



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

North Carolina Education and Workforce
Innovation Commission Grants

§ 115C-64.15.

Date Due: April 30, 2026
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2025-2026

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION

Every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction is to use their constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right to a public education for every student in North Carolina and to support public school units in providing every student an excellent education that prepares them for success in their next phase of life.

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LEGISLATION

COMBINING OF THE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INNOVATION COMMISSION GRANT PROGRAMS – SESSION LAW 2023-24

§ 115C-64.15

SECTION 7.43. ARTICLE 6C OF CHAPTER 115C OF THE GENERAL STATUTES READS AS REWRITTEN:

“Article 6C.

“Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program.”

§ 115C-64.15. North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Commission.

- a) There is created the North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Commission (Commission). The Commission shall be located administratively in the Department of Public Instruction but shall exercise all its prescribed powers independently of the Department of Public Instruction. Of the funds appropriated for the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program established under G.S. 115C-64.16, up to ten percent (10%) of those funds each fiscal year may be used by the Department of Public Instruction to provide technical assistance and administrative assistance, including staff, to the Commission and for reimbursements and expenses for the Commission for the Education and Workforce Innovation Program ~~and the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion and CTE Grade Expansion Program.~~
- b) The Commission shall consist of the following 14 members:
 - (1) The Secretary of Commerce or his or her designee.
 - (2) The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or his or her designee.
 - (3) The Chair of the State Board of Education or his or her designee.
 - (4) The President of the University of North Carolina or his or her designee.
 - (5) The President of the North Carolina Community College System or his or her designee.
 - (6) Three members appointed by the Governor who have experience in education.
 - (7) Three members appointed by the House of Representatives, as provided by G.S. 120-121, who have experience in businesses operating in North Carolina.
 - (8) Three members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, as provided in G.S. 120-121, who have experience in businesses operating in North Carolina.
 - Members appointed by the Governor or the General Assembly shall serve for three-year terms commencing July 1 of the year of appointment and may serve successive terms.
- c) The Commission members shall elect a chair from the membership of the Commission. The Commission shall meet at least three times annually on the call of the Chair or as additionally provided by the Commission. A quorum is six members of the Commission. Members may not ~~send designees to Commission meetings nor may they~~ vote by proxy.
- d) The Commission shall develop and administer the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program, as established under G.S. 115C-64.16, in collaboration with the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., and make awards of grants under the Program.

- (1) ~~The Commission shall develop and administer, in coordination with the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and in collaboration with the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Program, as established under G.S. 115C-64.17, and shall make awards of grants under the Program.~~
- (2) The North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., shall ~~serve as a grant administrator by providing~~ provide assistance and support to grantees for initiating, expanding, improving, and promoting career and technical education initiatives.
- e) ~~The Commission, in consultation with the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc.,~~ Commission shall publish a report on the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program and the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Program on or before April 30 of each year. The report shall be submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education/Higher Education, the House Appropriations Committee on Education, the Fiscal Research Division, the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the State Board of Education, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina. The report shall include at least all of the following information:
- (1) An accounting of how funds and personnel resources were utilized for ~~each~~ the program and their impact on student achievement, retention, and employability.
 - (2) Recommended statutory and policy changes.
 - (3) Recommendations for improvement of ~~each~~ the program.
 - (4) For the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Program, Grants, recommendations on increasing availability of grants after the first two years of the ~~program~~ to include additional local school administrative ~~units~~ units, charter schools, or providing additional grants to prior recipients.

BACKGROUND

The North Carolina Education and Workforce Innovation Program was established in the 2013 Legislative Session to support local education agencies undertaking innovative projects that would directly result in more students graduating college and career ready. The goals of the Education and Workforce Innovation Program include the following :

- a) Align public schools with business and industry and colleges/universities;
- b) Provide greater choice for parents/guardians among high-quality public education options;
- c) Enhance teacher and principal effectiveness;
- d) Ensure all students possess job-ready skills; and
- e) Leverage technology to accelerate student and teacher learning.

The Education and Workforce Innovation Program established by statute is a \$2 million annual fund to support schools, districts, and regions undertaking work in service of the goals listed above.

- a) Primary measurable outcomes of the program will include:
- b) Evidence of industry valued skills among students;
- c) Decreased time-to-degree;

- d) Increased rate at which students gain academic college credit and/or workforce credentials;
- e) Evidence of explicit partnerships with business and industry;
- f) Positive placement of every student upon graduation in continuing education or employment; and
- g) Evidence of alignment across K-12 and colleges and universities.

The Education and Workforce Innovation Program’s competitive grant fund is administered by the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission (hereafter, “the Commission”) and housed administratively in the Department of Public Instruction. This work was transferred to the Department of Public Instruction in July 2017. Members appointed to the Commission include a variety of individuals listed on the next page.

§ 115C-64.16. THE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INNOVATION PROGRAM AND CTE GRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM; INNOVATION GRANTS

(a) Program Establishment. – There is established the Education and Workforce Innovation and CTE Grade Expansion Program (Program) to foster innovation in education that will lead to more students graduating career and college ready. and to prioritize the inclusion of students in sixth and seventh grades through grant awards provided to selected local school administrative units and charter schools.

(1) Types of Grant Awards. – Funds appropriated to the Program shall be used to award competitive grants depending on the needs of the State, as determined by the Commission, by dividing the grants between each type as innovation grants pursuant to the provisions of this section or as grants for grade expansion for career and technical education pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 115C-64.17.

(2) Innovation Grants. - Competitive grants shall be awarded to an a charter school, an individual school, school a local school administrative unit, a local school administrative unit, or a regional partnership of more than one local school administrative unit to advance comprehensive, high-quality education that equips teachers and other hired personnel with the knowledge and skill required to succeed with all students. Before receiving an innovation grant, applicants must meet all of the following conditions:

- a. Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with either a public or private university or a community college.
- b. Form a partnership, for the purposes of the grant, with regional businesses and business leaders.
- c. Demonstrate the ability to sustain innovation once grant funding ends.

(b) Applicant Categories and Specific Requirements. – Requirements for Innovation Grants. –

(1) Individual schools. – ~~Individual public schools~~ Charter schools and individual public schools in local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:

- a. Partnerships with business and industry to determine the skills and competencies needed for students' transition into growth sectors of the regional economy.
- b. Aligned pathways to employment, including students' acquisition of college credit or industry recognized credentials.
- c. Development of systems, infrastructure, capacity, and culture to enable teachers and school leaders to continuously focus on improving individual student achievement.

(2) Local school administrative units. – Local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:

- a. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation.
- b. Appointment of a senior leader to manage and sustain the change process with a specific focus on providing parents with a portfolio of meaningful options among schools.

(3) Regional partnerships of two or more local school administrative units. – Partnerships of two or more local school administrative units must demonstrate all of the following in their applications:

- a. Implementation of resources of partnered local school administrative units in creating a tailored workforce development system for the regional economy and fostering innovation in each of the partnered local school administrative units.
- b. Promotion of the development of knowledge and skills in career clusters of critical importance to the region.
- c. Benefits of the shared strengths of local businesses and higher education.
- d. Usage of technology to deliver instruction over large geographic regions and build networks with industry.
- e. Implementation of comprehensive reform and innovation that can be replicated in other local school administrative units.

(c) Consideration of Factors in Awarding of Innovation Grants. – All applications must include information on at least the following in order to be considered for an innovation grant:

- (1) Describe the aligned pathways from school to high-growth careers in regional economies.
- (2) Leverage technology to efficiently and effectively drive teacher and principal development, connect students and teachers to online courses and resources, and foster virtual learning communities among faculty, higher education partners, and business partners.
- (3) Establish a comprehensive approach to enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators to successfully implement the proposed innovative program and to graduate all students ready for work and college.

(4) Link to a proven provider of professional development services for teachers and administrators capable of providing evidence-based training and tools aligned with the goals of the proposed innovative program.

(5) Form explicit partnerships with businesses and industry, which may include business advisory councils, internship programs, and other customized projects aligned with relevant workforce skills.

(6) Partner with community colleges or public or private universities to enable communities to challenge every student to graduate with workplace credentials or college credit.

(7) Align K-12 and postsecondary instruction and performance expectations to reduce the need for college remediation courses.

(8) Secure input from parents to foster broad ownership for school choice options and to foster greater understanding of the need for continued education beyond high school.

(9) Provide a description of the funds that will be used and a proposed budget for five years.

(10) Describe the source of matching funds required in subsection (d) of this section.

(11) Establish a strategy to achieve meaningful analysis of program outcomes due to the receipt of grant funds under this section.

(d) ~~Matching Private and Local Funds.~~— Funds for Innovation Grants. All innovation grant applicants must match fifty percent (50%) of all State dollars. Matching funds shall not include other State funds. Matching funds may include in-kind contributions.

(e) Awards for Innovation Grants. – Any innovation grants awarded by the Commission may be spent over a five-year period from the initial award. Grants may be awarded for new or existing projects. Grant funds shall not revert but shall be available until expended.

(f) Innovation Grant Recipient Reporting Requirements. – No later than September 1 of each year, an innovation grant recipient shall submit to the Commission an annual report for the preceding grant year that describes the academic progress made by the students and the implementation of program initiatives.

§ 115C-64.17. THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION GRADE EXPANSION PROGRAM.GRANTS

(a) ~~Program Establishment.~~— CTE Grade Expansion Grants. – ~~There is established the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Program (Program) to expand Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion grants shall be awarded under the Program for the purpose of expanding career and technical education (CTE) programs by prioritizing the inclusion of students in sixth and seventh grade through grant awards provided to selected local school administrative units and charter schools for up to seven years. Funds appropriated for the Program Grant funds shall be allocated to selected local school administrative units and charter schools as competitive grants of (i) up to seven hundred thousand dollars (\$700,000) for the 2017–2018 fiscal year and (ii)~~

grants, to the extent funds are available, of up to one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for the 2018-2019 fiscal year and subsequent fiscal years. Grant funds shall be used only for employing additional licensed personnel in career and technical education areas, career development coordination areas, and support service areas necessary for expanding the CTE program to sixth and seventh grade students. ~~The funds may be used for CTE programs at one or more schools in the local school administrative unit.~~ For a local school administrative unit, the funds may be used for CTE programs at one or more schools in the unit. Grant funds allocated to the local school administrative unit or charter school each fiscal year ~~under the Program~~ shall not revert but shall be available for the purpose of the grant program until expended.

(b) Consideration of Factors in Awarding of CTE Grade Expansion Grants. – Local school administrative units and charter schools applying for ~~the Program~~ CTE grade expansion grants shall submit an application that includes at least the following information:

(1) A plan for expansion of the CTE program to sixth and seventh grade students, including the specific programs that will be expanded, the significance of CTE in the local school administrative unit, unit or charter school, and how a grade expansion would enhance the education program and the community.

(2) A request for the amount of funds, a description of how the funds will be used, and any other sources of funds available to accomplish the purposes of this program.

(3) A proposed budget for seven years that provides detail on the use of the amount of funds to add personnel, increase career development efforts, and provide support services.

(4) A strategy to achieve meaningful analysis of program outcomes due to the receipt of grant funds under this section.

(c) Selection of CTE Grade Expansion Grant Recipients. – For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the Commission shall accept applications for a grant until November 30, 2017. For subsequent fiscal years that funds are made available for the ~~Program~~, CTE grade expansion grants, the Commission shall accept applications for a grant until August 1 of each year. The Commission shall consult with the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Foundation, Inc., to select recipients in a manner that considers diversity among the pool of applicants, including geographic location, location of industries in the area in which a local school administrative unit or charter school is located, and the size of the student population served by the unit, or charter school in order to award funds to the extent possible to grant recipients that represent different regions and characteristics of the State. The Commission shall recommend recipients of the grants to the State Board of Education. The State Board, upon consultation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall approve the recipients of grant awards.

