



Career & Technical Education Expert Review Team

Post-Visit Report
CECIL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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 members that participated in the exploration of this District's CTE programs, as well as central office and school leadership, staff, and students that contributed valuable insights regarding CTE programs in their Local Education Agency (LEA).

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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 develop an integrated, globally competitive framework 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 (ERT) to visit schools offering CTE pathways. 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 *Blueprint's* vision and the CTE Committee's framework and policies. In addition to reviewing progress, the visits are intended to provide support and identify technical assistance needs as LEAs build their CTE systems.

This CTE ERT visited Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS), located in Northeastern Maryland, on January 15, 2025. This was the fifth CTE ERT visit conducted by the CTE Committee during the 2024-2025 School Year (SY). CCPS offers CTE programs at five comprehensive high schools, as well as the LEA's CTE technical center, Cecil County School of Technology (CCST). The CTE ERT visited Elkton High School (EHS) and CCST in Elkton, Maryland.

One CTE Committee member and employer representative, two CTE Committee staff members, the Susquehanna Workforce Network Executive Director (local workforce development board), three CTE Directors from a neighboring LEA, one school principal from a neighboring LEA, one career counselor and CTE teacher from a neighboring LEA, the CTE Director from Delaware, one apprenticeship sponsor, and one MSDE staff member participated in the CTE ERT visit for Cecil. This report summarizes observations and initial recommendations that the CTE ERT developed by reviewing the LEA's self-reported data with district leaders and by conducting interviews, focus groups, school tours, and classroom visits during the CTE ERT visit.

CCPS's progress toward the *Blueprint's* goal that by the 2030-2031 SY, 45% of high school graduates shall complete the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship or another industry-recognized credential (45% goal) is at 12.5%, according to the IRC guidelines for the 2024-2025 SY.¹ Moreover, the CTE ERT noted that CCPS counted completing a Youth Apprenticeship toward the 45% goal, which per the GWDB CTE Committee's Apprenticeship policy only counts when the youth apprentice earns an IRC, but the CTE ERT learned all CCPS youth apprentices have related IRCs.²

Below is a summary of the observations and findings from this visit:

¹ Cecil County Public Schools measured IRC attainment using the MSDE IRC guidelines, not the updated [CTE IRC Policy](#), published in December 2024.

² GWDB CTE Committee. (2024). "Apprenticeships and Industry-Recognized Credentials for High School Students Under the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*." *Governor's Workforce Development Board, Career and Technical Education*. <https://www.gwdb.maryland.gov/policy/gwdb2024blueprintgoalpolicyoverview.pdf>

CCPS Internal Strengths

- Teacher, Career Coach, and Administrator Focus Towards *Blueprint* Goals
- Applied Trades Academy (ATA) for Students at Risk of Not Graduating on Time
- Hands-on Learning Has Led to Student Engagement and Word-of-Mouth Marketing
- Unique Problem-Solving to Address Scheduling and Waitlists
- Student Transition and Employability Program for Students With Disabilities

CCPS Internal Challenges

- Professional Development Does Not Address Student/Teacher Needs
- Students at CTE Center are More Engaged than Comprehensive HS Students
- Opportunity for Engagement with High School Level Registered Apprenticeships
- Scheduling and Transportation Hurdles Have Led to Lower WBL Engagement
- Expectations Surrounding Career Coaching Work

CCPS External Factors

- Strength: Connection to the Community
- Challenge: Employers Misunderstanding Students' Skill and Maturity Level
- Challenge: *Blueprint* Does Not Account for Rural Needs

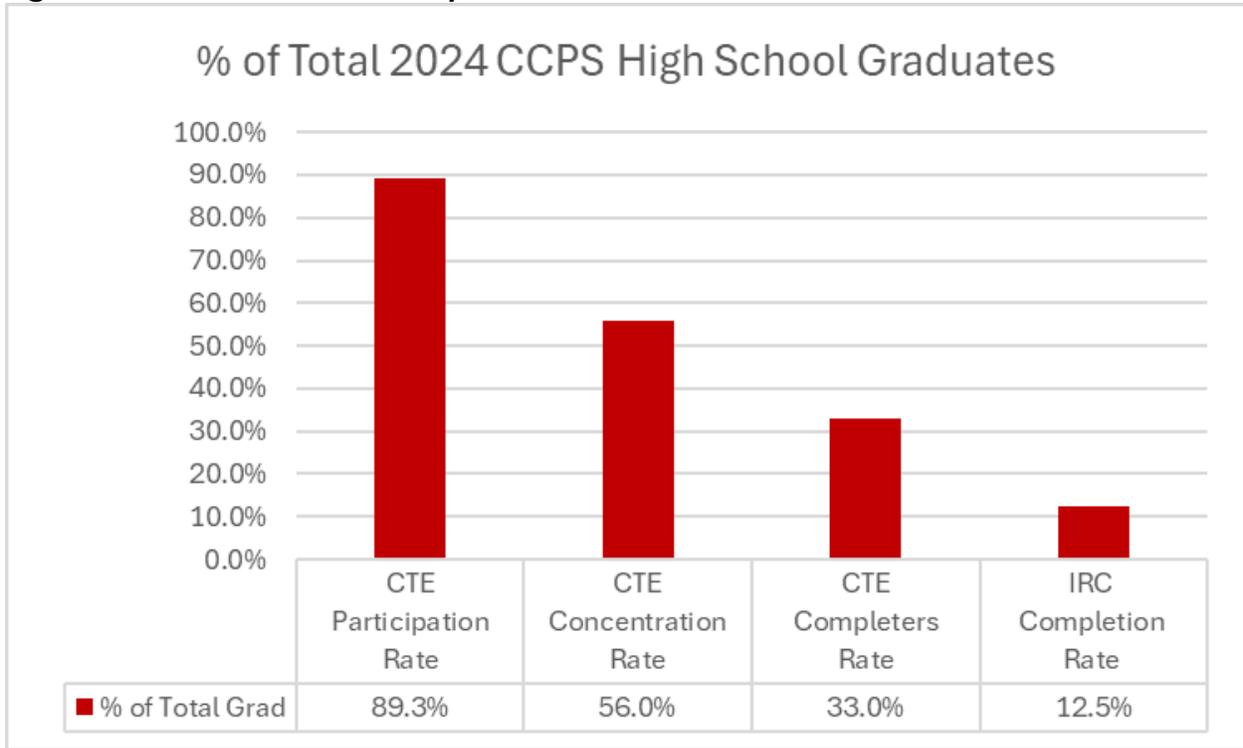
CCPS Potential Next Steps

- Include Teacher and Career Coach Perspectives on Professional Development
- Implement District-Wide Marketing Campaign for Comprehensive High Schools to Both Increase Enrollment and Overcome Employer Bias Toward Employing Apprentices Under 18
- Experiment With Set Schedules Instead of Block Schedules
- Establish Consistent Meetings With Susquehanna Workforce Network Representatives
- Explore Technical Assistance with MSDE, the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), and the CTE Committee in meeting the *Blueprint's* 45% Goal.

The CTE Committee staff, along with the CTE ERT, have collaborated on this report to provide observations and preliminary points of analysis to readers. In this document, readers will find the purpose of the CTE ERT, a brief explanation of CCPS, a summary of the CTE ERT visit, Strengths, Challenges, and External (SCE) analysis, and Potential Next Steps for the LEA to consider.

Please feel free to reach out to the CTE Committee or CTE Committee staff to answer any questions, comments, or concerns at GWDB.CTE@maryland.gov.

Figure 1: CCPS CTE and IRC completion rates.



