



Career & Technical Education Expert Review Team

Frederick County Public Schools Post-Visit Report

Governor's Workforce Development Board
Career and Technical Education Committee

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The Governor's Workforce Development Board is grateful to the CTE Expert Review Team (ERT) members that participated in the visit of this LEA's CTE programs, as well as central office and school leadership, staff, and students that contributed valuable insights during this CTE ERT visit.

FROM: Governor's Workforce Development Board CTE Committee

TO: Frederick County Public Schools

DATE OF SUBMISSION: June 16, 2026

DATE OF VISIT: December 11, 2025

SUBJECT: CTE Expert Review Team Post-Visit Report

PURPOSE: This report summarizes the key observations, strengths, and opportunities for growth identified during the CTE Expert Review Team's site visit. It is intended to provide actionable feedback and highlight promising practices to support continuous improvement of high-quality career-connected learning in accordance with state policy and the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* goals.

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Executive Summary

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* ("the *Blueprint*") established the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Committee within the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) to direct and coordinate the development of an integrated, globally competitive and aligned system for providing CTE to Maryland students in public schools, postsecondary institutions, and the workforce. As part of this effort, the *Blueprint* calls on the CTE Committee to establish, administer, and supervise Expert Review Teams (ERTs) to visit schools offering CTE pathways.¹ CTE ERTs are a key tool through which the state observes and tracks the progress of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in implementing CTE programs that align with the CTE Committee's framework, policies and the *Blueprint*'s vision and goals.² In particular, the *Blueprint* and Joint CTE Vision statement sets a goal that by the School Year (SY) 2030-2031, 45% of high school graduates who are college and career ready (CCR) shall complete the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship or another industry-recognized credential ("45% goal").³

This report reflects a visit during Phase 1 of the CTE ERT visits. The purpose of Phase 1 is to assess the current state of CTE and *Blueprint* implementation across all 24 LEAs to identify systemic challenges and establish a baseline for statewide improvement.

This report summarizes observations and initial recommendations that the CTE ERT developed by reviewing the LEA's self-reported data and by conducting interviews, focus groups, school tours, and classroom visits during the CTE ERT visit. The CTE Committee staff, along with volunteer CTE ERT members, have collaborated on this report to provide observations and preliminary points of analysis to readers.

In this report, readers will find the purpose of the CTE ERT, an overview of the LEA, a summary of the CTE ERT visit, Strengths, Challenges, and External (SCE) analysis, and Potential Next Steps for the LEA to consider.

VISIT OVERVIEW

LEA: Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS)
Date of Visit: December 11, 2025
School(s) Visited: Frederick County Career and Technical Center (CTC)
Frederick High School (FHS)

¹ Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 21-209 (2024). <https://bit.ly/3W0JoeU>

² For a list of policies issued to date, please visit www.gwdb.maryland.gov/policy/.

³ CTE Committee, Maryland State Board of Education, and Accountability and Implementation Board. (2025, December). *Career and Technical Education (CTE) Vision for Maryland's Future*. Governor's Workforce Development Board. www.gwdb.maryland.gov/ctecomm/ctecomm-jointvisionstatement2025.pdf

This CTE ERT visited Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), located in the Central region of Maryland. FCPS offers 40 CTE programs at 10 comprehensive high schools, as well as the LEA's CTE technical center, Frederick County Career and Technical Center (CTC).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Below is a summary of the observations and findings from this CTE ERT visit, which are further detailed within the body of this report:

***LEAs' Progress Toward the Blueprint's 45% Goal for the School Year 2024-2025:
(IRCs + HSLRA/Graduating Students)***
29.9%

Internal Strengths

- IRC Attainment Rate
- Student Access to Diverse and Flexible CTE Offerings
- Supportive CTE Leadership
- Robust Resources for Career Counseling
- Experienced and Collaborative CTE Teachers
- Student and Teacher Rapport
- Support for Special Populations
- Shadow Day
- CTE Mindset Supporting Both College and Career Readiness

Internal Challenges

- Student Enrollment Outpaces CTE Infrastructure
- Mismatch Between School Counseling and CTE Pathways
- CTE Course Selection and Enrollment Process
- Transportation Barriers to CTE Programs at the CTC
- Unsustainable Teacher Workload
- Depth of CTE and Career Coaching Marketing

External Factors

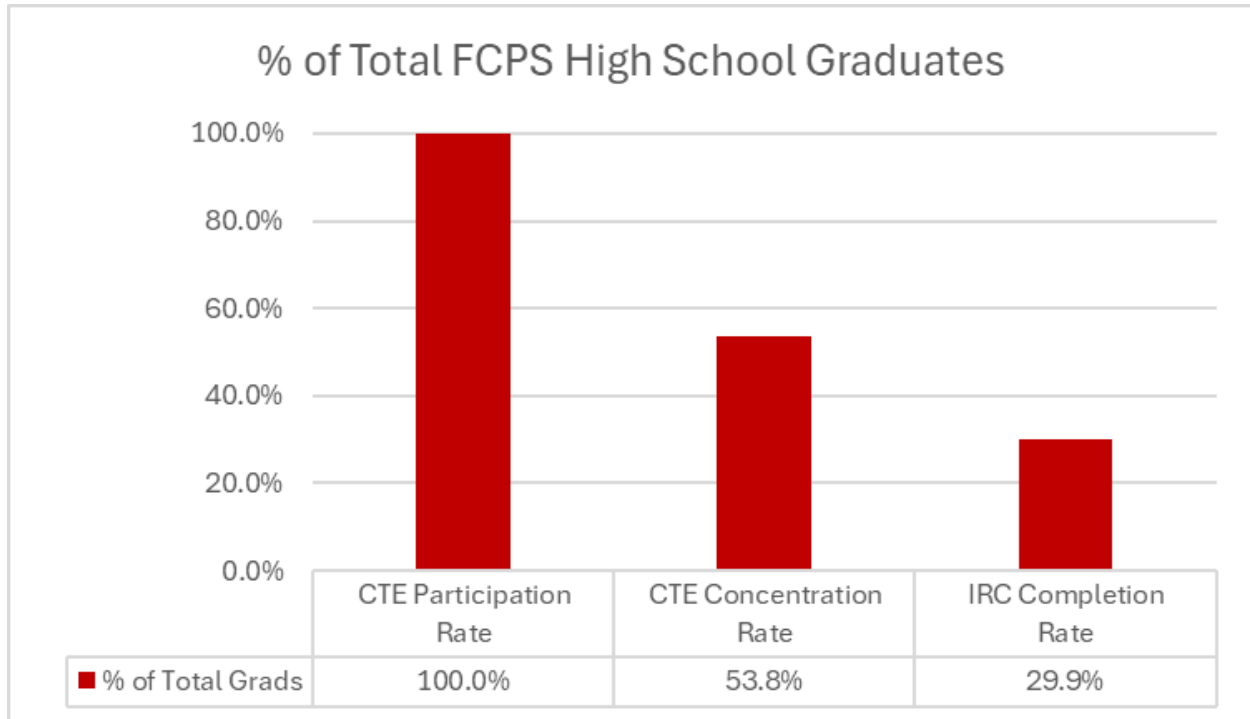
- External Strength: Partnerships with Community Colleges and County Resources
- External Strength: Industry and Community Connections
- External Strength: Robust and Accessible Employers
- External Challenge: Budget Cuts
- External Challenge: Transportation and Access to Work-Based Learning
- External Challenge: Limited Employer Engagement for HSLRA Offerings

Potential Next Steps

- Continue Implementing Creative Solutions to Address Budget and Capacity Constraints
- Deepen Use of Data to Inform Action
- Enhanced Messaging Campaign and Peer-to-Peer Engagement
- Target Professional Development Around CTE and Career Advising
- Explore Additional Alternative CTE Programming Options
- Develop Additional Supports for Multilingual Learners

- Continue to Center CTE Teacher Voices in Decision-Making
- More Intentional Career Exploration Early On
- Explore Technical Assistance with MSDE, the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), and the CTE Committee in Meeting the *Blueprint's* 45% Goal

Figure 1: LEA CTE Summary Data for School Year 2024-2025



CTE Expert Review Team Background

PURPOSE

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* ("the *Blueprint*"), Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 21-209, established the Career and Technical (CTE) Committee as a unit within the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB).⁴ The GWDB serves as the Governor's chief strategic and policy-making body for workforce development in the State of Maryland.⁵ The purpose of the CTE Committee is to direct and coordinate the development of an integrated, globally competitive and aligned system for providing CTE to Maryland students in public schools, postsecondary institutions, and the workforce. The CTE Committee aims to fundamentally reimagine and redesign career-connected learning and career pathways to ensure all of Maryland's students have real access to fulfilling and family-sustaining careers.

The *Blueprint* requires the CTE Committee to establish, administer, and supervise CTE Expert Review Teams (ERTs) to visit schools with CTE pathways.⁶ The CTE ERTs perform the following key functions through both qualitative and quantitative analysis:

1. **Monitoring:** determine whether Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are implementing CTE programs aligned to the *Blueprint's* vision and monitor progress toward reaching the statewide goal that by the School Year (SY) 2030-2031, 45% of public high school graduates who are college and career ready (CCR) will have completed the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship or another industry-recognized credential.
2. **Assessment:** analyze and assess the progress of LEAs in implementing CTE programs that align with the *Blueprint's* CTE vision, Maryland's CTE Framework as established by the CTE Committee, and associated policies.
3. **Technical Assistance:** analyze trends, identify challenges and best practices, and provide technical assistance to address issues and uplift best practices.
4. **Post-Visit Reports:** summarize findings and develop recommendations to address challenges faced by schools, LEAs, and the State in implementing the *Blueprint*. Submit reports to the LEA, Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), and the CTE Committee.
5. **Action:** summarize key findings and make recommendations to the CTE Committee on strategies to address challenges, including policy changes and technical assistance, within the CTE Committee's annual report or other avenues, as appropriate.
6. **Accountability:** Starting in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), the CTE Committee can make recommendations to the AIB on whether to withhold funds if an LEA is not making a

⁴ Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 21-209 (2024). <https://bit.ly/3W0JoeU>

⁵ Executive Order No. 01.01.2023.22. (2023). <https://tinyurl.com/execorder01012023>

⁶ Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 5-412 (2024). <https://tinyurl.com/5cb36cvy>

good faith effort to implement the *Blueprint* and is not demonstrating sufficient progress over time based on findings from CTE ERT visits.⁷

All of these functions build on each other, leading to a systemwide approach that is continuously improving the career-connected learning pathway for all students across Maryland.

On March 26, 2026, the AIB ratified a motion to amend the deployment strategy for CTE ERTs. This action was taken in accordance with Senate Bill 311 of the 2026 Maryland legislative session, which enacted a formal suspension of the ERT program. This suspension facilitates the development of a revised ERT implementation proposal by the AIB and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), which is due by November 1, 2026. Consequently, the AIB motion modifies the CTE ERT timeline, requiring the CTE Committee to conclude all Phase 1 visits by the end of the fall 2026 semester (i.e. visit all 24 LEAs). Phase 2 deployment will be deferred for the duration of the SY 2026-2027, during which time the CTE Committee will collaborate with the AIB and MSDE to identify and recommend an optimal, value-driven framework for the future operation of CTE ERTs.

CTE ERT APPROACH

The CTE ERT approach and plan is organized around two key principles: visits focused from an LEA-lense (rather than an individual school) as CTE strategies and programming is organized at an LEA level across the state; and a phased approach to completing and organizing visits over time. The CTE ERTs were organized with the following phased approach, which notes the pause in timelines of starting Phase 2 pursuant to the AIBs motion in March 2026:

Phase 1: Discovery (SY2024–2026)

- **Goal:** Establish a baseline of local strengths and systemic barriers to early implementation of the *Blueprint*.
- **Action:** Conduct field-level observations and collect data across all 24 LEAs to identify where technical assistance and state-level policy shifts are most needed.

Phase 2: Analyze & Assist

- **Goal:** Shift from observation to active alignment with the *Blueprint*, established policies, CTE Vision, and statewide CTE Framework.
- **Action:** Deploy targeted assistance and pursue policy or regulation changes to address common challenges.

Phase 3: Evaluate

⁷ Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Educ. §5-405, the AIB may release withheld funds to a school or local school system upon recommendation from MSDE, the CTE Committee, or an Expert Review Team - or if the school/LEA demonstrates sufficient progress in implementation or to improve student performance. In determining whether to release or withhold additional funds, the AIB shall consider whether a public school or local school system has been responsive to the recommendations of MSDE, CTE Committee, an Expert Review Team, and the AIB's staff. <http://bit.ly/3OMwcJh>

- **Goal:** Evaluate progress toward *Blueprint* goals and analyze outcomes; additional purposes to be developed during Phase 2.
- **Action:** Direct intensive support to LEAs struggling with progress.

Given the pause in CTE ERT visits once Phase 1 visits to all 24 LEAs are completed by the fall semester of the SY 2026-2027, this approach and structure may be amended. The CTE Committee will work closely with the AIB, and MSDE, to analyze the optimal structure and timelines for CTE ERTs.

CTE ERT VISIT MEMBERS

The CTE ERT visits consist of members from various backgrounds and expertise, ensuring a variety of analysis of the LEA's CTE programming.⁸ The CTE ERT typically consists of 10-14 individuals for each visit. This group is then split into two teams during the visit. The CTE ERT core team members must include:

- CTE Committee staff (1-3);
- CTE teacher (1): represented by a teachers' organization that, for the purposes of collective bargaining, represents a majority of teachers in the State or in a local school system, preferably a representative from a neighboring LEA;
- School/LEA leadership (1): i.e., Principal, Assistant Principal, LEA Lead CTE Staff Designee, or Blueprint Implementation Coordinator, preferably a representative from a neighboring LEA; and
- Employer, trade union representative, and/or apprenticeship sponsor (1)

Teams also typically include representatives from the:

- CTE Committee or their designee
- Local Workforce Development Board or staff
- Local community college
- State agencies responsible for implementing the *Blueprint*, inclusive of MSDE and AIB staff

CTE ERT VISIT STRUCTURE

Every CTE ERT visit during Phase 1 adheres to the following structure:

Pre-Visit Data Analysis and Dialogue:

- LEA completes a schedule for the day (Appendix B)
- LEA completes and submits brief with quantitative and qualitative data (Appendix A)
 - ERT members review in advance of orientation and training session
- Virtual orientation and training session for ERT visit members with LEA leadership, including:

⁸ GWDB CTE Committee. (July 1, 2024). CTE Committee Expert Review Team Deployment Plan School Year 2024-2025. https://gwdb.maryland.gov/ctecomm/ctecomm-ctedeploymentplan_draftsy24-25_62624.pdf

- Pre-recorded training providing an overview of CTE ERTs, roles and responsibilities during visits, and what to expect from the day
- Virtual orientation (within 1-week prior to the visit):
 - Overview of CTE in the LEA provided by the LEA Lead CTE staff
 - Review and discussion of LEA data brief
 - CTE enrollment practices, observed challenges, and any other information the LEA Lead CTE staff deems necessary

Full-Day District Visit:

- **Where:** typically two schools per day, depending on the LEA CTE structure. Visits typically include both a CTE Center and comprehensive high school with CTE programming.
- **What:** Guided school tour, CTE classroom visits, and focus groups at each school with:
 - Students
 - CTE teachers
 - Career coaches/counselors, and possibly school counselors or work-based learning coordinators, as relevant, in each LEA
 - LEA administrators/leadership (optional)

Post-Visit Debrief, Assessment, and Reporting:

- CTE ERT members submit their notes and a short survey on initial feedback
- Virtual debrief held with ERT members 1-week after visit to discuss observed strengths and challenges
- CTE ERT members review post-visit report to provide feedback
- Post-visit report provided to LEA with option for asynchronous or synchronous feedback
- Final post-visit report submitted to the CTE Committee, AIB, and LEA leadership

At every visit, the team engages in discussions with stakeholders to gain insights into the strengths and challenges of the CTE programming. These conversations reveal valuable information about how CTE supports students' post-graduation pathways and career goals, as well as areas where the LEA could enhance program access and resources. The focus groups in particular aim to uncover the experience these stakeholders have in CTE by asking consistent questions about professional development opportunities, their opinions on their experience in CTE classes, perspective on hurdles, etc. (Appendix C).

CTE ERT POST-VISIT REPORT

Following each visit, CTE Committee staff drafts a report to present observations and preliminary analyses. To ensure accuracy, drafts are shared with the CTE ERT members and LEA lead staff prior to publication. These reports integrate quantitative and qualitative findings from the LEA data brief, classroom observations, focus group recordings, team discussions, and all feedback received from CTE ERT team members either written or during the debrief.

Phase 1 reports include a summary of the visit, LEA background information, and a Strengths, Challenges, and External (SCE) analysis to guide potential next steps. The SCE analysis organizes observations into internal factors - strengths and challenges - and external factors that emerge during the visit. This framework allows LEAs to target internal improvements, and it provides an opportunity to share best practices with other LEAs. During Phase 1, the observations and next steps documented in the post-visit reports are preliminary and do not address every challenge observed, they are also not meant as a directive, but rather the intent is that LEAs utilize the findings as opportunities of improvement to explore.