(d) Allocation of Funds. – Of the funds available for the Program in each fiscal year, the Commission shall first allocate funds to applicants who received grant funds for the prior fiscal year for up to seven years. After funds are allocated to prior fiscal year grant recipients, any remaining funds may be used by the Commission to select new grant recipients. recipients, as provided in G.S. 115C-64.16(a1). ~~The Commission, in consultation with the Superintendent of Public~~

~~Instruction~~, Commission shall establish rules regarding any requirements for grant recipients to continue eligibility to receive funds each fiscal year, including timely and accurate reporting as required under subsection (e) of this section.

(e) Reporting Requirements. – No later than August 1 of each year, for up to seven years after the initial grant award, a grant recipient shall submit to the Department of Public Instruction, Local Planning Systems Regional Services staff within the Division of Career and Technical Education, an annual report for the preceding year in which CTE grade expansion grant funds were expended that provides at least the following information on the program for sixth and seventh grade students:

- (1) The use of grant funds, including the CTE programs and courses that have been expanded in the local school administrative unit or charter school to include sixth and seventh grade students.
- (2) The number of students enrolled in CTE courses as part of the expansion.
- (3) The number of students who subsequently enrolled in CTE courses in high school.
- (4) The number of students who subsequently participated in internships, cooperative education, or apprenticeship programs.
- (5) The number of students who subsequently earned (i) college credit and (ii) approved industry certification and credentials.
- (6) Any other information the Division of Career and Technical Education deems necessary.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a report to the Commission by October 15 of each year based on the information reported to the Local Planning Systems Regional Services staff under this subsection, including how the grant recipients compare to CTE programs statewide and whether the programs are aligned with the Master Plan for Career and Technical Education adopted by the State Board. (2017-57, s. 7.23F(b); 2017-212, s. 2.2.)

Education and Workforce Innovation Commission Members		
Name	Title	Appointing or Designating Office
Dr. DeSandra Washington	Vice President for Academic Support Services and Civic Engagement, Fayetteville Technical Community College	Appointed by The Office of the Governor
Tamika Kelly	President, North Carolina Association of Educators	Appointed by The Office of the Governor
Dr. Jairo McMican	Associate Director of Equitable Programming and Holistic Student Support at Achieving the Dream	Appointed by The Office of the Governor
Richard L. Purcell	Associate Director, University Instructors	Appointed by The Speaker of the NC House of Representatives
Paul F. Worley	VP of Workforce Development and Chief Operations Office	Appointed by The Speaker of the NC House of Representatives
Rachelle "Shelley" R. Wolford	Chief People Officer, Golden Corral Corporation	Appointed by The Speaker of the NC House of Representatives
Stephen Griffin	President, Insurance Peoples of NC	Appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the NC Senate
Randall "Randy" Burns	Senior Executive Director for Campus Centers, Catawba Valley Community College	Appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the NC Senate
Satish Garimella	Council Member, Town of Morrisville	Appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the NC Senate
Dr. Annie Izod (Designee for Lee Lilley)	Executive Director of the NC Works Commission	The North Carolina Secretary of Commerce, Lee Lilley, or Designee
Kathie Sidner (Designee for Peter Hans)	Director for Workforce and Partnerships	The President of the University of North Carolina, Peter Hans, or Designee
Vacant	The President of the North Carolina Community College System	The President of the North Carolina Community College System, Dr. Jeffrey A. Cox, or Designee
Rupen R. Fofaria (Designee for Eric Davis)	Director, Board of Operations and Policy, North Carolina State Board of Education	The Chair of the NC State Board of Education, Eric C. Davis, or Designee
Angela LeMay (Designee for Mo Green)	Assistant Director, Office of Career and Technical Education, NC Department of Public Instruction	The State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Maurice Green, or Designee

2024-25 EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INNOVATION GRANT RECIPIENTS		
SBE Region	Applicant Name	Funding Amount
Northwest	Alexander County Schools	\$60,000.00
Southeast	Duplin County Schools - Wallace Rose High School	\$40,000.00
Western	Haywood County Schools	\$60,000.00
Northeast	Hyde County Schools	\$60,000.00
Western	Jackson County Public Schools - Blue Ridge Early College	\$50,000.00
Western	Macon County Schools	\$60,000.00
Northwest	McDowell County Schools	\$60,000.00
Southwest	Mountain Island Charter	\$60,000.00
North Central	North East Carolina Preparatory School	\$60,000.00
Sandhills	Public Schools of Robeson County - Purnell Swett High	\$60,000.00
Piedmont-Triad	Randolph County School System	\$60,000.00
Piedmont-Triad	Rockingham County Schools	\$60,000.00
Northeast	Tyrrell County Schools	\$60,000.00
Northeast	Washington County Schools	\$60,000.00
Northwest	Wilkes County Schools - Wilkes Central High School	\$60,000.00
Northwest	Alexander County Schools	\$60,000.00
Southeast	Duplin County Schools - Wallace Rose High School	\$40,000.00

2024-25 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION GRADE EXPANSION GRANT RECIPIENTS		
SBE Region	Applicant Name	Funding Amount
Northwest	Alexander County Schools	\$50,000.00
Northwest	Alleghany County Schools	\$50,000.00
Southeast	Brunswick County Schools	\$50,000.00
Southeast	Carteret County Public Schools	\$50,000.00
Sandhills	Cumberland County Schools	\$49,500.00
Northeast	Currituck County Schools	\$50,000.00
Piedmont-Triad	Elkin City Schools	\$50,000.00
North Central	Franklin County Schools	\$49,934.00
Northwest	Hickory City Schools	\$50,000.00
Northeast	Hyde County Schools	\$50,000.00
Southwest	Jackson Day School	\$50,000.00
Southeast	Lenoir County Public Schools	\$50,000.00
Northeast	Martin County Schools	\$50,000.00
Northwest	McDowell County Schools	\$50,000.00
Piedmont-Triad	Mount Airy City Schools	\$50,000.00
Southwest	Mountain Island Charter	\$50,000.00
Southeast	New Hanover County Schools	\$50,000.00
North Central	North East Carolina Preparatory School	\$45,000.00
Southeast	Pender County Schools	\$50,000.00
Sandhills	Public Schools of Robeson County	\$50,000.00
Piedmont-Triad	Randolph County School System	\$50,000.00
Northeast	Roanoke Rapids City Schools	\$50,000.00
Piedmont-Triad	Rockingham County Schools	\$50,000.00
North Central	Rocky Mount Preparatory	\$50,000.00
Sandhills	Sampson County Schools	\$50,000.00

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE INNOVATION PROGRAM LOCAL REPORTS

Alexander County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

The From Classroom to Career: Family & Consumer Science (FACS) Work-Based Learning Initiative was developed to expand and enhance work-based learning opportunities for students at Alexander Central High School (ACHS) and Alexander Early College (AEC), with a focus on the Human Services career pathways of Early Childhood Development and Food & Nutrition. The initiative was designed to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application, equipping students with relevant, hands-on experiences aligned with current industry standards. One major component of the program focused on strengthening the Early Childhood Education pathway by providing student interns with the opportunity to help design and implement developmentally appropriate activities for the school-based childcare center, affectionately known as “Baby Cougars.” This aspect of the initiative allowed students to gain practical experience working directly with young children, using professional materials and planning activities that support physical, emotional, and cognitive development.

The second major component of the initiative focused on transforming the Food & Nutrition classrooms into modern, industry-aligned culinary learning environments. With grant funding, outdated equipment and furnishings were replaced with commercial-grade appliances, including stainless steel workspaces, commercial refrigerators, sinks, and other essential upgrades. These enhancements were intended not only to improve the functionality and safety of the instructional space but also to provide students with exposure to the types of tools, layouts, and workflows they will encounter in professional culinary settings. By working in an environment that mirrors real-world kitchens, students are better prepared to develop technical skills, understand industry expectations, and transition more confidently into culinary and hospitality careers.

The overall goals of the program were to increase student participation in internships, job shadowing, and other work-based learning experiences; to enhance the quality and impact of the Early Childhood Education program through enriched instructional materials and environments; and to modernize the Food & Nutrition classrooms to better prepare students for career success. The program was designed to be implemented over three years. In the first year, planning and purchasing of new equipment and materials took place. The second year we plan to focus on expanding student work-based learning placements and integrating new resources into instructional settings. Hopefully for the third year we will have full integration of all enhancements, with an emphasis on evaluating student outcomes and ensuring ongoing alignment with workforce demands. Overall, the initiative was envisioned as both innovative and transformative, offering students a direct connection between their classroom experiences and future career opportunities.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

During the grant period, the program made strong progress in supporting student academic growth, career readiness, and leadership development at Alexander Central High School. One major focus was expanding work-based learning opportunities, with 89 students completing internships—40 in the fall of 2024 and 49 in the spring of 2025—at local businesses, childcare centers, and health organizations. In addition, 11 students took part in job shadowing experiences at schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and government offices, gaining valuable hands-on insight into various careers. While Alexander Early College did not offer internships or job shadowing in the 2024-25 school year, presentations were made to all 10th and 11th graders in the spring of 2025 before enrollment meetings to raise awareness and build interest, setting the stage for future involvement. Students who participated in these experiences developed important career skills, built professional habits, and gained confidence.

Compared to their peers, they showed stronger communication, problem-solving abilities, and a clearer sense of their career goals.

At the same time, the program helped students earn industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate their knowledge and career readiness. In the Early Childhood pathway, 22 students earned First Aid/CPR certification and 20 earned the NC Early Childhood Credential during the 2024–2025 school year. In the Foods and Nutrition pathway, 127 students received their Food Handler certification, while 21 earned the more advanced Food Safety Manager credential. These accomplishments not only validate what students are learning in the classroom but also prepare them for real-world job opportunities.

Leadership development also grew through the revival of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter. After being re-established in 2023–2024, FCCLA experienced increased student involvement the following year, with seven students competing at the 2024–2025 FCCLA State Conference—marking the first time Alexander Central students had ever competed at the state level. They earned notable awards, including 2nd place in the Sports Nutrition Team event and 2nd and 5th place in Early Childhood competitions. FCCLA sponsors and state-level winners were recognized at a school board meeting, helping highlight and promote this expansion in CTE, which was made possible through EWIF grant funding. These achievements underscore members' growth in leadership, confidence, and academic ambition. Compared to students who did not participate, FCCLA members demonstrated higher levels of initiative and responsibility, reflecting the program's positive impact. Moving forward, tracking student participation and accomplishments will support continued improvement in academic and career outcomes for all students.

Activities Accomplished:

In the Foods and Nutrition program, 264 students were enrolled across three course levels—157 in Foods I, 90 in Foods II, and 17 in Foods Advanced Studies—supported by three full-time Foods teachers. The Early Childhood Education pathway, led by one teacher, also showed solid participation, with 41 students in Early Childhood I, 14 in Early Childhood II, and 11 children enrolled in the on-site Baby Cougars preschool. A full time daycare teacher was employed through private pay tuition funds for the daycare students. Early Childhood I and II students gained hands-on experience through scheduled internship time in the campus daycare, while five high school interns provided direct instructional support, gaining valuable real-world teaching skills.

Credential attainment remained a key indicator of success. In the Foods pathway, 127 students earned their Food Handler certification, while 21 earned the more advanced Food Safety Manager credential. In the Early Childhood pathway, 22 students earned First Aid/CPR certification, and 20 earned the NC Early Childhood Credential—credentials that directly support student readiness for employment or further education in their respective fields.

A major highlight for 2024–2025 was the reorganization and expansion of the school's Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) with the revival of the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapter. In 2023–2024, staff attended training and a small group of students met occasionally with sponsors. Building on that foundation, 2024–2025 brought regional professional

development for sponsors, the initiation of student officers, regular meetings, community service projects, and preparation for state-level competitions. Seven members went on to compete at the FCCLA State Conference—the first time Alexander Central had competed at the state level— with three teams placing in the top five in the state. This achievement reflects the quality of the program and the dedication of its students and sponsors, which was made possible with EWIF funding for travel and PD expenses.