Purpose of the CTE ERT

The *Blueprint for Maryland's Future* (“the *Blueprint*”), Md. Ann. Code, Ed. Art. §21-209, established the Career and Technical (CTE) Committee as a unit within the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB). The GWDB serves as the Governor’s chief strategic and policy-making body for workforce development in the State of Maryland.³ The purpose of the CTE Committee is to build an integrated, globally competitive framework for providing CTE to Maryland students in public schools, institutions of postsecondary education, 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 ERTs to visit schools with CTE pathways.⁴ The goals of these visits are to: 1) review alignment of district programs and practices with *Blueprint* vision and policies, 2) assure an LEA’s CTE programs and practices are consistent with the Maryland CTE Framework and policies on the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) and Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs), and 3) support technical assistance needs for LEAs as they create new systems, programs and practices in order to support *Blueprint* goals and expand career-connected learning, especially registered apprenticeship and other IRC attainment, for their students. Ultimately, the CTE ERTs report back to the CTE Committee on district progress toward *Blueprint* goals, common challenges, and opportunities for policy change, technical assistance, or other support to meet those goals. The CTE Committee staff will publish a summary of findings from CTE ERT visits every December within the CTE Committee’s annual report.⁵

The CTE ERT Program has three phases that transition from Phase 1: Discovery, to Phase 2: Analyze and Assist, and Phase 3: Evaluate. The primary goal in Phase 1 is to visit all 24 LEAs and build a baseline set of observations to understand the state of CTE in Maryland, along with common challenges LEAs face in creating a robust CTE system. The common challenges will inform what technical assistance sessions will be in Phase 2, which will focus on alignment, systemic data collection, and assistance. Phase 2 is set to begin in the 2026-2027 SY, so the specifics for Phase 2 will be planned in Spring 2026. Phase 3 will begin in the 2028-2029 SY and will focus on evaluating progress toward *Blueprint* goals, but will be more specifically planned during Phase 2.

The CTE Expert Review Team visit to CCPS consisted of members from various backgrounds and brought expertise in areas such as student learning, workforce development, and CTE, ensuring a comprehensive review of the LEA’s CTE programs (see Appendix A).

³ Executive Order No. 01.01.2023.22. (2023). <https://tinyurl.com/execorder01012023>

⁴ Md. Ann. Code, Ed. Art. §5-412 <https://tinyurl.com/5cb36cvy>

⁵ Md. Ann. Code, Ed. Art. §21-209, <https://bit.ly/3W0JJoeU>

About Cecil County Public School System

Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS), located in Northeastern Maryland, enrolls 4,772 high school students, and has an 89% participation rate in CTE for graduating students. The LEA offers 25 CTE programs covering a wide range of areas of specialization, from Automotive Technology to the Teacher Academy of Maryland. CCPS is in alignment with the Susquehanna Local Workforce Plan's focus on building key sectors like logistics, healthcare, IT, construction, and manufacturing. CTE programs in Biomed, Nursing, Computer Science, Carpentry, Electrical Trades, Masonry, Plumbing, Automotive Tech, and Welding are all at maximum enrollment. This demonstrates CCPS's focus on developing a robust workforce targeting key sectors identified in the Susquehanna Workforce Network's Four-Year Local Plan 2024-2028.⁶ One unique aspect about CCPS's program design is that the Engineering Program and Biomedical Sciences offer intro-level courses at the comprehensive high schools, which are public high schools that offer a traditional academic curriculum and a variety of CTE Programs, then offers the final two courses in the program at CCST. This enables CCPS to run one full classroom located at CCST instead of five smaller classes. Students enrolled in CTE programs have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials, and 12.5% of graduating students complete an IRC; however, this rate comes from the previously approved MSDE IRC list as the updated list approved by the CTE Committee does not go into effect until the 2025-2026 SY. Moreover, the CTE ERT learned CCPS includes Youth Apprenticeships in their progress toward the 45% goal, which only counts toward the goal if the Youth Apprenticeship includes an IRC. During the visit, the CTE ERT learned all CCPS youth apprentices have related IRCs. The CTE IRC Policy published in December 2024 may impact CCPS' attainment rate for 2025 and beyond.⁷ CCPS has 89.3% of graduating students participate in CTE, and 33% of graduating students complete their CTE program.

CCPS has CTE offerings at all five comprehensive high schools and at the CTE Center, Cecil County School of Technology (CCST). The CTE ERT visited Elkton High School (EHS) and the CCST, both of which are located in Elkton, Maryland. Students at the comprehensive high schools enroll in Project Lead the Way courses like Engineering and Biomedical Sciences based on available seats and school counselor guidance; however, most CTE programs are only offered at CCST. CCST has both an application process and a lottery, where students must apply to be placed in the lottery.

The CTE ERT observed a clear difference in students' attitudes toward CTE programming between Elkton High School, one of CCPS's comprehensive high schools, and Cecil County School of Technology (CCST), CCPS's sole CTE Center. At CCST, there was complete buy-in on the value of CTE, where students developed a CTE identity and sense of pride in their skills and accomplishments within CTE. At Elkton High School, the general sentiment was that CTE programs were of value, but that those truly interested in CTE should attend CCST. The

⁶Susquehanna Workforce Network. (2024). *Susquehanna Local Workforce Plan 2024-2028*.

⁷GWDB CTE Committee. (December 2024). *Career and Technical Education: Industry-Recognized Credentials*. <https://www.gwdb.maryland.gov/policy/gwdbcte2024commindustrycredentialpolicy.pdf>

CTE ERT Program has noticed a similar trend across school districts in its first year of visits - that the culture of pride and value in CTE was strong at CTE Centers, but not at comprehensive high schools. The difference in culture and belonging between comprehensive high schools and CTE Centers will be further investigated in Phase 2 of the CTE ERT Program.

Summary of Visit

Prior to the visit, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Expert Review Team (ERT) members attended a virtual orientation to review the visit agenda, materials, and tools. During this session, Cecil County Public Schools' (CCPS's) CTE Lead Staff provided an overview of the Local Education Agency's (LEA's) CTE system, highlighting key strengths and challenges. The LEA Lead CTE Designee presented CCPS's CTE Strategic Plan, data on the Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP), and CTE Programming updates. This pre-visit orientation helped the CTE ERT understand the specific context and priorities of CCPS's CTE programs, setting the stage for focused observations and discussions during the visit.

During the visit, the CTE ERT visited Elkton High School (EHS), one of CCPS's comprehensive high schools with CTE offerings, and Cecil County School of Technology (CCST), CCPS's sole CTE Center. The team visited EHS in the morning, which included 4 CTE Programs, and CCST in the afternoon, which included 20 CTE Programs, conducting classroom visits to observe programs in action and holding focus group conversations with students, teachers, administrators, and school and career counselors.

At each site, the team engaged in discussions with stakeholders to gain insights into the strengths and challenges of the CTE programs. These conversations revealed valuable information about how CTE supports students' postsecondary pathways and career goals, as well as areas where the LEA could enhance program access and resources.

The CTE Expert Review Team visit to CCPS consisted of members from various backgrounds, and brought expertise in areas such as student learning, workforce development, and CTE, ensuring a comprehensive review of the LEA's CTE programs (see Appendix A). Throughout the day, the team engaged in observations, interviews, and focus groups with stakeholders to gain insights into the strengths and challenges of the CTE programs. The CTE Committee staff created a set of questions for each focus group: leadership, teachers, students, career counselors/coaches, and school counselors (See Appendix D). These questions aimed to uncover the experience these stakeholders have in CTE by asking questions about professional development opportunities, their opinions on their experience in CTE classes, their perspective on hurdles, etc. (see Appendix D).

After the visit, the CTE ERT compiled their individual notes and shared it with CTE Committee staff. A week after the visit, the CTE ERT gathered together for a debrief, where the team members collaborated, reviewed, and discussed their compiled observations. Together, these

data, observations, focus groups, interviews, and debrief help inform the following SCE analysis and Potential Next Steps.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EXPERT REVIEW TEAM VISIT

About the SCE Analysis

A SCE Analysis is meant to organize the CTE ERT's observations and notes into internal factors - Strengths and Challenges - and External factors. This method of analysis is based on the SWOT analysis method, which also differentiates between internal and external factors. This SCE analysis will help readers differentiate among internal Strengths, internal Challenges, and External factors, which are conventionally Opportunities and Threats. The CTE ERT did not have the opportunity to observe and coordinate with external stakeholders, but external factors came up in interviews, focus groups, debrief, and orientation that must be documented. With a SCE Analysis, readers may use this section to target changes and best practices internally.

INDICATORS OF STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Strength: Teacher, Career Coach, and Administrator Focus Toward Blueprint Goals

Focus groups revealed that CCPS has a great deal of buy-in developing toward *Blueprint* goals. At the time of the visit, CCPS's administrators are confident they can achieve *Blueprint* goals of having 45% of graduates earn an industry-recognized credential (IRC) and/or complete a high school level Registered Apprenticeship (RA) by 2030-2031. The CCPS administrators the CTE ERT spoke to predicted they would achieve a 38% IRC/RA achievement rate by the 2029-2030 SY. The CTE ERT learned CCPS has a full-day, system-wide Career Connected Professional Development activity that includes teachers, special education teachers, and career coaches. The day is full of activities, but a key component is to tour the four local businesses actively hiring students and inform all staff of *Blueprint* goals in CTE. During focus groups, teachers at CCST demonstrated how well-versed they were in all CTE programs and were available to offer brainstorming sessions on career paths for students. Career coaches and school counselors have a shared spreadsheet across schools to track college application deadlines, job applications, job fairs, etc. so everyone has the most up-to-date information. These examples illustrate how CCPS is focused on achieving *Blueprint* goals.