CTE Expert Review Team Visit to Frederick County Public Schools

CTE ERT VISIT MEMBERS

The CTE Expert Review Team visits consist of members from various backgrounds and expertise ensuring a variety of analysis of the LEA's CTE programming. The following is a list of members who joined this CTE ERT visit:

Name	Title & Organization	Role
Adam Parry	CTE Director, Washington County Public Schools	School/LEA Leadership
Ben Hsieh	Special Projects, GWDB	GWDB staff
Bob Stike	Principal/CTE Teacher, Boyd J. Michael, III Technical High School, Washington County Public Schools	CTE Teacher (required)
Christine Lynch	Contractor, CityWorks	Notetaker/Support for CTE Committee
Dylan Brown	CTE Educator (Carpentry), Washington County Public Schools	CTE Teacher (required)
Dr. Edrees Nawabi	Research Data Analyst, GWDB CTE Committee	GWDB CTE Committee staff
Dr. Genevieve Floyd	Director, Department of College and Career Readiness, Montgomery County Public Schools	School/LEA Leadership (required)
Katherine Swanson-Palmer	Program Manager, GWDB CTE Committee	GWDB CTE Committee staff
Lateefah Durant	Vice President of Innovation, CityWorks	Support for CTE Committee
Mariel Fedde	Program Manager, Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development	LWDB member or staff

Stacey Butler	Sr. Manager, Workforce Initiatives, CVS Health	Employer (required)
Stephanie Discepolo	Apprenticeship, Howard County Public Schools	LEA Staff
Teresa Mena	Apprenticeship Navigator, Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor	State Agency partner

CTE ERT VISIT OVERVIEW

During this visit, the CTE ERT visited Frederick County Career and Technology Center, Frederick County Public Schools' sole CTE Center, and Frederick High School, one of the LEA's comprehensive high schools with CTE offerings. The team visited Frederick County Career and Technology Center in the morning, which houses 24 CTE programs, and Frederick High School in the afternoon, which houses 16 CTE programs.

LEA: Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS)
Date of Visit: December 11, 2025
School(s) Visited: Frederick County Career and Technology Center
Frederick High School

About Frederick County Public School System

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), located in Central Maryland, enrolls 15,101 high school students, and has a 100% participation rate in CTE for graduating students. FCPS offers 40 CTE programs that cover a wide range of areas, from Academy of Health Professions to Television/Multimedia Production. FCPS is in alignment with the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Plan's focus on building key sectors like Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Construction/Skilled Trades.⁹ CTE programs in Academy of Health Professions, Biomedical Sciences, Computer and Information Sciences, Construction, IT Networking, and Skilled Trades are all at or near maximum enrollment. This demonstrates the LEA's focus on developing a robust workforce targeting key sectors that are in-demand in this region.

FCPS has CTE offerings at all 10 comprehensive high schools and at the CTE technical center, Frederick County Career and Technical Center (CTC). FCPS students may enroll in CTE courses offered at both their home school and CTC. CTE enrollment at the comprehensive high schools are generally open and unrestricted. On the other hand, CTC enrollment requires a "Shadow Experience" and an application. Generally, FCPS students apply to CTC in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade. Before students submit an application, they must schedule and complete a "Shadow Experience" for the program they are interested in. For the "Shadow Experience", students ride the bus from their home school to CTC for a half-day session, where they participate in classroom and lab activities, interact with instructors, and see the program firsthand. Applications are then evaluated on three criteria: attendance, grade point average, and "Shadow Experience" evaluation from the instructor. When programs are overenrolled, which is the case for the majority of programs at the CTC, preference is given to students who scored higher among those three criteria. Students enrolled in CTC spend half their school day in their CTE program and the other half of their day taking classes at their home school.

FCPS has 100% of graduating students participate in CTE and 53.8% of graduating students are CTE concentrators.

Students enrolled in CTE programs have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials (IRC), and 35.7% of graduating students from the SY 2024-2025 completed an IRC. This is an improvement from FCPS progress toward the 45% goal in SY 2023-2024, which was 28%. This 7.7 percentage point increase was solely in IRC attainment as FCPS has reported no graduating students have completed a high school level Registered Apprenticeship. It should be noted, however, that this rate comes from the previously approved MSDE IRC and technical skills assessment (TSA) list as the updated policy and approved IRCs by the CTE

⁹ Frederick County Workforce Development Board. (2025). Frederick local plan. <https://tinyurl.com/26fmr9r>

Committee does not go into effect until the SY 2025-2026.¹⁰ As such, the CTE IRC Policy published in December 2024 may impact this LEA's attainment rate for 2025 and beyond.¹¹

FCPS reports that they had 0 graduating students participate in the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship, aligned with the CTE Committee's Apprenticeship Policy issued December 2024.

One unique aspect at FCPS was their emphasis on data-informed decision-making. FCPS regularly reviews workforce data to identify emerging career pathways and determine the need for new programs. Moreover, FCPS maintains a robust data platform that enables administrators and teachers to monitor enrollment, student performance, and student outcomes from all CTE programs. This level of data-informed decision-making is a best practice other LEAs should look to emulate.

¹⁰ IRC completion data from the current Blueprint-aligned list will not be available until after the end of the SY 2025-2026.

¹¹ GWDB CTE Committee. (December 2024). Career and Technical Education: Industry-Recognized Credentials.

<https://www.gwdb.maryland.gov/policy/gwdbcte2024commindustrycredentialpolicy.pdf>

CTE Expert Review Team Observations & Analysis

OVERVIEW OF ANALYSIS

The following report is organized around a Strengths, Challenges, External (SCE) approach. A SCE analysis is meant to organize the CTE ERT's observations and notes into internal factors - Strengths and Challenges - and External factors and influences. Although the CTE ERT does not currently have a focus group specifying external stakeholders, external factors come up in conversations, focus groups, the debrief, and orientation that must be documented. With a SCE Analysis, readers may use this section to target changes and best practices internally and better understand how external factors may influence CTE.

It is important to emphasize that the following observations reflect insights that were documented as of the date of the visit. As such, it is possible that observations noted below have been altered or addressed since the CTE ERT visit was conducted.

INDICATORS OF INTERNAL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strength: IRC Attainment Rate

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) demonstrated strong progress toward the 45% goal. Based on the school year (SY) 2024-2025 data, FCPS reported 29.9% of graduating seniors attained an Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC). The 29.9% IRC attainment rate is strong, especially considering the state average of 10.9%. FCPS also reported 28% progress toward the 45% goal in SY 2023-2024, demonstrating not only that FCPS created a system that gets graduating students certified, but it also is steadily improving on that system.

The strong IRC rates can be attributed to a variety of factors including proactively transitioning to new IRCs approved by the CTE Committee, developing a robust data platform, revising curriculum to ensure the content is aligned with new standards, and implementing creative solutions to enhance attainment of IRCs. For example, FCPS is deploying the Perkins Reserve Grant-funded Mobile Safety Lab to deliver OSHA 30 instruction systemwide instead of limiting access to few schools that have the infrastructure. FCPS is also expanding IRC attainment opportunities outside of CTE classes through collaborating with the Visual Performing Arts curriculum to offer an IRC in photoshop to a greater number of students outside of CTE programs. FCPS also maintains a robust data platform that enables administrators and teachers to monitor enrollment, student performance, and CTE completer data for all CTE programs, allowing FCPS administrators to make data-informed decisions at a high level. FCPS supported both teacher and student preparation for IRCs through staff professional development, investing in test preparation and digital tools, and emphasizing systemic math and literacy focus to reinforce foundational skills linked to IRC success. FCPS's progress toward the 45% goal and projection toward meeting it by SY 2030-2031, particularly through IRC attainment rates, is laudable.

Strength: Student Access to Diverse and Flexible CTE Offerings

The CTE ERT observed robust and diverse CTE offerings available to students in FCPS. Each of the comprehensive high schools offers 13 or more CTE programs and the Frederick County Career and Technology Center (CTC) offers 24 programs. Some of the programs are more niche programs compared to what many LEAs offer across the state, such as the Academy of Health Profession-Dental Assistant Program or the Agricultural Sciences and Operations (PreVet) program. FCPS is considering new program additions that are even more aligned to workforce demand, student interest, and emerging industry needs such as Data Science/Machine Learning Program, Facilities Management, and Biotechnology. FCPS administrators were able to come to this conclusion because of their robust data-collecting system, tracking student interest, CTE outcomes, and workforce data.

In the LEA Brief, FCPS outlined the enrollment process for CTE programs and how all students have access to CTE offerings. At comprehensive high schools, all students in grades 6–12 have access to enroll in CTE courses or pathways. At the middle school level, every student must complete a CTE course that meets the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) computational thinking requirements. In high school, all students must meet the Technology Education COMAR requirement by completing a Computer Science or Engineering course, as well as a course in Financial Literacy. Middle and high school students may enroll in CTE courses offered at their home schools and at the CTC. Career Coaches promote and market CTE programs, which may be an important factor for FCPS students' engagement with CTE offerings. They do this in a variety of ways, including one-on-one conversations and through CTE Fairs. Students typically enroll through the school counseling process, where they select courses during annual registration periods with support from their counselors.

Flexible delivery options allow greater program completion and access. FCPS buses CTC students daily from their home school, offering access to additional CTE programs without students having to figure out transportation to another school. In addition, students can complete CTE courses at Frederick Community College (FCC), which is adjacent to the CTC, and many students leverage FCC for Dual-Enrollment opportunities. One student explained,

“I drive to school and then go to college and then go to work. I am also taking post-secondary courses through dual enrollment.”

This quote demonstrates this student has multiple options to complete courses. FCC, through its open-campus options, allows for students to complete CTE programs such as the Pharmacy Technician and FCC also offers general education classes such as English.

Students at the CTC also have the option in 12th grade to complete their English and Math onsite at the CTC, therefore maximizing the time they spend at the school instead of taking the bus from their home school. As one CTE teacher explained during the focus group,

“[A student] can do senior year in building - do English in the morning, CTE class here with a learning lunch. They have math and then work the rest of day.”

This scenario allows for a greater amount of time for work-based learning opportunities, especially high school level Registered Apprenticeships. One participant in the student focus group agreed, explaining,

“Senior year, can take English and math here (at CTC), can do it here early before day starts and then go to my program and then go to math.”

The CTC offers virtual online options for select programs as well, further demonstrating FCPS’s flexible options for students. Focus group participants conveyed that in some cases, students are participating in multiple CTE programs, which is only possible due to flexible course delivery options. The variety of program offerings and flexibility in completion is a strength as it expands access to a wide-range of CTE programs available to students.

Strength: Supportive CTE Leadership

The CTE ERT observed the strong CTE support at the leadership level. One CTE teacher focus group participant explained, “our leadership in the department head is so great,” and others in the same focus group agreed. The tenure of the Supervisor of CTE and the creative and proactive leadership within the CTE department are assets and indicators of a committed and experienced CTE team.¹² Leadership at the school-level was also uplifted by CTE teacher focus group participants as a strength. One participant shared

“[the] Vice principal is supportive and that’s an important factor for retention. We feel like [the Vice Principal’s] got our back.”

FCPS has strong and supportive CTE leadership within schools, and across the county.

Strength: Robust Resources for Career Counseling

FCPS has robust and dedicated resources for career counseling, particularly in terms of staffing. As mentioned in the LEA Brief, FCPS centers their work in the ACTE Quality CTE Program of Study Framework to ensure FCPS is developing and improving the quality of their CTE programs.¹³ In Frederick County, 22 Career Coaches serve the secondary students across 29 physical schools and 2 virtual programs. The team is supported by two coordinators, one hired by FCPS, and one hired by the Frederick County Workforce Services (FCWS), Frederick County’s workforce development board. Frederick Community College (FCC) serves as a third Career Coach partner, collaborating with the team to expand student opportunities. Both schools the CTE ERT visited had dedicated work-based learning specialists, which is not always the case at neighboring LEAs. Often, CTE centers at neighboring LEAs do not have a dedicated work-based learning staff member, but the CTC within FCPS does. The addition of the Linking Youth to New Experiences (LYNX) Program at Frederick High School creates added capacity to serve students in their career exploration and post-secondary plans. LYNX is a partnership between FCPS and community partners

¹² Shortly after the visit, the long tenured Supervisor of CTE did retire at the end of 2025; however, the core CTE team remains largely unchanged as of the writing of this report.

¹³ Association for Career & Technical Education. (2026). *High-quality CTE framework development*. <https://tinyurl.com/3t9dmwzu>

that began in 2017 with the goal of providing maximum student choice, highly individualized plans emphasizing competencies for student success, and a clear connection between the content students learn and how it is applied in the local workforce. LYNX is embedded into the curriculum and is meant to provide flexibility for how students master course content.

Students explained the impact of the career coaches. The students uplifted the helpful nature of career coaches and how establishing meetings through QR codes made the coaches accessible. During student focus groups, support from their career coaches was mentioned multiple times, which is not something the CTE ERT has consistently observed in other LEAs visited. Students in focus groups explained,

“Career coaches have been super supportive to help me find different options.”

“Sometimes you see them walking through the hallways, they will chat. Other times, they are busy and they will set up a meeting.”

The CTE ERT team also observed how collaborative the career counseling teams at each school were and they appeared to have strong delineations of roles. These findings are likely driven by Frederick's proactive implementation and early rollout of the *Blueprint* career counseling program. FCPS's robust and impactful career counseling resources have helped FCPS set a foundation to help them achieve the 45% goal.

Strength: Experienced and Collaborative CTE Teachers

A strength of FCPS is its experienced and passionate CTE teachers. The CTE ERT observed this at both the CTC and at Frederick High School (FHS). Teacher retention rates in Frederick averaged 13.4 years, which is slightly above the state average of 12.5 years. Retention rates at the CTC were significantly higher, averaging 18.9 years, which is over 50% higher than the state average of 12.5 years. One participant during a teacher focus group explained,

“It is not all about the money, and staff does not quit working at the CTC... they retire.”

This quote further demonstrates the sentiment that teachers, particularly at the CTC, are retained for long durations of time. The LEA Brief acknowledges multiple teacher retention strategies, such as the Rise and Thrive Program, which supports ongoing professional development for teachers at all career stages, Teacher Leadership Opportunities, which offers pathways for educators to take on leadership roles without leaving the classrooms, and the Mentor Teacher Programs, where newer teachers are connected with experienced educators for support and guidance.

In addition to a strong and motivated teaching staff, the teachers are collaborative and supportive of one another. One CTE teacher explained an appreciation for their colleagues,

“The collaboration we get - learned so much from colleagues - what to do, what not to do, what to say, what not to say - huge support – learning from the rest of staff in building has been wonderful.”

Another CTE teacher focus group participant was asked about what the district's strengths are and they described their peers as,

"Amazing. These people are amazing. How amazing these people in the room are - the camaraderie we have."

The teachers also explained how their programs collaborate with one another. For example, the chicken coop was built by woodshop students and then the eggs from the coop were used by the culinary students while the chickens themselves were part of the agriculture pathway. Focus group participants uplifted how important a shared lunch period among teachers was for coordinating and sharing best practices. The teaching culture at FCPS is collaborative and runs deep with expertise creating a positive learning environment for students.

Strength: Student and Teacher Rapport

A similar strength is the strong student and teacher rapport. When describing what teaching is like, one teacher explained, "the spirit here is unmatched" with another sharing

"[The teaching here is] as if it's a family. There is no animosity, no problems. It's everyone on the same page and same alignment."

Another teacher directly named their reason for staying at FCPS as a teacher was the "rapport with students and energy – that keeps the day going". During the CTE teacher focus groups, teachers also alluded to how much they enjoyed working with their students,

"[Students can] specialize and value their certain gifts... try to put that value and passion into caring about themselves... not caring about what [their] homelife is - if they can see the importance of themselves then hopefully getting out of here they can see the importance of them in society".

The rapport and bond teachers have with students is particularly important in an LEA that offers so many CTE options at the comprehensive high schools. When word-of-mouth marketing has been so successful in other LEAs, it is because teachers earn a great reputation among students, leading to more students interested in participating in CTE.

Students held similar sentiments for their teachers. As one student explained, they "love the teachers." Specifically, students noted that CTE teachers go above and beyond for students. Students in focus groups explained that many of their teachers support them in figuring out what to include in a resume and how to tailor it to their industry. Other students explained they have a "really good bond" with the teachers and that "here, teachers care and work with you hands on - [and give you an] in-depth answer."

Students also expressed their strong appreciation for their teachers and classes in preparing them for life after graduating high school. One student explained it as "CTE is preparing you

for college and also outside of college.” The CTE teacher focus group participants explained their role as “teaching the skills to pay the bills.” The CTE ERT observed a strong appreciation for the CTE classes by the CTE focus group students, which is a strength for FCPS as interested and engaged students are more likely to participate and matriculate through the programs. The strong student-teacher rapport helps foster a love of learning.

Strength: Support for Special Populations

A strength of FCPS is its dedication to supporting special populations such as students with disabilities and multilingual students within the CTE programming. While the CTE ERT did not explicitly probe or observe students from either of those populations, there were other instances of supportive practices in place. Participants during both the career coach focus groups included dedicated staff to supporting multilingual students. When describing the CTE programming, one career coach referred to the CTC as,

“[An] island of hope in land of education – never seen multilingual students happier anywhere else. They have an opportunity to not be bombarded by the academic rigor of bio class that is so linguistically challenging at this moment in their journey, but here [at CTC], they can bring their funds of knowledge - can use what they know and learn from other students, see models and good examples to thrive linguistically. I’ve never seen that before.”