To ensure instructional quality remains high, all FACS teachers were provided with professional development opportunities. FACS staff attended regional PD on best practices and business visits and one Foods teacher participated in an externship experience, spending time learning with a nutritionist, caterer, and restaurant owner. Notably, three Foods teachers attended The Science of Food: Safety, Systems, and Health training through NCCAT at Ocracoke, returning with valuable resources to integrate into their classrooms. Online training was also made available in key areas such as food safety, daycare certification, and safety protocols, ensuring instructors stay current with industry expectations.

Grant funds supported meaningful expansions in program quality and student opportunity. In the Foods/Hospitality pathways, investments were made in upgrading kitchen equipment and modernizing instructional materials to ensure alignment with current industry trends, improving both the learning experience and students' preparedness for careers. To support real-world learning, funds also helped provide essential resources for internship placements and field-based experiences. Foods students toured the Culinary Arts program at Wilkes Community College, where they explored commercial kitchen operations, worked alongside current college students making homemade pizzas, and learned about culinary career paths. Early Childhood students visited the Lucy Brock Child Development Laboratory at Appalachian State University—a professional training site for early childhood educators and used their observations and research from this experience on future tasks of designing and updating outdoor play areas for our onsite daycare. In addition to field trips, students benefited from guest speakers who brought industry knowledge into the classroom. Presenters included behavioral specialists from the local Partnership for Children, a preschool behavior interventionist, a school cafeteria manager discussing food safety, a local nutrition drink business owner covering entrepreneurship and wellness, an expert on food allergies, and a specialist in elderly nutrition and foodservice.

Overall, the program initiatives were successfully implemented, as evidenced by high student enrollment, strong credential achievement, expanded hands-on learning, and enhanced teacher training. These outcomes reflect a well-rounded approach that prepares students not only for academic success but also for meaningful careers in early childhood education and culinary arts.

Duplin County Schools – Wallace Rose High School

Goal of Grant Program:

The grant was funded to revolutionize Agricultural Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses at Wallace-Rose Hill High School by integrating drone technology. The initiative aims to enhance precision agriculture education, equipping students with cutting-edge skills and knowledge essential for

modern agricultural practices which aligns perfectly with the district's STEAMA focus. The last "A" in STEAMA represents agriculture, and this initiative will address local, state, and national business and industry needs through powerful partnerships. The STEAMA model contributes to a growing economy and better prepared workforce by engaging all students in pathways with purpose, increasing their chances of being connected to school and thus graduating on-time ready for prosperous careers and college experiences. By leveraging drones, we will bring innovative, hands-on learning experiences that align with industry advancements and address regional agricultural needs.

Incorporating drones into the existing agriculture education courses will enhance the curriculum with drone technology and emerging careers. The agriculture department will integrate drones into existing CTE courses to provide students with practical experience in crop monitoring, soil analysis, marketing strategies, and precision farming techniques. In addition, the program will create engaging curriculum projects that utilize drone technology for real-world applications, such as aerial surveys and data-driven agricultural decision-making.

The implementation of this unique application and partnership will provide innovative hands-on learning opportunities for students, staff, and partners. Student work will implement drone-based field projects where they can conduct aerial assessments, collect data, and analyze agricultural conditions, bridging theoretical knowledge with practical skills. Heightened Data Analysis Skills will take the forefront as instructors teach students how to interpret drone-collected data using GIS and other analytical tools to make informed decisions about crop management and field optimization.

The Wallace-Rose Hill High School agriculture department is composed of two teachers who have less than 5 years of educational experience but a wealth of knowledge and desire to provide the utmost unique experience for students. The utilization of the agriculture program will demonstrate these teachers' skills and breadth of agricultural knowledge by empowering them. A key element will be ensuring teachers are offered comprehensive training to effectively integrate drone technology into their teaching, including appropriate equipment training, license and operator preparation and acquisition, hands-on workshops, and ongoing technical support. Grant funding, partnership support, and CTE will supply educators with the necessary drones, software, and instructional materials to enhance their teaching and facilitate student learning.

As student interest and program growth occurs over five years it is anticipated that CTE Drone courses will be integrated into the program and pathway offerings. This will provide enhanced career exploration for students.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

During this reporting period, the program has successfully achieved all timeline goals for the 2024–2025 academic year. Notably, the foundational steps for enhancing student academic progress in agricultural education have been accomplished through strategic investments and professional development. All required drone equipment has been purchased, and teachers are enrolled in FAA Remote Pilot Certification and drone training to be completed in the summer of 2025. These actions are directly aligned with integrating precision agriculture into the curriculum.

As a result of these efforts, the agriculture program has seen a 10% increase in student enrollment for the 2025–2026 school year. This growth reflects a measurable positive impact on student engagement and interest in STEM-related agricultural pathways. While full academic outcomes will be more accurately assessed after curriculum implementation and teacher certification, the enrollment increase

provides early evidence of improved student academic interest and projected achievement. This trend is significant when compared to previous years where enrollment in the program remained static, demonstrating the influence of program enhancements on student academic direction and choices.

Activities Accomplished:

Significant progress has been made in implementing key program initiatives aligned with the integration of precision agriculture into the existing Agriculture Education curriculum. One instructor has enrolled in the ADVANCE Precision Agriculture Program with Virginia Tech University, scheduled for summer 2025. This training includes a series of pre-training sessions and support meetings, ensuring the instructor is well-prepared for the intensive week-long program.

Instructor involvement in selecting and purchasing instructional materials has been critical to program success. Teachers participated directly in identifying the appropriate drones, software, and hardware necessary to meet the instructional goals for precision agriculture, ensuring that investments were aligned with instructional needs and technological relevance.

The impact of these initiatives is already evident, as reflected by a 10% increase in enrollment for the 2025–2026 academic year. This growth signals strong student interest and engagement driven by the program's new technological direction.

Looking ahead, instructors will work during summer 2025—after completing their training—to establish specific curriculum goals. These goals are expected to ensure that at least 15% of the Agriculture Education curriculum reflects precision agriculture content and practices. This deliberate and strategic approach reflects both strong progress and a sustainable plan for continued implementation and growth.

Haywood County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

- Career Exploration Opportunities-
 - provide hands-on work experience and reinforce career alignment through real-world job exposure.
- Career Exploration and Assessments-
 - Use of cutting-edge tools for career assessments, guiding students toward personalized career paths
 - Workplace Communication workshop: enhance interpersonal communication skills in the workplace.
- Job Skill Development:
 - Create a LinkedIn account, local government, and small business tours to expose students to local career options and public service pathways
- Partnership with Haywood Community College:
 - Entrepreneurship Workshop-expo to business creation, innovation, self-employment, and connection to local small businesses.

- Haywood Community College Tours and completion of financial aid and college application
- Financial Literacy Sessions
 - Help students develop an understanding of personal finance, budgeting, and long-term financial planning.
- STEM Career Exploration-
 - BMW manufacturing tour-advanced manufacturing and engineering environment
- College Admissions and Financial Aid
 - Haywood Community College Application and completion of FAFSA

Academic Progress Made by Students:

- 12 students engaged in a paid internship aligned with their career goals
- 12 students completed required Manpower applications and onboarding, preparing students for professional expectations and accountability in a real-world work environment
- Eleven students completed the Skills to Succeed Academy by Accenture. They earned the certificate(Skills to Succeed Academy, a globally recognized online training program focused on digital career readiness, workplace communication, and professional skills aligned with pathways).
- Twelve students completed the Career Coach Assessment, which helps students identify career interests and local in-demand occupations through a Holland-coded data-driven career assessment.
- 12 students attended the Resume Workshop and created a resume in NCWorks-career readiness and connection to local Career Works
- 8 students participated in the Financial Literacy session at Southwest Community College
- 8 students attended the LinkedIn presentation and created a LinkedIn account
- 10 students attend Local Government and Small Business Tours
- 10 students attended the BMW manufacturing tour in Greenville,
- 11 students participated in an Entrepreneurship Workshop
- 8 students attended the Haywood Regional Medical Center career exploration session
- 8 students completed a “Workplace Communication” workshop with WCU Associate Professor of Psychology
- 10 students participated in the Government Community Leader Panel
- 10 students received certificates for completion of the Summer Career Academy

Activities Accomplished:

The 'Bridging Futures 2025 Summer Career Academy' was a key initiative of the grant, designed to provide students with significant support in career exploration and assessment, work-based internships with local businesses, and support for post-secondary planning.

Hyde County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

Washington, Tyrrell, and Hyde counties were to collaborate with Beaufort County Community College to offer students hands-on experiences, exploration of various career pathways, and the opportunity to discover their passions. By utilizing resources from each district and the community college, this partnership would deliver career and technical education along with Career and College Promise courses. Through this collaborative effort, the three districts would expand student access to dual enrollment, work-based learning, and workforce credentials. This initiative was to provide students with greater access to resources, courses, and opportunities that they might not have otherwise. The aim was to leverage partnerships that address the unique needs of each community and to connect three districts in our service area to increase economic development.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

The district did not provide the CTE state staff an answer for this question.

Activities Accomplished:

Through a collaborative approach involving the program coordinator and the CTE Directors from all three districts the team worked carefully to map out program options and identify the most suitable programs for each district. Each district conducted thorough surveys of students to gather feedback on their interests, ensuring that the selected programs align with their aspirations and the needs of the community.

In addition to gathering student input, we engaged in detailed discussions with BCCC to determine which courses could be feasibly offered to meet the identified needs. These discussions have led to the selection of courses that not only align with student interest but also meet the logistical and resource requirements of our districts.

Furthermore, we have worked closely with the facility management teams to assess classroom suitability for each course. This included evaluating spaces for necessary equipment and supplies, ensuring that each course will be well-supported with the appropriate resources. Each district's technology team worked to ensure students and teachers had cross district access to needed programs and applications.

This approach has laid a strong foundation for the program and led to successful implementation and positive outcomes for students and teachers in all three districts.

Jackson County Public Schools – Blue Ridge Early College

Goal of Grant Program:

Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates (JNCG) creates business, industry and education partnerships committed to achieve the mission of Jobs for America's Graduates to ensure that at-risk high school students remain in high school, attain employability skills through classroom and work-based learning experiences during high school, graduate and receive twelve (12) months of follow-up services by the

JNCG Specialist. In the follow-up period, JNCG participants are successfully transitioned into a career and/or pursue a postsecondary education to enhance career entry and advancement. The JNCG Specialist builds relationships with both students and employers to deliver a student-centered program with three core components: employer engagement, trauma-informed care and project-based learning.

The JNCG Model, delivered by JNCG Specialists, consists of an innovative and comprehensive set of services designed to keep young people in school through graduation and improve the rate of success in achieving education and career goals. JNCG provides job and post-secondary education placement services. JNCG Specialists help graduates identify entry level job opportunities and assist in the exploration of postsecondary education.

In the classroom, trained JNCG Specialist provides individual and group instruction to 35-45 students carefully selected by an in-school advisory committee, comprised of faculty, administrators and counselors. The method of instruction proven most successful in JNCG classrooms is Project Based Learning (PBL). PBL methodology provides a realistic learning experience for JNCG students who engage in projects that assist in developing 21st century workplace skills. JNCG Specialists deliver a competency-based curriculum developed by JAG National. The curriculum equips students with no less than 37 employability competencies and intensive career exploration and developmental opportunities. As many as 81 competencies may be completed for students enrolled in high school (grades 9-12). As importantly, students are provided opportunities to develop, practice, and refine their leadership and team membership skills.

The JNCG program aligns with the CTE focus within Jackson County Public Schools and in Blue Ridge Early College, specifically, as it personalizes learning for students with the inclusion of a system of comprehensive monitoring, mentoring, and support. Through JNCG, qualifying students receive additional academic and behavioral support, and guidance toward success on their chosen pathway. Qualifying students are those who are experiencing at least five barriers to success.

JNCG Specialists provide advice and support as students make significant career and life decisions. JNCG Specialists provide individual attention to students to help them overcome challenges that prevent them from graduating and/or securing employment. A significant innovation, JNCG provides no less than twelve months of follow-up services and support to graduates in the advancement of their career and educational opportunities including job placement during summer months to support year-long learning. Finally, a comprehensive tracking and reporting system (JagForce) tracks vital information in three categories – students served, services delivered, and outcomes achieved.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

Students participating in the program progressed toward meeting graduation requirements for completion and as a result of the program acquired skills to prepare them for the workforce and other postsecondary opportunities. Students in the program learned how to conduct themselves in job interviews, learn business/industry expectations, and how to advocate for themselves within a future career. Students spent a lot of time learning how to communicate with others as an employee and how to be a team player in a work setting. The program encompassed skills such as proper work behaviors, time management, collaboration, the power of punctuality, and meeting and recognizing job expectations.