While at Elkton High School, the CTE ERT noted teachers', administration's, and career coaches' passion for CTE programs and their knowledge of the *Blueprint's* priorities and goals, especially making connections with local businesses. For instance, Elkton High School switched from ProStart to the Hospitality and Tourism Program to more closely align with earning an IRC and the Great Wolf Lodge, which is one of Cecil County's top employers for those 18 and under. Meanwhile, every student in the focus group at CCST had either already earned an IRC or was on the path to earn an IRC. Despite this connection, teachers and students in focus groups both said they need help building a stronger connection with local businesses. Ultimately, the comprehensive focus toward *Blueprint* goals is a strength amongst CCPS.

Strength: Applied Trades Academy (ATA) for Students at Risk of Not Graduating on Time

The Applied Trades Academy (ATA) in CCST is a program to help students explore the benefits and careers of working in trades. Students and their families are invited to tour CCST

and students are interviewed. Students must apply to enter into this program after earning a recommendation from their 8th grade administrator or school counselor. CCST staff evaluate student applications and choose which students attend CCST in the ATA. CCST staff shared with the CTE ERT that they target students at-risk of not graduating on time to enroll in ATA. In total, the ATA admits 40 students to CCST every year. In the ATA, students explore entry-level trade skills at CCST in occupations like welding, masonry, carpentry, residential electrical, and basic auto maintenance, shadow programs of interest, and enroll in English and Mathematics content instruction. Students also develop employability skills including the employment application process, as well as successful work habits.

Teacher focus groups at CCST and meetings with the LEA's Lead CTE Designee revealed that the ATA has been successful in getting students at-risk of not graduating on time to graduate with their peers. These stakeholders told the CTE ERT that students from the ATA tie their curiosities and creativity to professional needs, making for more engaged students. Since students complete the ATA in 9th grade and then apply for CTE programs for 11th grade, teachers reported that these students are already invested in their CTE program because of the prior exposure. Teachers in focus groups also told the CTE ERT that they have been trained to work with multilingual students, which has helped teach some of the students in the ATA. Whether it leads to students coming back to CCST to complete their CTE program, more engaged students, more successful students, or more success for special populations, the ATA has proven to be a strength in CCPS.

Strength: Hands-on Learning Has Led to Student Engagement and Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Both teachers and students remarked in focus groups on how hands-on learning experiences with clear connections to the workplace has led to more engaged students. Teachers commented on how active their Program Advisory Committee (PAC) is at engaging CTE teachers so they understand employer expectations and communicate those expectations to students so all are aligned. This engagement with the PAC has led to unique learning experiences for students to, as one student remarked in a focus group, “[CTE] help[ed] me learn skills that’ll help for the future, but also the science behind it.” One student at CCST made a connection between what they learned in the classroom, the IRC they were targeting, and the career pathway they were developing toward. Another student in the focus group added, “CCST gives us an opportunity to learn more about what we do or don’t want to do in life or college. I’m more clear on what I want to do because of the experiences I have at CCST.” The hands-on learning that happens at CCST has led to students who can make a distinct connection between what they learn and how it applies to their chosen career path.

Students and teachers at CCST also spoke about the effectiveness of word-of-mouth marketing for students to take back to their home schools. Students talk about their hands-on learning experiences to friends who are not enrolled in CTE offerings. One student specifically told the CTE ERT they joined CCST because their friends and relatives talked about the skills they developed. Students agreed and said CCST gave them the confidence to talk about the things they are passionate about with their friends: “CCST made me more outgoing - more open to asking questions. We got in [to CCST] for a reason, so I’m more motivated to do this work - it’s a priority.” Additionally, CCST requires all students to wear a

uniform for their CTE program even if the occupation has no typical uniform (e.g. the homeland security students wear a polo and pants). It is possible this lends itself to students having a sense of belonging with their fellow classmates; however, the students did not remark on this specifically in the focus group. While the CTE ERT will need to further investigate the connection between word-of-mouth marketing and this hands-on learning, CCST focus groups revealed how hands-on learning benefits both the students and the program.

Strength: Unique Problem-Solving to Address Scheduling and Waitlists

The LEA's lead CTE staff led the pre-visit orientation and told the CTE ERT about two unique solutions to scheduling problems they have developed that may be worth sharing with the State as a best practice: 1) Flexible Learning Experience (FLEX) scheduling for students involved in WBL and 2) scheduling overenrolled CTE programs' introductory classes at comprehensive high schools and finishing the final two courses at the CCST. CCPS has implemented FLEX scheduling, which allows students flexible scheduling options like online course options or half-day schedules, for all students within CTE pathways. The purpose of this scheduling tactic is to enable students to take advantage of gaining meaningful employment and relevant work opportunities through Youth and Registered Apprenticeships.

The LEA's lead CTE staff also told the CTE ERT two of their most-enrolled programs - Project Lead the Way Pre-Engineering and Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences - is a great example for other LEAs to follow to overcome waitlists. The CTE ERT observed CCPS was able to eliminate any waitlists for either program by offering introductory courses at the comprehensive high schools and then students attend CCST to finish the final two courses in the program. The intention behind this is to have one full classroom at CCST instead of several classes with only a few students. These two programs are also the two programs the CTE staff noticed that had a large dropoff between participants and completers, so this move allows flexibility for students who try this pathway and think it is not a good fit for them to explore a different path. FLEX scheduling and offering introductory courses are two strengths at CCPS that the CTE ERT observed.

Strength: Student Transition and Employability Program for Students With Disabilities

CCPS's self-reported data lists 14% of students in the LEA are students with disabilities, but the LEA Lead CTE Designee told the CTE ERT 15% of CCST students were categorized as Special Education (SPED) students. Because of this need, the Student Transition and Employability Program (STEP) was developed in 2013 to provide modified instruction to students with disabilities while aligning with competencies within the Maryland Career Development Framework. These competencies include self awareness, career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, job seeking and advancement, and career satisfaction, all while in school-based work environments: screen printing, embroidery, and engraving. Teachers in the focus group at CCST talked about how this program has helped students with disabilities find employment after graduation. One teacher spoke highly of the STEP, saying, "students who may have struggled in 10 years of school find their passion here [at CCST]." The CTE ERT observed the STEP as a strength in CCPS's ability to provide pathways to success for students with disabilities.

Challenge: Professional Development Does Not Address Student/Teacher Needs

The LEA's self-reported data lists 14% of students are students with disabilities and the LEA Lead CTE Designee told the CTE ERT 15% of CCST students were categorized as Special Education (SPED) students. The STEP has assisted many of these students prepare for employment after graduation; however, CCST has one Special Education teacher who supports all 20 programs. CCST has 15% of students categorized as SPED students, but without effective support systems, teachers will struggle and students may fall through the equity and access gaps. With such a large proportion of students with disabilities, the teachers at both EHS and CCST identified that the lack of Professional Development in this area was a challenge as they would like to learn how to more effectively engage and assist students with disabilities .

At EHS and CCST, teachers were quick to acknowledge how helpful it has been to have Professional Development in teaching multilingual learners because this is a fast-growing population at CCPS. CCPS administrators send Professional Development Preference Surveys to CTE teachers covering special education pedagogy, technical literacy, CTE teaching best practices, and career connected learning in the Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP). Teachers at CCST acknowledged doing two or three sessions on instruction for multilingual learners and one session on Artificial Intelligence has been helpful, but multilingual learners still represent less than 5% of the total CCPS student population. Meanwhile, teachers at EHS and CCST reportedly did not have Professional Development in teaching students with disabilities. One teacher acknowledged there is a “disconnect of what type of Professional Development needs [at CCST] and that we could use something targeted to teaching special education students for every teacher.”

Finally, the CTE ERT found opportunities for improvement in engaging with high school level Registered Apprenticeships and IRCs through Professional Development. Teachers at EHS and CCST talked about how they recognized the importance of meeting the *Blueprint's* 45% goal, but faced difficulties turning community and employer connections into WBL opportunities. Teachers at CCST acknowledged that there were a significant number of instructors who never saw the certification assessment for the CTE program in which they are teaching, so they did not really know how to prepare students to take those assessments. The CTE ERT observed that CCPS teachers recognized the problems that needed to be addressed, but that their Professional Development did not address those needs.