LYNX programming also has targeted support for multilingual learners. For example, experiences are offered specifically just for English as a Secondary Language classes, in addition to coordinating with multiple nonprofits that represent a diverse representation of languages that students may speak. Career coaches also emphasized the importance of connection to work-based learning opportunities, particularly for multilingual learners, and how the school is offering creative ways for students to access them. One career coach explained,

“Multilingual students cannot overemphasize how important it is to connect to work-based learning... some are here alone, some are here to prioritize work”

The other folks in the career coach focus group explained FCPS offers them the opportunity to obtain a “robust education and get the money they need. [It] Requires a lot of flexibility.” The CTC also offers language interpreters for open houses and the shadowing experience as part of the application process, which will be explained later in this report.

The CTE ERT also observed the strong support FCPS provides to students with disabilities. The CTC, which is application-based, has similar percentages of students with disabilities as compared to the district. 10.8% of high school students have a disability in Frederick County, and 10.4% of students at the CTC have a disability, suggesting parity between the county and CTE center. Teachers and administrators within focus groups claimed many students with disabilities are successful at the CTC. One teacher focus group participant explained,

“Usually we are questioning why they have an IEP when they are here, and the same thing for behavioral...here they are interested.”

Another teacher acknowledged that the CTC offerings can be a better fit for students with disabilities because it ,

“Allows for all of us to recognize that success and measurement and intelligence are not a single number, data point, multifaceted. If [a kid] struggles to read, but they can take apart an engine and put it back together, they can show their strengths here. Multiple ways to represent intelligence and capacity.”

FCPS offers pathway options to the SUCCESS Academy, which is post-secondary transition education for students with disabilities.¹⁴ The CTC also offers a non-diploma bound pathway and options for students with disabilities.

Multilingual learners were underrepresented at the CTC with a rate of 3.9%, which is nearly half the district rate of 7.2%, which is an equity challenge. It was unclear how many students and multilingual learners are within each CTE program at each comprehensive high school. That said, the CTE ERT observed strong support for both populations based on the focus group conversations which is a strength for FCPS and how they are equitably supporting students of special populations.

Strength: Shadow Day

The CTC leverages a Shadow Day to provide equitable access to CTE programs at the CTC and is a best practice for career exploration opportunities for students. As part of the application process for the CTC, each student is required to complete a half-day “shadow” opportunity to explore their prospective CTE program of choice to ensure fit and understanding. Interested students spend half a day with programs of interest at the CTC the year before they put in an application. FCPS provides bus transportation from each student’s home school to the CTC.

Once a student shadows, they can apply for up to two programs. Many programs have more shadows than seats. Students are assessed by CTC teachers across a standard rubric as one component of the application process. If a student is not accepted, they have the opportunity to shadow and apply again the subsequent year. The CTE ERT noticed the effectiveness of a shadow day in supporting CTE completion rates and ensuring student interest. One student explained that it was a “great experience to see - think people should shadow.” Many students in the focus group noted the shadow process as a key step in the application process where they could learn more about the program before applying. Teachers noted that it helps narrow down those who are most interested and that since its implementation, it significantly improved attrition rates. The Shadow Day provides for an equitable

¹⁴ SUCCESS Academy. (2025). *Prospective Students*. Frederick County Public Schools. https://success.sites.fcps.org/prospective_students

opportunity for students to explore what a CTE program at the CTC will be like, and helps students further identify if a CTE program is of interest and fit.

Strength: CTE Mindset Supporting Both College and Career Readiness

Within the CTE programs, students expressed a strong appreciation for their CTE classes as preparing them for both college and/or career post-secondary options. The CTE ERT observed the students' abilities to articulate the connection from CTE classes to their post-secondary plans. Most students in focus groups explained how their CTE program intentionally connected to their plans after high school, and for many students how they leveraged their career coaches to support in career exploration opportunities. Students could also clearly connect the IRCs available to their particular pathway. One student focus group participant explained, "I can see myself as a professional because of my (CTE) class." Another student shared about their classes "[It doesn't] feel like work because I enjoy it." Students were also able to articulate the connection of core content to their CTE courses. For example, one culinary student uplifted how important math skills are to cooking. A CTE focus group participant explained how important English and writing skills are to broadcasting, and how that CTE pathway can support college readiness.

District-wide, FCPS CTE leadership instituted CTE practices modeled after practices more traditionally associated with college. For example, focus group student participants brought up that CTE students earn and wear CTE graduation regalia. CTE students receive cords and pins similar to students in other academic programs at the school. During the pre-visit orientation, leadership explained that FCPS has a "signing day" to celebrate students who are opting to enter straight into the workforce after high school. FCPS also hosts a career fair with employers offering benefits to students, emphasizing the importance and priority of CTE and Career Pathway options for students after high school. CTE classes at FCPS are preparing students for both college and career post-secondary options, supporting students in whichever direction they go.

Challenge: Student Enrollment Outpaces CTE Infrastructure

One of the biggest challenges for FCPS is its consistent growth in student enrollment and its impact on available seats and resources for CTE students. Participants across all of the focus groups during the CTE ERT visit and during the pre-visit orientation named capacity as one of the most prominent challenges. FCPS's CTE leadership expressed 10.8% student enrollment growth from the previous year, which directly contrasts with the zero expansion in CTE facilities. This indicates immediate pressure on CTE capacity and access. Many CTE programs have a waitlist, particularly at the CTC. Furthermore, a participant during the CTE administrators focus group explained the difficulty in making the budget case to expand the CTC, particularly because of the shared time model. They expressed it as a,

"Tough situation to make all adjustments – shared time center - students have a home school building - the model/formula does not support our case for more space."

Administrators acknowledged that county leaders often prioritized new elementary school construction over a CTE center during difficult budget periods. Participants speculated that

this may be because elementary and comprehensive high school projects are perceived as serving all students, whereas CTE centers may be viewed as serving only a smaller, more selective group of students. With limited resources for CTE expansion to match the enrollment rates, FCPS will find it increasingly difficult to meet student demand.

Challenge: Mismatch Between School Counseling and CTE Pathways

During the CTE ERT visit, the CTE ERT noticed a disconnect between the counseling students were receiving and the CTE pathways. At the comprehensive high school, in particular, teachers expressed frustrations around counseling decisions. CTE teacher focus group participants explained,

“Guidance is still on narrative that every kid needs to take an AP class. They don’t have our back.”

“They don’t want us until they need us. Our classes are at the bottom of the registration sheet.”

CTC teachers during the focus group also explained that “students are making a choice between coming here and AP.” Teachers are feeling unappreciated and undervalued, with their classes being a last resort option for school counselors.

This concern matches concerns students brought up related to the abundance of students in CTE classes that are not interested in that CTE pathway. One student focus group participant explained how much of a negative impact disinterested students have on the classroom experience, highlighting a scenario where the

“Student wasn’t paying attention and it is taking instruction time away from everyone else.”

A CTE student focus group participant agreed, explaining how common it is to see students in their CTE classes that are there to earn an “easy A”. Because of the limited number of available seats, students solely interested in an “easy A” or are not interested in the subject are taking a seat away from an interested student. These mismatches are also contributing to challenges with attrition, as many students are utilizing the entry level CTE classes as career exploration classes and not continuing onto upper level classes. Many students feel frustrated that disinterested students are enrolled. Many teachers feel unsupported by counselors and feel that counselors are inadvertently adding to their workload by enrolling disinterested students or forcing the teachers to do the course advising.

Challenge: CTE Course Selection and Enrollment Process

The current enrollment process for the CTE pathways is a challenge for FCPS to reach the 45% goal. The CTE ERT observed inconsistencies in how schools prioritized students for a CTE class, which, at times, prevented space for students really interested in the CTE pathway. During the counselor focus group, the participants shared the process:

“Sometimes we prioritize a grade. [Sometimes] we ask teachers. Usually 9th graders get the short-end of the stick. Each [time it] varies.”

“Trying to walk the balance with prioritizing students who has the most interest.”

The inconsistent approach may be unintentionally leading to inequities and/or unintentionally preventing students most interested in select CTE programs from accessing them, per the challenge mentioned above.

The CTC application process is positive in the sense that it identifies students who are strong academically, coupled with a strong interest in select CTE pathways; however, it is not an equitable process across all student populations. For example, there is a high reliance on GPA during the application process, which may be limiting students that could potentially thrive in an academic environment like the CTC. In addition, there is less representation for multilingual learners at the CTC as compared to County-wide FCPS rates. Due to staffing capacity, students may have to assist with the process of finding work-based learning opportunities. The CTE course selection and enrollment process is limiting access to select students who are most interested in CTE pathways.

Challenge: Transportation Barriers to CTE Programs at the CTC

Multiple focus group participants identified transportation barriers during the CTE ERT visit. While FCPS provides transportation to the CTC from home schools, challenges around the timeliness of buses exist. Although this is not a regular occurrence, when it does occur, it can be greatly impactful. Multiple students at the CTC expressed stressful first-hand experiences with trying to catch the bus from their home school to the CTC in order to be on time for their clinicals. One student focus group participant explained, “[it is] very difficult for home buses to get here on time for the CTC to leave [on time]. I am worried about the home bus [arriving] on time to get here- domino effect.” Another student expressed the challenges with missing their bus home after attending the CTC,

“Sometimes the bus would be late and not back to [home high school] until 2:25 and I’d miss our bus to get home.”

Bus transportation to and from the CTC is a challenge and an added challenge for students, but districts across Maryland are dealing with transportation challenges. During the CTE ERT’s time at Frederick High School, transportation did not come up as a challenge.

Challenge: Unsustainable Teacher Workload

While FCPS has dedicated and passionate CTE teachers, teachers expressed challenges with excessive workloads. During the visit, the CTE ERT observed multiple instances of unsustainable workloads for teachers. For example, more than one teacher during the CTE teacher focus group shared they were teaching multiple sections during one class as a solution to run fewer classes. For teachers, that creates an additional burden of having to complete multiple preps and manage two completely different skill-levels simultaneously. The disconnect with school counselors is creating additional work where CTE teachers are

marketing their pathways to potential students, and advocating which students should be opting for higher level classes. A CTE teacher explained it as “We promote within.... we have to work extra hard.” Teachers are having to do additional marketing and guidance support since, according to stakeholder focus groups, guidance counselors prioritize college and AP pathways over CTE programs. Many teachers are also being asked to provide ad-hoc and inconsistent feedback to guidance on which students should be prioritized for select classes, which is another “ask” of teachers, and does not have a formal process or set of expectations. While teachers directly benefit from this work and are an important part of marketing, which includes several staff who support this work, marketing CTE programs adds to the teachers’ workload, which is already unsustainable in the long-term.

Another example is the reliance on CTE teachers to teach basic core content skills. One participant in the teacher focus group explained,

“We’ve been asked to supplement reading, writing, and math.”

Teaching core content areas takes additional time and energy during class time, and can hinder other students’ learning. At the CTC, teachers participate in Program Advisory Committees (PACs) and manage industry relationships. Teachers work with administrators to create flexible schedules, additional planning time, and credit toward professional development for this work. Teachers told the CTE ERT they often have to obtain their own supplies during their lunch breaks and they have to do “what it takes to keep up the level of learning.” The Shadow Day experience at the CTC requires teachers to complete a rubric assessment for however many students participated in shadowing each teacher’s respective courses, which, for some, can be over 400 students. While it gives CTE teachers input into student selection, it can be a burdensome process. The excessive workload for CTE teachers is a challenge as it is unsustainable in the long term and likely to cause burnout when CTE positions are already being cut and unfunded.

Challenge: Depth of CTE and Career Coaching Marketing

The breadth of the marketing process, particularly for the CTC, was observed by the CTE ERT as a strength for FCPS; however, the depth of marketing remains a challenge. For example, while students could speak to their respective CTE programs, few could speak about other program offerings. There appeared to be limited cross-program student-level collaboration at both the CTC and comprehensive high schools, though it appeared more robust at the teacher-level. During one of the CTE student focus groups, there was a lot of conversation on lack of knowledge around completion options and limited information about how CTE programs can fulfill that requirement. Only one of ten students in the focus group leveraged CTE as a completion choice with one student specifically stating,

“It’s not pushed out enough that they are completers. It’s not pushed out to incoming freshmen in 8th grade.”

While students could speak to the programs themselves, the CTE ERT noticed minimal instances of a deep understanding of CTE as a graduation option or knowledge across

programs. Career coach focus group participants also expressed concerns with parents and their understanding of the career coach role not being taken seriously. This is a major gap with a significant stakeholder group. The participant described the parent mindset as it relates to career coaching as, “but as a whole, for career coaching - [we are] not taken seriously...think we won’t be here in a few years with the grant.” The depth of CTE program and career coaching marketing is a challenge as there are limitations in core messages and cross-program understanding.

INDICATORS OF EXTERNAL FACTORS AND INFLUENCES

External Strength: Partnerships with the Community College and County Resources

The CTE ERT observed strong connections to county resources and the local community college. In Frederick County, 22 Career Coaches serve secondary students across 29 physical schools and 2 virtual programs. The team is supported by two coordinators, one hired by FCPS, and one hired by the Frederick County Workforce Services (FCWS). Frederick Community College (FCC) serves as a third Career Coach partner, collaborating with the team to expand student opportunities. The career coaching structure is a partnership between the local workforce development board (FCWS), FCC, and FCPS.

In addition to career coaching support, FCC offers multiple resources to FCPS including dual enrollment opportunities, CTE and core course offerings for CTE students, and post-secondary options for students after graduation. It is also conveniently located near the CTC, alleviating transportation challenges to an additional site and easy access from the CTC. During the Pre-Visit Orientation, CTE leadership uplifted partnerships with the Maryland Department of Labor and Frederick County entities to support in employer recruitment opportunities. A partnership with Frederick County offers the Fire and Rescue Program at the Frederick County Safety Training Center, staffed by County employees. The partnerships with local County resources and community college are strong and alleviate some of the pressure on resources FCPS is experiencing.

External Strength: Industry and Community Connections

FCPS has strong industry and community connections. Particularly at the CTC, the CTE teachers demonstrated strong connections to and high levels of involvement with their Program Advisory Committees (PACs). Multiple teachers referenced their ability to get donations from companies, such as sandpaper or salon supplies, in addition to referencing connections to work-based learning opportunities. The Child Development Program has formal partnerships with neighboring elementary schools to offer real industry Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) experience for students on site. The innovative Pre-K allows for Pre-K students to be bussed to the high school, alleviating space concerns for the Pre-K while also providing low-barrier access to work experience practicum hours for the Child Development Associate (CDA) Program students. Other examples include the LYNX (Linking Youth to New Experiences) program at Frederick High School, which offers multiple opportunities for industry connections, as one counselor focus group participant explained,

“[FHS] has over 30 LYNX experiences per month – over 265 community and business partners available to students in a variety of career pathways.”

There is also a strong Youth Apprenticeship partnership with Dynamic Automotive in addition to an Automotive specific career fair offered to students.

Teachers are also participating in the three local Foundations, which include the House Foundation, Culinary Foundation, and Automotive Foundation. The Foundations, which are non-profits run by a board, rely heavily on local partnerships and community connections for

donations and revenue generating opportunities such as sourcing car donations or purchasing a lot to build a new home. The administration provides flexibility and professional development credits to attend Foundation meetings. One teacher explained the foundations as,

“Three nonprofit foundations separate from school - Mechanical Trade Foundation get cars donated, fix them, and auction off, pays for supplies and scholarships. House Foundation builds the house and separately run it, and culinary has one as well. Industry contact - Foundations are made of people in industry - we are there as reference – they help drive what we should be teaching.”

CTSO participation was strong at the CTC and mostly funded through Foundation revenue. That said, the CTE ERT did not observe strong participation in CTSOs at the comprehensive high school. One teacher focus group participant explained that Foundation revenue funds about \$50,000 for SkillsUSA participation, and additional “scholarships for any student in CTE regardless of program.”

The CTE ERT observed that many teachers were also heavily involved in their local community with one referencing a large-scale community-wide Holiday event put on by the CTE programs. Other teachers were wrestling coaches, participating in the Foundations, or longstanding community members. During the focus group, one CTE teacher explained that they

“Get anywhere from 2-3 calls from random companies every week to hire students- I don’t have enough-not all go that way- a lot go to college.”

It is clear FCPS’s CTE teachers have strong industry and community connections, which will be particularly important as FCPS expects to face increased enrollment. The industry and community connections are strong and help advance the CTE programming to provide real-world experiences for students that often contribute meaningfully to the local community.

External Strength: Robust and Accessible Employers

Frederick County is the largest county by land mass in Maryland with access to many large-scale employers. As referenced in the LEA Brief, the city is growing exponentially and it is centrally located in the State of Maryland with access to large highways, and a diverse set of over 135 employers across industries. Six of the local employers employ over 750 individuals.¹⁵ The location and access of Frederick County to many employers is a strength and creates many opportunities for student engagement with employers across a variety of career pathways.