Activities Accomplished:

The JAG program at Blue Ridge Early College began in August 2025 as a way for students to gain critical knowledge and expertise for lifelong career success. Students at Blue Ridge Early College have the option to enroll in Career and College Promise courses and while this is successful, many of the student's desire to enter the world of work post-graduation. This program provided specialty training for those students to enter the workforce. Based upon the numbers of students in the program, around

75% met or exceeded job expectations for applications, job interviews, and job readiness skills. Around 90% of the students in the program explored multiple career pathways including business, medical/health science, and entrepreneurship specifically. Students practiced communication skills in mock job settings at around a 90% proficiency rate for both written and oral communication. Three students specifically excelled and were expected to attend a state convention; however, specific circumstances prevented the attendance of the convention for those students.

Macon County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

1. Transform Classroom Instruction through Innovation
 - a. AVID's integration was expected to bring innovation into classrooms by:
 - i. Utilizing the WICOR framework (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading).
 - ii. Promoting active, student-centered learning like Socratic seminars, peer tutoring, and project-based learning.
 - iii. Supporting college and career readiness, not just academic achievement.
 - iv. Ensuring equity and access to rigorous Instruction for all students.
2. Increase College and Career Readiness for All Students
 - a. Expand CTE programs and dual enrollment opportunities at all district high schools.
 - b. Provide opportunities for students to:
 - i. Earn certifications.
 - ii. Enroll in articulated postsecondary programs.
 - iii. Participate in apprenticeships and internships.
 - c. Develop and track Personalized Career Development Plans for students.
3. Establish Strong Partnerships
 - a. Use grant funding to develop explicit partnerships with:
 - i. Local businesses and industry leaders (e.g., Angel Medical Center, Drake Enterprises).
 - ii. Community organizations and economic development councils.
 - iii. Southwestern Community College, supporting dual enrollment in 39 program areas.
4. Leverage Technology and Expand Access
 - a. Create a CTE Distance Portal to support rural students through:
 - i. Online courses, live presentations, and virtual mentorship.
 - ii. One-to-one devices and internet access to ensure equity.
 - b. Encourage blended learning for students in remote regions.
5. Provide Robust Professional Development
 - a. Partner with AVID.org, a proven provider of evidence-based professional development.
 - b. Train teachers and administrators in:
 - i. Culturally responsive, student-centered instruction,
 - ii. Use of data-driven decision-making and digital tools.
6. Improve Outreach and Engagement
 - a. Launch a publicity campaign to:
 - i. Raise awareness of CTE and AVID opportunities.
 - ii. Increase student and family engagement, especially in underserved, rural, and Latino populations.
 - iii. Establish Parent and Guardian Advisory Committees to ensure community involvement.
7. Align K-12 and Postsecondary Instruction

- a. Ensure students graduate with college credits and/or workforce credentials.
 - b. Reduce remediation rates by:
 - i. Early alignment of coursework and skills.
 - ii. Ongoing collaboration with colleges, counselors, and industry partners.
8. Data-Driven Measurement of Outcomes
- a. Establish baseline data for:
 - i. Student participation in CTE, dual enrollment, and credential programs,
 - ii. Post-secondary placements and workforce entry.
 - b. Use annual data collection, surveys, and focus groups to track and improve outcomes.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

Goal 1: Transform Classroom Instruction through Innovation

- 90% of teachers districtwide completed AVID 101 training.
- Each teacher selected one AVID strategy to implement consistently for the remainder of the year, signaling broad instructional impact.
- This systemic adoption of WICOR-based strategies (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading) introduces consistent, research-based practices that promote higher-order thinking and student engagement across classrooms,

Goal 2: Increase Student Achievement through CTE Credentials and Career Readiness

- 2,300 total credentials earned in 2025, up from 1,731 in 2024 — a 33% increase, demonstrating substantial growth in student technical skill attainment.
- Specific, high-value certifications earned:
 - 5 EMT certifications
 - 3 NC Firefighter certifications
 - 10 Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)
 - 5 Certified Clinical Medical Assistants (CCMAs)
 - 1 FAA Private Pilot license
 - 9 Adobe Certified Professionals
 - 9 NC Early Childhood Development Associates
- 46 internships completed, offering real-world experience aligned to students' career goals.
- Career Development Plans completed for every student in grades 7—11, ensuring early and sustained career pathway alignment.

Goal 3: Strengthen Industry and Postsecondary Partnerships

- Secured \$50,000 from the Macon County Economic Development Commission to support paid internships, expanding work-based learning access and financial equity.
- New certificate program in Automotive Engineering added through partnership with Southwestern
- Community College, expanding postsecondary pathways aligned to industry demand.

Goal 4: Leverage Technology to Support Instruction

- High-powered computers purchased for Computer Science classes, enhancing students' access to industry-standard software and technical training opportunities.
- This investment supports growing interest in high-wage tech careers and aligns with the district's CTE and digital learning goals.

Goal 5: Provide Robust Professional Development

- Partnered with AVID.org to deliver evidence-based professional development.

- 56 teachers attended AVID Summer Institute, a national training focused on instructional transformation and equity.
- 9 teachers attended AVID’s National Conference, providing leadership development and exposure to innovative practices from across the country.

Goal 6: Increase Awareness and Engagement through Publicity

- A comprehensive publicity campaign included:
 - Billboards
 - Promotional videos
 - Visually appealing course catalogs
- These efforts increased visibility of CTE offerings and AVID strategies, especially important for rural and underserved families.

Goal 7: Continue Growth in Credential Attainment

- As noted under Goal 2, credential completion increased from 1,731 (2024) to 2,300 (2025) — a direct indicator of improved student academic achievement and career readiness.

Goal 8: Expand Postsecondary Access and Dual Enrollment

- 89% of seniors were identified as CTE Concentrators, showing strong program engagement and alignment to state/national benchmarks.
- 54 students participated in dual enrollment, allowing students to earn college credit while still in high school.
- Credential attainment and dual enrollment numbers demonstrate significant progress toward reducing remediation and increasing postsecondary success.

Activities Accomplished:

Professional Development and AVID Integration

- October 30, 2024:
 - Districtwide Professional Development Day launched with a focus on the district’s Strategic Plan.
 - Featured keynote by AVID National Director Patrick Briggs, setting the tone for AVID implementation and inspiring districtwide buy-in.
- November 15, 2024:
 - AVID Demonstration Site Visit for school administrators and selected teacher leaders.
 - This visit allowed teams to observe AVID best practices in action and served as a catalyst for site-level implementation planning.
- December 2024:
 - 9 teachers and administrators attended the AVID National Conference, where they participated in hands-on workshops and brought back high-leverage strategies to train their peers.
- February 2025;

- Principals and district administrators were trained as AVID 101 staff developers, building internal capacity for ongoing implementation and sustainability.
- AVID 101 delivered to all teachers at designated school sites, ensuring consistent exposure to AVID’s foundational practices across the district.
- June 2025:
 - 56 teachers and administrators attended AVID Summer Institute, gaining deeper knowledge and resources to implement AVID strategies, especially WICOR, in the classroom.

Outcome:

This phased and scaffolded implementation led to 90% of teachers being trained in AVID 101. The focus on capacity-building ensures sustainability and alignment with district instructional goals.

McDowell County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

Specific expectations included:

- Vertical Alignment of Pathways: Strengthen the connection between middle and high school CTE programs by introducing foundational skills in middle school that directly align with high school course sequences and industry needs.
- Updated Course Offerings: Review and revise CTE course offerings at both middle and high school levels to reflect local education priorities and economic demands, ensuring that students are gaining relevant, high-demand skills.
- Pathway and Workforce Alignment: Ensure that all current CTE pathway programs of study align with regional workforce needs, and identify emerging occupations. Develop plans to implement new programs or revise existing ones based on these findings.
- Industry-Informed Programming: Collaborate with local industry stakeholders to identify skill gaps in the current workforce and adjust programming and student activities to address those deficiencies.
- Strengthen Partnerships: Continue to build and expand relationships with McDowell County businesses and industries, as well as form new partnerships with neighboring community colleges, to increase opportunities for work-based learning, dual enrollment, and credential attainment.

These goals reflect a comprehensive effort to build a cohesive and responsive CTE pipeline, from middle school through high school and into postsecondary education and the workforce.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

During the grant period, McDowell County Schools utilized EWIF funds to expand career pathways, improve course alignment, and increase student access to college credit, credentials, and work-based learning—all of which contributed to measurable gains in student academic progress and career readiness.

Key Accomplishments and Impact:

- Increased CTE Course Participation:
 - Expanded middle school CTE offerings led to a 22% increase in enrollment in foundational CTE courses across grades 6–8. These students were more likely to select

a career-aligned course in 9th grade, showing early engagement with academic and career planning.

- Improved Academic Outcomes for CTE Students:
 - High school students who participated in aligned pathways supported by the grant had a graduation rate of 91.5%, compared to 79.9% for the general student population (2022 data). These students also showed stronger performance on state assessments, particularly in math and science, due to increased relevance and real-world application of academic concepts.
- Credential Attainment and College Credit:
 - EWIF-supported programs helped increase the number of students earning industry-recognized credentials or college credit before graduation. Approximately 60% of CTE concentrators graduated with one or both, positioning them for postsecondary success.
- Middle to High School Transition Gains:
 - Students who participated in expanded middle school CTE programs demonstrated improved attendance and engagement in 9th grade. Early data shows that these students are 30% more likely to remain in a CTE pathway through 10th grade than peers without prior exposure.
- Dual Enrollment Impact:
 - With strengthened advising and alignment with McDowell Technical Community College, the number of students participating in Career & College Promise programs increased by 15%, providing more students with a head start on postsecondary coursework.
- Program Equity:
 - The grant-supported efforts led to increased participation among students from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds. Specifically, at-risk students participating in the Career Awareness Readiness Program (CARP) showed higher promotion and engagement rates than non-participants.

Context for Results:

Students directly impacted by EWIF initiatives had access to updated curriculum, expanded pathways, industry exposure, and college-level coursework. Compared to peers in the same grade who did not participate in these initiatives, affected students showed:

- Higher retention in CTE pathways
- Greater access to credentials and dual enrollment
- Stronger alignment between career goals and academic performance

These results confirm that early, structured, and industry-aligned exposure to CTE and postsecondary opportunities significantly enhances student achievement, retention, and long-term readiness for college and career.

Activities Accomplished:

During the grant period, McDowell County Schools made significant progress in implementing the initiatives outlined in the Education and Workforce Innovation Program (EWIF) grant. These efforts focused on building seamless pathways from middle school through postsecondary education, aligning instruction with regional workforce needs, and expanding access to early college, CTE, and work-based learning opportunities.

Key Implementation Highlights:

- Alignment of CTE Pathways with Workforce Demand:

- Course offerings at the middle and high school levels were reviewed and updated to align with local labor market needs. This included the expansion of engineering modules in middle school and high school courses connected to high-skill, high-wage careers in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and emergency services.
- Expansion of Middle School Programs:
 - CTE offerings were expanded to include agriculture, business, engineering, health science, FCS, and trade and industry modules in grades 6–8. These courses serve as entry points to high school pathways, creating early exposure and interest in technical careers.
- Dual Enrollment and College Credit Access:
 - The district worked with McDowell Technical Community College to strengthen articulation agreements and increase student access to Career & College Promise (CCP) and early college programs. A revised advising process helped more students enroll in dual credit courses, with a goal to double engineering program completers by 2029.
- Industry Engagement and Work-Based Learning:
 - Industry partners, including Dodge Industrial and Baxter Healthcare, collaborated with the district to provide job-shadowing, site tours, and guest speakers. These real-world experiences helped students and teachers understand local job demands and workplace expectations.
- Professional Development:
 - Teachers and administrators received training on implementing aligned pathways and using labor market data to guide instruction. Paxton Patterson training sessions were used to support evidence-based classroom tools and pathway implementation.
- Technology Integration:
 - Virtual reality tools (ClassVR) and robotics (Ozobots, Coding Finches) were deployed to provide immersive learning experiences in STEM and CTE-focused activities. These tools were used during STEM events, in classrooms, and through mobile outreach (STEM van).

