CTE Committee Meeting

January 22, 2026

Meeting Goals

1. **Examine** and discuss new Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) applications reviewed and IRCs recommended for approval; **vote to approve** recommendations.

2. **Review** the Expanded Career Counseling Report and surface feedback. **Discuss next steps** for report, including publication.

3. **Discuss** key information + Expert Review Team (ERT) findings highlighted in the 2025 Annual Report, and **vote to approve** the Report for submission to MGA, AIB, and the Governor.

Reviewing and approving recommendations and analyses that guide policy decisions and implementation in an effort to strengthen high-quality CTE pathways and programs

2

Motion to Approve

- ✓ January 22, 2026 Agenda
- ✓ December 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Eligible Industry-Recognized Credentials SY2026-27

Overview: Industry-Recognized Credentials

Background

- IRC policy developed and issued (2024) to require IRCs to meet 7 core criteria in order to demonstrate clear industry validation and workforce demand
  - Defines which IRCs count in the *Blueprint*'s 45% goal

- Policy went into effect School Year 2025-2026 with ~210 approved IRCs

Committee Action Today

- Second year of IRC application review

- Of the 75 unique applications, 22 IRCs are recommended for approval, exhibiting the strengthening rigor and consistency in evaluation

- Effective the SY2026-2027

Maryland
GWDB CTE COMMITTEE

Career and Technical Education:
Industry-Recognized Credentials

Policy on Industry-Recognized Credential Definition and
Criteria, Approval and Review Process, and List of
State-Approved Credentials Under the *Blueprint for
Maryland's Future*

Governor's Workforce Development Board
Career and Technical Education Committee
Policy Issuance 2024-01

December 2024

CTE Committee Meeting

Industry Recognized Credentials

January 22, 2026

Division of College and Career
Pathways

Objectives
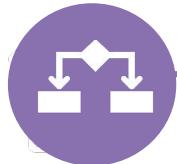
Review MSDE's implementation process for Industry-Recognized Credentials

Preview IRC application data from Cycle 2

Introduce decisions and business rules for Cycle 3 beginning August 1, 2026

Overview

- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that the GWDB CTE Committee design a policy outlining **a new statewide definition** for industry-recognized credentials.

- The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that the GWDB CTE Committee define which industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) count toward **the 45% goal**.

- According to CTE Committee Policy "Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Community Colleges, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and other organizations in Maryland must **submit an application** for industry-recognized credentials (IRC) that are not on the approved list to be considered."

Core Criteria

To be approved by the GWDB CTE Committee as an IRC within the CTE Committee's definition, an IRC must meet the following seven core criteria and two optional criteria:

1. Aligns with In-Demand Occupations
2. Provides Documented Outcomes
3. Validated by Industry
4. Assessment-Based
5. Standards-Driven
6. Attainable and Accessible
7. Portable
8. Stackable (preferred, but not required for approval)
9. Renewable (preferred, but not required for approval)

Important Dates

Date	Description
August	Online application for new industry-recognized credentials to be assessed opens.
October 31	Online application for new industry-recognized credentials to be assessed closes.
November	MSDE reviews each submission for completeness and follows up with requesting entities to gather any additional information needed to make a recommendation to approve or not approve.
September-November	IRC Review Committee reviews assigned IRC applications and evaluates based on required criteria.
December	MSDE prepares submission packages for each industry-recognized credential application meeting foundational application requirements, including a recommendation to approve or not approve the IRC. All packets and recommendations will be sent to CTE Committee staff by December 31st for review by the full CTE Committee.
January	The CTE Committee will formally vote to approve or not approve each IRC package provided to them by MSDE. Once a formal determination is made, MSDE will notify the requesting entity of the status via email. Each approved IRC will be added to the state-approved list for use in the upcoming school year.
February	MSDE and the CTE Committee will publish the annual State-Approved Industry-Recognized Credential list for use in the upcoming school year.
July 1	The State-Approved Industry-Recognized Credential list goes into effect for the upcoming school year.

GWDB CTE Committee Industry Recognized Credential Policy

Implementation Process

- The AIB approved the CTE Committee's Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) Policy on August 1, 2024.

- MSDE launched a new webpage and opened the application link on August 1, 2025. To support applicants, sample IRC applications and a list of recommended artifacts were made publicly available from August 1 to October 31, 2025.

INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS, CORE ARTIFACTS, AND EXAMPLES

Criteria 1: Aligns with In-Demand Occupations:

The credential is associated with occupations that are in high demand or emerging within Maryland as defined by the Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) using state labor market data and employer feedback, or as defined as a regional need or emerging credential by the Local Workforce Development Board.

Artifacts	Example
Maryland Labor Market Information (LMI) dashboards or occupational projections (from Maryland Department of Labor). LMI should exhibit statewide or regional/local demand. Also, Maryland Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan priority occupations, sectors, or lighthouse industries that have been identified or used within one to two years of issuance.	A screenshot or PDF showing projected growth for "Information Security Analyst" through 2030.
Regional or Local Workforce Development Board priority lists, sector strategies, or employer convening reports.	A letter from a local board or excerpt from a local plan citing a need for CNAs in the Lower Shore region.
Letters from employers (at least two) indicate whether they require or prefer a specific credential in hiring.	A letter from a regional healthcare system stating they give preference to CNA-certified candidates in hiring protocol.
County or regional economic plans identifying priority sectors or workforce gaps	A Montgomery County economic development report highlighting creative services as a growth area in their strategic plan.
Aggregated job posting analytics (e.g. from Burning Glass, Lightcast, Indeed)	Report showing number of job postings in Maryland requesting CompTIA Security+.