¹⁵ Maryland Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning. (2024). *Frederick County - Major employer lists - Labor Market Information*. Maryland Department of Labor. <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/lmi/emplists/frederick.shtml>

External Challenge: Budget Cuts

Budget cuts were uplifted by CTE leadership in the Pre-Visit Orientation and were a prominent challenge during the CTE ERT visit. Budget constraints at the county-level were identified in the LEA Brief as affecting the ability to run CTE programs as limited resources forced FCPS school leadership to prioritize core classes like English and Math over CTE offerings. Budget limitations are also creating constraints on the LEA's ability to access up-to-date materials, test-preparation tools, and industry-aligned equipment. As referenced in the Pre-Visit Orientation, 3 CTE programs were cut in SY 2024-2025. As student enrollment continues to increase annually, budget cuts directly affecting CTE program offerings is a challenge as CTE program offerings are already limited and conducive to waitlists. With increasing student enrollment, continued budget cuts only limit the percentage of students able to participate in CTE programs in the future.

External Challenge: Transportation and Access to Work-Based Learning

Similar to the challenges with transportation to the CTC, another challenge is transportation to work-based learning opportunities. FCPS does not provide transportation for students to these opportunities, which significantly limits which students can participate in them. The public transportation options in Frederick County are not robust across the entire county and are often clustered in more densely populated areas. Many students in the focus group drive themselves to school or to their internship site, but that is not the case for all students and a career coach explained that there are a, "number of schools outside the public transportation zone." One student focus group participant explained how difficult it was to get to their internship after being in a car accident, limiting their transportation options. They shared, they were "bus hopping trying to figure out rides - makes internships difficult if not a reliable way to get there." There was discussion during a career coach focus group on how to make drivers education classes more accessible, coupled with the fact that fewer students are opting to obtain a drivers license. Students that do not have reliable transportation are not able to commute to work-based learning opportunities which is a challenge for FCPS.

External Challenge: Limited Employer Engagement for HSLRA Offerings

The CTE ERT observed that no students participated in high school level Registered Apprenticeships (HSLRAs) despite multiple attempts to create incentives for employers. Career coach focus group participants named a myriad of factors limiting HSLRAs, including employers naming challenges, such as

"Time to mentor because they have limited staff."

In addition to employers' limited staff capacity to mentor high school level Registered Apprentices, career coach focus group participants mentioned arbitrary age requirements or mismatches in timelines where employers do not want to wait until the Fall to begin employment as barriers. For a large county the size of Frederick, the 62 Youth Apprenticeships and zero HSLRAs represent a gap in meeting *Blueprint* goals. Even with robust financial incentives for employers such as wage reimbursement, extensive marketing efforts, and collaboration with local government entities to recruit Youth Apprenticeship

offerings, few employers showed interest in the Apprenticeship Maryland Program, let alone interest in the HSLRAs. Although FCPS is facing challenges with both youth and Registered Apprenticeship attainment, Frederick County has robust and accessible employers and FCPS has demonstrated that it has strong industry and community connections. FCPS has also collaborated with MD Labor on several occasions to explore how to establish and expand HSLRA offerings. It should also be noted that participants in teacher and career coach focus groups explained how they have “cold-called” local businesses and their own industry connections to explore WBL opportunities and have had marginal success. This is a challenge as HSLRAs are a core strategy in FCPS meeting *Blueprint’s* 45% goal and few industry partners appear to be potential HSLRA sites.

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

Although the CTE ERT has presented its observations in this report, these observations and Potential Next Steps are preliminary. The purposes of Phase 1 of the CTE ERT are to establish a baseline for progress toward *Blueprint* goals across Maryland and identify key challenges. The Potential Next Steps are areas that this LEA may look for improvement in and something the CTE ERT may examine more closely in the future. These Potential Next Steps are not a directive, but opportunities of improvement to explore. They are meant to be the beginning of a conversation that will continue into future school years, and for this reason, these Potential Next Steps do not comprehensively address the challenges the CTE ERT notes in this report.

Continue Implementing Creative Solutions to Address Budget and Capacity Constraints

FCPS is already implementing creative solutions to address many of the challenges they are experiencing as it relates to IRC attainment and CTE offerings. FCPS should continue to explore how to expand offerings, like their Mobile Safety Lab Trailer, as a way to enhance IRC attainment or model similar approaches with other IRCs. The use of IRCs through the Visual Performing Arts curriculum is another approach that could be potentially replicated in other programs. The school-based enterprises are demonstrating strong connections to industry while simultaneously providing revenue streams to support CTE pathways and program costs. FCPS can explore if and how similar approaches can be expanded to the comprehensive schools and ways in which best practices can be replicated. FCPS is already creatively problem solving as they are facing budget and capacity constraints, and FCPS is thinking ahead of those challenges downstream. While capacity constraints are posing a challenge, FCPS has the greatest ability to advance IRC attainment and CTE completion rates through focusing on enhancing offerings and removing barriers to attainment at the comprehensive high schools. The proactive approach coupled with creative thinking is supporting them in IRC attainment progress and should be continued.

Deepen Use of Data to Inform Action

Data-informed decision making is already occurring within FCPS and they can deepen and enhance those strategies to ensure more equitable practices across CTE programs. For example, the CTC enrollment numbers are representative of county-wide Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs) and students with disabilities rates, but multilingual learners were underrepresented. Anecdotally, during the administrators focus group, one participant shared that a success has been

“Gains we made for reducing barriers for all students: non-traditional, women in trades program. Females see themselves in construction. At home school, huge gains in computer science - diverse populations accessing comp science.”

FCPS has an opportunity to further collect, analyze, and act upon data within each CTE program and be able to demonstrate trends around specific populations.

Building off of the current plans for enhanced data collection efforts, FCPS is rolling out a new school-wide career platform, Xello. With this new software, FCPS can better capture data to ensure effective career advising and understanding enrollment patterns and completion data, particularly around racial demographics, gender, and special populations like multilingual learners or students with disabilities. Once that data is collected and analyzed, FCPS can identify barriers and blockers as to why specific populations of students have lower enrollment and completion patterns, and then implement specific targeted marketing and intervention support.

The CTE ERT has observed strong data collection and analysis systems that impact decision-making at both Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and Washington County Public Schools (WCPS), and perhaps there is an opportunity to collaborate with them. WCPS has created an equitable and data-informed process for enrollment that may be a useful model for FCPS to collaborate on. On the other hand, HCPSS has prioritized data collection and analysis on IRC attainment to target specific areas for technical assistance so the LEA can reach the 45% goal. Collaborating with these two LEAs may be a helpful opportunity for FCPS.

Enhanced Messaging Campaign and Peer-to-Peer Engagement

While FCPS already has robust marketing, especially as it relates to the CTC, FCPS can consider enhanced marketing efforts to further the college and career going mindset of CTE. The messaging can also help communicate more effectively what is happening within CTE programs, particularly at the comprehensive high schools, to aid in students understanding what is happening across programs and what students have to look forward to as they matriculate to upper-level classes, ideally supporting retention. Teachers shared during focus groups that many upper-level classes that were cut due to lack of interest and an enhanced marketing strategy can help. Student ambassadors and shadow days were main recruitment techniques for the CTC, and FCPS can explore how to replicate similar peer to peer engagement opportunities within the comprehensive high schools. In meetings with FCPS administrators after the visit, the CTE ERT learned that FCPS is already taking steps to enhance their messaging campaign, especially as they plan to transition to the new programs of study in SY 27-28.

Students and teachers can support targeted marketing efforts and provide micromarketing opportunities to increase participation of underrepresented populations. Students in the CTC focus group shared strong positive sentiments about the sense of community within their programs and how students "build community with each other." Peer-to-peer engagement and cross-program marketing support can help increase the sense of community within CTE programs at the comprehensive high schools. A targeted messaging strategy focused on parents can help remove some of the negative stigmas associated with the career coaches, and better communicate their value and associated resources available to students.

Other LEAs, like Prince George's County Public Schools, have implemented a robust marketing campaign that helped build the identity of CTE programs across the County and enhanced the awareness of both college and career going culture. Howard County Public

Schools demonstrated micromarketing campaigns that have effectively increased enrollment of specific demographics of students. The personal touch and outreach of teachers has been very successful in increasing enrollment numbers of underrepresented populations of students. FCPS can consider exploring best practices from both those LEAs to build off of the already successful outreach occurring to deepen the messaging around CTE and the programs they have to offer.

Target Professional Development Around CTE and Career Advising

The disconnect between guidance and the CTE teachers at the comprehensive high school suggests there are multiple opportunities for professional development around the benefits of CTE and school counseling, and to deepen the connection of CTE across the school. For example, FCPS may want to explore:

- *School-Wide CTE Professional Development:* Implementing professional development on the benefits of CTE, career development, and career advising, will have a positive effect on the entire school. This enhanced understanding will likely alleviate some of the disconnects between guidance and the CTE teachers. FCPS can also explore integrating career advising into core classes to ensure a greater understanding and alignment of a student's career interests across the school system, and longer-term, career advising can be integrated throughout curriculum and counseling. This can further be realized with the implementation of their new career data-tracking system, Xello. Montgomery County Public Schools has done an excellent job of integrating CTE and career advising across the curriculum and may serve as a useful collaborator.
- *New Career Advising Platform:* FCPS is already implementing a new district-wide career advising platform, Xello. This is an opportunity to implement professional development and instill procedures and expectations around its usage to better collect data, have career data visible across roles and departments, and ultimately better serve students. FCPS should consider a system-wide professional development series on maximizing the usage of Xello and increase shared data collection practices.
- *Professional Development on Career and Technical Student Organizations:* CTSOs were apparent at the CTC; however, they appeared less visible at the comprehensive high school. CTSOs offer increased opportunities for students to develop their technical skills, leadership opportunities, and both career and academic preparedness. FCPS should explore offering CTSOs as an area of growth and offer support and training for teachers if interested in leading it. While FCPS is already asking a lot of their teachers, supporting them with additional professional development, and alleviating some of the disconnects with guidance may incentivize a teacher to lead CTSOs.
- *Professional Learning Communities:* FCPS has already begun implementing professional development through professional learning communities (PLCs) of like-positions to share best practices, problem-solve challenges, and build community connections. Even though it was in its early stages of implementation, FCPS has established "Monthly Collaborations" facilitated by a teacher leader. Teacher leaders receive stipends funded through the Maryland Center for Computing Education.

These PLCs are optional and virtual, but can be difficult for singleton programs, which mostly impact programs at the CTC.

Explore Additional Alternative CTE Programming Options

The current design of CTE within FCPS is already well-positioned for the upcoming change to the Core-Flex model; however, there are limitations to the availability of CTE offerings, seats in select programs, and long waitlists. To mitigate some of the access issues and address the increasing student enrollment patterns while navigating limited budgets and facilities constraints, FCPS may want to consider exploring alternative CTE programming options that can also fast-track IRC attainment. For example, there are flexible options in place already for select programs, such as asynchronous options for the CTC or limited evening offerings. FCPS can explore additional creative approaches. An emerging best practice is occurring in Wicomico County Public Schools, where they offer a “Twilight CTE” program at their Evening High School (EHS). The EHS is for individuals under 21 years-old who are interested in earning a high school diploma or for students currently enrolled in a regular daytime high school program who wish to make-up credits or take extra courses. Twilight CTE was designed for students to have career-focused education that lead directly to an IRC so program completers may enter the workforce. More importantly, Twilight CTE provides an alternative for students who could not enroll in a CTE program to earn an IRC and be workforce ready. FCPS can consider collaborating with Wicomico County to see if there are ways to replicate and tailor best practices to their CTC program. The CTC is mostly utilized during the day, is centrally located near FCC, and has access to public transportation. This fast-track IRC approach in the evening, or something similar, may alleviate some of the challenges FCPS is facing, especially with trying to keep up with Frederick County’s growing population.

Develop Additional Supports for Multilingual Learners

FCPS already offers multiple examples of how they are supporting special populations, including multilingual learners; however, particularly at the CTC, multilingual learners were underrepresented and anecdotal evidence pointed to this being a challenge for FCPS. Focus group participants stressed how CTC offerings are often incredibly valuable and they have seen success serving that population of students. As it was described during the ERT visit, many of the multilingual learners were unable to participate due to scheduling concerns. Implementing a Twilight CTE program, as referenced above, with additional language support, could be beneficial in expanding the number of IRCs attained by multilingual learners. Wicomico County Public Schools is implementing a series of practices around supporting multilingual learners, and could serve as a strong collaborator in expanding CTE access for multilingual learner populations in FCPS. Prince George’s County Public Schools CTE ERT stakeholders told the CTE ERT about how positive the collaboration has been between the Department of CTE and the Department of Language and Literacy, creating a pipeline of multilingual learners to CTE. FCPS can consider implementing something similar to more effectively support multilingual learners in FCPS, especially at the CTC.

Continue to Center CTE Teacher Voices in Decision-Making

Across other LEAs, a best practice is incorporating CTE teacher voices into decision-making rolled out by the Central Office within the LEA and within respective schools. The CTE ERT recognized how FCPS has incorporated CTE teacher perspectives in many decisions; for example, Shadow Day or informal ad-hoc support to guidance. FCPS administrators also created several opportunities for teachers to provide input about the upcoming program of study updates, meant to begin implementation in SY 2027-2028. By further centering their voices, this can help alleviate some of the disconnects with guidance, identify creative solutions to budget and scheduling challenges, and utilize their insights to better support IRC attainment with a rapidly growing student population. When teachers have more input in decision-making that impacts them, it is possible that their overall buy-in for CTE increases, and likely that student experience is better incorporated in decisions. Because teachers have a strong sense of students' day-to-day experience, their perspective is invaluable when it comes to decision-making. FCPS leadership have faced nuanced challenges with budget, resources, and other county-wide challenges, but continuing to incorporate teacher perspectives in decision-making will benefit all FCPS stakeholders.

More Intentional Career Exploration Early On

During the CTE ERT visit focus groups, students expressed frustrations with many students participating in courses that were outside of their aligned career pathway interests. In addition, guidance counselors uplifted how the CTE program courses are at times leveraged as career exploration opportunities or electives. This has been observed as a challenge other LEAs are facing as well. While FCPS offers some pathway opportunities in middle schools, they require a Computer Science or Engineering course, as well as a course in Financial Literacy in high school, and the "Shadow Day" as an opportunity for exploration. That said, they do not have a required CTE exploration course. A career exploration course could alleviate some of the mismatches in interest. This can also alleviate some of the struggles with waitlists or students not accessing their preferred courses, as well as ensuring better planning of upper-level courses as students who are truly interested are more likely to complete the CTE pathway and earn an IRC. At Frederick High School, the LYNX program offers many complimentary career exposure opportunities; however, that program is not offered county-wide so other strategies for career exposure should be considered. Some examples of middle and high-school level career exploration courses include:

Examples of Middle School Career Exploration Course Offerings:

- At Kent County Public Schools, nearly all students in 8th grade are enrolled for one quarter in a course called Managing Your Future. This is a 45-day course designed to help students explore their interests, skills, and potential career paths while building real-world readiness for life after high school.

Examples of High School Career Exploration Course Offerings:

- At Somerset County Public Schools, 88% of 9th grade students completed the semester-long CTE Exploration Course in SY 2024-2025. Students at Somerset County

Public Schools are required to participate in the CTE Exploration Course unless they have a required math course that causes a scheduling conflict.

- The Applied Technical Exploration (ATEX) program at Wicomico County Public Schools, lasts two quarters: the first is for students to explore four CTE programs, and the second is to prepare foundational skills in the selected CTE program.

By offering more intentional career exploration courses, students are more likely to enter into a program of interest, fully understand the expectations of various CTE pathways, and complete their program with an IRC.

Explore Technical Assistance with MSDE, the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), and the CTE Committee in Meeting the Blueprint's 45% Goal

In order to achieve the *Blueprint's* 45% goal, establishing and expanding RAs should be one of FCPS's priorities. FCPS should explore continued collaboration with MD Labor's Apprenticeship Navigators on what opportunities are available for high school students in the County. FCPS may continue working with MD Labor's Apprenticeship Navigators to ensure employers understand scheduling options for students, as well as accessing available incentives such as grants and tax credits. This collaboration also has the potential to address any misconceptions employers may have about working with high school level Registered Apprentices and age requirements.

Examples of Best Practices:

- Several LEAs employ interns and youth apprentices and may consider working with MD Labor to become Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in order to convert these WBL opportunities to high school level Registered Apprenticeships.
- Washington County Public Schools, which was a pilot district for setting up youth apprenticeship programs, puts on a career fair with over 1,000 attendees who get to see students' work from their CTSOs, from classwork, and from their youth apprenticeships.

At the time of the visit, FCPS has a high IRC attainment rate, although the true IRC attainment rate may be difficult to quantify given it is based on a prior approved IRC list, but nevertheless, FCPS can seek technical assistance from MSDE and similar LEAs in strategies to increase IRC attainment. For instance, FCPS plans to strengthen IRC attainment with annual review of data, enhanced career counseling, and leveraging 6-year plan data.