Measured Progress:

- Over 1,200 middle school students participated in expanded CTE courses.
- Dual enrollment participation increased by 15% compared to the prior year.
- CTE concentrator completion rates and credential attainment at the high school level showed measurable improvement, particularly in engineering and health science pathways.
- Industry engagement grew, with over 25 local business partners involved in student programming and advising.

These outcomes reflect steady and strategic implementation of the EWIF program, resulting in improved student access to aligned, high-quality educational and career opportunities.

Mountain Island Charter School

Goal of Grant Program:

We planned to continue expanding our offerings to include

- One or two additional course completers in high school by adding Entrepreneurship II and Marketing II, depending on student interest.
- Restore Welding, OSHA certification, and CNA program with community college
- Grow Apprenticeship opportunities with local businesses
- Revamping our after-school Academic Accelerator program to include a CTE focus, providing a structured, hands-on learning opportunity for students who currently stay after school and need a productive environment. Guest speakers, field trips, and project-based learning will occur during this hour-long daily program
- Continue our 3-week summer Career Accelerator Program (which focused heavily on field trips and guest speakers) by adding more business partnerships, more focused CTE pathways, opening up more space and opportunity for students to learn about their community and the work needs surrounding MICS.
- Increase the impact of the 8th grade Career & Leadership project by adding exploratory CTE courses in 6th & 7th grade to educate students on careers prior to the 8th grade research focus.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

In our inaugural year, we successfully launched the Raptor Navigators Career Readiness Program, a structured and engaging afterschool initiative designed to expand student access to career and technical education (CTE), financial literacy, and digital literacy. The program provided hands-on, future-focused learning through field trips, guest speakers, interactive activities, and guided discussions aligned with 21st-century career pathways.

48 students participated consistently in the program over the school year, engaging in weekly sessions that promoted self-awareness, career exploration, and life skills development. 60 students were enrolled in the program. As a result, students demonstrated a greater understanding of post-secondary career options, and the program became a springboard for more focused conversations around the 8th Grade Leadership Project. This alignment has set a clear pathway for future program integration and growth.

- 58% of the students who attended Raptor Navigators demonstrated reading proficiency on their grade-level EOG.

- 60% of the students who attend Raptor Navigators demonstrated math proficiency on their grade level EOG.

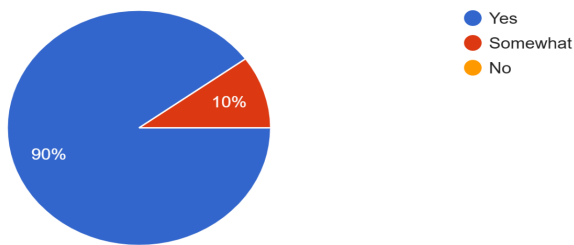
To measure impact and guide future improvement, both students and parents were surveyed. Highlights from the feedback include:

- Student Survey Results: Over 90% of the students in the program had positive attitudes towards the impact of the program—a notable achievement given the challenges of sustained engagement in middle school afterschool programs. Students frequently cited interactive sessions, exposure to new careers, and real-world relevance as key benefits. (See snapshots of survey data below)
- Parent Survey Results: Parent feedback was overwhelmingly supportive, emphasizing appreciation for the program’s structure, content, and the meaningful opportunities it offered their children. Sample parent comment: “This program gave my child something to look forward to each week and helped spark conversations at home about future goals.” (See snapshots of survey data below)

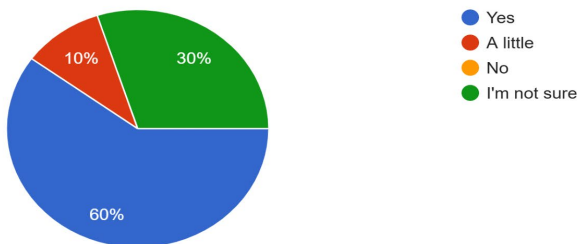
Looking Ahead: We view this strong first year as a foundation for growth. Moving forward, we will use survey data and qualitative feedback to refine programming, broaden career exposure, and enhance student outcomes. Planned improvements include expanding partnerships with local businesses, increasing student voice in planning, and integrating program outcomes more deeply into our school’s broader academic and leadership initiatives.

Activities Accomplished:

Do you feel this program supported your student’s overall growth and learning outside of the regular school day?
10 responses



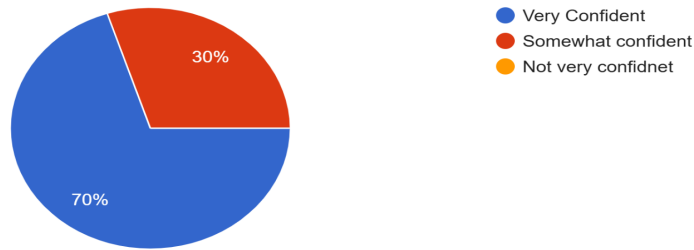
Did the program help your student become more responsible using technology?
10 responses



A couple of responses from the Student Survey:

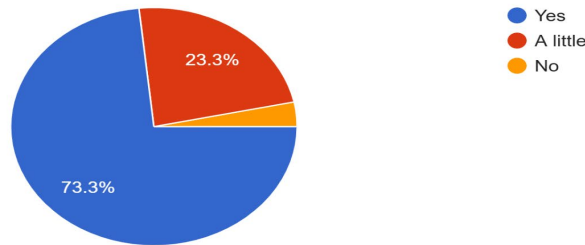
How confident do you feel in your ability to work in a team?

30 responses



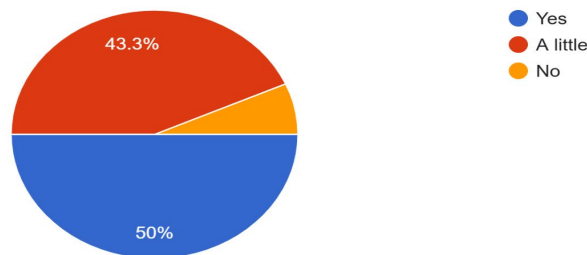
Did you learn about new careers or jobs during the program?

30 responses



Are you more interested in planning for your future career now?

30 responses



North East Carolina Preparatory

Goal of Grant Program:

NECP started the innovation program with the intentions of the following:

- Hire a middle school business and/or agriculture education CTE position to serve our students in 6th and 7th grade;
- Continue to support the initiatives championed by NCPI to gain much-needed skills in computer science before graduation by adding an exploratory middle school computer science option to our curriculum;

- Continue to educate and engage students in the multiple pathways available to them as they transition to high school;
- Continue to engage with Carolina Gateway Partnership to connect students with industry-related job-shadowing and pre-apprenticeship opportunities;
- Continue to provide students access to CTE courses that provide career exploration and foster a culture centered on career readiness;
- Continue to offer experiences around CTE that will allow for careers through the variety of paths available past high school such as certificates, diplomas, or degree programs at Edgecombe Community College;
- Continue to identify industry-recognized certifications relevant to various career paths and integrate them into the curriculum, including using grant funds to cover the costs associated with certification exams and training materials.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

During this reporting period, the PRC 079 funds have enabled NECP to significantly expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for middle school students, directly impacting academic engagement, skill development, and readiness for future coursework.

1. CTE Teachers & Courses – Utilized middle school CTE teachers specializing in business and agriculture education.
 - a. Impact: All 6th graders and 50 - 7th grade and 8th grade students are now enrolled in at least one exploratory CTE course, compared to 25 students prior to grant funding.
 - b. Early Indicator: Student course completion rates in these new CTE electives are currently at 100%, with 100% meeting or exceeding project-based rubric expectations.
2. Middle School Computer Science Initiative – Implemented the Introduction to Computer Science course aligned with NCPI goals.
 - a. Impact: 100 - 7th grade middle school students have gained introductory coding skills, with 100% successfully completing at least one programming project.
3. Pathway Awareness & Career Readiness – Integrated structured career exploration activities into CTE courses.
 - a. Impact: 231 students participated in career interest inventories, with 100% identifying at least one career field of interest.
 - b. Work-based learning opportunities were initiated with the Carolina Gateway Partnership, benefiting 10 students to date.
4. Certification Readiness – Began integrating industry-recognized certifications into the curriculum, including Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB), OSHA-10, and North Carolina Agriculture certifications.

Overall, these initiatives have broadened access to hands-on, career-connected learning, strengthened foundational skills in technology and applied academics, and increased students' awareness of postsecondary pathways.

Activities Accomplished:

The implementation of the above listed programs wouldn't be possible without the funding provided via PRC079 Innovation Grant. NECP has implemented the middle grades program and a support person to guide CTE support staff member to guide the strategic direction of middle grades CTE offerings and align them with high school pathways.

NECP has provided targeted advising, curriculum coordination, and industry-alignment support, resulting in more coherent sequencing between middle school exploratory courses and high school CTE concentrator pathways.

Public Schools of Robeson County - Purnell Swett High

Goal of Grant Program:

Purnell Swett High School will sustain and enhance the Jobs for North Carolina's Graduates (JNCG) program serving high-risk 11th and 12th grade students.

Selected students will be challenged by five barriers to success that stand in their way of college and career readiness. JNCG prepares students for life after high school by providing exposure to careers, guiding them through educational requirements, building job attainment and job maintaining skills, and enhancing their leadership opportunities. Juniors and seniors receive classroom instruction, connect with representatives of business and industry, compete in state and national competitions, and participate in the JNCG Career Association in the school. Graduates are followed for one year with supports for personal challenges, employment, post-secondary options, or enlistment in the military.

In the classroom, each student can access multiple learning approaches to master each of 37 employability skills, developed through JAG National with business and industry input identifying the skills needed for employment in any field. Content is available through teacher-led classes, video modules, written assignments, role-playing, and practice. Student work is evaluated day by day as they are introduced to concepts (Level 1), working towards mastery (Level 2), and achieving independent mastery (Level 3). Progress is documented daily in JAGForce, the JNCG data management system. In this way, no student can fall behind.

Each JNCG Specialist develops a partnership with NC Works and establishes relationships with local and regional for-profit and nonprofit organizations. These provide students with eye-opening experiences that serve to motivate them to achieve in all their high school classes and graduate ready for next steps.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

As the JAG competencies were delivered, students worked to master each at a level 3. 93% of the students attained this goal. 100% of the seniors enrolled in JAG graduated, and 74% improved their GPA from the previous year.

For the follow-up students (Seniors from the class of 2024), Purnell Swett met 5 of the 6 JAG National goals. These are:- 90% graduation rate- PSHS- 100%, 60% Employment -PSHS-65%, 60% of those employed- Full Time PSHS-78%, 75% Positive Outcome- 76.74%, 35% Further Education Rate- PSHS 42.14% and 95% Connectivity Rate PSHS- 90%. The final goal of connectivity was not met, mainly due to a change in JNCG staff at Purnell Swett.

Activities Accomplished:

For the students in the classes, data was also collected on attendance improvement, reduction in discipline referrals, increase in credit attainment, matriculation to the next grade/graduation, and barrier removal. The program at Purnell Swett met 3 of these 4 goals.

The students in the class also heard from 8 guest speakers and participated in one field trip to a local business. Recruiters from the military and local colleges were also guests in the classroom. Students were given the opportunity to explore businesses through NC Works, local employment agencies, and HR departments.

