

HARFORD COUNTY
CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING

May 12, 2026

8:00-9:45 AM

Attendees: LaWanda Brown, Mikale Brutus, Charlene Chester Jerome, Joe Connolly, Jeanne Donlick, Katie Eckstein, Savannah Feist, Matthew Gullion, Matt Johnstone, Rob Limpert, Erin Mock, Becky Pensero, Joni Poust, Wade Sewell, Andrew Thomson, and Kelly Zajicek

After opening remarks by Mr. Connolly, the prior meeting's minutes were approved with a motion by Mr. Sewell, seconded by Mr. Johnstone. The meeting's agenda was approved with a motion by Mr. Sewell, seconded by Mr. Limpert.

Ms. Pensero shared that 71 students took part in the Harford Youth Workforce Investment program this year, many of whom earned multiple certifications, 160 in total. Students are continuing to take the Microsoft certification exam, which will increase that number. For next year, there are 252 interested students, mostly focused on the Allied Health courses. An Allied Health testing day was held on a Saturday at HCC. Out of 175, only 33 qualified; students tend to struggle with the math portion of the AccuPlacer. The Allied Health lottery will take place later this week. All programs are budget contingent.

Mr. Johnstone said 332 students participated in the apprenticeship program last school year, currently 328 for this school year, even with one less staff member. Career navigators conduct all career counseling lessons in high schools in addition to coordinating apprenticeships. Next year, we will see a drop in apprenticeship numbers due to Career-Connected Learning increasing school-based enterprises and internships, but an overall increase of participation in work-based learning activities. A Fallston student was recently spotlighted for his apprenticeship; through the IBEW, he is engaged in a 4-year program which, if completed, will earn him \$50 per hour as a journeyman electrician. He is in his first year of the program.

Mrs. Eckstein provided an update on results of CAC input related to the HCC and HCPS calendar gaps for dual enrollment students. Unfortunately, neither calendar can be altered. However, based on group suggestions, a menu-style list of options has been created to fill the weeks between HCC's semesters; these are all valuable teaching tools already being used, but will be shifted to different times in the school year. This includes mock interviews and guest speakers through the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education's Speakers Bureau. MBRT vets speakers for schools- getting individuals who are experts in their fields, ensuring they can explain their work to students in a clear and engaging way, and handling background checks and other security items prior to sending them into schools.

According to the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, the CTE department is doing well on paper with the state's goals and targets. Math is the only area with a shortfall; supports and professional development sessions over the next year will look closely at math connections. We

will continue to partner with the math office on crosswalk work related to standards. The focus will be on aligning our concepts/skills to how they are taught in math. MSDE's standard for 4-year graduation rates for CTE is 96; we are currently at 100%. RELA target rate is 45%, we are at 70%. The state target for math is 49%, but we are currently falling short at 29%.

90% of students are enrolled, employed, or enlisted within two quarters of graduation per the data we receive. In September and October, we have 27 events scheduled. We are moving forward with adding a Law Enforcement magnet program at Harford Tech, which will differ from Joppatowne's Homeland Security program in that students from the whole county are able to apply for and enroll in this program. An advisory committee will be formed to guide what should be included and taught. The team had a good meeting with correctional facilities employees on hiring standards and procedures. There are 27 events, including open houses and magnet information nights, scheduled for September and October. Due to programs of study changes, we will examine where higher course level work can be moved down to earlier core courses.

Mr. Thomson shared that the team has been working on a full-year computer science course at the middle school level to move the required technology credit down to 8th grade. They are now rehashing the engineering curriculum; we currently use PLTW, which is expensive, especially with frequent changes and training needed. Changing curriculum will allow us to hit all standards, not just the ones PLTW focuses on. 7th is shifting slightly to line up with programs of study. Updated curriculum will roll out next year for 6th and 7th grades, 8th the following year. We will continue to use PLTW at high school level.

Mr. Connolly believes that there will be a greater focus on internships with CCL beginning, which will necessitate having one career navigator per high school. Students will gravitate toward school-based enterprises and internships since there are not many open positions for students, and transportation will not be a barrier. This will also fill open slots in students' schedules. There will be no new staff positions in CTE, two positions were lost, but no teachers were lost.

School year 25-26 Perkins fund will be 95% spent after the current open transaction. The remainder will be spent before June 30th. Requests for the 26-27 Perkins have been received and reviewed, and the approved ones will be submitted this Friday. The approved purchases are based on what will assist us in aligning to the new programs of study guides, increase CTE participation, and help students attain IRCs. Three focuses for next year's school-based enterprises: Harford Tech-Printing & Graphics; North Harford: plant sales, dog grooming; Possibly Havre de Grace: spirit wear store. Through a partnership with APG, students can participate in an internship in cyber security. Other students can intern with our athletic directors to learn more about this role.

Over the summer, CTE will have planning time to further develop the Academy of Finance courses. AP Computer Science teachers will be given time to work on math curriculum since they tend to teach these courses.

Several committee member seats are coming open. The application is open until 5/22 on HCPS's website. Current members are encouraged to complete the ballot to vote for new members. Next year's meeting dates are forthcoming.

Ms. Mock shared that Cosmetology renovations are beginning this month. The new teacher for Printing & Graphics has been hired for next year; they are waiting for HR to complete background checks on the new carpentry teacher. Neither person has a teaching certificate; Harford Tech looks for technical certification, and the teachers have 5 years to earn their teaching certificate.

Ms. Zajicek said that HYWI certificates are being delivered over the next two weeks. We had 68 students in 7 programs in the fall, and 2 small open enrollment and Allied Health groups in the spring. Next year's lotteries are completed, and students are being informed of next steps; enrollment will end with HCPS's school year. Tentative orientation dates: 9/9 and 9/10, with courses beginning 9/14. Two sessions of Summer Career Exploration will be held offering Animal Care, HVAC & Electrical, Carpentry, Childcare, Culinary, and Financial Literacy.

Mr. Connolly said Joppatowne gave juniors the LAPSEN exam for the first time, and 13/17 students passed. The seniors will take it as well, since vouchers are still available. Most high schools gave the OSHA 30 test this year as well, with great success. The Entrepreneurship & Small Business and Cisco Certified Support Technician exams will likely be given as well.

Mrs. Donlick shared that 87% of seniors have earned an IRC; not all areas have IRCs, but 98% of seniors will have an IRC or articulation. Harford Tech will start OSHA 30 next year.

Mr. Gullion's daughter came to Harford Tech's culinary program as a sophomore and took 9th & 10th grade technical area courses at the same time. She'll be studying business at college next year, where she will work with the college's 3rd party caterer, likely as a food manager.

Mrs. Chester-Jerome and Mrs. Eckstein will work together on career program collaborations between Howard University and HCPS. They have international internships that we can make students aware of and get them interested in before they begin college. Howard University can organize visits so students can learn more about available programs and internships at Howard.

Mrs. Poust informed the committee that the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute representative visited all 10 high schools this year, and there has been a lot of student interest.

Mrs. Brutus shared that APG will hold their summer camp for students entering 5th through 8th grades; they are unable to bring back Rise program because they need more stability with staff to run their programs.

At 9:10 AM, Mr. Connolly adjourned the meeting.