Examples of Best Practices:

- Somerset County Public Schools had posters in the hallways of the CTE Center identifying IRCs tied to various programs and the IRCs' benefits in the industry.
- Worcester County Public Schools administrators conduct a thorough data analysis of Labor Market Information before the start of the school year with all the administrators, staff, and teachers so they can analyze what jobs, skills, and IRCs are in-demand regionally.

The CTE Committee recognizes that policies defining the 45% goal were not issued until December 2024, and this CTE ERT visit took place in December 2025, so all of those implementing this work and the partnerships required are still in the early stages of development. Exploring technical assistance with MSDE, MD Labor, and the CTE Committee will prove to be a useful addition to meeting the 45% goal.

Conclusion

This Phase I visit to Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) was conducted to assess progress in strengthening CTE program quality, alignment to labor market demand, student access and equity, and *Blueprint* implementation of state policy priorities. The visit provided an opportunity to engage with leadership, educators, students, and partners to better understand current practices, celebrate successes, and identify areas for continued growth. The CTE Committee appreciates the transparency, preparation, and collaboration demonstrated throughout the visit process.

The CTE Committee commends FCPS for its clear commitment to advancing high-quality CTE programs and for the strengths observed during the visit. At the same time, the CTE Committee recognizes that challenges remain. Some of these reflect broader external factors - including evolving policy requirements, workforce dynamics, resource constraints, data system transitions, and shifting student needs - that influence local implementation. Continued focus on strategic alignment, program quality, and equitable student outcomes will be essential as the system moves forward.

As implementation of CTE ERT Phase 2 is currently paused, the CTE Committee will be taking insights from Phase 1 visits to inform a longer-term strategy for the CTE ERT program. The CTE Committee will be working closely with the AIB, MSDE, and relevant stakeholders to make an informed recommendation regarding the structure and timelines for resuming CTE ERT visits in future school years.

We look forward to continued partnership as FCPS advances this important work and we encourage FCPS to reach out to CTE Committee staff for any questions or technical assistance.

Appendix Guide

- A. LEA Brief
- B. School Visit Agenda
- C. Focus Group Protocol and Interview Questions
- D. Glossary and Acronym Guide

Appendix A | LEA Data Brief

LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) BRIEF

LEA:	Frederick County Public Schools
PREPARED FOR:	Governor's Workforce Development Board CTE Committee Expert Review Team (ERT) Visit
PREPARED BY:	<i>LEA Insert Staff Name(s)</i>
DATE OF VISIT:	December 11, 2025
PURPOSE:	Provide CTE ERT staff and visit members with data and insight prior to the visit and orientation. The materials within the brief may be discussed during the orientation.
DATE OF ORIENTATION:	<i>12/8 from 12PM-2PM</i>

LEA Overview

CTE LEA LEAD STAFF

Name	Role(s)	Contact Info
Dr. Kristine Pearl	Supervisor of CTE	Kristine.Pearl@fcps.org
Korbin Shoemaker	Coordinator of CTE	Korbin.Shoemaker@fcps.org

COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS WITH CTE

Name	# of CTE Programs	Is the CTE ERT Visiting this School?
Frederick High School ("School #2")	16	Yes
Brunswick High School	14	No
Catoctin High School	13	No
Governor Thomas Johnson	15	No
Linganore High School	15	No
Middletown High School	14	No
Oakdale High School	15	No
Tuscarora High School	17	No
Urbana High School	15	No
Walkersville High School	13	No

LEA CTE CENTER(S)

Name	# of CTE Programs	Is the CTE ERT Visiting this School?
Frederick County Career and Technology Center ("School #1")	24	Yes

LEA Data

LEA PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

School Year for the Data Reported Below: 2024-2025 SY

The following data is reported according to the Maryland Report Card (reportcard.msde.maryland.gov) and Educator Dashboard (marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/educator-dashboard.aspx)

Enrollment & Graduation

SY 2025-2026	Maryland	Frederick	School #1 (CTC)	School #2 (FHS)
Total Enrollment (# of all high school students)	278,238	15,101	930	1,821
Graduation Rate: 4-Year Adjusted Cohort for the Prior SY (Number/4-Yr Adjusted Cohort)	87.55% 58,965/67,349	94.31% 3,416/3,622	N/A	86.16% 411/477
Diploma Completers Prior SY	98.90%	95%	N/A	95%
Certificate Completers Prior SY	1.10%	5%	N/A	5%
Program Completion - USM	57.20%	54.80%	N/A	53.20%
Program Completion - CTE	8.70%	10.80%	N/A	8.20%
Program Completion - USM & CTE	18%	16.90%	N/A	13.40%

High School Student Demographics

SY 2025-2026	Maryland	Frederick	School #1 (CTC)	School #2 (FHS)
% American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	0.28%	0.1%	* (none or <10)
% Asian	7%	7.40%	4.3%	5.11%
% Black/African American	33%	15.33%	13.2%	26.03%
% Hispanic/Latino of Any Race	23%	21.99%	26.5%	43.44%
% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1%	0.20%	0.3%	* (none or <10)
% Two or More Races	5%	6.11%	5.5%	6.64%
% White	32%	48.69%	50.1%	18.23%
% Students with Disabilities	11.1%	10.8%	10.4%	10.2%

% Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS)	48.9%	33.0%	33.2%	54.7%
% of Multi-Lingual Learners	10.8%	7.2%	3.9%	22.5%

Teacher Demographics

SY 2025-2026	Maryland	Frederick	School #1 (CTC)	School #2 (FHS)
Total Number of All Teachers	63,736	3,092	34	106
% Female	76.8%	76.9%	47.1%	63.2%
% Male	23.1%	23.1%	52.9%	36.8%
% American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
% Asian	4.8%	1.4%	0.0%	1.9%
% Black/African American	21.4%	3.6%	8.8%	9.4%
% Hispanic/Latino of Any Race	4.9%	4.3%	0.0%	6.6%
% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
% Two or More Races	1.7%	1.5%	0.0%	6.6%
% White	66.6%	88.8%	91.2%	75.5%
Average Length of Service (Years)	12.5 Years	13.4 years	18.9 years	13.9 years
# New Hires	5,317	156	1	3
% Teacher Retention Rates	90.6%	90.8%	90.6%	83.9%
National Board-Certified Teachers	2,279	80	5	4

ADDITIONAL PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Report Card: for additional information on the LEA and schools we will be visiting:

- LEA: [Frederick](#)
- School #1: N/A as student data is counted in their home school
- School #2: [Frederick High](#)

Career Coaching: more information about [the career coaching structure and implementation](#) within this LEA.

Economic & Workforce Development Data:

- List of [major employers](#) by county

- County Economic Profile: [Full Profile](#)

As Maryland's fastest-growing county in Maryland, Frederick County is where innovation flourishes; businesses expand, and industries thrive. Strategically positioned in the heart of the Mid-Atlantic region, Frederick County's dynamic economy continues to attract top-tier companies across diverse industries. In 2024, Frederick County's economy surged to a \$15.4 billion Gross Domestic Product, driven by a thriving business ecosystem and pro-business climate. Companies choose Frederick County for its strategic location, skilled workforce, and exceptional quality of life. With access to five major highways and proximity to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, businesses can easily connect with key markets. Frederick County's vibrant life science, technology and manufacturing sectors continue to expand, with industry leaders like AstraZeneca, Lonza, Kite (a Gilead Company), and Thermo-Fisher Scientific calling Frederick home. Recent expansions include Hercules Custom Iron and Federal Stone Industries, reinforcing Frederick County's reputation as a hub for innovation and growth. Fort Detrick has, and continues to be, a significant employer for Frederick County residents. A major new economic driver is the development of a large-scale Critical Digital Infrastructure (CDI) campus, primarily situated on the former Eastalco site north of Adamstown. This campus, which includes projects like Rowan Digital Infrastructure's Quantum Frederick and Aligned Data Centers, is positioned to become a significant East Coast data hub. Frederick County's vibrant community and thriving Main Streets foster a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and businesses of all sizes. With lower operating costs, tax advantages, and world-class infrastructure, this is the ideal location to start, locate, expand, and succeed. Whether you're an emerging startup or a global powerhouse, Frederick County is the place to grow.

County Postsecondary Institutions:

- Frederick Community College
- Hood College
- Mount St. Mary's University

LEA BLUEPRINT DATA

Black Text Reported Below Signifies Data from the: 2023-2024 SY

Red Text Reported Below Signifies Data from the: 2024-2025 SY

- If LEAs have data from the 2024-2025 SY, they can report that in *red* text below

SY 2024-2025	Maryland	LEA	School #1 (CTC) **	School #2 (FHS)
Graduates: 4-Year Adjusted Cohort	64,870	3416 Grads (94.31%)	N/A	411 Grads (86.16%)
CTE Participation Rate (# and % of all graduating students)	48.6%	3416 (100%)	2221 (%)	411 (100%)
CTE Concentrator Rate (# and % of all graduating students)	38.6%	1836 (53.75%)	# (%)	193 (46.96%)
Work-Based Learning - Participants (# of all graduating students)	n/a	995	221	122
Youth Apprenticeship (YA) - Completions (# of all HS students)	YA (no IRC): unknown YA+IRC: unknown YA Total:	YA (no IRC): 6 YA+IRC: 56 YA Total: 62	YA (no IRC): 2 YA+IRC: 4 YA Total: 6	YA (no IRC): 0 YA+IRC: 5 YA Total: 5
High School Level of a Registered Apprenticeship - Participants (# of all HS students)	Unknown	0	0	0
High School Level of a Registered Apprenticeship - Completers (# and % of all graduating students)	99; 0.1%	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) - Attained* (# and % all graduating students)	6,859 ¹⁶ ; 10.9%	1023 (29.9%)	# (%)	179 (43.55%)
Blueprint's 45% Goal Progress	11%	29.9%	n/a	n/a

¹⁶ This is based on MSDE's prior approved list of IRCs and Technical Skills Assessments (TSAs) as the CTE Committee's new approved list of IRCs does not go into effect until the 2025-2026 SY.

**** Students do not graduate from CTC. Student enrollment and program completion range from multiple high schools, grade levels, and graduation classes.**

*LEA: please confirm if the IRC #s here are based on MSDEs prior approved list or the new list approved by the CTE Committee that goes into effect the 2025-2026 SY:
Prior

LEA CTE OFFERINGS

School Year for the Data Reported Below: 2025-2026 SY

Program Name	Total Enrollment	Overenrolled or Underenrolled	# of Students on Waitlist
Academy of Health Professions - Physical Rehabilitation	58	Overenrolled	26
Academy of Health Professions Medical Assisting	90	Overenrolled	28
Academy of Health Professions Nursing	93	Overenrolled	18
Academy of Health Professions - Dental Assistant	58	Overenrolled	17
Agricultural and Commercial Metals Technology	38	Overenrolled	35
Agriculture- Agri- Business	11	Underenrolled	N/A
Agricultural Sciences and Operations (Mechanics)	386	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Agricultural Sciences and Operations (Horticulture)	494	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Agricultural Sciences and Operations (PreVet)	987	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Autobody/Collision Repair and Refinishing	40	Overenrolled	21
Automotive Mechanics	77	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Automotive Technology	79	Overenrolled	30
Biomedical Sciences	135	Overenrolled	37
Business Administrative Services	5226	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Business Management	5059	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
CAD	34	Overenrolled	14

Program Name	Total Enrollment	Overenrolled or Underenrolled	# of Students on Waitlist
Career Research and Development	3399	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Carpentry	53	Overenrolled	1
Child Development	1558	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Cisco IT Networking	87	Overenrolled	22
Computer and Information Sciences	4436	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Construction Design and Management (Wood, Design, and Application)	1421	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Construction Design and Management (Architecture Engineering and Construction Management)	278	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Cosmetology	50	Overenrolled	36
Culinary Arts American Culinary Federation	62	Overenrolled	34
Culinary Hospitality	286	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Digital Design and Printing Methods (Print ED)	39	Overenrolled	3
Electrician - Construction Electricity	50	Overenrolled	8
Environmental Landscape Design and Management	17	Overenrolled	N/A
Finance and Accounting	5224	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Fire Emergency Medical Training/ High School Cadet (MFRI)	18	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A

Program Name	Total Enrollment	Overenrolled or Underenrolled	# of Students on Waitlist
Homeland Security and Criminal Justice	257	Overenrolled	22
HVACR & Plumbing	52	Overenrolled	15
Interactive Media Productions	134	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Marketing	5248	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Naval Science	234	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Project Lead the Way – Engineering (not including IED)	167	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A
Teaching Academy of Maryland	51	Overenrolled	5
Television/Multimedia Production	48	Overenrolled	5
Youth Apprenticeship	27	Rostered Mtg Size	N/A

Overview of CTE Programs

Please provide additional information on the CTE programs of study (attaching promotional materials or providing a website link will suffice):

FCPS CTE [Website](#)

[CTE Pathways](#) - (Found in HS Planning Guide page 8)

CTC [Website](#)

CTC [Brochure](#)

LEA NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Instructions: Please answer the following prompts to the best of your ability. Feel free to reference data from the prior sections.

Blueprint Implementation

What progress are you projecting toward meeting the *Blueprint's* 45% goal for your LEA in this school year, next school year, and by the 2030-31 school year?

Starting in 2023, FCPS actively promoted Maryland Blueprint goals and expectations to our Board of Education, teachers, administrators, Career Coaches, Counselors, parents, students, and, most critically, our industry partners. As one of only two school systems, who piloted the Apprenticeship Maryland Program, FCPS has invested significant effort into employer recruitment. To support this work, we applied for and received the Maryland Works Grant.

In SY24-25, FCPS worked with a marketing firm to provide resources supporting employer recruitment, as well as a comprehensive supervisor onboarding training module. This training supports employers - new or seasoned - with hiring, onboarding, and training youth apprentices, who for most will have their first work experience through the program.

In SY25-26, FCPS, in partnership with Frederick County Workforce Services, implemented a grant to support recruiting new Youth Apprenticeship employers with wage reimbursement to increase apprenticeship opportunities for students.

Despite a countywide marketing campaign and strong collaboration with the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce, Frederick County Government, and the City of Frederick, the number of participating industry partners remains insufficient to meet student interest in apprenticeships.

Given these challenges, FCPS is now concentrating on elements of the Blueprint's 45% goal that are fully within our control, preparing students to earn industry-recognized credentials (IRCs).

Examples of IRC Focus:

- Transitioned to new IRCs approved by the CTE Committee.
- Revised curriculum content to align with updated IRC standards.
- Implemented creative solutions such as deploying the Reserve Grant-funded Mobile Safety Lab to deliver OSHA 30 instruction systemwide.
- Collaborating with our Visual Performing Arts curriculum team to expand IRCs to digital arts and animation courses.

Teacher and Student Preparation

- Delivered targeted professional learning for CTE teachers on IRC content and expectations.

- Advocated for teachers to take and earn IRCs within their instructional areas.
- Invested in test-preparation resources and digital tools.
- Emphasized a systemic math and literacy focus to reinforce foundational skills linked to IRC success.

Student and Family Awareness and Recognition

- Awarded certification pins and schools held recognition ceremonies.
- Displayed certification banners and signage celebrating students who earned IRCs.

Data and Projected Progress

- **SY24–25:** 26% of the graduating class earned at least one IRC.
- **Goal for SY26–27:** Increase IRC attainment by five percentage points, reaching 31%.
- **Long-Term Projection:** If FCPS continues to maintain an annual 5% growth rate, the district should meet the 45% Blueprint target by SY2030–31. Progress will vary by school depending on baseline performance and program availability.

What are your plans for expanding Registered Apprenticeships in your LEA?

To expand Registered Apprenticeships (RAs) in Frederick County, FCPS will establish agreements with local employers and Maryland Department of Labor (MDoL) RA sponsors to ensure Youth Apprentices have a seamless pathway into full (RAs) after graduation. Working in close partnership with the MDoL Apprenticeship Navigator, FCPS will identify active RA sponsors in the region and connect them directly with current Youth Apprenticeship employers to strengthen alignment and accelerate program expansion.

FCPS will develop and strengthen a “Fast Track RA Pathway” branding to highlight Youth Apprenticeship as the initial step in a seamless credential-to-career pipeline. To enhance student advising, school counselors and Career Coaches will receive ongoing training to present Registered Apprenticeships as college-equivalent postsecondary options, particularly in high-demand fields such as construction, information technology, health sciences, and manufacturing.

To increase employer participation, FCPS will spotlight RA sponsors in the Work-Based Learning newsletter and host joint outreach events such as “Become a Registered Sponsor” workshops, in collaboration with MDoL, the local Chamber, and business organizations. FCPS will also work with local economic development partners to leverage available incentives that help employers offset onboarding and training costs.

Finally, FCPS will publicly celebrate key milestones, including growth in the number of Registered Apprenticeships, to build community engagement, elevate employer

participation, and strengthen awareness of Registered Apprenticeship as a high-value postsecondary pathway.

What challenges does your LEA face in reaching the 45% goal?

Time Constraints in Classes

- Many industry certifications require additional instructional hours beyond what current class schedules allow. (i.e., seat time, hours, or depth of content knowledge, etc.)
- New program guides are aspirational and often exceed the time realistically available to prepare students for certification exams.
- Ongoing statewide program revisions can delay implementation and limit time for full alignment.