Randolph County School System

Goal of Grant Program:

- Provide a JAG Specialist to deliver curriculum on the 37 employability skill competencies, provide individualized academic assistance/support for students to ensure success, and offer educational opportunities that include, but are not limited to, hands-on lessons, whole group discussions, small group discussions, mock interviews, role-playing, and opportunities to put the employability skills into action
- Facilitate experiences for students to be exposed to various careers, guides students through educational requirements, and help students build job attainment, success and leadership skills.
- Provide students opportunities to connect with business and industry partners through internships and job shadowing events.
- Provide students with the opportunity to participate in state and national competitions and be involved in the JNCG Career Association at PGHS.

As a part of the support process with JNCG, participants are also followed for one year post graduation to offer support and resources to address personal challenges, employment issues, exploration of post-secondary options, or support for enlisting in to the armed forces. However, the JAG program at PGHS will no longer be operational in the 2025-2026 school year.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

This grant assisted in employing a JAG Specialist at Providence Grove High School to provide relevant and rigorous classroom and work-based learning experiences for select students. The program is in its second year and served fewer students in 2024-2025 than in 2023-2024. The program served a mixture of 11th and 12th graders at PGHS. The grant funds allowed for the continued employment of the Specialist, who assisted in identifying students who would benefit from the program, and served the students according to the JAG NC parameters. Throughout this school year, the students' academic data was tracked and analyzed. Overall, the students showed an improvement in academic performance. The graduation rate for seniors enrolled in the JAG program during the 2024-2025 at Providence Grove High School was 100%. The JAG National Graduation Rate was 96%. Over the course of the year, data was collected for the JAG students. This information was available for comparison with non-JAG students and their performance. Data for JAG graduates is tracked by the

JAG Specialist to ensure post-secondary placement and would have been tracked throughout the 25-26 school year had the program been continued.

Activities Accomplished:

The implementation of the program at PGHS is in the second year of operation. The JAG Specialist is in place and serving students who are 11th and 12th graders. The number of students being served is smaller than the previous year, not what was hoped for to elicit growth and stability in the program. Efforts to analyze areas of celebration and areas of need were taken into consideration when the decision to close the program was made. Program evaluation also encompassed evaluating outcomes using the JAGForce Database. Preliminary data, showed a decline in interest in the program.

Rockingham County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

North Carolina, like many states, faces a critical shortage of child care workers, teacher assistants, and certified teachers. This growing need is fueled by factors such as increased population, rising enrollment in early childhood education programs, and ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals in the field.

The primary goal of the PRC 079 Innovation Grant was to help address this workforce gap by building a robust, sustainable pipeline for future early childhood educators and teaching professionals, starting at the high school level. The initiative was designed with two interconnected steps to ensure students could progress seamlessly from exploration to certification and, ultimately, into the workforce or higher education.

Step One:

Establish a Childhood Education Program at Reidsville High School, allowing students to complete the Early Childhood Development and Services (EACH) Pathway. Students in this pathway take:

- Child Development
- Early Childhood Education I

Reidsville High School is uniquely positioned to support this program due to the presence of a licensed on-site child care center. This facility offers students hands-on, real-world experience working with young children in a safe and structured setting. Students also participate in an internship component, gaining further experience and employability skills.

Upon completing the pathway, students earn articulated credit for EDU 119 – Introduction to Early Childhood, providing a seamless transition into postsecondary coursework.

Step Two:

Students who complete the high school pathway then enroll in the Early Childhood Childcare Professional Certificate Program at Rockingham Community College (RCC) during their senior year. The program includes:

- EDU 119 Early Childhood Education (articulated credit)
- EDU 144 Child Development I
- EDU 145 Child Development II
- EDU 153 Health, Safety and Nutrition
- EDU 222 Learners with Behavioral Disorders

By graduation, students will have earned:

- The Early Childhood Development and Services Pathway credential
- First Aid/CPR/AED certification
- The NC Early Childhood Credential
- The Early Childhood Childcare Professional Certificate from RCC

This comprehensive approach equips students with industry-recognized credentials and early college credit, setting them up for immediate employability or continued education.

Additionally, this program serves as a feeder into the RockATop Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship Program, a collaborative effort between Rockingham County Schools and local industry partners. Completion of both Step One and Step Two satisfies the pre-apprenticeship requirement, preparing students for full apprenticeships and eventual participation in the Teaching Assistant to Teacher pipeline initiative.

Through this multifaceted approach—linking high school programs, community college credentials, apprenticeships, and long-term career pathways—Rockingham County Schools is working to address the teacher shortage in our region. This initiative not only builds workforce readiness but also strengthens the foundation of early childhood education by investing in the next generation of educators.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

During the 2024–2025 school year, Reidsville High School successfully launched its Childhood Education Program, a major milestone supported by the PRC 079 Innovation Grant. In Spring 2025, the school offered Child Development for the first time in school history, with 21 students enrolled in the course. This course represents the first level in the Early Childhood Development and Services (EACH) pathway and serves as the foundational step toward students earning credentials and pursuing careers in early childhood education.

This initial implementation reflects strong student interest and marks an important expansion in CTE programming at RHS. Prior to this grant-funded initiative, Reidsville High School did not offer a pathway in early childhood education, nor did students have access to a formalized plan to enter the childcare and teaching assistant workforce.

Context and Impact:

- **Student Achievement:** Of the 21 students enrolled, 90% earned a passing grade of C or higher, indicating academic success in the first implementation of the course.
- **Equity and Access:** The course provided opportunities to a diverse population of students, including many who had not previously participated in CTE pathway programs.
- **Postsecondary Planning:** Preliminary student surveys indicated that over 60% of students expressed interest in continuing the pathway with Early Childhood Education I in the 2025–2026 school year, and several students identified a desire to pursue careers in education, childcare, or human services.

As this is the first phase of a multi-step program, the foundational success of this course is a promising indicator of long-term program viability and student progression. Future semesters will expand opportunities for internships, credentials, and RCC dual enrollment, further increasing the impact on student employability and college readiness.

This initiative sets Reidsville High School apart by creating a direct and structured path from high school to career and college in early childhood education—a growing and essential workforce area in North Carolina.

Activities Accomplished:

The implementation of the Early Childhood Education program at Reidsville High School has made significant progress since the start of the Spring 2025 semester. This initiative was designed to provide a structured, hands-on pathway for students interested in careers in child care, early childhood education, and teaching. The following key milestones illustrate the progress and success of the program during this reporting period:

Program Launch and Enrollment:

- In Spring 2025, Child Development was offered for the first time at Reidsville High School.
- A total of 21 students enrolled in the course, signaling strong initial interest in the new pathway.
- This course serves as the introductory level in the Early Childhood Development and Services (EACH) pathway and is a required prerequisite for future coursework, including Early Childhood Education I.

Instructional Delivery and Student Success:

- Instruction included both classroom-based learning and career exploration activities focused on child development, early learning theories, and health and safety.
- 90% of students successfully completed the course with a grade of “C” or higher.
- Students were introduced to key concepts aligned with EDU 119 (Intro to Early Childhood), setting the foundation for future articulated credit opportunities at Rockingham Community College.

Work-Based Learning and Site Readiness:

- Reidsville High School’s on-site child care center was assessed and prepared as a future internship placement site for students continuing in the pathway in 2025–2026.
- Program planning is underway to align internship experiences with course standards for Early Childhood Education I.
- The CDC and CTE teachers began coordinating with RCC to schedule dual enrollment opportunities for qualifying students during their senior year.

Student Interest and Program Growth:

- A follow-up interest survey indicated that over 60% of students currently enrolled are interested in continuing in the EACH pathway.
- At least six students expressed strong interest in entering the Early Childhood Certificate program at RCC as part of their senior year schedule.
- Feedback from students emphasized the value of learning about real-world child care settings and the opportunity to pursue a credentialed career pathway before high school graduation.

Program Alignment and Strategic Expansion

- The program is on track to expand into Early Childhood Education I in the 2025–2026 school year, including internships and the opportunity to earn the NC Early Childhood Credential.
- Discussions with the RCC Early Childhood Department have confirmed alignment of high school coursework with college credit pathways.
- This initiative also serves as a pre-apprenticeship entry point into the district’s Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship program, with future opportunities to “Grow Our Own” teaching workforce.

Conclusion:

The Early Childhood Education program at Reidsville High School has been implemented successfully, with strong student interest, high course completion rates, and effective alignment with postsecondary partners. The groundwork has been laid for meaningful career pathways and credentials in education—a high-demand sector across North Carolina.

Tyrrell County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

Washington, Tyrrell, and Hyde counties were to collaborate with Beaufort County Community College to offer students hands-on experiences, exploration of various career pathways, and the opportunity to discover their passions. By utilizing resources from each district and the community college, this partnership would deliver career and technical education along with Career and College Promise courses. Through this collaborative effort, the three districts would expand student access to dual enrollment, work-based learning, and workforce credentials. This initiative was to provide students with

greater access to resources, courses, and opportunities that they might not have otherwise. The aim was to leverage partnerships that address the unique needs of each community and to connect three districts in our service area to increase economic development.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

During the grant period, significant progress was made in expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities, deepening cross-county collaboration, and supporting student readiness for college and career pathways. These accomplishments reflect both short-term outcomes and long-term capacity building, with measurable impacts on student achievement, engagement, and skill development.

Student Participation and Academic Progress

- Welding Program (Tyrrell County Schools):
 - 7 students from Tyrrell County Schools participated in the welding program.
 - 5 of these students (71%) stayed a 5th year to complete the full welding pathway, indicating strong student commitment and persistence in a high-demand field.
 - 1 student is now employed at the Virginia Shipyard, a major regional employer, demonstrating the program's success in workforce alignment and job placement.
- Cross-District Enrollment:
 - A student from Washington County Schools (WCS) enrolled in a Health Science course at Tyrrell County Schools (TCS), reflecting the collaborative use of resources across districts to meet diverse student interests and workforce needs.
- Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Career Readiness
 - TCS facilitated three paid internships in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, and the school's Child Nutrition Department. These internships offered students real-world, compensated work experience, promoting career readiness and soft skill development.
- TCS and WCS Students Participated in:
 - Business tours at Virginia Shipyard, Bay Metals & Fabrication, and the BCCC Industry Curriculum Program.
 - A regional welding competition at BCCC, where students demonstrated their technical skills in a competitive setting.
 - A Job Fair hosted by Hyde County Schools, exposing students to regional employment opportunities and helping them build employer networks.
- Program Development and Infrastructure Expansion

- TCS upgraded its Agricultural Mechanics shop to host the welding program on-site in response to rising student demand. This investment reduces transportation barriers and increases access for local students.
- Core Construction Course Materials were purchased to help students prepare for the NCCER credential, supporting hands-on skill development and expanding credentialing opportunities within the construction career pathway.
- Facilities Use Expenses at WCS were covered to ensure continued access to the welding shop for program delivery.
- Professional Development and Teacher Collaboration
 - CTE teachers attended industry-specific workshops through STEM East, aligning instruction with current workforce expectations and enhancing classroom rigor.
 - TCS and Hyde County CTE teachers participated in a joint CTE Retreat featuring professional development sessions focused on:
 - Rigor and Relevance in CTE
 - Serving Special Populations
 - Marketing and Promoting CTE Pathways
 - This retreat fostered stronger cross-district relationships and reinforced instructional quality.
 - Teachers engaged local industry by distributing face-to-face invitations and posting flyers to recruit members for the CTE Business Advisory Board, strengthening community and employer partnerships.
- Leadership Development and CTSO Planning
 - The grant coordinator attended the state SkillsUSA Conference, assisting with coordination efforts to gain firsthand insight into the structure, impact, and value of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs).
 - This experience supports the district's goal of establishing a SkillsUSA chapter in the 2025–2026 school year, which will provide students with additional leadership, competition, and networking opportunities.

Impact and Context

These accomplishments reflect a strong return on investment in terms of student engagement, skill development, and workforce alignment. For example:

- Over 70% of TCS welding students extended their education to complete the program, demonstrating high retention and persistence compared to average CTE pathway persistence rates.

- One graduate now employed at the VA Shipyard showcases a direct pathway from education to employment.
- Cross-district collaboration, regional competitions, and WBL experiences enriched opportunities for both TCS and WCS students beyond what either district could offer alone.