Criteria 2: Provides Documented Outcomes

There is evidence of positive employment and wage outcomes for individuals who have obtained the IRC, demonstrating its effectiveness in contributing to workforce readiness and economic advancement.

- In cases where the credential does not lead to a living-wage job or where data is not yet available, the credential should show that it can be stacked with other credentials, exhibiting progression in a career pathway with positive wage outcomes, or that it meets criteria 1 since it leads to an in-demand occupation.

Industry-Recognized Credential Review Committee

In November and December 2025, IRC Review Committee reviewed submitted applications:
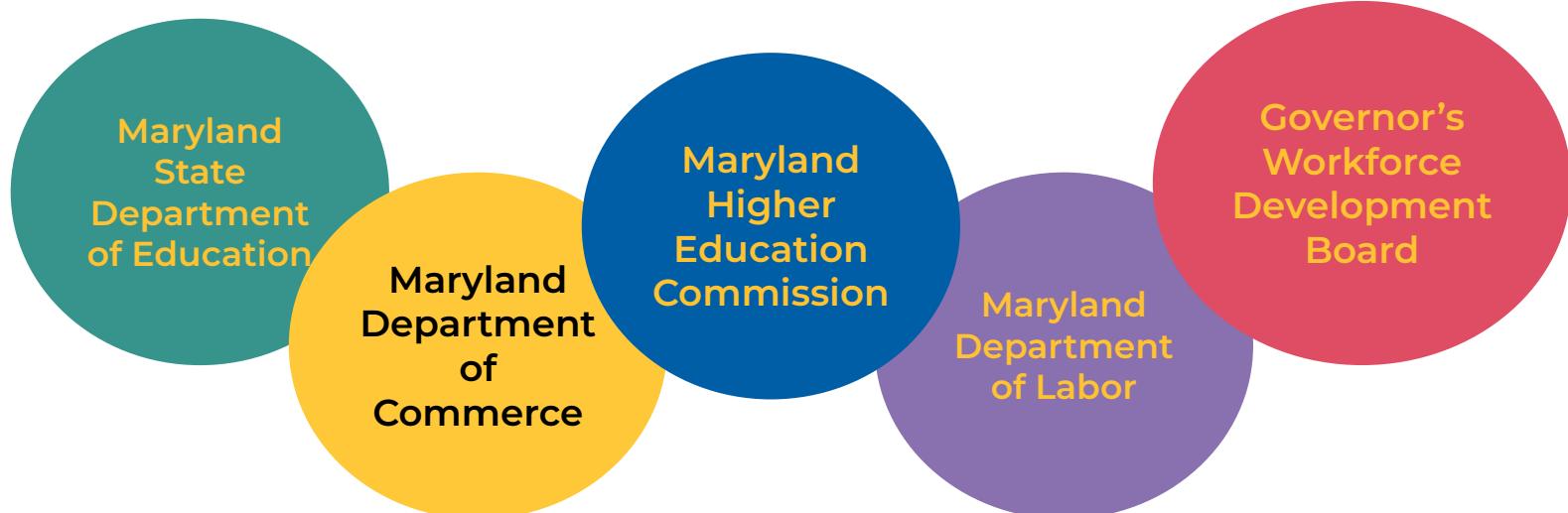
Maryland State Department of Education

Maryland Department of Commerce

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Maryland Department of Labor

Governor's Workforce Development Board

Industry-Recognized Credential Review Committee

Maryland State Department of Education

- Coordinator, Industry Recognized Credentials
- Coordinator, Career Connected Learning
- Coordinator, Career Counseling
- Coordinator, Pathway Implementation and Support
- Coordinator, Equity and Civil Rights
- Director, Advanced Academics and GT Programs
- Director, The Learning Experience
- Coordinator, Comprehensive Arts Education
- Specialist, Secondary Transition Performance
- Executive Director – Maryland FFA (Special consultation only)

