

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY**  
**INFORMATIONAL REPORT**  
**PRESENTATION ON THE**  
**7<sup>th</sup> GRADE CAREER COMPASS**  
**COURSE**

March 18, 2024

Background:

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future articulates, “Students will benefit from early career guidance and greater opportunities to develop skills and earn certificates that qualify them for well-paying jobs upon certification.”

The Blueprint further asserts local oversight program committees will collaborate with local business and industry representatives to identify workforce opportunities, creating clear pathways to jobs and stronger local economies. Within Career and Technical Education there are 12 career cluster areas of focus: Arts, Media, and Communications, Business Management and Finance, Consumer Services Hospitality and Tourism, Environmental, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Health and Biosciences, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology, Transportation Technologies, Construction and Development, Career Research and Development and Apprenticeship Maryland. Each of these MSDE-recognized career clusters are currently offered in Harford County public high schools.

In analyzing current middle school offerings, it became evident not all career clusters are being represented in the curriculum. Unrepresented areas include Agriculture, Construction, Automotive, Business, Interactive Media, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Education, Fire Rescue, Homeland Security, Medicine, and/or Apprenticeships.

Currently, sixth-grade students participate in at least three Naviance lessons per year, developed and implemented by School Counselors. During these lessons, students develop an academic SMART Goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound), begin exploring careers, and develop organization and time management skills. They expand on these lessons in Grade 7, with at least three additional lessons.

The content for the course comes to fruition as a collaboration with the Director of Middle School Innovation and Secondary Education Services, the School Counseling Student Services, including the Career Coaching Specialist to support The Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation and HCPS Middle School Innovation initiative. In this course, students will encounter each of the MSDE career clusters, explore careers related to each cluster, identify opportunities in high school to develop industry-specific knowledge and skills through HCPS Magnet and Signature Programs, CTE High School Programs of Study, Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment, and apprenticeships. Students will develop a working knowledge of how to conduct personal assessments, set SMART goals, locate, evaluate, and utilize career research tools, develop career plans, and monitor their progress towards academic- and career-related SMART goals.

Discussion:

At their January 30, 2024, meeting, the General Curriculum Committee approved the request from the Office of Career and Technical Education to approve the curriculum for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum for the 2024-2025 school year.

Requested Action:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education approve the Career Exploration Curriculum as a 7<sup>th</sup> grade offering in middle schools for the 2024-2025 school year.