These outcomes demonstrate that the program is not only enhancing students' technical capabilities but also building a pipeline for career and postsecondary success.

Activities Accomplished:

Through a collaborative approach involving the program coordinator and the CTE Directors from all three districts the team worked carefully to map out program options and identify the most suitable programs for each district. Each district conducted thorough surveys of students to gather feedback on their interests, ensuring that the selected programs align with their aspirations and the needs of the community.

In addition to gathering student input, we engaged in detailed discussions with BCCC to determine which courses could be feasibly offered to meet the identified needs. These discussions have led to the selection of courses that not only align with student interest but also meet the logistical and resource requirements of our districts.

Furthermore, we have worked closely with the facility management teams to assess classroom suitability for each course. This included evaluating spaces for necessary equipment and supplies, ensuring that each course will be well-supported with the appropriate resources. Each district's technology team worked to insure students and teachers had cross district access to needed programs and applications.

This approach has laid a strong foundation for the program and led to successful implementation and positive outcomes for students and teachers in all three districts.

Welding Program Participation and Outcomes

- **Tyrrell County:**
Seven students from Tyrrell County participated in the Welding program. Of those, five opted to remain for a fifth year to complete the program. One graduate is currently employed at the VA Shipyard.
- **Washington County:**
Ten students from Washington County participated in the Welding program. Three have graduated, and one is continuing their education at a community college. Additionally, one Washington County student enrolled in a course offered in Tyrrell County.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities

Tyrrell County Schools provided three paid internship opportunities through partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce, Arts Council, and the Child Nutrition Department.

Washington County Schools

Goal of Grant Program:

Washington, Tyrrell, and Hyde counties were to collaborate with Beaufort County Community College to offer students hands-on experiences, exploration of various career pathways, and the opportunity to discover their passions. By utilizing resources from each district and the community college, this partnership would deliver career and technical education along with Career and College Promise courses. Through this collaborative effort, the three districts would expand student access to dual enrollment, work-based learning, and workforce credentials. This initiative was to provide students with greater access to resources, courses, and opportunities that they might not have otherwise. The aim was to leverage partnerships that address the unique needs of each community and to connect three districts in our service area to increase economic development.

Academic Progress Made by Students:

Student Participation and Outcomes:

- Welding Program: 10 Washington County students participated, resulting in three graduates, with one student continuing education at the community college level. Seven Tyrrell County students participated in the program housed at Washington County; five remained for a fifth year to complete the program, demonstrating strong retention, and one graduate is now employed at the Virginia Shipyard.
- Cross-District Course Enrollment: One Washington County student enrolled in a virtual course hosted by Tyrrell County, illustrating increased access to courses not offered in their home district.

Work-Based Learning (WBL):

- Tyrrell County offered three paid internships in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce/Arts Council and Child Nutrition Department.
- Washington County offered unpaid WBL opportunities, including job shadowing, guest speakers, and business tours.
- Students from both districts participated in regional events, including the SkillsUSA State Conference and a regional welding competition at BCCC.

Industry Exposure and Career Readiness:

- Students attended business and industry tours, including the Virginia Shipyard, Bay Metals & Fabrication, and BCCC Industry Curriculum Tour.
- Tyrrell County students attended a job fair hosted by Hyde County Schools, and Washington County hosted its own career fair.

Program Enhancements and Staff Development:

- Tyrrell County upgraded its Agricultural Mechanics shop to allow welding instruction on-site to accommodate growing student interest.
- Washington County Schools purchased career exploration equipment to increase student exposure to a variety of career pathways, spark interest in high-demand fields, and support informed decisions about post-secondary education and workforce opportunities.
- Staff participated in industry-specific workshops through STEM East and attended a CTE retreat focused on curriculum and career readiness.

- Businesses were invited to participate in advisory board meetings, strengthening connections between education and industry.

Impact on Student Achievement: The grant-funded activities have increased student engagement, retention, and access to high-demand career pathways. Students participating in the welding program and other WBL activities have demonstrated progression toward program completion, skill mastery, and post-secondary employment or education. Cross-district access via virtual courses and VR career exploration has expanded opportunities for students to pursue pathways aligned with regional workforce needs, supporting both academic progress and long-term career readiness.

Activities Accomplished:

Through a collaborative approach involving the program coordinator and the CTE Directors from all three districts the team worked carefully to map out program options and identify the most suitable programs for each district. Each district conducted thorough surveys of students to gather feedback on their interests, ensuring that the selected programs align with their aspirations and the needs of the community.

In addition to gathering student input, we engaged in detailed discussions with BCCC to determine which courses could be feasibly offered to meet the identified needs. These discussions have led to the selection of courses that not only align with student interest but also meet the logistical and resource requirements of our districts.

Furthermore, we have worked closely with the facility management teams to assess classroom suitability for each course. This included evaluating spaces for necessary equipment and supplies, ensuring that each course will be well-supported with the appropriate resources. Each district's technology team worked to ensure students and teachers had cross district access to needed programs and applications.

Wilkes County Schools - Wilkes Central High School

Goal of Grant Program:

- Graduation Rate of 90% or Higher – 100% of Wilkes Central JNCG seniors graduated
- Civilian Job Placement/Military Service of 60% or Higher – 54 % of Wilkes Central students achieved this goal
- Full-Time Employment of 60% or Higher – 100 % of WCHS 2024 JNCG graduates achieved this goal
- Positive Outcomes of 75% or Higher – as calculated by work, post-secondary education, and military service- 75 % of JNCG students in the WCHS Class of 2024 achieved this goal
- Higher Education Rate of 35% or Higher – 46% of WCHS JNCG students achieved this goal
- Connectivity Rate of 90% or Higher – 100% connectivity rate for WCHS JNCG students during the follow up period for the Class of 2024

Academic Progress Made by Students:

100% of JNCG seniors graduated this spring. The students credited JNCG for supporting this accomplishment. During the first month of follow-up meetings with students, of 23 recent graduates, five enrolled in Wilkes Community College or another four-year university, 14 graduates are full-time employed. During the school year, we were able to remove an average of one barrier per student including obtaining a drivers license, improving attendance or GPA, or reaching graduation on time. Barriers facing our JNCG students are significant and the average number of challenges is 7.9 97% of JNCG students were lacking marketable skills for the local labor market. 80% brought with them a past record of excessive absences. 55% were not connected to any extracurricular activities. 67% were in need of transportation to and from work or school. 65% had a history of low academic performance.

Activities Accomplished:

The JNCG curriculum developed by JAG National is delivered in a classroom setting. Students are required to achieve 80% mastery of 37 employability lessons. In addition to the curriculum, the JNCG Specialist work with each student to support their academics in core subjects and to address any one or more of the barriers they face that allowed them into the program.

JNCG includes several initiatives that reinforce the skills taught in the classroom. “Jump Start Jobs Week” is held each semester where local and regional employers come to the class to speak with students about job option and preparation. This past year, companies participating in “Jump Start Jobs Week” included Matt Matthews State Farm Insurance, NC Works, Martin Roofing, State Employees Credit Union, GE Aerospace, as well as the Wilkes County SWAT Team. NC Works representatives worked with our students on resume building, interview skills, and how to have a successful transition to higher education enrollment, employment or military enlistment after high school.

They provided in-depth “tricks and tips” to creating a winning resume and to successfully interviewing and landing a job. The success of these experiences and support led to 12 Class of ‘25 graduates finding full-time employment within and around the county by June, 2025.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION GRADE EXPANSION GRANT LOCAL REPORTS

Alexander County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funding supported the employment of a full-time Career Development Coordinator (CDC) serving both East Alexander Middle and West Alexander Middle Schools in Alexander County. The CDC’s efforts focused on increasing awareness and engagement with Career and Technical Education (CTE) among students, staff, and families, as well as expanding outreach to 5th-grade students in elementary schools. The scope of work included the following:

- Developed and distributed a brochure outlining Alexander County CTE offerings at middle school open houses, elective nights, school board meetings and other school and community events.

- Developed and implemented Xello career development lessons and a rollout plan for grades 6–8; presented the plan to school staff and led professional development training to equip them with the tools to deliver lessons and support students. Monitored lesson completion and regularly communicated progress updates, resulting in all students in grades 6–10 creating new or updating existing Career Development Plans (CDPs) and completing their assigned career development lessons.
- Organized Career Days for 6th and 7th grade students at both middle schools, featuring over 30 guest speakers from local industries.
- Coordinated 6th Grade CTE Showcases at both middle schools, featuring high school student ambassadors and the CTE Career Mobile Lab with hands-on stations related to high school CTE courses.
- Brought the CTE Career Mobile Lab to all seven elementary schools, providing 5th-grade students with hands-on exposure to various careers.
- Supported coordination of 8th grade elective classroom visits at the high school based on student interests through stations in Agriculture, Computer Science, Health Science, Family & Consumer Science, and Trades.
- Organized and presented 8th grade parent information sessions at both middle schools to share high school elective options, provide personalized Xello reports for students, and explain Career Development Plans (CDPs) and student career interests to help families choose electives aligned with students' goals.
- Collaborated with the local Extension Office to implement the “Real Money, Real World” financial literacy program at both middle schools.
- Coordinated local industry tours and a community college visit for 8th grade students to explore career opportunities and learn about educational pathways that align with in-demand jobs in the region.
- Planned and implemented a two-week summer camp (July 28 – August 7, 2025) for middle school students to explore various Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways through daily hands-on activities. The camp included a field trip to the NASCAR Hall of Fame to learn about careers in marketing and tourism, as well as guided tours of local industries and community businesses to provide real-world exposure to a variety of career opportunities.
- Coordinated a one-week Camp Med program in June 2025 for current middle school students interested in healthcare careers.
- Provided year-round support to two middle school teachers utilizing Paxton Patterson career exploration labs, including updating instructional materials to reflect local industry needs and student interests, and ensuring effective and engaging program delivery.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

6th grade students-319 non-duplicated students; Total of 637 enrollments in CTE classes as many students repeated more than 1 CTE class

7th grade students-323 non-duplicated students; Total of 635 enrollments in CTE classes as many students repeated more than 1 CTE class

8th grade students-293 non-duplicated students; Total of 593 enrollments in CTE classes as many students repeated more than 1 CTE class

Total Non-Duplicated Students=935 students; Total Enrollments=1865

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

In the 2024-2025 school year, 272 of the 326 (83%) ninth grade students were enrolled in at least one CTE course. Top enrollments for ninth graders were Agriscience, Foundations of Health Science, Construction Core, Foods & Nutrition I, and Child Development.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Student participation in internships increased, with 89 placements during the 2024–2025 school year. We also had 37 students who took an Advanced Studies CTE course. Two students earned apprenticeship placements with local industry partners.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

For the fourth year in a row we have increased the number of credentials earned. While state data has not been finalized, initial reports indicate that we had 372 students earn credentials, while many of those earned duplicate credentials. Our credential attainment rate is around 68%, which would be an increase from 62% the prior year.

Allegheny County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grade Expansion Grant to strengthen and extend Career and Technical Education programming for sixth and seventh grade students across all three K-8 schools in the district: Sparta School, Piney Creek School, and Glade Creek School.