Industry-Recognized Credential Review Committee

Maryland Department of Commerce

Director, Office of Talent and Workforce

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Deputy Secretary

Industry-Recognized Credential Review Committee

Maryland Department of Labor

Deputy Director, Office of Apprenticeship

Governor's Workforce Development Board

Senior Advisor, CTE Committee
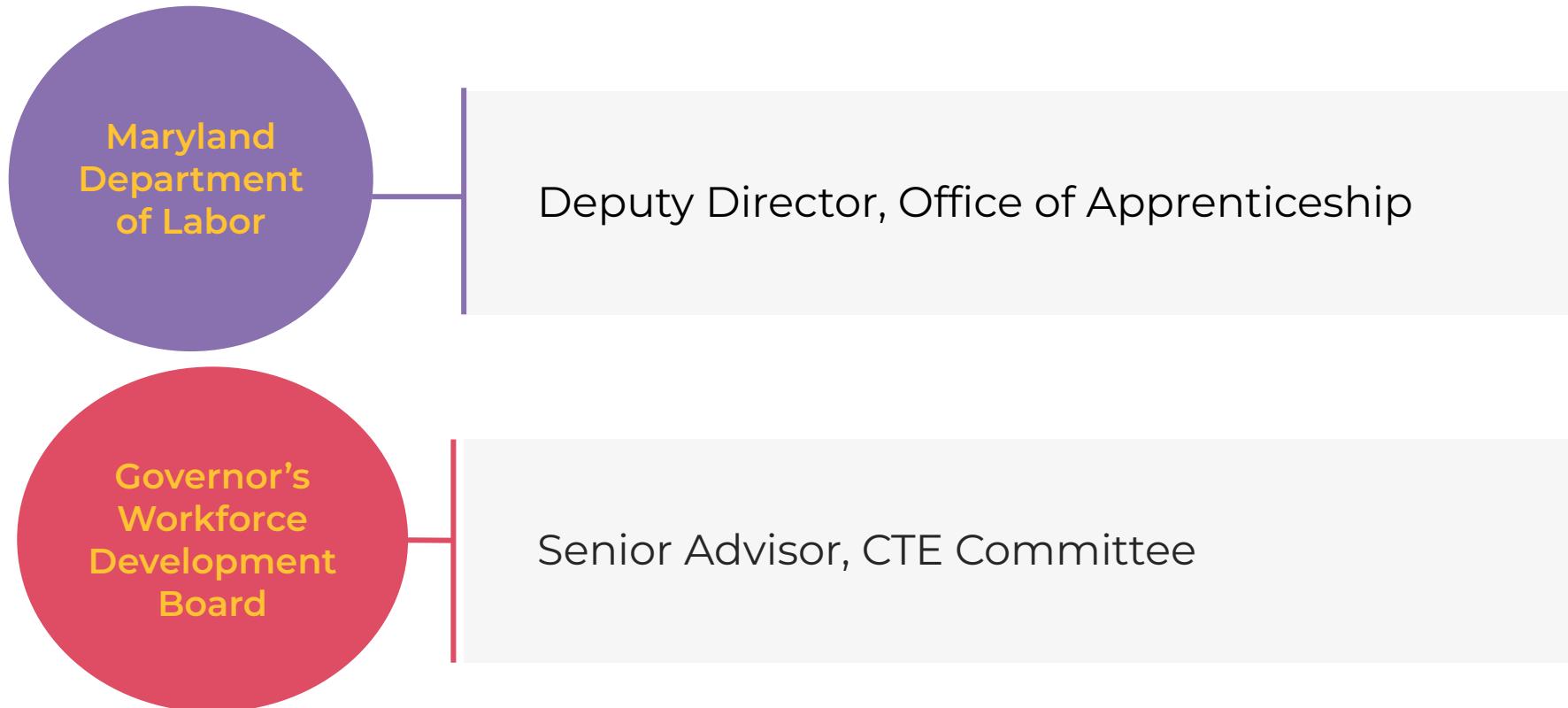
MSDE Technical Assistance

- All applications flagged as incomplete, were **promptly contacted with clear instructions** to resolve the issues along with **an invitation to meet virtually**.

- Each email communication acknowledged the submission, thanked the applicant, and **provided detailed guidance on criteria, qualifications, and requirements**, along with links to resources **and recommended artifacts**. Applicants were encouraged to review these resources and reach out for support as needed.

- MSDE maintained detailed records of all communications, including emails and meetings, to **ensure transparency and accountability,** and that helped shape the data that the committee has available to them on their report on pages 2-5.

Application Outcomes
By Submission Type

Submission Type	Number of Applications
Local Education Agency	21
Government Agency	15
For-Profit Organization	29
Non-Profit Organization	22
Community College	4
Other	1
Total Applications	92
Total Duplicated Applications	16
Total Already State-Approved IRC	1
Total New Non-Duplicative IRC's Applications	75

Application Outcomes

By Decision

Decision Outcome	Number of Applications
Recommend	22

Applications in this category demonstrated excellence in **meeting all seven required core criteria**. These submissions included **high-quality artifacts** supported by **strong evidence from a variety of stakeholders** and resources. They clearly showed potential for **gainful employment** and significant value to Maryland's workforce system, as well as alignment with broader economic and workforce needs beyond the state. These programs exemplify the standards necessary for inclusion in the state's approved Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) list.

Year Two Application Trends

Areas of Applicant Strength

- **Balanced application representation:** Applications were submitted by balance of for-profit entities, nonprofit organizations and local education agencies. This distribution signals increased statewide awareness of the IRC process and growing confidence across sectors in Maryland's approach to reviewing and approving industry-recognized credentials.

- **Improved application completeness:** Compared to the first cycle, a higher proportion of applicants made a good-faith effort to submit all seven required artifacts.

- **Stronger evidence of regional and community support:** Many applications included artifacts demonstrating engagement from multiple stakeholders, including education systems, industry partners, national certification bodies, and regional leaders.

Application Outcomes

By Submission Type

Decision Outcome	Number of Applications
Do Not Recommend	47

Applications in this category failed to meet the core criteria for approval. Common reasons included not meeting a **required criteria**, **incomplete submissions**, duplication of programs already on the approved list, or **missing key artifacts** necessary for evaluation. These deficiencies prevented MSDE from determining the program's alignment with the state's workforce needs or its value to Maryland's workforce system.

