

Harford County Citizens Advisory Council on Career and Technology Education

Summary Report: October 2024 - May 2025

Executive Overview

The Harford County Citizens Advisory Council on Career and Technology Education has maintained strong momentum in advancing career and technical education initiatives throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Key achievements include leading the state in apprenticeship participation with 330 students, expanding the Harford Youth Workforce Investment Programs, and implementing significant facility improvements at Harford Technical High School.

Apprenticeship Program Excellence

Harford County has established itself as the state leader in apprenticeship programs, with 330 students currently participating across 188 companies. The program has exceeded its SMARTIE goal of 20% growth and successfully expanded partnerships with local businesses, government entities, and federal agencies including the NSA and AICPA. Career fairs have consistently drawn over 250 students and 50+ companies, demonstrating strong community engagement and employer support.

The apprenticeship program has evolved to include internal HCPS opportunities in facilities, transportation, food service, and educational support roles. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) students have created comprehensive heatmaps for multiple counties and are sharing their expertise with other districts, showcasing the program's innovation and regional impact.

Workforce Investment and Industry Partnerships

The Harford Youth Workforce Investment (HYWI) program has grown significantly, with 179 students expressing interest in various certification programs including CNA, Dental Assistant, and EMT programs. The partnership with Harford Community College and Susquehanna Workforce Network has enabled expanded course offerings and improved student support services.

Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs) have been a major focus, with new offerings including OSHA 30, Erosion & Sediment Control, and Six Sigma certifications. The CTE department has successfully implemented 1000 credentials earned by students, with additional completions pending final examinations. The Child Development Associate (CDA) program has shown particular success, with 100% pass rates at some schools. The Teacher Academy of Maryland Program had 46/88 students pass for a 95% success rate for the ParaPro Credential.

Program Development

The middle school program has expanded to include Interactive Media, Computer Science, and Engineering, creating earlier pathways for student engagement in technical fields. Project-Based Learning implementation across middle school disciplines represents a significant curriculum advancement, with successful piloting of Python programming for 7th graders and JavaScript for 8th graders.

Academic Integration and Standards Alignment

MSDE's Blueprint 45% goal for 2031 has driven significant policy changes, requiring youth apprenticeships to align with Industry-Recognized Credentials. The CTE department has responded by aligning credentials to fit programming and provide the appropriate related instruction. 7th grade students have had the opportunity to participate in career exploration through a course developed called Career Compass.

The department has successfully integrated academic standards with career readiness, supporting HCPS goals for improved math achievement through contextualized learning in welding, construction, and culinary programs. Professional development has emphasized differentiated instruction and special education support.

Community Involvement and Recognition

The CTE program has received recognition at state and national levels, including proclamations for National Apprenticeship Week from the US Department of Labor. The P-TECH program successfully hosted signing events for incoming students, demonstrating family and community engagement in career pathway planning. The CTE Department hosts Informational Nights for students and families looking to apply to our various magnet programs. Families are introduced to each program, have the ability to ask questions and learn the timeline of events during the process.

Financial Sustainability and Future Planning

The council has successfully secured multiple funding sources, including Perkins grants (\$400,596), Perkins Reserve competitive grants (\$59,967), and ongoing partnerships with Susquehanna Workforce Network. However, long-term funding sustainability remains a priority, particularly for the HYWI program beyond the current MOU period.

The comprehensive needs assessment has identified transportation, funding, space, and qualified instructors as primary barriers to program expansion. The council continues to work with business partners to address these challenges while maintaining program quality and accessibility.

Opportunities

Opportunities for growth and discussions were involved around expanding registered apprenticeship programs, the possibility of developing artificial intelligence and law enforcement pathways, and strengthening partnerships with Aberdeen Proving Ground and other federal facilities. The council continues to evaluate new program possibilities while ensuring alignment with state standards and employer needs.

Conclusion

The Harford County CTE Advisory Council has demonstrated exceptional leadership in career and technical education, achieving state-leading apprenticeship numbers while maintaining focus on student success and employer satisfaction. The combination of strong community partnerships, innovative programming, and strategic facility investments positions the district well for continued growth and excellence in preparing students for high-demand careers.