Challenge: Students at CTE Center are More Engaged than Comprehensive High School Students

The CTE ERT observed how the CTE Center had a much stronger reputation, wherein those who were serious about CTE go to CCST. While Elkton High School has a great reputation for its CTE offerings, students appeared more engaged and received more attention at CCST. Students attending CTE programs at CCST were not aware of the CTE offerings at their comprehensive high school and 100% of students in the EHS focus groups selected their pathway because of a family member, not because of school guidance. Moreover, apprenticeships and WBL opportunities were significantly more popular at CCST. Teachers at both schools acknowledged an important factor for this is the difference in enrollment practices: CCST enrollment process combines a merit-based application and a lottery, while comprehensive schools enroll based on students' interests and school counselor guidance.

Teachers noted the merit-based application component of enrollment has created a sense of superiority amongst CCST students and identity. Students corroborated this perspective as one student in a focus group said, “I got in [CCST] for a reason, so I’m more motivated to do the work.” Another student added, “I feel like I’m ahead of my peers who don’t know what they want to do after school.” Other students in the focus group agreed, claiming they wish they could spend more time at CCST without having to go back to their home school. Students at EHS had passion and focus for CTE offerings, but they did not share the same sense of identity and connection compared to CCST students.

Teachers at both schools acknowledged how CCST’s enrollment strategy combining merit-based applications with lottery has created a challenge for some students. CCST teachers in focus groups talked about how “heart-wrenching” it is to witness the lottery process where students leave crying because they did not earn a spot at CCST despite having a strong application. Teachers at CCST connected this sense of superiority with the randomness of the lottery, where some students seem to think admittance means they earned enrollment solely-based on merit, but the reality is that many students who scored higher in the application may have not enrolled at CCST because they were not chosen in the lottery. Some CCST teachers recalled when CCST had a full merit-based application and how this led to a strong CTE identity.

Challenge: Opportunity for Engagement with High School Level of a Registered Apprenticeships

The CTE ERT found CCPS administrators counted Youth Apprenticeships toward *Blueprint* goals, which do not count toward the 45% goal unless they have an IRC attached. CCPS has a unique opportunity to collaborate with the Maryland Department of Labor’s Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) to develop a system to more effectively engage with high school level Registered Apprenticeships. Both the administrator and teacher focus groups acknowledged CCPS had a slow start with Youth Apprenticeships, but are now deeply and systematically engaged with the *Blueprint* and achieving the 45% goal. As of the visit in January 2025, CCPS administrators predict 38% of graduates in the 2029-2030 SY will either have earned an IRC or completed a high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship, which puts them close to being on track for the 45% goal by the 2030-2031 SY. One CCPS administrator acknowledged they “may need to think of creative ways for non-CTE students to obtain IRCs and have access to apprenticeship opportunities to hit the *Blueprint’s* 45%.” For now, CCPS reported they have zero students who have participated in or completed a high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship.

Another important caveat to this factor is that CCPS administrators talked about how the gold standard of Registered Apprenticeships had great intentions, but was not a realistic goal. Focus group participants claimed the apprenticeship system in Maryland needs major overhaul in order to achieve this goal, especially in accounting for the needs of more rural LEAs. Ultimately, these beliefs may lead students away from experiences that would build their college and career readiness skills. That said, CCPS predicts making a lot of headway in meeting the 45% goal and is in a unique opportunity to collaborate and build a system of supports.

Challenge: Scheduling and Transportation Hurdles Have Led to Lower WBL Engagement

Teacher focus groups at EHS and CCST spent a significant amount of time talking about how scheduling and transportation hurdles have led to students rejecting admission into CCST, rejecting internship and apprenticeship opportunities, and missing valuable class time. Teachers at EHS specifically talked about how the lack of transportation options have kept students from applying to CCST or to internship and apprenticeship opportunities. Teachers at CCST noted that while they may have connections to businesses in the surrounding community, if a student's home school is 45 minutes away, the student may not be interested in WBL because of the distance. In addition to the transportation issues associated with serving such a large geographical district, one important concern the teachers brought up was how the school buses for CCST were dependent on the elementary school schedule, so if there was a delay dropping off elementary school students, that would compound into transportation issues getting students to CCST.

Career coaches expanded on how parents shared concerns about students missing or interrupting class time for WBL opportunities, which has led to students opting out of these opportunities. While this may be more of an external factor, perhaps career coaches can continue to improve communicating CTE's benefits to parents, especially communicating WBL benefits to parents. The career coaches' focus group also went into detail about the challenge of CCPS's block scheduling where every day alternates between A and B days. For students interested in advanced coursework (e.g., AP and Dual Enrollment) and CTE offerings, they may have to choose one or the other because of these alternating schedules and lack of multiple course offerings. These scheduling hurdles also impact collaboration with external stakeholders like possible apprenticeship sponsors because they must also adapt to a different schedule every week with alternating A/B days.

Challenge: Expectations Surrounding Career Coaching Work

CCPS has a robust team of career coaches that faced confusion about their role, authority, and responsibilities when they first started their work, but the team of career coaches have worked diligently to overcome these hurdles. One important hurdle career coaches have faced is a combination of miscommunications and misunderstandings among career coaches, LEA officials, and the Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN), which is Cecil County's local workforce development board. In Cecil County, career coaches are SWN employees and are not supervised by CCPS administrators. In focus groups, career coaches referenced inconsistent and inaccurate communications from the SWN about what career coaches' roles and responsibilities were. For instance, the SWN reportedly told career coaches they were expected to conduct door-to-door canvassing for information on apprenticeships from employers, parents, and other stakeholders. The career coaches also revealed they faced confusion in understanding what authority they had and where that authority came from. One career coach stated they did not understand whether they worked for the LEA, the SWN, both, or neither. Teachers within the focus groups had a mixed understanding of the career coaches' role, with some noting specific instances they had tapped into the career coaches expertise, while others professing not being clear on how to utilize the career coaches or how they engaged with students. Further complicating these challenges is the high turnover rate among career coaches, with five out of eight career

coaches starting in the past year-and-a-half. This high turnover rate disrupts relationship building and impacts consistent service delivery.

The team of career coaches and the SWN have made great improvements overcoming communication gaps that led to confusion. In the pre-visit orientation, the LEA Lad CTE Designee told the CTE ERT about how the SWN has implemented a new system to streamline communication. CCPS also expanded the team of WBL professionals to create more systemic and regular collaboration pathways amongst the WBL professionals at CCPS and the career coach team. The career coaches told the CTE ERT during focus groups about how the new hire on the CCPS staff has helped create a system where every 10th grader has a four-year plan. In addition to this result, career coaches told the CTE ERT about how they have streamlined communication by creating a common spreadsheet for everyone to be on the same page regarding job applications and due dates, college application deadlines, CTE Programs of Study and their connected IRCs, and other information that may be pertinent to the career coaching team. While CCPS career coaches faced challenges of communication gaps and inaccurate expectations for their work, they have worked diligently to overcome these hurdles by expanding their team, creating a common spreadsheet to keep everyone aligned on workflow, and collaborating with LEA officials, the SWN, and employers.

INDICATORS OF EXTERNAL FACTORS AND INFLUENCES

A SCE Analysis is meant to organize the CTE ERT's observations and notes into internal factors - Strengths and Challenges - and External factors. This method of analysis is based on the SWOT analysis method, which also differentiates between internal and external factors. With a SCE Analysis, readers may use this section to advocate for change with external partners.

External Strength: Connection with the Community

The CTE ERT observed how CCPS has a deep connection with the Cecil County and Elkton communities through alumni relations, employer connections, state agency collaboration, and career coaches' work. In the teacher focus groups, both EHS and CCST teachers talked about the large alumni network they have built, but much of it is informal. CCPS does not have a formal process for keeping track of graduates and the kind of work they do, but during the tour of Elkton High School, the CTE ERT saw their "Wall of Fame", where EHS students get to see where alumni went and see real people who went to the same school had success. This "Wall of Fame" started in 2019 and EHS teachers spoke about the impact it has on students: "successful alumni have a positive role and experience locally or nationally." Teachers at CCST offered more specifics: "my old students now own salons and offer career exploration opportunities." Teachers and career counselors also spoke about their industry connections in the community with great detail during focus groups. At EHS, teachers talked about connecting Cecil College with EHS students to offer students an alternative pathway to obtain the same certifications as CCST if they did not enroll for whatever reason. Finally, career coaches have taken great initiative to collaborate with the community with the help of Apprenticeship Navigators from the Maryland Department of Labor who provide connections with apprenticeship sponsors.