Teacher Capacity and Readiness

- Teachers vary in their comfort, experience, and competency with IRC content and testing expectations.
- Shifts in curriculum, for example, introducing text-based coding in middle school, agricultural literacy, or financial literacy, require significant professional learning and adjustment.
- New MSDE CTE program guides require extensive overhauling of some curriculum, such as Marketing and Accounting Services, to fully prepare students for the prescribed certifications.

Budget and Resource Limitations

- Funding constraints limit access to up-to-date materials, test-preparation tools, and industry-aligned equipment.
- Schools must balance competing needs across programs, which can delay or reduce IRC-related resource investments.

Stakeholder Perception and Motivation

- Students may not fully understand the value of industry-recognized credentials or how they translate to employment or postsecondary pathways.
- Some students prioritize other academic commitments (Dual Enrollment, AP, IB), which compete for time and focus.
- Parents may be unfamiliar with the relevance or workforce value of IRCs, especially compared to traditional academic pathways.
- Some industry members may not see the value in the IRCs offered within their industry (“not required”).
- Regional differences in IRC recognition can limit perceived value for students and employers.

Apprenticeship Opportunities

FCPS partnerships with Maryland Department of Labor and local Frederick County agencies to expand Youth Apprenticeship industry recruitment and opportunities have only been moderately successful. However, even with a countywide marketing campaign and strong collaboration with the above agencies, the number of new industry partners willing or able to host apprentices continues to fall short of student demand, an obstacle that directly impacts progress toward the Blueprint's 45% apprenticeship target.

Considering these ongoing challenges, FCPS is prioritizing components of the Blueprint goal that are fully within our control, with a renewed focus on preparing students to earn industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) as a key measure of college and career readiness.

Do you have any new/different information regarding your career coaching programming that is not reflected in your most recent annual report submitted to the AIB on July 1? (Reference the reported linked in Section 1.B)

Career Coach Structure and Support in Frederick County

In Frederick County, 22 Career Coaches serve our secondary students across 29 physical schools and 2 virtual programs. The team is supported by two coordinators, one hired by FCPS, and one hired by the Workforce Investment Board (Frederick County Workforce Services, FCWS). Frederick Community College (FCC) serves as a third Career Coach partner, collaborating with the team to expand student opportunities.

Career Exploration and Learning Opportunities

Career exploration is integrated throughout all CTE programs:

- **Middle School:** Teachers collaborate with Career Coaches to connect curriculum to careers through Career Connected Learning. Students engage in guest speaker events, field trips, and utilize career readiness platforms such as Xello and Pathful.
- **High School:** Teachers work alongside Career Coaches to provide similar career exploration opportunities. Students can participate in work-based learning experiences, including apprenticeships, internships, and work study.

The Career Coaching program is a vital component of FCPS, providing essential, individualized career development support that complements the work of existing staff.

Career Coaches are deeply embedded across the school system, collaborating with all content areas, departments, special populations, teachers, and staff. They uniquely fill a capacity gap by offering individualized attention and specialized career-focused opportunities for students.

The decision to house the program within Career and Technical Education (CTE) has proven highly strategic. As members of the CTE team, Career Coaches work with CTE teachers and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinators to increase awareness and participation in CTE pathways, WBL opportunities, and develop unique programming that aligns with system-wide CTE initiatives.

Career Coaches are instrumental in organizing and hosting significant systemic career events, including the Youth Apprenticeship Summit, Teach Maryland Conference, Construction Career Day, and The Middle School Expo. These events dramatically increase student exposure to diverse career paths and industries.

During the 2025 summer months, Career Coaches were immersed in professional development (PD) opportunities, including targeted connections to local industries. PD topics included

- Mentoring and Coaching
- Marketing IRC Attainment to students
- Designing Relationships for Learning
- Classroom Management

Career Coaches are also connected with over 20 businesses and organizations over the summer via site visits and presentations. The summer connections increased our business partners to over 300. These connections can be the catalyst for future partnerships and opportunities for students. The summer schedule can be found [here](#).

To ensure high-quality and equitable services, the Career Coach team is focused on continuous improvement and curriculum alignment. The Career Coach Coordinators are currently collaborating with curriculum development leaders at Frederick Community College to refine coach-developed lesson plans and resources. This effort will result in a finalized curriculum that aligns with established [program standards](#) and ensures equity of services across all schools.

Additionally, Career Coaches provide critical direct support that drives measurable outcomes. Career Coaches support Career & Technology Center (CTC) shadowing experiences, including providing preparation sessions, which has led to an increase in student shadow requests and improved performance during the experience.

Career Coaches are also generally responsible for scheduling and coordinating the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Their efforts have successfully increased the frequency of testing days and the number of students participating in the opportunity.

CTE Programs & Enrollment

Are there any new CTE programs you plan on adding to your current programming within the next two school years? Why are you adding the program(s)?

FCPS is considering several new CTE program additions over the next two school years (budget dependent) to better align with workforce demand, student interest, and emerging industry needs:

- **Data Science / Machine Learning program:** Preparing students for high-demand careers in technology, analytics, and AI-driven industries. We recognize that this area will be a need both locally and globally.
- **Facilities Management (Future BHS):** The next high school building is being designed to add a trades-based program such as the Facilities Management program to add this option to the school and the district.
- **Biotechnology:** With the creation of this new MSDE program, FCPS will explore this pathway to determine if it will meet the needs of our local industry and equip students with knowledge and skills for careers in life sciences and research.

The primary focus over the next two years, however, will remain on transitioning existing programs to align with the new MSDE CTE standards. This process requires careful planning, including:

- Adjusting course offerings and scheduling to incorporate new standards and Career Connected Learning (CCL) opportunities.
- Transition existing Locally developed CTE programs to state approved programs.
- Ensuring teachers receive professional development and training to teach updated standards.
- Developing or acquiring curricular resources that align with the updated standards.

While new program development is a priority to expand student pathways, FCPS recognizes that successful implementation requires a measured approach to ensure both quality and sustainability.

Are there any current CTE programs you plan on expanding within the next two school years? How and why are you expanding the program(s)?

Program expansion decisions are informed by multiple data points, including:

- The Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Student interest and course request trends
- Local and regional workforce data
- Enrollment at existing program locations
- Equity and access indicators to ensure opportunities are available across all schools
- Administrator support, including staffing capacity and available instructional space

Existing programs are often expanded when there is clear and sustained student demand. For example, this year FCPS added a second section of Biomedical Science at the Career & Technology Center (CTC). FCPS is also piloting an Aeronautics program at Governor Thomas Johnson High School.

- **Pharmacy Technician:** Offering students pathways into healthcare and allied health careers with industry-recognized credentials. Currently available at FHS but relies on FCC Open-campus options to complete.
- **NJROTC Aeronautics: Drone Operations:** Expand beyond NJROTC students.
- **Agriculture Expansion at GTJHS:** Expand the agricultural program to Governor Thomas Johnson High School, our only high school without agriculture education. However, current budget constraints and facility limitations make immediate implementation more challenging.
- **Architecture Engineering and Construction Management:** For SY27, one more high school will be adding Architecture, bringing the total to 6 of 10 high schools offering this program. The goal would be to strive for every high school offering this program.
- **Interactive Media Production (IMP) (MSDE's new Video and Audio Production)** FCPS is exploring the expansion of the Video and Audio Production Program of Study to an additional high school, increasing access from five participating schools to six. The program prepares students for industry-recognized certifications, equipping graduates with the technical expertise valued by employers.

Additionally, with budget challenges, schools' ability to offer programs changes from year to year. Examples include Child Development- one high school has not run this program for the past two years; whereas another high school only had a one-year gap in offering. When schools are forced to ensure graduation required classes such as Mathematics and English / Language Arts are offered and enrolled, CTE classes that are not at full enrollment are some of the first to be cut.

Looking ahead, the FCPS CTE Central Office team will meet with school administrators in March, once student course requests for the next school year are finalized. These data-driven discussions will determine where expansion is both feasible and most needed to meet student interest and workforce priorities.

Are there any CTE programs you are eliminating/removing within the next two school years? Why are you eliminating/removing the program(s)?

CTE staff continually review program data to ensure all offerings meet MSDE requirements for size, scope, and quality. Programs that do not meet these standards, despite sustained strategic efforts, are closely monitored- especially trend data from the past three years. Currently, there is one program under review where enrollment, performance, and workforce alignment data are being carefully analyzed and shared with school-level administration. A final decision regarding this program is expected within the next few months. Additionally, there are frequent conversations about centralizing programs with low enrollment at a single school to

expand access to more students- Project Lead the Way engineering was centralized this way from one of the 3 schools in SY26.

Additionally, over the next two years, FCPS will sunset the Career Research and Development CRD program and phase in the Career Connected Learning system. This change is necessary to align with the new MSDE-approved programs and pathways, which shift toward updated course sequences and revised expectations for work-based learning and career readiness.

These decisions are guided by data, workforce needs, and the requirement to ensure all CTE programs meet updated MSDE standards and provide high-quality, sustainable opportunities for students.

How does your LEA structure its class scheduling? How is your scheduling structure for students to take CTE courses? (i.e. block; A/B etc.)

All students in grades 6–12 have access to enroll in CTE courses or pathways.

At the high school level, FCPS uses a semester-based block schedule, which allows students to take longer instructional periods and complete a full course in one semester. This structure provides flexibility for students to participate in CTE programs while maintaining progress in their core academic courses.

At the middle school level, FCPS uses a traditional seven block schedule with year-long and semester-based courses. Middle school students may take pathway-aligned (business & marketing, computer science and engineering) introductory CTE courses designed to expose them to career exploration and foundational skills.

Students who apply and are accepted to the Career and Technology Center (CTC) travel to the CTC daily for half of their school day throughout the full academic year. This schedule ensures sufficient instructional time for students to participate in highly technical, hands-on CTE programming while still completing their core coursework at their home high schools.

How do students enroll in CTE programs in your LEA?

All students in grades 6–12 have access to enroll in CTE courses or pathways. At the middle school level, every student is required to complete a CTE course that meets the ESSA computational thinking requirements. In high school, all students must meet the Technology Education COMAR requirement by completing a Computer Science or Engineering course, as well as a course in Financial Literacy.

Middle and high school students may enroll in CTE courses offered at their home schools and at the Frederick County Career and Technology Center (CTC). Career Coaches promote and market CTE programs. They do this in a variety of ways, including one-on-one conversations and through CTE Fairs. Enrollment typically occurs through the school counseling process, where students select courses during annual registration periods with support from their counselors.

What is your LEA's system for when a CTE program is overenrolled?

At comprehensive high schools, scheduling conflicts occasionally occur, particularly in smaller schools where a course may be offered only once per year. In those instances, counselors work with students to identify creative solutions such as Virtual School options or alternate scheduling to ensure students can access required courses.

The most significant over-enrollment challenge occurs at the Career & Technology Center. Due to facility limitations, the CTC cannot accommodate the number of students who express interest. When programs are overenrolled, students are placed on a waitlist. As of June 2025, the waitlist included 753 students. As students found other alternatives including apprenticeships and work study, the wait list at the end of July was 687.

To address this county-wide concern, a committee was created by the County Executive including the President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, FCPS CTE Director, FCC Representative, and County Representatives. A county-funded study was completed this fall to explore expansion options. No decisions or funding commitments for additional space have yet been made.

Are all CTE programs offered to all students?

Yes. All CTE programs are available to all middle and high school students. However, access may be limited by course scheduling constraints in comprehensive high schools or by facility capacity at the Career & Technology Center. While students are not restricted from applying to any program, final availability depends on space, scheduling, and staffing.

If available, please provide the overall acceptance rate for students who apply and are admitted into a CTE program for the most recent school year.

At this time, FCPS does not report a single LEA-wide acceptance rate for CTE programs. Enrollment in CTE courses at comprehensive high schools is generally open and unrestricted. Acceptance into CTC programs, however, is significantly constrained by facility capacity. Given the high number of applicants, including a June 2025 initial waitlist of 753 students, the acceptance rate varies by program and by available seats.

CTE Teachers

What are the requirements to be hired as a CTE teacher in your LEA?

Under the new licensing model, CTE teachers in FCPS must meet MSDE certification requirements. In most cases, this includes possession of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and eligibility for an MSDE teaching certificate with the appropriate CTE endorsement, or the ability to obtain the required endorsement within five years of hire.

For candidates entering under the Professional Trades model, a bachelor's degree is *not* required. Instead, individuals must meet MSDE's criteria for industry experience, professional licensure, or recognized trade credentials relevant to the program area. This hiring practice is extremely important for specialized programs and has a significant impact on student success.

This structure allows FCPS to hire both traditionally certified educators and highly skilled industry professionals to support high-quality CTE programming.

How are CTE teachers recruited in this LEA?

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) uses a comprehensive recruitment strategy to attract high-quality CTE teachers. The district participates in college campus visits, regional job fairs, and "Become an Educator" information sessions to reach candidates entering the teaching profession. FCPS also promotes open positions through social media, digital advertising, and community partnerships, highlighting the advantages of working in Frederick County.

FCPS invests in "Grow Your Own" initiatives, including the Teacher Academy of Maryland and Educators Rising, to build a diverse and sustainable educator pipeline within the school system. These programs encourage students to pursue careers in education and support them in returning to FCPS as certified teachers.

To specifically strengthen CTE staffing, FCPS has developed strong industry partnerships throughout the local community. When appropriate, industry experts with relevant skills or credentials are contacted directly about open CTE positions to identify strong candidates who may qualify under MSDE's Professional Trades certification model.

Through these combined efforts, FCPS attempts to ensure a robust pool of applicants with both educational expertise and industry experience to support high-quality CTE programming.

What difficulties do you face with recruitment and retention?

FCPS, like many school systems, faces several challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers. One primary difficulty is increasing competition for qualified educators, particularly in high-need areas such as special education, math, science, and CTE, where shortages are most acute.

Rising housing costs in the Frederick area further limit the ability of new teachers to live near their schools, contributing to turnover and a smaller candidate pool. Additionally, teacher candidate pipelines have decreased statewide, with fewer students enrolled in college education programs.

Retention of mid-career teachers can also be challenging. Limited opportunities for advancement outside of administrative roles, combined with higher-paying

positions in neighboring districts, sometimes lead experienced educators to seek alternative employment.

The Career Ladder under the Maryland Blueprint offers additional opportunities for teachers to advance their careers. However, lack of full understanding can be a contributing factor. There is a need to explore this at a deeper level.

These factors collectively make it essential for FCPS to implement proactive recruitment strategies, targeted incentives, and career growth opportunities to maintain a strong, stable teaching workforce.

Do you have any innovative practices to share regarding the recruitment and retention of CTE teachers?

Recruitment Innovations:

- **The “Golden Ticket” Future Educator Program:** Identifies and encourages students to pursue teaching careers in CTE.
- **Educators Rising CTSO Expansion:** Engages students in career pathways that prepare them for future teaching roles.
- **Community Partner Recruitment Flyers:** Leverages local industry connections to attract qualified candidates.
- **Internal Recruitment:** Prioritizes hiring current FCPS teachers for open CTE positions. Many of our best CTE teachers come from other content areas and grade levels. Their content knowledge and pedagogical background allow the teachers and students to be successful.
- **Grow Your Own Initiatives:** Programs such as the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) and the Child Development Associate (CDA) pathway strengthen the educator pipeline by preparing high school students for immediate employment opportunities within FCPS as Instructional Assistants (IAs). These positions provide early career experience while enabling graduates, and current FCPS employees, to access available tuition-assistance programs that support completion of post-secondary education and progression toward teacher certification.
- **FCPS Career Fairs:** Strategically target candidates based on background and skill alignment with district needs.

Retention Innovations:

- **Rise and Thrive Program:** Supports ongoing professional growth for teachers at all career stages.
- **Teacher Leadership Opportunities:** Offers pathways for educators to take on leadership roles without leaving the classroom.

- **Early Career Teacher Professional Learning:** Targeted support for teachers in their first years.
- **Central Office Support:** Provides consistent mentorship and resources for early career CTE teachers.
- **Mentor Teacher Program:** Connects new teachers with experienced educators for guidance and support.
- **Leadership Development Opportunities:** Helps teachers grow professionally and advance in their careers.
- **FCPS Health and Wellness Initiatives:** Supports teacher well-being to improve retention.
- **CTC Teacher of the Month Recognition:** Highlights and celebrates outstanding teacher contributions.
- **Support from our Partners:** Support structures of industry partners and state organizations such as the Maryland Center for Computing Education are essential for ensuring teachers feel equipped and supported with the challenges of the profession.

These innovative strategies collectively strengthen FCPS's ability to attract, support, and retain high-quality CTE educators, ensuring sustainable and high-impact programming for students.

General

What are some innovative best practices your LEA has implemented in CTE that you think are worth sharing?

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to being an Evidence-Informed and Equity-Driven school system to guide decisions and ensure every student has opportunities. FCPS employs several innovative practices to ensure CTE programs are responsive, accessible, and high-quality:

Data-Driven Program Development:

- FCPS regularly reviews local workforce data, both quantitative and qualitative, to identify emerging career pathways and determine the need for new programs.
- Program locations are evaluated to ensure diverse student representation and to reduce barriers to access.

