

## CTE seniors celebrate signing day

by Janelle Jessen | February 10, 2020

More than 170 Siloam Springs High School seniors who have completed a career and technical education (CTE) program were recognized at a signing ceremony in the Panther Activity Center on Tuesday.

After hearing a presentation from Assistant Principal Ross White and an inspirational message from motivational speaker Paul Vitale, students were called by name to come forward and sign posters committing to continue their post-secondary education, join the military, or go into the workforce.

CTE students are already recognized at the senior awards ceremony in May and get to wear a special cord when they walk in graduation, White said. However, teachers and administrators wanted to do something more to recognize the students' dedication and commitment to the future during CTE month, which is February, he said.

The ceremony was a first for Siloam Springs, according to White. Vitale, who speaks at schools across the country, said the ceremony was unique and something he "didn't see every day."

"I must say, you set the bar here in Siloam Springs," he said.

Earlier in the day, more than 300 eighth grade students attended a reverse career fair at the high school where they got a chance to visit with industries in the community and learn about the CTE programs offered at the high school, White said.

The Siloam Springs High School offers 50 careers in technical courses



Janelle Jessen/Siloam Sunday Seniors Maci Davis (left), Taylor Davis, Jaslyn Dalrymple and Alex Dabb sign a poster symbolizing their commitment to go on to post-secondary education during the Siloam Springs High School's first career and technical education signing ceremony on Tuesday.

in seven departments, including agriculture, audio/visual technology and film, Career Academy of Siloam Springs, business and marketing, family and consumer sciences, health sciences and pre-engineering: STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

In this year's senior class, 175 of the 309 students are on track to complete a career pathway, White said.

In order to be considered completers, students must have taken three courses in a career pathway, including a foundational course, a capstone course, and an in-between course, in addition to getting in all of their graduation credits, White said.

Many students are completers in more than one area of study, he said. All CTE programs are focused towards a career after high school, he said.

Sometimes students learn through a career pathway that the field isn't for them while others find direction, White said.

"We are very lucky to have a lot of students participate who take it very seriously," he said.

While taking CTE courses, students earn industry-recognized certifications that will help them advance their careers after graduation, according to White. Last year, students earned more than 525 certifications and this year White said he expects that number to be surpassed.

"That's a big deal because those are things our students can take when they leave here or even while they are students here, and get paid for them, or help them get job security in another way," he said.