These strong community connections have yielded some positive results. The teacher focus group at CCST raved about the 14th Annual CCST Job Fair in April 2024, which included a record-high 120 employers. The EHS teacher focus group revealed how they are aligning

curriculum to more closely align with Cecil County's biggest employer of those under 18 years old: the Great Wolf Lodge in Perryville. CCPS has done this by transitioning the ProStart Program to the Hospitality and Tourism Program. The Great Wolf Lodge in Perryville also has a Hospitality Program, which CCPS has used as a model for their Hospitality and Tourism Program. CCPS has a Summer Lineman Program with Utilitrain where 12 students completed Youth Apprenticeships and developed useful skills and industry connections to work in the trades. Finally, the LEA lead CTE staff explained during the pre-visit orientation that their Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP) youth apprenticeship has exponentially increased enrollment, especially in the Teacher Academy of Maryland. As of the January 2025 visit, in the 2024-2025 SY, 26 CCPS students have completed Youth Apprenticeships.

External Challenge: Employers Misunderstanding Students' Skill and Maturity Level

In focus groups, career coaches revealed that one of the biggest challenges they are facing is employers' negative perception of the work ethic, skill, and maturity of people under 18 years of age. Career coaches told the CTE ERT about how difficult it is to find new apprenticeship sponsors when many employers have a bias toward employing people under 18. Students in focus groups also revealed a bit of their frustration finding apprenticeships that worked for them and their needs. Of all the students in the focus groups, only one of them was actively employed and this student found that employment on their own outside of their CTE Program. Establishing and expanding the high school level of Registered Apprenticeships is a difficult task, but it is even more difficult when employers in Cecil County are under the belief that potential employees under 18 years of age do not have the skills, work ethic, and maturity to do the job.

Career coaches have taken up the task of informing potential Registered Apprenticeship sponsors about the benefits of employing CCPS students as apprentices. In their focus group, career coaches talked about working more closely with the Apprenticeship Navigator for Cecil County to help potential employers overcome this bias toward those under 18. Additionally, teachers at both EHS and CCST talked about how they are strategizing with career coaches to overcome this bias. Teachers at EHS talked about how when employers see the kind of work CTE students do, then they have more confidence in their abilities as an apprentice. Meanwhile, the teachers at CCST talked about leveraging their alumni connections to help suppress this bias. Teachers at CCST also talked about how important it is to highlight CTE students' projects during their career fair so when employers are actively recruiting, they can also witness the kind of work CTE students are capable of completing.

External Challenge: Blueprint Does Not Account for Rural Needs

There was a sentiment in all of the focus groups - career coaches, teachers, administrators, and students - about how the *Blueprint* and its impact, goals, policies, and procedures do not account for the needs of rural communities, especially in Cecil County. Both teachers and administrators indicated that the gold standard of the high school level of Registered Apprenticeships is not a feasible goal without significant overhaul of many stakeholder systems. According to CCPS's self-reported data, no students completed a high school level Registered Apprenticeship in the 2023-2024 SY. Further complicating this self-reported data, the CTE ERT was confused whether CCPS's self-reported data on their progress toward the 45% goal included those who completed Youth Apprenticeships, which, according to the policy, does not count toward the 45% goal unless students earn an IRC.

Focus groups revealed the specifics to the disconnect between the *Blueprint* and the needs of rural communities: a student needs special and specific transportation needs to get licensed or certified, then needs completely different and specific transportation needs once they start apprenticeships and internships. For instance, a rural student who may attend Bohemia Manor High School in CCPS may have one set of transportation challenges to get to their home school, a completely different set of challenges to get transportation to CCST, then a completely different set of transportation challenges to get to an apprenticeship's workspace. Ultimately, CCPS stakeholders noted that the *Blueprint* does not account for the nuances in rural communities like Cecil County.

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. While the following Potential Next Steps are preliminary, they are areas CCPS may look for improvement in and something the CTE ERT will look at more closely as the CTE Committee transitions into Phase 2 in the 2026-2027 SY. In other words, these potential next steps are not a directive, but opportunities of improvement to explore. These Potential Next Steps are meant to be the beginning of a conversation with CCPS that will continue into Phase 2, and for this reason, these Potential Next Steps do not comprehensively address the challenges the CTE ERT notes in this report. In Phase 2, the CTE ERT will target specific areas to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the state of CTE in CCPS.⁸ While Phase 2 is focused on analysis and assistance, it is also when the CTE ERT Program can make recommendations to the AIB to withhold funding if there is resistance complying with the *Blueprint*.⁹

Include Teacher and Career Coach Perspectives on Professional Development

The CTE ERT observed that the professional development teachers received was not addressing all student or teacher needs. For this reason, the CTE ERT believes including perspectives from the teachers and career coaches through questionnaires or regular meetings with those who work most closely with students on what professional development they would find beneficial would be a useful next step. When 14% of students at CCPS are students with disabilities and less than 5% are multilingual students, yet teachers have undergone three Professional Development seminars on teaching multilingual students and no professional development on teaching students with disabilities, then there is a disconnect between Professional Development and student and teacher needs. In order to bridge this gap, the CTE ERT recommends CCPS explore including teacher and career coach perspectives in decision-making for what Professional Development they undergo. CCPS has scheduled annual listening sessions with teachers both in groups and individually. out a Professional Development Preference Survey

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

⁹ AIB's Updated Comprehensive Implementation Plan, August 2023, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PsYQGhld5Qwk7Pgk2cEubr68SSKrG5dH/view?usp=sharing>.

Implement District-Wide Marketing Campaign for Comprehensive High Schools to Both Increase Enrollment and Overcome Employer Bias Toward Employing Apprentices Under 18

In addition to including different perspectives for professional development, the CTE ERT recommends implementing some sort of district-wide marketing campaign to bolster both the enrollment and reputation of CTE offerings at CCPS's comprehensive high schools. Specifically, the CTE ERT recommends CCPS comprehensive high schools hold some kind of event like a combined job fair and skill showcase to highlight students' projects, completed apprenticeships, etc., to both potential apprenticeship sponsors and students who are not enrolled in CTE offerings. CCST hosts a job fair in April, but leveraging a similar event at the comprehensive high schools could be an opportunity to highlight the projects and work CCPS students complete in their CTE programs. This would both operate as a marketing campaign to showcase CTE offerings at home schools to recruit more students and it will quell employer biases toward employing apprentices under 18 years old because it proves their skill, maturity, and work ethic, all of which are hurdles in finding more apprenticeship opportunities. In a follow-up meeting with LEA representatives, the CTE ERT learned CCPS has taken action toward increasing marketing efforts. CCPS published two professional commercials on youth apprenticeships: the [first](#) is to incentivize students to enroll into the Apprenticeship Maryland Program (AMP) and the [second](#) is to incentivize businesses to sponsor youth apprentices. CCPS has also hired a Career Liaison and Counselor with a plan to continue to expand staffing to attain *Blueprint* goals.

Experiment With Set Schedules Instead of Block Schedules

One of the challenges for CCPS was a result of the alternating block schedule. Currently at CCPS, days alternate between A and B block schedules, meaning no two weeks are the same. During focus groups, the CTE ERT learned this alternating block schedule has created scheduling challenges with both internal and external collaborators, especially with potential apprenticeship sponsors; however, the CTE ERT did not interview employers. For this reason, the CTE ERT recommends CCPS experiment with set schedules, where every week has the same schedule, but Fridays alternate between A and B schedules. In a set schedule, Mondays and Wednesdays are always A day schedules, Tuesdays and Thursdays are always B day schedules, while Fridays alternate between A and B days. The career coaches told the CTE ERT that EHS is a pilot school for many of the LEA's new programs and strategies, so they may consider navigating toward a set schedule to experiment. The purpose of this is to maintain more consistency in weekly schedules to overcome both internal and external scheduling hurdles. Set schedules may also help CCPS overcome transportation issues because the added consistency can streamline getting students to their homeschool, to CCST, and to potential worksites.