Program Planning and Support:

- CTE works closely with school-based administrators to plan onboarding, review program performance, and guide program evolution.
- Teacher leaders serve as a critical support mechanism, helping with curriculum review, updating resources, mentoring colleagues, and collaboration on program improvement.

Data and Monitoring:

- FCPS maintains a robust data platform that enables administrators and teachers to monitor enrollment, student performance, and ‘completer’ data for all CTE programs.

Flexible Scheduling and Program Design:

- Programs at comprehensive schools are designed to provide flexibility for scheduling, which allows smaller schools to be creative and responsive in offering CTE courses.
- **Innovative Learning Resources:** FCPS received a Reserve Grant to purchase and outfit a mobile safety lab trailer, which will bring hands-on, industry-standard training tied to the OSHA 30 IRC, directly to students and expand learning opportunities beyond traditional classrooms.

FCPS received a Reserve Grant to purchase and outfit a mobile safety lab trailer, which will bring hands-on, industry-standard training tied to the OSHA 30 IRC, directly to students and expand learning opportunities beyond traditional classrooms.

These practices ensure that FCPS CTE programs are equitable, responsive to workforce needs, and student-centered, while providing ongoing support to teachers and administrators.

How is the CTE budget and financial support structured within your LEA?

In Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), the CTE budget and financial support are structured through a combination of local budget requests, targeted allocations, and state and federal grants.

Each year, local budget requests are submitted to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. These requests cover expenses such as:

- Equipment repairs and maintenance
- Substitute teachers
- Supplemental pay for professional development outside of the school day and for curriculum writing
- Subscriptions and professional memberships for teachers where required
- Student CTSO incentives and travel
- Software, licenses, and instructional materials (one of the largest categories)
- Mileage reimbursement

Additional funding for specialized CTE initiatives, including career coaches and industry certifications, is allocated directly through the district’s Fiscal Services office.

Most program upgrades and new program expenses are funded through grants, including Perkins, Reserve Grant, Innovation Grants, and Maryland Works.

This budget structure ensures that CTE programs have the necessary resources to maintain high-quality instruction, support teacher professional growth, and provide students with relevant career preparation experiences.

Is there any additional information you would like to provide that we have not requested?

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) would like to highlight several challenges that are currently impacting CTE programming and opportunities:

- **Facilities Limitations:** Current lack of space and funding restrict program expansion and the ability to offer certain pathways at all sites.
- **Staffing Reductions:** Reductions in teaching, administrative, and central office staff affect program capacity and support.
- **Transportation for Work-Based Learning (WBL):** Ensuring students can access WBL opportunities can be challenging due to student transportation constraints.

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) would like to highlight several positive factors that impact CTE programming and opportunities:

- **Active Industry Partners:** Local industry partners provide robust support through WBL opportunities, mentorship, and increased program awareness.
- **Partnerships:** We are proud of our partnership with Frederick County to offer the Fire and Rescue Program at the Frederick County Safety Training Center, staffed by County employees. We hope to expand these types of community-school system partnerships to increase CTE offerings in a school system that has no room for expansion and whose budget does not meet the needs of the fastest growing County in Maryland.
- **Program Expansion:** FCPS continues to grow specialized programs, including expansions in Interactive Media Production (IMP) and Advanced Engineering & Construction (AEC M.).
- **Strong WBL:** Over 1,000 students countywide participated in work-based learning annually.
- **Program Expansion:** Yet, FCPS continues to grow specialized programs, including expansions in Interactive Media Production (IMP) and Advanced Engineering & Construction (AEC M.).
- **Internal Partnerships:** Collaboration with internal departments such as Data, Dual Enrollment, Maintenance, Multilingual and Special Education Program, and Technology Services to enhance program development and student learning.
- **Career Awareness and WBL Platforms:** The launch of Xello (Year 1) supports career exploration, planning, and work-based learning programming for students.

- **Strong CTSOs:** Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) continue to provide opportunities for leadership development and the extension of learning beyond the classroom. Our goal is to expand all 4 CTSOs over the next few years to ensure equitable access at every high school.

These efforts demonstrate FCPS's commitment to expanding CTE opportunities, building strong community and industry partnerships, and providing high-quality career preparation despite challenges related to facilities, staffing, and transportation.

Appendix B | School Visit Agenda

CTE Committee Expert Review Team

Visit Agenda

Frederick County Public Schools

Visit Date: December 11, 2025 Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Location AM: <i>Frederick County Career and Technology Center</i> <i>7922 Opossumtown Pike</i> <i>Frederick, MD 21702</i>	Location PM: <i>Frederick High School</i> <i>650 Carroll Parkway</i> <i>Frederick, MD 21701</i>	Arrival Time: 8:00 a.m.
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AM Session: Frederick County Career and Technology Center

Team 1	Bob Stike, Stacey Butler, Stephanie Discepolo, Katherine Swanson-Palmer, Adam Parry, Ben Hsieh, Dr. Edrees Nawabi	Team 2	Dylan Brown, Lateefah Durant, Dr. Genevieve Floyd, Christine Lynch, Teresa Mena, Mariel Fedde
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
8:15am-8:45am (30)	Meet and Greet Fruit and pastries provided by Culinary	8:15am-8:45am (30)	Meet and Greet Fruit and pastries provided by Culinary
8:45am-9:25 am (40)	Classroom Visits (3)	8:45am-9:25 am (40)	CTE Student Focus Group
9:25-9:30 (5)	Break	9:25-9:30 (5)	Break
9:30am-10:00am (30)	Classroom Visits (3)	9:30am-10:00am (30)	Classroom Visits (3)
10:00am-10:10am (10)	Snack Break	10:00am-10:10am (10)	Snack Break
10:10am-10:50am (40)	School Counselor & Career Coach Focus Group	10:10am-10:50am (40)	Teacher Focus Group
10:50 am-11:30 am (40)	CTE Staff/School Admin Mtg.	10:50 am-11:30 am (40)	CTE Staff/School Admin Mtg.



11:30am-12:00pm (30)	Travel & Check In	11:30am-12:00pm (30)	Travel & Check In
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PM Session: Frederick High School

Team 1	Bob Stike, Stacey Butler, Stephanie Discepolo, Katherine Swanson-Palmer, Adam Parry, Ben Hsieh, Dr. Edrees Nawabi	Team 2	Dylan Brown, Lateefah Durant, Dr. Genevieve Floyd, Christine Lynch, Teresa Mena, Mariel Fedde
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
12:00pm-12:45pm (45)	Lunch provided by FHS and Meet with Admin Invite Dyson, Sirgo, Harris and Afie, Gull, Jose Bueso	12:00pm-12:45pm (45)	Lunch provided by FHS and Meet with Admin Invite Dyson, Sirgo, Harris and Afie, Gull
12:45pm-1:40pm (50)	CTE Student Focus Group	12:45pm-1:40pm (50)	Classroom Visits (5)
1:40pm-1:50pm (15)	Break	1:40pm-1:50pm (15)	Break
1:50pm-2:35pm (45)	CTE Teacher Focus Group	1:50pm-2:35pm (45)	School Counselor & Career Coach Focus Group
2:35pm-3:15pm (40)	End of Day Debrief & Gathering	2:35pm-3:15pm (40)	End of Day Debrief & Gathering

CTE ERT Visit Members

Name	Title & Organization	Role
Adam Parry	CTE Director, Washington County Public Schools	School/LEA Leadership
Ben Hsieh	Special Projects, GWDB	GWDB staff
Bob Stike	Principal/CTE Teacher, Boyd J. Michael, III Technical High School - Washington County Public Schools	CTE Teacher (required)
Christine Lynch	Contractor, CityWorks	Notetaker/Support for CTE Committee
Dylan Brown	CTE Educator (Carpentry), Washington County Public Schools	CTE Teacher (Required)
Dr. Edrees Nawabi	Research Data Analyst, GWDB CTE Committee	GWDB CTE Committee staff
Dr. Genevieve Floyd	Director, Department of College and Career Readiness, Montgomery County Public Schools	School/LEA Leadership (required)
Katherine Swanson-Palmer	Program Manager, GWDB CTE Committee	GWDB CTE Committee staff
Lateefah Durant	Vice President of Innovation, CityWorks	Support for CTE Committee
Mariel Fedde	Program Manager, Baltimore County Department of Economic & Workforce Development	LWDB member or staff
Stacey Butler	Sr. Manager, Workforce Initiatives, CVS Health	Employer (required)
Stephanie Discepolo	Apprenticeship, Howard County Public Schools	LEA Staff
Teresa Mena	Apprenticeship Navigator, Division of Workforce Development & Adult Learning, Maryland Department of Labor	State Agency partner

ERT Team Member Roles

Team 1 Role	Name
Facilitator/Recorder	Katherine Swanson-Palmer
Notes/Time	Edrees Nawabi

Team 2 Role	Name
Facilitator/Recorder	Lateefah Durant
Notes/Time	Christine Lynch

Appendix C | Focus Group Protocol and Interview Questions

Focus Group Best Practices

To be read by CTE ERT before focus group or during Orientation

- Stay Focused. Focus groups are conversations with a purpose; remind both the CTE ERT and focus group participants what our purpose is. The CTE ERT is not here to provide our perspective, any solutions, assessments, or inform the LEA. Our role here is to make observations and collect our observations into a report identifying the state of CTE in Maryland and common challenges we can provide Technical Assistance for.
- Ask Questions and Be Curious. Focus groups run best when the CTE ERT focuses on asking questions and actively listening. If you need to, ask participants to repeat themselves. Ask follow-up questions. Be curious.
- Keep Track of Time. Time flies by in the focus groups, so the facilitator needs to have a ten-minute warning so both the CTE ERT and the participants know time is starting to run out. If the facilitator hasn't yet, move to the "Important Questions" with at least ten minutes left.
- Speak Up. The CTE ERT records focus groups (except students), but the range on the recorder isn't great, so we need folks to speak up. If there are announcements or bells going over the intercom, pause because the recorder and our transcription service won't be able to differentiate.
- Cut Any Cross-Talk. The CTE ERT should not be having conversations with each other during the focus group. It's not only disrespectful to focus group participants, but it also disrupts our transcription services.
- Create a Safer Space. Brief introductions and some light humor at the beginning of the focus group can ease participants to provide more authentic and honest reflections.
- Be Mindful of Non-Verbal Cues. So much is said before speaking, so please be intentional with non-verbal cues that may distract participants or make participants uncomfortable.
- Summarize and Validate Participants. We are here to observe and listen, so remember to validate participants' perspective with an accurate summary of what a few participants say.
- Convey Appreciation. Focus group participants take time out of their busy day to provide their perspective. Don't forget to thank them for their participation and explain how it will help improve CTE across the State.

Focus Group Reminders

To be used by team facilitator for focus group participants before starting

- We're here on behalf of the CTE Committee, committed to improving CTE programs in line with Maryland's goals outlined in the Blueprint.
- Our team represents a variety of different perspectives. Our members here today are teachers, administrators, school leaders, researchers, employers, local workforce board members, and CTE Committee staff and board members.
- Our purpose in this visit is to try to understand what is in place now in your LEA, including plans for expanding or strengthening existing programs and current challenges. We also want to identify any strong practices in place that we might be able to highlight statewide. These visits will also inform the CTE Committee's development of the statewide CTE framework.
- We are not here to “assess” or grade CTE programming or CTE teachers in schools or LEAs. We are here to observe, not judge.
- After the visit, CTE Committee staff will draft a LEA report summarizing what we saw and heard, including our understanding of the LEA's CTE strategy, current strengths and challenges, and suggestions to help the LEA reach its goals.
- We look forward to hearing about your experiences and your thoughts on what's working and where we can support CTE here in your LEA.
- We would like to record this session (except student groups) to capture your thoughts accurately—does that work for you all? To be clear, this recording is only for note-taking purposes; we ensure confidentiality meaning no names will be cited in our reports.
- Your contributions today will help us improve CTE programs both here and statewide. Any questions before we start?

Questions for CTE Teachers

Instructions for focus group lead: Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask “Important Questions”.

Priority Questions:

1. What program do you teach in and how long have you been in your role? What is your background in this area?
2. For newer teachers, what was your recruitment like? What were important factors for your decision to work here?
3. For senior teachers, what factors influence your decision to stay here?
4. Do you have contact with employers in your industry? If so, what partnerships have been most beneficial for students?
5. Where do students from your program go after graduating (i.e., further training, work, college, etc.)?

6. What support do you and/or the school provide to help CTE students develop post-graduation plans? Are your students getting time with a Career Coach as part of that support?
7. How do you measure the effectiveness of your CTE program, and what data or feedback informs changes or improvements?
8. If you could redesign your subject's program of study, what would you change?
9. What professional learning opportunities are available for you?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

1. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your school's CTE programs?
2. What do you need as a CTE teacher that you feel you may not be getting?
3. What do you see as the key CTE challenges facing your school now?

Additional Questions:

1. How do you collaborate with your colleagues (CTE and academic teachers)? How do you collaborate with other colleagues within this LEA?
2. Do any of your programs have school-based businesses that serve the school community and/or local clients?
3. Do you think the certification requirements for CTE teachers are well-aligned to what is needed to teach in the area you teach in?
4. What CTSOs (Career and Technical Student Organizations) do you all participate in? What clubs/programs/sports do you all participate in? Can you speak to those and how they help students?
5. What do you see as the biggest hurdles in expanding CTE at your school?

Questions for CTE Students

Instructions for focus group lead: Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask "Important Questions".

Priority Questions:

1. What year are you, what program are you enrolled in, and why did you choose the program you're in?
2. How did you learn about the program you are enrolled in now? What was the process of getting enrolled into the program?
3. How has your experience in the classroom been for your CTE classes? How is it different from your other classes?
4. Have you had any work experience as part of your program?
5. If you have a different home school, how do you get to your CTE program and / or to your job (if applicable)?
6. Will you graduate with any certifications/credentials or college credits?
7. What is your plan post-graduation, and how did you develop it? Did you work with a career coach or career counselor to help with this plan?

8. How much do you know about careers in your industry (salary, training paths)? How did you get this information?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

1. What would you say is the best thing about your program? What are some of your CTE program's strengths?
2. If you could change anything in your program, what would it be? What challenges have you faced in your CTE program?
3. Looking back on when you first enrolled in your CTE program, what advice would you give to students who are currently considering CTE as an option?

Additional Questions:

1. Are there any CTE programs you think the school/LEA should offer that it does not now?
2. Have you participated in any competitions or extracurricular activities related to your CTE program? If so, what was your experience like?
3. How well do you feel your CTE program is preparing you for the workforce or further education in your chosen field?
4. How do your family and friends perceive your enrollment in a CTE program, and has their perception changed since you started?
5. How does your school promote CTE programs to students, and what improvements would you suggest to increase awareness and interest?

Questions for Career Counselors/Coaches

Instructions for focus group lead: Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask "Important Questions."

Priority Questions:

1. How long have you been in your role? What is your background in this role? What is your title? Career Coach? Career Counselor? Something else?
2. How is career counseling organized at your school, and in this district? How do professional school counselors and career coaches work together in your district?
3. Is there a work-based learning coordinator and if so what is their scope of work and how do they interact with career counselors/coaches?
4. How does the career counseling staff stay up-to-date with CTE programming and workforce trends in the LEA and the state?
5. How are students introduced to and informed of CTE programs? Who leads this introduction? How are parents informed about CTE offerings?
6. How are students who change their minds about a program/career path supported?
7. What opportunities are there for career exploration/education in middle school? In high school?
8. How are CTE students supported in planning for post-CCR pathways?
9. How are CTE students supported in making post-graduation plans?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

1. What do you see as the strengths of career coaching/career counseling in this school/district? What is going well? What are you celebrating?
2. What do you see as the challenges of career coaching/career counseling in this school/district? What has been a challenge?

Additional Questions:

1. Do you track post-graduation outcomes, such as enrolling in further education /training or entering the workforce?
2. In what ways does the school involve parents and the community in the CTE program?
3. How do you think the CTE guidance could be improved? Is feedback on guidance and support collected from students?
4. Are there issues with students being able to access CTE programs? If so, what are the reasons and what are current strategies to address access issues from your perspective?
5. What do you see as the biggest hurdles in expanding CTE at this LEA?

Questions for School/LEA Leadership

Instructions for focus group lead: Focus groups with School/LEA Leadership are rare since we receive most of this information through the Brief and Orientation. Please start by asking everyone to introduce themselves with the first question. Since there are a lot of questions to get through, ask for a few people, not everyone, to answer each of the following questions, asking for different perspectives as needed. Be sure to save at least ten minutes to ask “Important Questions”.

Priority Questions:

1. How long have you been in your role? What is your background in CTE?
2. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your LEA/school's CTE program, and what have you made the most progress on recently?
3. Can you give us an overview of the structure of CTE programs in your school / LEA? If not addressed, ask about: Dual enrollment, WBL, Range of programs, Application process, Transportation
4. Is there capacity for all interested students to participate in CTE programs? Are there any barriers to enrollment?
5. For those students who are not able to enroll and stay on a waitlist, what's the process for those students? What happens if they don't get off the waitlist?
6. How does the LEA/district update CTE programs? What are some current plans you have for adding new programs, expanding existing programs or eliminating current programs?
7. What are your district's strategies for increasing CTE enrollment and WBL opportunities, particularly apprenticeships?