Year Two Application Trends

Areas of Growth

MSDE did not recommend applications to the CTE Committee under the following conditions:

- Applications were **incomplete**.

- **Over reliance on anecdotal or testimonial evidence:** Several applications relied heavily on personal testimonials or narrative statements.

- Applications that were **already on the approved list** were not recommended.

- Applications **presenting as curriculum or entrance exams**, such as ASVAB, JROTC Employability Skills, WISE Financial Literacy and CAST Exam, were not recommended as they did not qualify as industry-grade certifications or credentials and were misaligned with the core criteria.

Year Two Application Trends (continued)

Areas of Growth

MSDE did not recommend applications to the CTE Committee under the following conditions:

- Endorsements **lacking clear hiring preferences** were considered insufficient external validations.

- Job descriptions that **fail to mention the certification's preference.**

- Applications demonstrating **discrepancies between the skills needed for the job and the skills the certification addresses.**

Application Outcomes

By Submission Type

Decision Outcome	Number of Applications
Deferred Recommendation	6

Applicants in this category **did not meet the 7 core criteria** and are encouraged to collaborate with MSDE to **strengthen** their submissions or consider alternative credential pathways for review in the next approval cycle. This category applies to applicants whose proposals demonstrate student-centered best practices **aligned with the state's economic development plan** and the vision of a high-performing CTE system but require additional refinement to fully meet the seven core criteria.

Implementation Business Rules

- **Completeness Review:** MSDE will follow up only when an applicant has made a good faith effort to submit all required materials by the application close date.

- **Academic Alignment:** Letters of support must clearly identify the specific course(s) or Program(s) of Study with identified LEAs to which the proposed industry-recognized credentials aligns.

- **Credential Eligibility:** Curricula, exam assessments, instructional programs, programming languages, software platform tools, or certificates of course completion do not meet the definition of an industry-recognized credential.

- **Credential Modifications and Re-Evaluation:** The CTE Committee and MSDE will apply a consistent distinction between administrative updates and substantive changes to approved industry-recognized credentials.

Implementation Business Rules (continued)

- Administrative Changes: If an approved IRC undergoes minor adjustments, such as a name update, cleaning up standards, or renaming components, MSDE will notify the CTE Committee.

- Significant Changes Requiring Re-Evaluation: If a proposed change significantly impacts the structure or function of an IRC, such as:

  - The elimination or creation of domains not included in the original application standards,

  - Updates to testing environments or methodologies,

  - Revisions to core standards or technical requirements.

MSDE will submit the updated IRC for re-evaluation by the committee to ensure alignment with established criteria and standards.

Future Actions

The state-approved list of Industry-Recognized Credentials will be available on the Maryland State Department of Education's Industry-Recognized Credential webpage and documented in the CTE Committee's approved meeting minutes.

MSDE in collaboration with the GWDB CTE Committee, will undertake the following actions to strengthen implementation:

Update and streamline the IRC application process

Establish implementation guidance for IRC lifecycle management

Clarify expectations for system alignment and data integration

Define the role of portfolio-based credentials and performance evidence

Closure

We strongly encourage all applicants to reach out to the Coordinator of Industry Recognized Credentials at MSDE to discuss their applications and address any questions or concerns. Applicants are welcome and encouraged to resubmit in future cycles.

For further questions, please contact:

Coordinator, Industry-Recognized Credentials
Phone 410-767-0216
Email: IRCSupportMSDE@maryland.gov

Motion to Approve

✓ Recommended list of Industry-Recognized Credentials (IRCs) for the 2026-27 school year

Expanded Career Counseling Best Practices Report

Maryland's Blueprint for the Future Career Counseling

Presented by:

Shamara P. Bownes, Governor's Workforce Development Board

Shana Payne, Director, Jobs for the Future

January 22, 2026

Implementation Summary Analysis
November 20, 2025

Best Practices Report

MARYLAND LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAs)

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

STUDENTS GRADES 6–12

INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER GUIDANCE FOR EVERY MARYLAND STUDENT

BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE CAREER COUNSELING INITIATIVE

At a Glance

Synthesizes **local implementation experiences** to highlight:

- **Solutions with broad adoption**
- **Challenges** that are widely experienced

Explicitly connects **focus group insights** to patterns from the Summary Analysis.

Guidance for near and long-term actions for local and state leaders to promote successful implementation

Evidence Base and Methodology

Document review (*Summary Analysis*, Nov 2025):
- Executed MOUs/addenda for all jurisdictions

- 2025 annual reports

- Spring 2025 AIB check-in notes

Stakeholder focus groups:
- **11 focus groups**, Oct–Nov 2025

- **69 participants** across all jurisdictions

- Career counselors (12), community colleges (20), LEAs (15), LWDBs (22)

Focus groups probed **implementation wins, challenges, and recommendations** to inform this report.

Research Considerations

Terminology

- **"Jurisdiction"** refers to formally designated local partnership responsible for delivering career counseling services under Maryland's Blueprint within a geographic area, which may span multiple counties or cities.

Limitations

- Report **is not a causal program evaluation**; it surfaces trends and stakeholder recommendations.
- Report **does not capture professional development** offered by MSDE in the 25-26 school year.