Establish Consistent Meetings with Susquehanna Workforce Network Representatives

Administrator, career coach, and teacher focus groups identified communication challenges with the Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN). Creating consistent meetings to communicate accomplishments and challenges, explain expectations of both the LEA and the SWN, and align on any changes to policies and procedures, especially pertaining to the *Blueprint*, would help CCPS overcome communication challenges. CCPS has already begun to do this by creating more direct workflows with Apprenticeship Navigators and onboarding

new staff to coordinate communications with work-based learning opportunities. Overcoming these communication gaps can help CCPS more effectively align with *Blueprint* goals, address gaps for rural students under the *Blueprint*, eliminate biases toward employing apprentices under 18 years old, and clarify expectations for career coaching work. Also, establishing a regular cadence of meetings with the SWN would be an opportunity for the LEA to elevate their concerns around the *Blueprint* to people who are more involved with policymaking. In a follow-up meeting with LEA representatives, the CTE ERT learned that CCPS has established and maintained monthly meetings.

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

In order to achieve the *Blueprint's* 45% goal, establishing and expanding RAs should be one of CCPS's priorities. CCPS should explore closer collaboration with MD Labor's Apprenticeship Navigators on what opportunities are available for high school students in Cecil County. At the time of the visit, CCPS' true IRC attainment rate was difficult to quantify, but nevertheless, CCPS can seek technical assistance from MSDE and similar LEAs in strategies to increase IRC attainment. The CTE Committee will also be developing more targeted technical assistance around this topic, and facilitating a community of practice utilizing findings from CTE ERT visits. The CTE Committee recognizes that policies defining the 45% goal were not issued until December 2024, and this CTE ERT visit took place in January 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 CCPS meeting the 45% goal.

Appendix Guide

- A. Visit Participants
- B. LEA Brief
- C. Visit Agenda
- D. Interview & Focus Group Questions

Appendix A | Visit Participants

Name	Role
Brian Cavey	VP, International Assoc. Of Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers; Chair, MATC (CTE Committee Member)
Carolanne Burkhardt	CTE Director, Talbot County Public Schools
John Strickland	Expert Review Team Manager, CTE Committee
Tracey Williams	Principal, Kent County High School
Kim Justus	Executive Director, Susquehanna Workforce Network
Jon Wickert	Director, CTE and STEM Initiatives; Delaware Department of Education
Brett King	Career Counselor/PLTW Engineering Teacher, Kent County Public Schools
Molly Mesnard	Senior Advisor, CTE Committee
Joseph Connolly	CTE Director, Harford County Public Schools
Tom Porter	CTE Director and Blueprint Coordinator, Kent County Public Schools
Marnie Stockman	CEO, Lifecycle Insights
Sally Irwin	School Support Coordinator, MSDE

Appendix B | LEA Brief

CTE LEA LEAD STAFF	
Name	Role(s)
Dr. J. Heather Handler	Instructional Coordinator for CTE/STEM/AMP
John Rodgers	AMP Liaison

COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS WITH CTE	
Bohemia Manor High School	Elkton High School
Perryville High School	North East High School
Rising Sun High School	

LEA CTE CENTER(S)
Cecil County School of Technology

CTE ERT VISIT	
Date	School(s)
January 15, 2025	Elkton High School
	Cecil County School of Technology

LEA CTE ENROLLMENT, PARTICIPATION and COMPLETION RATES

	Cecil Co	Elkton HS	CCST
Enrollment			
Total Enrollment (# of all HS students)	4,772	1,106	387
Total Enrollment (# of all graduating students)	1,059	235	
CTE¹⁰			
CTE Participation Rate (% of all graduating students)	89.3%	76.1%	
CTE Concentration Rate (% of all graduating students)	56%	55.7%	
CTE Completers Rate (% of all graduating students)	33%	20.4%	
IRC Completion Rate (% of all graduating students) ¹¹	12.5%	10.6%	
Apprenticeship and Other Work-Based Learning¹²			
Work-Based Learning Participants ¹³ (# of all graduating students)	0	0	
Dual Enrollment Participants ¹⁴ (# of all graduating students)	280		
Dual Enrollment Completers ¹⁵ (# of all graduating students)	n/a		
Apprenticeship Participants (# of all HS students)	RA: 0 YA: 35	RA: 0 YA: x	RA: 0 YA: x
Apprenticeship Participants (# of all graduating students)	RA: 0 YA: x	RA: 0 YA: x	RA: 0 YA: x
Apprenticeship Completers (# of graduating students)	RA: 0 YA: x	RA: 0 YA: x	RA: 0 YA: x
Progress Towards 45% Goal¹⁶	12.5%	10.6%	

LEA CTE OFFERINGS

CTE Program Enrollment

Program Name	Total Enrollment	Overenrolled or Underenrolled?	Number of Students on Waitlist
CNA/GNA	59	Max	10
CCMA	36	Max	16
Automotive Technology	39	Max	2
Biomedical Science (PLTW)	65	Max	1
CRD	34	Under	0
Cosmetology	42	Max	28
CISCO Networking Academy	36	Max	0
Computer Science (PLTW)	624	Max	0
Industrial Maintenance	37	Max	0
Welding	42	Max	13
Carpentry	36	Max	0

¹⁰ CTE Participants are students completing not less than one credit in a MSDE-approved CTE program of study. CTE Concentrators are students who have completed at least two courses and are enrolled in a third course in a single MSDE-approved CTE program of study. CTE Completers are students who meet all requirements in a state-approved CTE program of study, typically three or four courses.

¹¹ Defined as the percentage of all graduating students who have earned an IRC (as defined by the CTE Committee)

¹² Participation is defined as the number of all high school students or all graduating students who have participated in the high school portion of a registered apprenticeship (RA) or an AMP youth apprenticeship (YA). Completion is defined as the number of all graduating students who have completed the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) or have completed both an AMP youth apprenticeship (YA) and an IRC (YA completers who don't earn an IRC will not count towards 45% goal).

¹³ Work-based learning includes internships, job shadowing, and other job-based experiences.

¹⁴ Participation is defined as the number of all graduating students participating in dual enrollment (does not count towards the 45% goal unless they earn an IRC).

¹⁵ Dual enrollment completers is defined as the number of all graduating students who earned college credit through dual enrollment.

¹⁶ This metric is calculated by adding together the Apprenticeship Completion Rate (RA completers plus YA completers who also earn an IRC) and the IRC Completion Rate (based on draft guidance from the CTE Committee), divided by the total number of graduating students.

Electrical Trades	38	Max	5
Plumbing	34	Max	2
Culinary Arts	44	Max	17
CASE	29	Under	4
Fire Emergency Medical Training/ High School Cadet	18	Under	0
Prostart*	155	Max	0
Homeland Security	45	Max	10
Horticulture	23	Under	0
Interactive Media	32	Under	0
NIMS	40	Max	0
Marketing	118	Max	0
Diesel	35	Max	5
Pre-Engineering (PLTW)	23	Under	0
Teacher Academy of Maryland	36	Max	0

Progress Towards the 45% Goal:

- What are you projecting, for next school year, in growth towards the 45% goal for your district?
 - Next 3 years?

CCPS Numbers Needed Per Year to Meet SDPL's based on our Historical Results

Indicator	Baseline	2024	2025	2026	2027
5S1: Program Quality—Attained Recognized Credential	0.0%	67	134	200	267
5S3: Program Quality: Work-Based Learning	0.0%	33	67	100	134

- Next 5 years?

Our Goal is to maintain consistent results in line with MSDE/Perkins State Determined Performance Levels. This will ensure we are meeting Blueprint determined levels.

Blueprint is measured using Total Graduates – 1059
 $401/1059 = 38\%$ This only gets us to 38% of the Blueprint Goal

- By SY 2030-2031?
We are hopeful that the benchmarks for Perkins will increase accordingly to ensure we are meeting Blueprint determined levels.

Perkins is measured using CTE Concentrators – 594
SDPL Totals Towards Blueprint Goal = 267 IRC +134 YA = 401 students

This is $401/594 = 67.5\%$. This is a high percentage of CTE students. We may need to think of creative ways for non-CTE students to obtain IRC's and have access to Apprenticeship Opportunities to hit the Blueprint 45%.

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

To expand registered apprenticeship opportunities we would need to bring on eligible employers that provide the related instruction that qualifies for registered apprenticeships. There are talks with IEC to possibly use them for the related instruction for any electrical registered apprenticeships. We need to locate additional companies and or employers to help provide opportunities in our other program of studies.

Program Plans for Future

- Are there any new programs you plan on adding to your current programming within the next 2 school years? Why are you adding/not adding the program(s)?
HTMP has been added in place of ProStart. Reason: It has been difficult to get ProStart completers and successful IRC rates.

Advanced Technology has been added in place of Construction and Manufacturing. We wanted to add a program pathway with an IRC at its conclusion.