Important Questions to Ask with At Least 5 Minutes Left:

1. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your LEA/school's CTE program, and what have you made the most progress on recently?
2. What do you see as the key challenges facing your LEA/school now in CTE?
3. Where would you like the LEA to be in five years in regards to CTE?

Additional Questions:

1. Are any CTE teachers earning National Board Certification? If so, have they been able to move into differentiated roles?
2. How do you collaborate with local business and industry and community colleges?
3. Do you have sufficient teachers for current programs? If not, what are the issues in recruiting them?
4. What measures are in place to assess the long-term impact of CTE programs on students' career trajectories and contributions to the local economy?
5. Do certain programs have higher completion rates than others?
6. Are there clear pathways from current CTE programs to community college certificate and degree programs?
7. What strategies are employed to raise awareness and improve perceptions of CTE programs among students, parents, and the broader community?
8. In your opinion, how well does the programming at your school align with key (high-growth, high-wage) industries in your community and statewide?

Appendix D | Glossary and Acronym Guide

Term	Acronym	Definition
Accountability and Implementation Board	AIB	An independent unit of Maryland State government created by the <i>Blueprint for Maryland's Future</i> law to ensure successful implementation of the <i>Blueprint</i> over the multi-year implementation period and achievement of the <i>Blueprint's</i> intended outcomes.
American Job Center	AJC	One-stop centers where job seekers and employers access coordinated workforce services (also sometimes called One-Stops). Every local workforce area has at least one.
Bachelor of Arts	BA	University degree that focuses on liberal arts, humanities, social sciences, languages and culture, and fine arts.
<i>Blueprint for Maryland's Future</i>	<i>Blueprint</i>	A set of policies and dedicated funding that is intended to transform Maryland's early childhood, elementary, and secondary education system to the levels of high-performing systems around the world. The <i>Blueprint</i> became law in 2021 with a 10-year plan to create a world-class public school system by transforming early childhood, K-12, and career readiness, focusing on five key pillars: expanding universal Pre-K; developing high-quality teachers; creating career pathways, including CTE; increasing resources for struggling schools/students; and strong governance/accountability for equity and excellence. The <i>Blueprint</i> aims to ensure every student, regardless of background, achieves college and career readiness through increased funding and systemic changes.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Blueprint's 45% Goal	45% Goal	The <i>Blueprint for Maryland's Future</i> set a goal that by the 2030-2031 School Year, 45% of high school graduates will have completed the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship or another industry-recognized credential (Md. Ed. Code §21-204). The joint CTE Vision, approved in 2025, updated this goal to specify that the goal would be out of CCR graduating students. This metric is calculated by adding together the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship completion and the IRC attainment rate, divided by the total number of graduating students who are CCR. The CTE Committee is charged with defining the terms that meet the <i>Blueprint's</i> 45% goal. For more information on these policies, visit the GWDB website .
Career and Technical Education	CTE	Courses and learning opportunities in a range of vocations that provide students with the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to thrive in their careers.
Career and Technical Student Organization	CTSO	National organizations for middle and high school students in CTE programs that develop real-world activities, competitions, and service projects to prepare students for future careers and higher education.
Career Connected Learning	CCL	A continuum of learning experiences that includes career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and/or career training through learning. These experiences are connected to learner interests and abilities and industry- or occupation-based needs and expectations.
Career Counseling/Coaching	-	A new initiative within the <i>Blueprint</i> wherein LWDBs, LEAs, and their local community college partner together to provide individualized career counseling to all middle and high school students. Many of the areas have distinguished their career counselors from school counselors by referring to them as career coaches, hence the terminology counseling/coaching is used interchangeably.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Career Ladder	-	A compensation structure enacted by the <i>Blueprint</i> that is developed by an LEA with the input of local school leaders, educators, and union representatives that provides teachers with opportunities to advance in their careers while remaining in the classroom and recognizes high quality school leaders. As teachers advance to higher tiers of the career ladder, educators will take on additional leadership responsibilities.
Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Act	Perkins V	Federal legislation providing funding for CTE in the U.S., aiming to prepare students for high-skill, high-wage jobs by linking academics with technical skills through hands-on training and support for special populations, with the latest version being Perkins V (2018) that reauthorized funding and emphasized strong business-industry connections and equity.
Code of Federal Regulations	CFR	The official compilation of federal rules and regulations, including those governing WIOA programs.
Code of Maryland Regulations	COMAR	Official compilation of all administrative regulations issued by agencies of the state of Maryland.
College and Career Readiness	CCR	A student's readiness to succeed in entry-level courses at a postsecondary institution or a professional pathway upon graduation from high school. The State Board of Education defines the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standard, as required by the <i>Blueprint</i> . To view this policy, visit the Maryland Public Schools website .
Comprehensive High Schools	-	Comprehensive high schools are traditional high schools with available CTE programs for students to enroll in.
Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment	CLNA	Local applicants of Perkins V must conduct a comprehensive local needs assessment at least every two years and include it in their local application to be eligible to receive financial assistance. The law requires eligible applicants to describe how their CTE programs are sufficient in size, scope, and quality to meet the needs of all students served by the eligible recipient; and aligned to State, regional, Tribal, or local in-demand industry sectors or occupations identified by the

Term	Acronym	Definition
		State workforce development board or local workforce development board, including career pathways, where appropriate; or are designed to meet local education or economic needs not identified by State boards or local workforce development boards.
CTE Completers	-	Students who meet all requirements in a state-approved CTE program of study.
CTE Concentrators	-	An individual who has earned at least two credits in a single state-approved CTE program of study.
CTE Framework	-	Under the <i>Blueprint</i> , the CTE Committee is charged with developing a statewide Framework for CTE that prepares students for employment in a diverse, modern economy. Maryland's CTE Framework lays out the State's vision and priorities for CTE and supports the goals of the <i>Blueprint</i> . To view the CTE Framework, visit the GWDB website .
CTE Participants	-	An individual who earns not less than one credit in a state-approved CTE program of study.
CTE Program of Study	CTE POS	A structured, multi-year educational pathway connecting high school academics with real-world career skills, allowing students to explore various fields, earn industry certifications and college credits, and gain work-based experience (internships, apprenticeships etc.) for smoother transitions to careers or further education. These programs align academic and technical standards, preparing students for today's dynamic workforce through hands-on career connected learning and partnerships with businesses.
Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services	DPSCS	Maryland state agency that is responsible for overseeing correctional institutions, community supervision, and related public safety programs to protect the public and support rehabilitation.
Division of Rehabilitation Services	DORS	DORS is an agency of MSDE. DORS is composed of the public vocational rehabilitation (VR) employment services program and the Disability Determination Services.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning	DWDAL	A division within the Maryland Department of Labor, overseeing Maryland’s apprenticeship programs, Maryland Workforce Exchange, correctional education, and other workforce development initiatives.
Dual Enrollment	DE	An opportunity where high school students take college courses for both high school and college credit, often with low or no tuition, though requirements and credit transfer vary by state and institution. Programs can be on-campus, online, or at high schools, sometimes leading to an associate degree alongside a diploma. For the <i>Blueprint</i> -specific policy on dual enrollment, visit the Maryland Public Schools website .
Eligible Training Provider List	ETPL	WIOA mandates that each state have an eligible training provider list (or system, as it is called in Maryland) so the consumer can research career and training options suitable to their interests. ETPL is continuously updated to provide accurate information on currently approved eligible programs of postsecondary providers.
Employment Advancement Right Now	EARN	A Maryland state-funded, competitive workforce development grant program that is industry-led, regional in focus, and a proven strategy for helping businesses cultivate the skilled workforce they need to compete. It is flexible and innovative, designed to ensure that Maryland employers have the talent they need to compete and grow in an ever-changing 21st century economy.
Expert Review Teams	ERT	Created under the <i>Blueprint</i> , these are teams of expert educators and industry leaders who visit schools on scheduled visits to observe, interview, and engage with school faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders. ERTs will review data, conduct a comprehensive school visit, and then identify opportunities for improvement, particularly for implementation related to the <i>Blueprint</i> .
Fiscal Year	FY	Covers a funding period that starts on July 1 and ends on June 30, i.e., fiscal year 2023 (FY23) begins July 1, 2022, and ends June 30, 2023.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Governor's Workforce Development Board	GWDB	The GWDB is Maryland's state workforce development board. State workforce development boards vary in name and structures across the U.S., but they all share statutory responsibilities under the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including serving as the Governor's policy-making body for workforce development, oversight of the state's public workforce development system, and development of the state's workforce development plan. State workforce boards are appointed by the governor and led by private sector business representatives, who make up a majority of the board's membership. Boards also include organized labor; leaders from state agencies responsible for post-secondary education, career and technical education, workforce development and economic development; and community organizations. Boards often represent the embodiment of public-private partnerships. Maryland's GWDB serves as the Governor's chief strategy and policy-making body for workforce development by engaging key business, labor, education, community, and State and local government leaders to collaborate and advise the Governor on business-led workforce approaches that advance Maryland's economic competitiveness and build pathways to work, wages and wealth for all Marylanders. Governor Wes Moore's 2023 executive order concerning the GWDB solidifies its leadership role in setting the statewide vision and strategy for workforce development, building partnerships to accelerate implementation of that strategy, and holding Maryland's workforce development system accountable to delivering results.
Graduation Rate	-	The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. For any given cohort, students who are entering grade 9 for the first time form a cohort that is subsequently "adjusted" by adding any students who transfer into the cohort later during the next three years and subtracting

Term	Acronym	Definition
		any students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die during that same period. This definition is defined in federal regulation 34 C.F.R. §200.19(b) (1) (a)-(iv).
High School Level of a Registered Apprenticeship	HSLRA	A Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program, approved by the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council (MATC), that begins while an apprentice is in high school, and requires that students complete 144 hours of related instruction (RI) and at least 250 hours of paid on-the-job training (OJT) before their high school graduation. Further RA requirements continue post-graduation, in accordance with total program standards approved by MATC. For more information on this policy, please visit the GWDB website .
Industry-Recognized Credential	IRC	A formal validation of an individual's skills and/or competencies that align with state or regional in-demand occupations and are recognized by industry and employers. It may be a certification, license, or credential obtained through an assessment process, and is portable and may be stackable. The IRC leads to documented positive employment outcomes, ensures relevance in the labor market, and supports career advancement and economic development for credential holders. An IRC must be approved by the CTE Committee's criteria to meet the definition of counting in the <i>Blueprint's</i> 45% goal. For more information on this policy and which IRCs are currently approved, visit the Maryland Public Schools website .
Labor Market Information	LMI	Data about jobs, wages, hiring trends, and economic conditions used to guide workforce planning and career decisions.
Local Education Agency	LEA	A local school system or school district. Maryland has 24 local education agencies, one for each of the counties and Baltimore City.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Local Workforce Development Board	LWDB	There are 13 local workforce areas in Maryland, each supported by a Local Workforce Development Board. The areas are guided and led by the private industry in the area to meet the current and future hiring needs of their employer community. The local workforce areas build connections between workforce development and economic development by serving as a vehicle for identifying needs and developing and ensuring implementation of an effective workforce strategy. Local workforce areas develop and oversee locally delivered workforce services as well as leverage community resources through their American Job Centers.
Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Council	MATC	An appointed Council that reviews all Registered Apprenticeship sponsor applications and decides if the program meets all the apprenticeship requirements.
Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program	MATP	A unit within MD Labor's DWDAL that oversees apprenticeship.
Maryland Department of Labor	MD Labor	Maryland state agency that provides job development and employment training to help citizens get the skills and expertise they need to move with the economy into Maryland's future.
Maryland Department of Legislative Services	DLS	Maryland state agency that operates under the policies and directives of the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, the Legislative Policy Committee, and the Joint Audit Committee. DLS conducts research and drafts legislation for members of the Maryland General Assembly.
Maryland General Assembly	MGA	The legislative body of the state of Maryland, including the House of Delegates and State Senate.
Maryland Higher Education Commission	MHEC	State of Maryland's higher education coordinating board responsible for establishing statewide policies for Maryland public and private colleges and universities and for-profit career schools. MHEC also administers state financial aid programs that affect students on a statewide basis.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center	MLDSC	State agency created for the purpose of generating timely and accurate information about student performance that can be used to improve the State's education system and guide decision makers at all levels. To accomplish this task, the MLDS collects and organizes individual-level student and workforce data from all levels of education and the State's workforce.
Maryland State Department of Education	MSDE	State agency overseeing education throughout Maryland.
Maryland Workforce Association	MWA	Association of the 13 Local Workforce Development Board directors that collaborates with the Maryland Department of Labor, GWDB, and other state workforce partners to foster regional and statewide collaboration and sharing of best practices.
Maryland Workforce Exchange	MWE	Online job seeker/workforce services system. It was specifically designed for job seekers, students, case managers, employers, training providers, workforce professionals, and others seeking benefits and services.
Memorandum of Understanding	MOU	A legal document describing the broad outlines of an agreement that two or more parties have reached.
National Board Certification	NBC	Professional certification available in pre-K–12 education that certifies a teacher's demonstrated ability to positively impact student learning. NBC is administered by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).
On-the-Job Training	OJT	Hands-on training from an experienced mentor at the job site, focusing on skill and knowledge necessary for occupational proficiency. OJT is a requirement of the Registered Apprenticeship system.
Personally Identifiable Information	PII	
Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment	RESEA	Federally funded program that helps unemployed individuals return to work more quickly by combining eligibility reviews for unemployment insurance with personalized career guidance, job search assistance, and referrals to training and

Term	Acronym	Definition
		support services.
Registered Apprenticeship	RA	An industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. Registered Apprenticeships are industry-vetted and approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor or a State Apprenticeship Agency. In Maryland, Registered Apprenticeships are approved by the Maryland Department of Labor’s DWDAL in consultation with MATC.
Registered Apprenticeship Programs	RAP	Training programs that combine paid on-the-job training with related classroom instruction. RAPs provide workers with skills and industry-recognized credentials, ensuring quality through registration with USDOL or State Apprenticeship Agencies.
Related Instruction	RI	A systematic form of instruction that teaches technical and academic competencies that apply to the occupation, often in a classroom setting or online, for Registered Apprenticeships.
Request for Proposal	RFP	A document issued by an organization to solicit bids from vendors for a project or service. It outlines the project's requirements and evaluation criteria. Vendors submit proposals detailing how they will meet the requirements, including costs and timelines. The RFP process ensures competitive and transparent vendor selection.
School Year	SY	The months of the year during which school is open and attendance at school is required.
Social Security Number	SSN	

Term	Acronym	Definition
Special Populations	-	In Perkins V, special populations demographic groups include the following: (A) individuals with disabilities; (B) individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults; (C) individuals preparing for non-traditional fields; (D) single parents, including single pregnant women; (E) out-of-workforce individuals; (F) English learners; (G) homeless individuals described in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a); (H) youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; (I) youth with a parent who - (i) is a member of the armed forces (as such term is defined in section 101 (a)(4) of title 10, United States Code); and (ii) is on active duty (as such term is defined in section 101(d)(1) of such title; and (J) migrant students (secondary only).
State Apprenticeship Agency	SAA	State-level entities that oversee and manage apprenticeship programs. They ensure programs meet federal and state standards, provide technical assistance, and promote apprenticeship opportunities to employers and job seekers.
State Determined Performance Level	SDPL	Targets set by states under Perkins V to measure the effectiveness of CTE programs. These performance levels assess how well CTE programs prepare students for postsecondary education and the workforce.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training	SNAP E&T	Federal program run by states that helps people receiving food assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]) get job skills, training, and work experience to find employment.
Technical Assistance	TA	The process of providing targeted support, such as training or resource sharing, to a specified body.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	TANF	Federally funded, state-administered program providing temporary cash assistance, job training, and support services (like childcare) to low-income families with children to promote self-sufficiency and economic stability, operating through block grants with flexible state-run programs.
United States Department of Education	USDOE	Federal agency that sets education policy and administers federal funding, working to serve America's students and support state/local

Term	Acronym	Definition
		systems.
United States Department of Labor	USDOL	Federal agency overseeing labor in the U.S.
Work-Based Learning	WBL	A continuum of activities that occur in part or in whole in the workplace, providing the learner with hands-on, real-world experience. It combines skill development with training opportunities and is a key strategy for developing talent and preparing students for the workforce and evolving labor market.
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	WIOA	A federal law that aims to strengthen and improve the U.S. workforce system. WIOA provides funding for job training and education programs, promotes workforce development, and ensures that job seekers acquire skills necessary for employment. WIOA also supports employers in finding skilled workers and aligns workforce programs with economic development.
Youth Apprenticeship	YA	An apprentice with a valid Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP) agreement submitted by an LEA and their approved employer. AMP Youth Apprentices are not formally Registered Apprenticeships in Maryland. Participants are required to complete at least 450 hours of OJT and 1 credit of approved RI.



Maryland

GWDB CTE COMMITTEE

Governor's Workforce Development Board
Career and Technical Education Committee

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