Who Participated by Geographic Region

69 participants across all Maryland regions
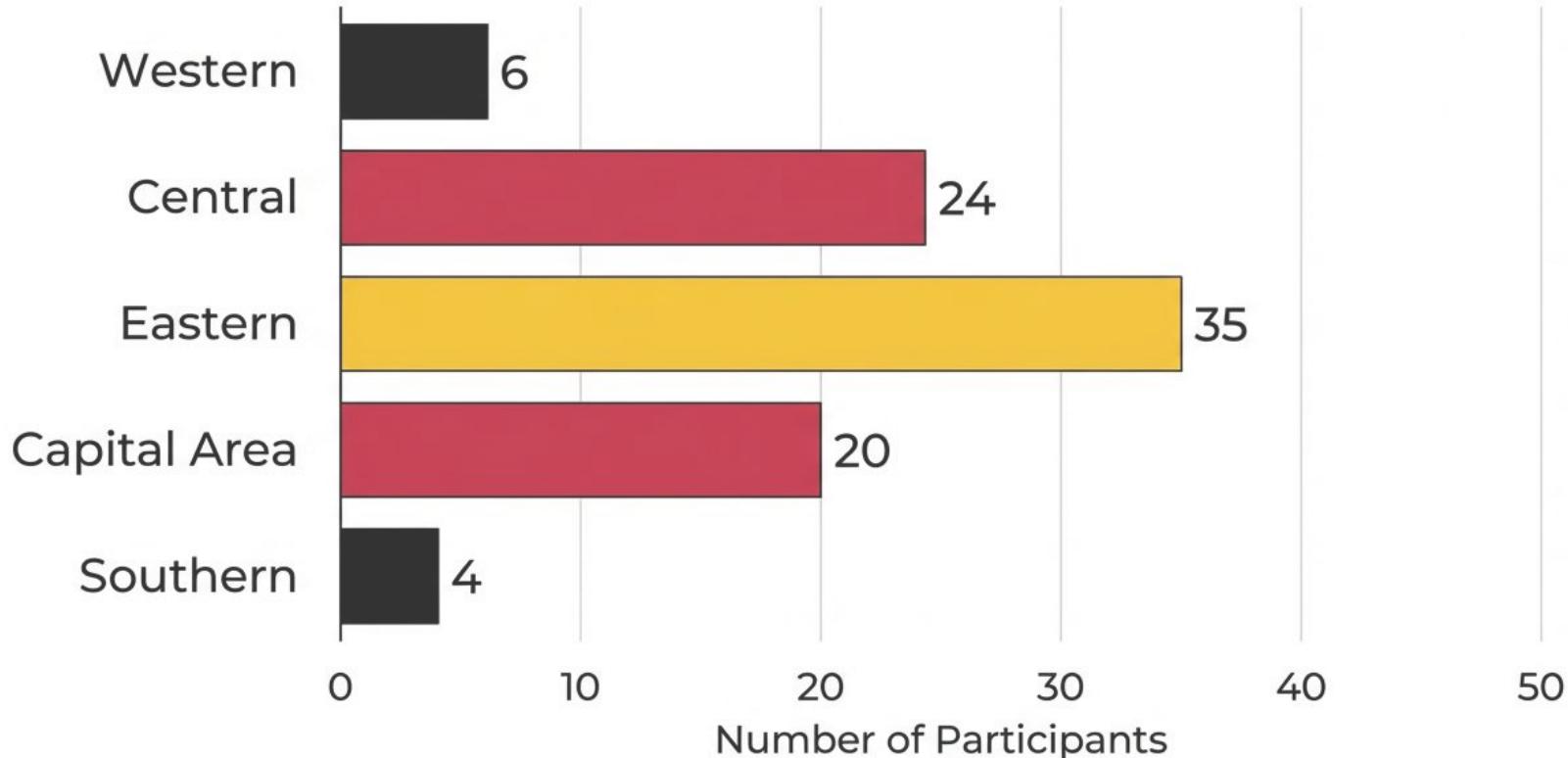
Solutions and Challenges:
Maryland Career Counseling Best Practices Report

Solutions with Broad Adoption

- Tiered professional development

- Structured partner meetings

- Embedded career counselors

- Collaborative employer engagement

Widely Observed Challenges

- Data systems & accountability

- Partnership roles & clarity

- Staff turnover & onboarding

- Geographic & capacity constraints

Solution 1: Annual Onboarding & Tiered Professional Development for Career Counselors

What it looks like

- Annual summer onboarding conference for new and returning staff.

- Quarterly professional development that blends:
  - Technical topics (data privacy, platform use)
  - Relational practice (student engagement, classroom management)
  - Tiered sessions tailored by role and experience.

Why it matters

- Builds **shared language and expectations** across partners.

- Supports **consistency amid staff turnover**.

- Strengthens relationships among schools, workforce boards, and colleges.

Solution 2: Regular, Structured Local Partner Meetings

What it looks like

- Standing biweekly or monthly meetings among LEA, LWDB, and community college partners.
- Clear **agendas, shared facilitation, and follow-up owners**.
- Use of shared calendars, running notes, and subcommittees.

Why it matters

- Creates a forum to **align roles**, resolve issues quickly, and maintain progress during staffing transitions.

Solution 3: Embedded Career Counselors

What it looks like

- Career counselors integrated into **daily school schedules and routines**.
- Regular collaboration with teachers; participation in staff meetings.
- Clear referral and support pathways; access to student data and resources.