Computer Science -We have high enrollment because of the tech credit but it fades out because of the 4 course sequence. Ideas include bumping the tech credit to middle school and starting students in a CS pathway sooner.

Apprenticeship Pathway has been fully implemented at the comprehensive high school level. We are also implementing flex scheduling to take advantage of Apprenticeship Opportunities within each Program of Study.

- Are there any current programs you plan on expanding upon within the next 2 school years?

- Why are you expanding upon the program(s)?

We have just added Army JROTC to EHS and plan on expanding it to full capacity over the next 3 years.

- Are there any programs you are taking away within the next 2 school years?

- Why are you taking away the program(s)?

- **See Above**

Enrollment Practices

- How do students enroll in programs?

Cecil County School of Technology (CCST) - Acceptance = (½ Merit / ½ Lottery)
Comprehensive Schools enroll based on interest and counselor guidance

- Are all CTE programs offered to all students?

All students have an opportunity to apply for acceptance to CCST. All students have an opportunity to participate in any program at their comprehensive school.

- Can a student participate in a CTE program at another school?

There is an application process for CCST acceptance. We offer blended virtual options for students in Computer Science. CCST is the only option for many of our programs of study.

Program Design

- What are some best practices from CTE in your LEA that you think are worth sharing with other CTE programs across the state?

We firmly believe that implementing FLEX scheduling for all students within their CTE pathways will enable students to take advantage of gaining meaningful employment and relevant work opportunities through Youth and Registered Apprenticeships.

I think the way we run our PLTW Engineering Program and Biomedical Sciences is a good example for others to follow. We offer introductory level courses for students at the comprehensive schools. If students have an interest to continue learning in these pathways then they can attend the School of Technology to finish the final 2 courses in the program. This enables us to run one full classroom located at the School of Technology instead of 5 classes of only a few students. This may be a best practice for smaller LEA's.

LEA Support for Schools

- How is CTE financial support structured within the LEA?
Perkins & Local CTE Budget that goes up by at least \$1 per year to continue qualifying for Perkins.
- How is CTE staffing structured within the LEA?
CTE staffing is structured as follows:
 - CCST houses all specific career based programs of study ie. electric, welding, cosmetology, etc.
 - Comprehensive Schools house all general programs of study such as Business, Technology, Hospitality, and Computer Science

Career Exploration

- What career exploration is available to students in your LEA?
Career Exploration is being started in Naviance with career coaches located at 2 middle schools. They have been traveling around with VR headsets to gauge student interest in careers.
We also have career coaches located at each High School in the county. They are helping to guide students through job search, application process, and youth apprenticeships.
- How do the students access their career coach(es)?
Scheduled appointments in the high schools
Scheduled lessons in the middle schools
- How does/do the career coach(es) serve students in your LEA?
See above

INFORMATION FOR VISITING SCHOOLS

Elkton High School

School Leadership:

Principal: Dr. Jim Leitgeb

AP: Jeffers Brown, Erin Lewan, Chris Fielder

School Contact: Dr. Jim Leitgeb

School Website: <https://ehs.ccps.org/>

[Teachers and Faculty at Elkton High School](#)

Cecil County School of Technology

School Leadership:

Principal: Dr. Nicole Parr

AP: Jim Comegys

School Contact: Dr. Nicole Parr

School Website: <https://ccst.ccps.org/>

[CTE Teachers and Faculty at CCST](#)

CTE PROGRAMS AND ENROLLMENT AT VISITING SCHOOLS

Schools with CTE Programs	CLUSTER	CTE PROGRAM	ENROLLMENT NUMBER	COMPLETION RATE	IRC ATTAINMENT RATE
Elkton High Total Enrollment: 1,106	BMF	Business Management, Marketing, and Finance (Bishaw)	129	0	0
	MET	Advanced Technology (Smeltzer)	122	NA - Program sequence has not been 3 years yet	0 - Advanced Tech 3 not offered till this year
	CS	PLTW Computer Science (Weaber)	81	0 completers for Cybersecurity	7%
	CSHT	Prostart*/ Hospitality and Tourism Management (Everett)	122	NA - Program sequence has not been 3 years yet and Prostart Sunset hasn't hit third year	0
Cecil County School of Technology Total Enrollment: 387	AMC	Interactive Media	20	100%	85%
	CD	Electrical Trades	38	100%	73%
		Plumbing/ HVAC	34	100%	0%
		Carpentry	36	100%	77%
		Welding	42	100%	75%
		Industrial Maintenance	37	92.9%	78%
	CRD	Career Research and Development	34	100%	0%
	CSHT	Cosmetology	42	100%	78%
	EANR	CASE	29	100%	0%
		Horticulture-CPH	6	100%	0%
HB	Bio Science (PLTW)	18	100%	100%	

		CCMA	18	100%	64%
		CNA / GNA	26	100%	100%
	HRS	Fire and Emergency Medical Training	18	100%	60%
	IT	CISCO Networking Academy	5	100%	60%
		IT Networking Academy (CISCO) - CCENT	31	93%	33%
	MET	CNC - NIMS - Multisystem	40	100%	0%
		CNC - NIMS - CNC Programming	10	100%	0%
		Pre- Engineering PLTW	11	100%	0%
	TT	Diesel	35	100%	100%
		Automotive Technology	39	94%	0%

Overview of CTE Programs

[Cecil County Student Education Planning Guide](#) (CTE begins on page 41)

LEA STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	Maryland	Cecil Co
District Student Demographics (2023)	276495	4772
% Asian	7%	<1%
% American Indian / Alaska Native	<1%	<1%
% African American	33%	11%
% Hispanic	21%	10%
% Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
% Two or More Races	4%	7%
% White	34%	71%
% Students with Disabilities	11%	14%

# of Multi-Lingual Learners	9%	<5%
% Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS)	47%	49%
Child Poverty Rate % (2022)	12%	
Unemployment Rate % (2024)	3%	

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Economic Profile¹⁷

Cecil County's desirable mid-Atlantic location on the I-95 corridor has made it one of the most sought after business locations in the region. Situated midway between Philadelphia and Baltimore, Cecil's strategic location offers businesses overnight access to over 90 million customers. That means your business can reach 1/3 of the USA's effective buying income within 8 hours. Close proximity to two major international airports, three ports, CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads, and Amtrak all provide additional intermodal transportation links. Cecil County is in the Baltimore Foreign Trade Zone #74, providing economic incentives to companies importnating or exporting international goods. Cecil County generates more than \$5 billion in economic output. Key employers include world leaders such as W.L. Gore & Associates; Northrop Grumman; IKEA; and Terumo Medical Products. Cecil County continues to draw interest from a diverse industry base due to Cecil's location and highly skilled regional workforce.

Educational Attainment¹⁸

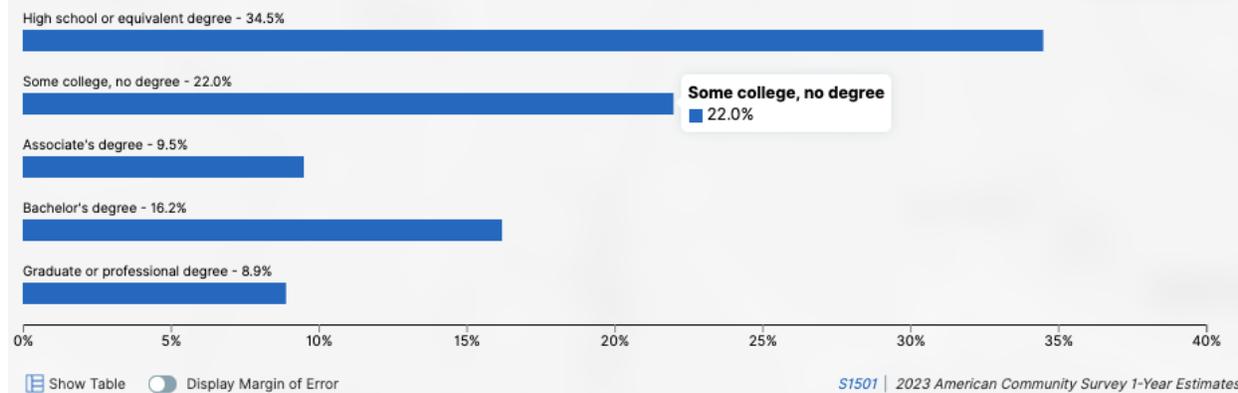
25.1% ± 3.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Cecil County, Maryland

