stronger and more rigorous and vigorous to ensure the country can compete in a global economy — but Utah's programs are on top.

That was the message Monday Troy Justesen, assistant secretary for vocational and adult education for the U.S. Department of Education.

Justesen, who was born in Price and earned his bachelor's degree at Utah State University, addressed more than 100 CTE leaders and educators, talking about the future of CTE and adult education programs in the country.

He said the face of education is changing, and by the time a kindergartner today is 21 years old they will have received 250,000 text messages, spent 20,000 hours on the phone and watched 10,000 hours of TV.

"Plus the world is at their fingertips with the Internet — they can find out anything they want to know," Justesen said.

He said it is predicted that by 2013 there will be a super computer that will have the same power of computing as the human brain, and in less than three decades the top 10 jobs will be in industries that are yet to be created.

A classroom education used to focus around memorization of everything from math problems to spelling and theories.

But now the mission of educators is teaching students how to obtain information, how to apply knowledge to solve problems and where to find information they need.



Troy Justesen, assistant secretary for vocational and adult education and a Utah native, chats with ESL students Monday during a tour of the Granite Technical Institute, which serves five districts.

*Jason Olson, Deseret Morning News*

"Your work is important, your work matters and it is going to have an impact on students who will grow up and make their communities a better place," Justesen told educators.

He said that Utah has some of the best CTE and adult education programs in the nation and is an example to the rest of the country.

He gave CTE leaders kudos especially for the Granite Technical Institute that serves all five districts in Salt Lake County.

Students can enroll and earn certificates in areas like 3D animation, computer programming, biotechnology, dental assisting and certified nurse assisting — preparing students with a marketable skill the minute they leave high school. Plus adult students can also earn their GED or attend ESL.

"I think CTEs are doing a great job across the state — (Utah) is right there at the top I think because interest is high, and we have a real commitment to kids," said Parley Jacobs, CTE director for the Granite School District.

He said leaders are breaking perceptions of CTE — many saw it as the old vocational education. But it has shifted to cover areas that are high-tech, high-skilled and high demand in high-paying kinds of occupations, he said.

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