Why it matters

- Deep integration drives effectiveness. This is **NOT** employer dependent, but critical to success.
- Embedded counselors build **stronger relationships** and provide more **consistent access** for students.

Solution 4 : Collaborative Employer Engagement & Events

What it looks like

- Local partners co-plan employer events (career fairs, "career takeovers," joint industry days).
- Shared timelines and designated outreach leads; some regions designate a **"backbone" partner** to manage employer lists.

Why it matters

- Reduces **duplication and employer fatigue**.

- Expands student access to **work-based learning and industry exposure**.

Challenges-Summary

The report also surfaced consistently observed challenges that affect equitable implementation:

- Data systems and accountability
    - Limited reciprocal data sharing
    - Late or shifting guidance on metrics

- Partnership structure and role clarity

- Staff turnover, onboarding, and professional development

- Geographic and capacity constraints

Challenge 1: Data Systems & Accountability

What it looks like

- Guidance on required metrics often arrives late and can shift over time.
- Limited access to timely, student-level data.
- One-way data flows; partners who share data rarely receive **actionable reports** in return.

Why it matters

- Erodes **trust between partners** and forces manual workarounds.
- Pulls counselors away from **direct student support**.
- Makes it harder to **monitor quality, demonstrate impact, and improve programs**.

Challenge 2: Partnership Structure & Role Clarity

What it looks like

- Overlapping or unclear duties across LEAs, LWDBs, and community colleges.
- Uncertainty about **who holds decision-making authority**.
- Uncoordinated employer outreach—multiple partners contacting the same businesses.

Why it matters

- Slows implementation even when partners are committed.
- Creates confusion for employers and can limit work-based learning opportunities.

Challenge 3: Staff Turnover, Onboarding, & PD

What it looks like

- Persistent turnover of career counselors across at least eight jurisdictions.
- Variation in qualifications (from associate's degree to licensed teacher/school counselor).
- Professional development ranges from ad hoc workshops to robust credential-based models.

Why it matters

- Disrupts relationships with students and staff.
- Inconsistent onboarding and training undermine **effectiveness and retention**.

Challenge 4: Geographic & Capacity Constraints

What it looks like

- High counselor caseloads; in some places only **one counselor** serves multiple schools.
- Time split between student support and administrative tasks.
- Rural areas face **transportation barriers** and limited local industry diversity.

Why it matters

- Students may receive **group-only** services or miss out on one-on-one counseling.
- Fewer work-based learning opportunities, especially in rural communities.

Stakeholder Guidance-Overall

Stakeholders identified guidance needs across three levels:

- **State-level entities**

- **Local jurisdictions and partners**

- **Stakeholder groups** (LEAs, LWDBs, community colleges, career counselors)

Some guidance is needed **immediately**; other recommendations focus on **long-term system building**.

Perspectives across stakeholder groups

Stakeholder	Guidance
Local workforce development boards	• Need for statewide best practices sharing mechanisms • Clear state guidance on partnership structure and roles • Support for capacity building related to staffing and funding • Improved outcome measurement tools and definitions
Local education agencies	• Reciprocal data sharing rather than one-way data flows • Clear and early state guidance on metrics and expectations • Support for embedded career counseling models • Professional development for career counselors
Community colleges	• Better integration mechanisms with k-12 and workforce partners • Clarity on their role within the local partner structure • Data systems that support tracking and coordination • Consistent outcome measurement approaches
Career Counselors	• Robust onboarding for new career counselors • Ongoing high-quality professional development • Tools and support for effective student engagement • Clarity on metrics and outcome expectations

Guidance for State-Level Entities

Short Term	Mid and Long Term

• Provide **clear, early, and consistent guidance** on:
    • Metrics and reporting requirements
    • Definitions (e.g., "career ready," "individualized counseling")
 	
• Establish and communicate **standards for quality** while preserving local flexibility.
 	
• Create **statewide communication and learning mechanisms**, such as:
    • Regular newsletters
    • Conferences
    • Communities of practice
	Mid-Term:
	• Standardized **training and professional development** on:
	    • Data sharing and data use
	    • Collective impact practices
	    • School operations and culture
	    • Graduation requirements
	    • Partnership roles and responsibilities
	
	Long-term:
	• Integrated **data-sharing systems** with
	    • Clear compliance guidance
	    • Data governance standards (ownership, access, use)
	    • Ability to track students' evolving career interests over time and across jurisdictions

Guidance for Local Jurisdictions & Partners

Short Term	Mid and Long Term

• Implement tiered **professional development and onboarding** locally to:
    • Account for varying staff experience
    • Address turnover through robust onboarding
    • Create ongoing learning and peer networks
	Mid-Term:
	• Formalize two-way **data sharing**:
	    • Clearly defined data elements and lawful uses
	    • Regular, actionable reporting back to all contributors
	
	Long-term:
	• Expand **community and employer engagement** through
	    • Collaborative events and initiatives
	    • Clear timelines, shared responsibilities, and feedback loops
	    • Coordination on career fairs, career takeovers, and industry experiences across agencies

Big Picture: Opportunities for Improvement

Maryland has moved from **planning to implementation** of a new, collaborative career counseling model since 2023.

Local partners have demonstrated **innovative solutions** that can be scaled and have provided honest reflection on **challenges** that require state and local action.