43.7% ± 0.5%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Maryland

S1501 | 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Education Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older)
in Cecil County, Maryland

Share / Embed



¹⁷ <https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/ResearchDocument/CecilBEE.pdf>

¹⁸ https://data.census.gov/profile/Cecil_County,_Maryland?g=050XX00US24015#education

LEADING BUSINESS GROUPS¹⁹

Name	Industry	Size Category
ACME Markets	Retail Trade	100-249
Bayside Community Network Inc	Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249
Bohemia Manor High School	Educational Services	100-249
Boy Scouts of America	Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249
Burriss Logistics	Transportation and Warehousing	259-499
Calvert Manor Healthcare Ctr	Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249
Cecil County Public Schools	Educational Services	100-249
Cecil Whig	Information	100-249
Chesapeake Inn	Accommodation and Food Services	100-249
Chili's	Accommodation and Food Services	100-249
Christianacare Union Hospital	Health Care and Social Assistance	750-1000
Cracker Barrel Old Country Str	Accommodation and Food Services	100-249
Elkton High School	Educational Services	100-249
Estes Express Lines	Transportation and Warehousing	100-249
Food Lion Inc	Retail Trade	100-249
GE Appliances Distribution Ctr	Wholesale Trade	100-249
Gerresheimer	Manufacturing	100-249
Laurelwood Healthcare Ctr	Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249
Lowe's Home Improvement	Retail Trade	100-249
Martin's Food Market	Retail Trade	100-249
Maryland Transportation Auth	Transportation and Warehousing	259-499
Mc Donald's	Accommodation and Food Services	100-249
Medline Industries Inc	Wholesale Trade	259-499
North East High School	Educational Services	100-249
Olive Garden Italian Rstrnt	Accommodation and Food Services	100-249
Penn National Gaming Inc	Retail Trade	259-499
Perry Point VA Hosp Med Ctr	Health Care and Social Assistance	1000+
Perryville High School	Educational Services	100-249
PFG Customized Distribution	Wholesale Trade	100-249
Phillips Gourmet Mushrooms	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	100-249
Putnam Care & Rehab	Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249

¹⁹ Maryland Department of Labor, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning
<https://www.labor.maryland.gov/lmi/emplists/cecil.shtml>

Appendix C | Visit Agenda

Visit Date: January 15, 2025 Time: 7:30am-3:30pm	Location: Elkton High School 110 James Street, Elkton, MD 21921 Cecil County School of Technology 912 Appleton Road, Elkton, MD 21921	Arrival Time: 7:15am-7:30am
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Worcester Technical High School

AM Session: Elkton High School

Team 1: John Strickland, Carolanne Burkhardt, Brett King, Joe Connolly, Brian Cavey, Marnie Stockman		Team 2: Molly Mesnard, Jon Wickert, Tom Porter, Tracey Williams, Kim Justus, Sally Irwin	
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
7:30am-8:00am	Meet and Greet	7:30am-8:00am	Meet and Greet
8:00am-9:00am	School Counselor & Career Coach Focus Group Location: F105 EHS	8:00am-9:00am	Teacher Focus Group Location: F107 EHS
9:00am-9:55am	School Tour- Cafeteria	9:00am-9:55am	School Tour- Cafeteria
9:55am-10:15am	Break	9:55am-10:15am	Break
10:15am-11:00am	Student Focus Group A204	10:15am-11:00am	Student Focus Group F107
11:15am-11:30 am	Travel to CCST	11:15am-11:30 am	Travel to CCST

PM Session: Cecil County School of Technology

Team 1: John Strickland, Carolanne Burkhardt, Brett King, Joe Connolly, Christy Dryer, Marnie Stockman		Team 2: Molly Mesnard, Lateefah Durant, Jon Wickert, Tom Porter, Tracey Williams, Kim Justus, Sally Irwin	
Time	Activity	Time	Activity
11:30 am-1:00 pm	CTE Staff/School Admin Mtg. & Working Lunch	11:30 am-1:00 pm	CTE Staff/School Admin Mtg. & Working Lunch
1:00 pm-1:50 pm	CTE Student Focus Group	1:00 pm-1:50 pm	School Tour
1:50 pm-2:00	Break	1:50 pm-2:00 pm	Break

pm			
2:00 pm-3:00 pm	School Tour	2:00 pm-3:00 pm	CTE Teacher Focus Group Location: Media Conference Room
3:00 pm-3:30 pm	End of Day Team Debrief Counseling Conference Room	3:00 pm-3:30 pm	End of Day Team Debrief Counseling Conference Room

Appendix D | Interview & Focus Group Questions

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.
- 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 School Leadership

Priority Questions:

1. How long have you been in your role? What is your background in CTE?
2. 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*
3. What are the school's current priorities for CTE in your school/LEA? *If not addressed, ask about: Eliminate/add programs, Apprenticeship, Increasing enrollment, Working with industry*

4. In your opinion, how well does the programming at your school align with key (*high-growth, high-wage*) industries in your community and statewide?
5. Is there capacity for all interested students to participate in CTE programs? Are there any barriers to enrollment?
6. 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?
7. How does the LEA/district update CTE programs? What are some current plans you have for adding new programs, expanding existing programs or eliminate current programs?
8. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your LEA/school's CTE program, and what have you made the most progress on recently?
9. What do you see as the key challenges facing your LEA/school now?
10. Where would you like the LEA to be in five years in regards to CTE?

Additional Questions:

- Are any CTE teachers earning National Board Certification? If so, have they been able to move into differentiated roles?
- How do you collaborate with local business and industry and community colleges?
- Do you have sufficient teachers for current programs? If not, what are the issues in recruiting them?
- What's your process for reviewing the IRCs currently offered to students as part of their CTE program?
- What measures are in place to assess the long-term impact of CTE programs on students' career trajectories and contributions to the local economy?
- Do certain programs have higher completion rates than others?
- Are there clear pathways from current CTE programs to community college certificate and degree programs?
- What strategies are employed to raise awareness and improve perceptions of CTE programs among students, parents, and the broader community?

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.

Priority Questions:

1. What program do you teach in? How long have you been in your role? What is your background in this area?
2. Can you give us an overview of your CTE program? *If not addressed, ask about: Dual enrollment, WBL, IRCs, completion rates, post-grad options*
3. Do you have contact with employers in your industry? If so, what partnerships have been most beneficial for students?
4. Where do students from your program go after graduating (i.e., further training, work, college, etc.)?
5. 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?*
6. If you could redesign your subject's program of study, what would you change?
7. What professional learning opportunities are available for you?
8. From your perspective, what are the strengths of your school's CTE programs?
9. What do you need as a CTE teacher that you feel you may not be getting?
10. What do you see as the key CTE challenges facing your school now?

Additional Questions:

- How do you collaborate with your colleagues (CTE and academic teachers)?
- Do any of your programs have school-based businesses that serve the school community and/or local clients?
- Do you think the certification requirements for CTE teachers are well-aligned to what was needed to teach in the area you teach in?
- Do most students who enroll in your program intend on completing the program?
- Can you share a success story of a former student who has benefited from your program?
- How do you measure the effectiveness of your CTE program, and what data or feedback informs changes or improvements?

Questions for CTE Students

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 in to the program?
3. How has your experience in the classroom been for your CTE classes? 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?
8. How much do you know about careers in your industry (salary, training paths)?
9. What would you say is the best thing about your program?
10. If you could change anything in your program, what would it be?

Additional Questions:

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

Questions for School Counselors/Career Coaches & Staff

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.

Priority Questions:

1. How long have you been in your role? What is your background in this role?
2. How is school counseling and career counseling organized at your school? Do the counselors work together?
3. Is there a work-based learning coordinator and if so what is their scope of work and how do they interact with counselors?
4. How does the school counseling staff and 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 CTE programs? Do students have opportunities for career exploration/education?
6. How are CTE students supported in making post-graduation plans?
7. How are parents and families introduced to programs? Are there other efforts to publicize CTE in the community?
8. What do you see as the strengths of CTE in this school?
9. What do you see as the key challenges facing your LEA/school's CTE programs?

Additional Questions:

- Do you track post-graduation outcomes, such as enrolling in further education / training or entering the workforce?
- In what ways does the school involve parents and the community in the CTE program?
- How are students who change their mind about a career path supported?
- How do you think the CTE guidance could be improved? Is feedback on guidance and support collected from students?
- 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 a counseling perspective?



Maryland

GWDB CTE COMMITTEE

Governor's Workforce Development Board
Career and Technical Education Committee

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