Reflections on how to improve the impact of career counseling include opportunities to:

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities** among LEAs, LWDBs, and community colleges.
- Provide **early, consistent guidance** on metrics and professional expectations.
- **Reduce staff turnover** and standardize onboarding for career counselors.
- Enable **reciprocal data sharing** across partners.
- Build local **capacity and expertise** through sustained professional development and guidance.

Discussion

2025 Career and Technical Education Annual Report

2025 CTE Annual Report: Key CTE Committee Accomplishments

★ Adoption of the Maryland CTE Framework, which aligns academic instruction, career preparation, and employer engagement across secondary and postsecondary systems.

★ Implementation of a statewide Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) policy and Apprenticeship Policy, establishing consistent quality standards and minimum requirement for what counts toward the 45% goal.

★ Approval of a CTE Joint Vision statement, aligning the AIB, the State Board of Education, and the CTE Committee around a shared definition of success, and further clarifying the 45% goal to be out of high school graduates who meet the college and career readiness (CCR) standard, as well as specifying that within the goal, one in four of these graduates will complete the high school level of a Registered Apprenticeship.

2025 CTE Annual Report: Progress + Emerging Patterns

➔ Disparities in IRC attainment, particularly among students from historically underserved populations – emphasizing the need for targeted equity strategies as implementation continues

➔ Wide variation among LEAs in CTE participation and completion rates, with smaller and mid-sized districts often reporting higher participation than larger ones

➔ 47% increase in the number of 12th graders who earned an IRC (or TSA) from the prior school year – likely a reflection of expanded access to credential-bearing programs

➔ Steady expansion of employer participation and student interest in Registered Apprenticeship

2025 CTE Annual Report: Progress + Emerging Patterns

SY	IRC Completers	HSLRA Completers*	Graduates	45% Goal
23-24	4,674	44	57,759	**8%**
24-25	6,859	99	63,214	**11%**

While data systems are still being refined and policies go fully into effect in School Year 2025-2026, early indicators show measurable forward momentum toward the state's long-term workforce goals.

*The CTE Committee is using the number of 17-year-olds who enrolled in a Registered Apprenticeship in the 2024 calendar year as a proxy metric for progress toward the 45% goal. This metric is presently the best proxy for understanding how many high school students have completed a RA by graduation, as the number of 17-year-olds who registered to start an RA in 2024 are most likely to be graduating from high school and to have had time to complete the HSLRA 250 OJT/144 RI hour mandatory benchmarks by graduation.

2025 CTE Annual Report: Expert Review Team Visit Progress

SY24-25 Summary:
- 11 LEAs
- 18 schools
- 89 CTE ERT participants

Strengths of the ERT Visit Process:
- Information Gathering
- Unconventional Stakeholder Collaboration

Challenges of the ERT Visit Process:
- Staff Vacancies and Hiring Freeze
- Arduous Data Collection Process

Statewide Total

234

Counties in Red have been visited

Map labels:
- Garrett 2
- Allegany 4
- Washington 10
- Carroll 10
- Harford 11
- Cecil 6
- Frederick 13
- Baltimore County 27
- Baltimore City 24
- Howard 14
- Kent 1
- Queen Anne's 6
- Montgomery 28
- Anne Arundel 17
- Caroline 3
- Prince George's 25
- Talbot 2
- Calvert 5
- Charles 8
- Dorchester 3
- St. Mary's 5
- Wicomico 5
- Somerset 1
- Worcester 4

2025 CTE Annual Report: Key Observations from CTE ERT Visits

Regional Collaboration Matters

Neighboring districts with aligned industry partnerships and shared labor markets often show similar performance patterns, indicating opportunities for regional strategies.

Local Innovation is Strong

Many districts are developing creative approaches to work-based learning, employer engagement, and credential alignment that can inform statewide best practices.

LEA Capacity Varies

Larger districts often face coordination and scale challenges, while smaller districts may lack staffing or technical capacity - underscoring the need for differentiated support.

Data Systems Remain a Constraint

Varying definitions, reporting timelines, and data integration across agencies continue to limit the ability to fully measure progress toward *Blueprint* implementation.

2025 CTE Annual Report: Strengths + Related Best Practices Observed via CTE ERT Visits

➔ **Teacher Passion and Commitment to Students**: *At Baltimore County Public Schools, instructors conducted exit interviews with students to figure out how to make their curriculum more effective.*

➔ **Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) Participation:** *At Worcester County Public Schools, 41 students earned first-place in the SkillsUSA competition.*

➔ **Career Counseling Integration:** *At Montgomery County Public Schools, career coaches connect with "Career Champions", who are teachers and staff that act as champions for career advising, supporting students in navigating their post-graduation pathways.*

➔ **Regional LEA Collaborations for Community of Practice and Resources:** *In the Lower Shore, CTE administrators have regular meetings to discuss common challenges, which has led to CTE instructors also having regular meetings to talk about curriculum, apprenticeship opportunities, etc.*

➔ **Work-Based Learning and Student Club Participation:** *At Washington County Public Schools, students highlighted their successes, both in the classroom and in CTSO participation, during the Career Fair, helping potential employers overcome negative biases toward high school students' skill level.*

➔ **CTE Exploration Course and Program Design:** *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 for the CTE program.*

➔ **IRCs Are a Priority:** *Dorchester County Public Schools conducts annual audits to evaluate which programs to expand, sunset, or start, which has created a responsive system that adapts to evolving students' needs and interests and industry trends.*

➔ **School Districts as Apprenticeship Sponsors:** *At Montgomery County Public Schools, students who completed the Computer Science program could work alongside the school's IT department as an intern.*

2025 CTE Annual Report: Challenges + Related Best Practices Observed via CTE ERT Visits

Insufficient Space Available to Meet Program Demand: Many CTE programs that are primed to be the related instruction for a Registered Apprenticeship, such as those in electrical, nursing, and automotive tech, are often the ones that LEAs report are oversubscribed.

➔ *At Wicomico County Public Schools, students who are interested in the Computer Science, Cosmetology, and Culinary programs but are on the waitlist may apply for Twilight CTE, where they can earn CISCO, Nail Technology, and ServSafe certifications.*

Difficulty with Expansion of Registered Apprenticeship: Most of the LEAs visited to date by the CTE ERT do not have many students in a formal Registered Apprenticeship.

➔ *Somerset County Public Schools approved a new policy to allow students to leave school early for an apprenticeship or employment.*

Lack of Transportation to CTE Centers and Work-Based Learning: Every district is facing nuanced transportation-related issues. Rural, suburban, and urban districts all faced substantial challenges transporting students to CTE centers and to WBL opportunities.

➔ *Caroline County Public Schools used carryover career counseling funds to purchase a passenger van to transport students for career exploration/career coaching activities.*

Difficulty with Recruitment + Retention of Special Populations: Two categories of "Special Populations" (as defined by Perkins V) – students with disabilities and English learners – faced particular challenges with becoming college and career ready at LEAs across the state.

➔ *At Cecil County Public Schools, the Student Transition and Employability Program provides modified instruction to students with disabilities while aligning with competencies within the Maryland Career Development Framework.*

2025 CTE Annual Report: Looking Ahead

The CTE Committee has established the structures, partnerships, and shared vision necessary to move from planning to impact - ensuring that more students graduate prepared for college, career, and lifelong success.

With core frameworks and policies now in place, the next phase of work will focus on:

★ *Development of a Joint CTE Vision Implementation Plan*

★ *Strengthening statewide data systems to ensure accurate, timely, and comparable reporting*

★ *Supporting LEAs as they align programs with updated IRC and apprenticeship standards, course standards, and the Career Connected Learning system*

★ *Developing high-quality, employer-aligned career pathway maps that lead to family-sustaining careers*

★ *Using data to drive targeted technical assistance and continuous improvement*
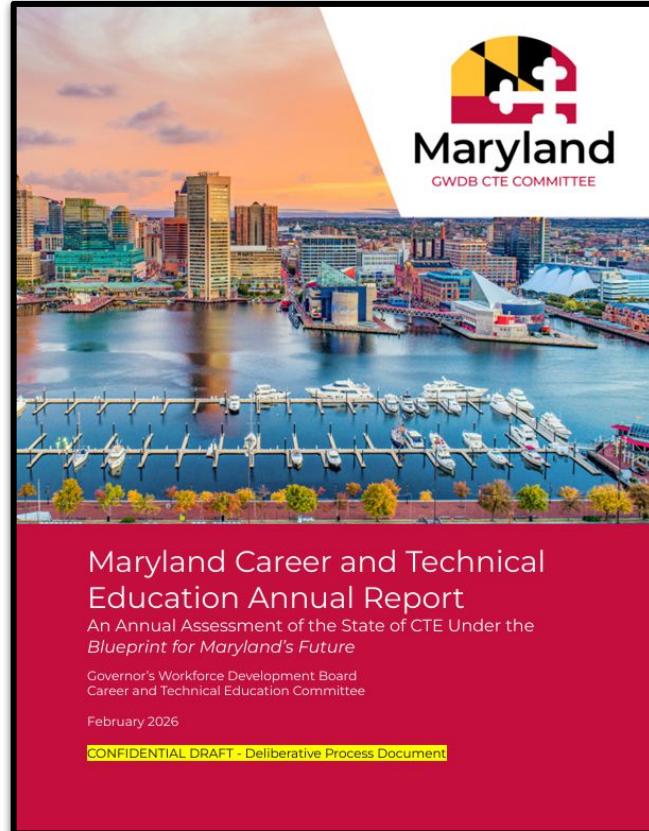
2025 CTE Annual Report Discussion

1. Were there any findings that surprised you, challenged your thinking, or raised questions about current policies or strategies?

2. Which current findings deserve further examination, and what supplemental data should the CTE ERT visit teams gather to provide that necessary clarity?

Motion to Approve

✓ CTE 2025 Annual Report

Maryland Career and Technical Education Annual Report

An Annual Assessment of the State of CTE Under the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*

Governor's Workforce Development Board
Career and Technical Education Committee

February 2026

CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT - Deliberative Process Document

Next Steps

Help us choose our 2026 meeting locations! Reach out to GWDB.CTE@maryland.gov with meeting location suggestions.

Save the Dates:
3/11/2026 - GWDB Quarterly Meeting
4/29/2026 - CTE Committee Meeting
6/10/2026 - GWDB Quarterly Meeting
6/24/2026 - CTE Committee Meeting
More information to follow via calendar invite and email.