Use of Grant Funds: The Grade Expansion Grant primarily funded the salary and benefits of a dedicated Middle Grades CTE Teacher, who is responsible for delivering MS CTE courses and career exploration programming. This position, at Sparta School, Glade Creek and Piney Creek has allowed the district to:

- Expand access to the Career Exploration (EY30) and Exploring Technology (CY40) curriculum for all 6th and 7th graders.
- Deliver consistent, grade-appropriate career and college awareness activities

- Organize and lead field trips and guest speakers
- Provide support for our career fairs, and district-wide CTE showcases
- Ensure that students complete a Career Development Plan (CDP) prior to entering high school

This Expansion grant funded in its entirety the salary and benefits of the CTE MS instructor along with supplemental local and CTE allotments 014 and 017 funding. Additional funding also help to provide additional program support by allowing:

- Professional development for middle grades CTE staff
- Purchases of instructional supplies and career exploration resources aligned with CTE pathways

Expansion of CTE Courses and Programming – Paxton Patterson Labs

The implementation of the Expansion Grant allowed Allegheny County Schools to offer structured and standards-aligned CTE courses at the 6th and 7th grade levels that would otherwise not exist district-wide. The Middle Grades CTE Teacher focused on the Career Exploration using Paxton Patterson Labs, which aligns with the NC CTE curriculum and supports early pathway awareness. Major Clarity was also used by students to support them while developing their CDP plans. Additionally:

- Paxton Patterson Labs at Sparta and Piney Creek provided students with hands-on exploration of pathways such as Health Science, Trades, and STEM.
- Students engaged in interest inventories and career research through platforms like Major Clarity and NCcareers.org
- College tours to Wilkes Community College and local business visits introduced real-world relevance and postsecondary options
- Pre- and post-program surveys were administered to measure growth in students' understanding of career clusters and postsecondary opportunities

Outcomes and Impact

The expansion grant has directly enabled Allegheny County Schools to:

- Serve all 6th and 7th grade students in the district with equitable, structured CTE exposure
- Strengthen the pipeline of CTE concentrators at the high school level
- Increase awareness of local labor market needs, postsecondary options, and high school CTE offerings
- Begin building four-year Career Development Plans in 7th grade so that all 8th graders transitioning to Allegheny High School are in a clear career direction or pathway plan

Follow-up surveys indicate that 73% of 9th and 10th grade students who had access to middle grade CTE exploration reported greater awareness of career pathways, and 100% had taken at least one CTE course in high school. These results confirm the longitudinal impact of early career exposure.

The use of data-driven planning, student-centered programming, and this grant-supported staffing has created a scalable and sustainable model that we hope to continue into the 2025–2026 school year, with the planned expansion of Paxton Patterson Labs at Glade Creek School and continued integration of career planning activities.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

The district did not provide the CTE state staff an answer for this question.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

The district did not provide the CTE state staff an answer for this question.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

The district did not provide the CTE state staff an answer for this question.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

During the 2024 2025 school year Allegheny County Schools had 33 students who earned CCP credit that was directly impacted by the CTE Grade Expansion Grant which allowed these students the opportunity to participate in MS CTE programming during their 6th and 7th grade years. Allegheny County also had students earn 1635 industry recognized certifications/credentials during the 2024 2025 academic year.

Brunswick County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Funds from the CTE Grade Expansion Grant continue to support the employment of a full-time middle grades Career Development Coordinator (CDC). Throughout the school year, our CDC has worked diligently to provide career awareness and exploration opportunities for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. The CDC ensures that sixth and seventh graders are well-informed about the various CTE programs and career pathways available. These pathways serve as a "roadmap," helping students prepare for lifelong learning and future employment opportunities. Additionally, the CDC collaborates effectively with administrative and school improvement teams at each school to market and promote expanded middle school CTE courses.

Our district adopted the MajorClarity program, which continues to be used for students in grades 6-12. The results from MajorClarity assessments guide students in their career exploration activities. Through this platform, students develop personalized four-year career development plans, record their postsecondary goals based on chosen pathways, begin exploring postsecondary opportunities, and track their career exploration progress. Students also monitor their progress toward graduation by tracking enrollment and successful completion of high school courses. By introducing MajorClarity as early as sixth grade, middle school CDCs can devote more time assisting students in exploring their specific career interests across all 16 career clusters.

In sixth grade, lessons provide an introduction to the 16 career clusters, the diversity of careers, and how student interests can influence career choices. The CDC offers additional career guidance through activities such as career cafés, lunch & learn sessions, career and college fairs, STEM tours, and Students@Work sessions.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

The middle school CDCs, including the one funded through this grant, have been instrumental in expanding CTE offerings at the middle school level. Their career development planning has helped us identify middle school CTE programs that align with both student interests and current labor market data. As a result of the expansion grant, the current number of students enrolled in CTE courses is 2,602.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

4,806 students were enrolled in high school CTE courses in the 2024-2025 SY as a result of services provided through this grant.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

50 CTE students engaged in internships during the 2024-2025 school year.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

224 CTE students engaged in CCP CTE courses during the 2024-2025 SY.

4,015 CTE students earned approved industry certification/credentials during the 2024-2025 SY.

Carteret County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

This grant supports the continuation of the Middle School Career Development Coordinator (CDC) position, serving all five middle schools in Carteret County. This role directly benefits over 2,800 students, providing them with early exposure to a wide range of career pathways and educational opportunities.

The Middle School CDC collaborates closely with the career coach at Carteret Community College to coordinate a variety of career-focused events. Through the use of MajorClarity, students complete career interest inventories, which inform targeted invitations to participate in specialized events at the college, such as Farm to Table Day, Forensics Day, IT Day, Visual Arts Day, and Manufacturing Day. In partnership with the college and BioNetwork, the CDC facilitates hands-on career workshops that enhance student engagement and awareness.

Throughout the academic year, the CDC also arranges for guest speakers to visit Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms. These professionals—such as dental hygienists, EMS personnel, and culinary experts—provide valuable insights into their respective fields. Additionally, students are

introduced to STEM careers through collaboration with Fleet Readiness Center East (FRCEast) at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. During Engineering Week, base personnel lead classroom activities that showcase STEM-related career opportunities.

To help students make informed decisions about their academic and career paths, the CDC organizes tours of local high schools and Carteret Community College. These visits include presentations about high school course offerings, career clusters, and community college programs. Beginning in sixth grade, students develop a Career Development Plan using tools such as MajorClarity, NCCareers.org, and CFNC. By the end of eighth grade, each student has a completed portfolio that is shared with high school counselors to assist with future planning.

One of the capstone events for eighth graders is the annual CTE Expo, held each February at the civic center. Teachers from all CTE programs across the three high schools, along with community college faculty, showcase their offerings through interactive activities and informational sessions. This event is strategically scheduled just prior to high school registration, and course guides are distributed to help students make informed course selections.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

- 2018-2019: 1726
- 2019-2020: 1815
- 2020-2021: 2378
- 2021-2022: 2649
- 2022-2023: 2720 (6th-8th)
- 2023-2024: 2515 (6th-8th)
- 2024-2025: 2436 (6th-8th)

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

- 2018-2019 - 0 - This was our first year in which the grant was awarded.
- 2019-2020 - 930
- 2020-2021 - 2006
- 2021-2022 - 3859
- 2022-2023 - 3637 (9th-12th)
- 2023-2024 - 3633 (9th-12th)
- 2024-2025 - 3905 (9th-12th)

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

- 2018-2019 - 0

- 2019-2020 - 0 (9th only)
- 2020-2021 - 0 (9th and 10th only)
- 2021-2022 - 41 (9th, 10th, 11th only)
- 2022-2023 - 154 (9th-12th)
- 2023-2024 - 160 (9th-12th)
- 2024-2025 - 156 (9th-12th)

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

- 2018-2019 - 0
- 2019-2020 - 61 (9th only)
- 2020-2021 - 74 (9th and 10th only)
- 2021-2022 - 165 (9th, 10th, 11th)
- 2022-2023 - 688 (9th-12th)
- 2023-2024 - 1841 (9th-12th)
- 2024-2025 - 3617 (9th-12th)

Cumberland County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funds have been used to fund a middle grades Career Development Coordinator position. This position supports 18 middle schools, 62 middle school CTE Teachers, with 10,126 middle school CTE student participants. Through this position, CCS CTE has been able to expand career exploration activities and programs as well as curriculum expansion. Having this grant allows CCS CTE to continue to offer an annual Career Pathway Fair that allows for middle school students to explore careers in the 16 career clusters that include high school and college programs and local employers to bring about awareness of educational and career opportunities. By adding a middle grades CDC to lead this work, students have access to an increased number of in-person and virtual field trips; in-school STEM days; and career ready labs. CCS has also been able to continue providing districtwide implementation of a career readiness platform for students in grades 5-12. The CDC through this grant has been the project manager for districtwide implementation supporting all middle grades students, teachers, and support staff to include middle grades school counselors. Greater collaboration between departments has increased due to the work and dedication of the middle grades CDC.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

CCS CTE reported 10,126 CTE non-duplicated middle school participants. These students are enrolled in CTE courses ranging through the 16 career clusters including Agriculture Education, Business

Education, Computer Science and Information Technology Education, and STEM. CCS CTE has also had the opportunity to expand exploratory middle grades programming through the addition of Paxton Patterson Career Ready labs to four more middle schools bringing our total to nine. All CTE participants have career readiness platform access with a single user sign on to begin career exploration and academic and career planning.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

CCS CTE student participation from middle to high school maintains consistency with over 10,000 unduplicated students. Students are able to gain exposure through exploratory experiences in various career clusters in middle schools to help identify their interests and make more informed decisions about program and course selection in high school. CCS CTE continues to experience steady growth in the number of CTE Concentrators each year. This upward trend directly supports the goals outlined in both the CCS Strategic Plan and the Local CTE Plan. CTE Concentrators made up 51% of the 2025 graduating class.

CCS CTE also continues to see steady increases in the number of industry recognized credentials and consistently ranks within the top ten districts in NC with the highest number of credentials earned. Early exposure is key and the grant funded CDC has been critical to early exposure.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Our Innovative Career Opportunities Now (ICON) program, provided paid internships to 120 students across 30 local companies during Summer 2024. This number has increased to 160 students during Summer 2025 totaling 19,200 work hours. Through the efforts of the CDC, CCS was able to partner with District C and our Workforce Development Board, to offer a myriad of internship experiences and to help mitigate barriers for students needing additional support.

We are continuing to seek and pursue ongoing work-based learning opportunities for all students. Having the CDC funded from this grant has been critical to business and community outreach and engagement.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

CCS students earned 7,600 college credits through CCP during the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters. 233 students graduated from Fayetteville Technical Community College with a CTE Certification through Career and College Promise. CCS students earned 15,031 industry recognized credentials.

Currituck County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Currituck County Schools used grant funds to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for 6th and 7th grade students at Currituck County Middle School and Moyock Middle

School. Serving approximately 728 6th and 7th grade students across 2 schools, the district is addressing the needs of its growing student population by providing a dedicated Career Development Coordinator at the middle schools. This expansion allows younger students earlier access to career exploration through exploratory courses, hands-on projects, and career awareness activities. The specific courses were Business, Agriculture, CS Discoveries, and the College and Career Ready lab.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

Approximately 650 students at 2 middle schools were enrolled in CTE courses as part of the Expansion Grant.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

In the 2023-2024 school year, Currituck County Schools had approximately 900 unduplicated students enrolled in High School CTE courses. We also had 268 students concentrate in a pathway. This is an increase of 29% of students concentrating in a CTE pathway.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

For the 2024-2025 school year, Currituck County Schools had approximately 50 High School students participate in internships. This growth practically doubles since the 2023-2024 school year. Students participated in internships and work base learning areas such as Nursing Clinicals, Automotive Repairs Shops, School nursing placements, teacher cadet placements, and hospitality and tourism.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

While I don't have the exact number of students who earned CCP credit, our credentials increased with over 80% of High School students earning a credential in the 2023-2024 school year. This number increased by 47% from the year before.

Elkin City Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Funding has been used to provide a Middle Grade Career Development Coordinator to serve grades 6, 7, & 8. This teacher also teaches a middle school Medical Terminology course to help prepare our students for the healthcare labor market need in our local area and region. The CDC works with students to develop career goals, guides students in completing interest inventories in NCCareers, contacts business/industry to provide Career Cafes, Career Fairs, Community College tours, and guest speakers.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

- Grade 6: 94
- Grade 7: 98
- Grade 8: 88

Total Enrollment: 280

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

Grade 9: 161

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

2024-2025 Academic Year:

Internships: 19

Pre-Apprenticeships: 36

Requests for 2025-2026 Academic Year:

Internships: 14

**Pre-Apprenticeships: 35
Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:**

90 students received college credit

Approved Industry Certifications/Credentials: 340

Franklin County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

The CTE Grade Expansion Grant funds were used to cover 25% of the salary for a Career Development Coordinator (CDC) to support career development activities for students in grades 6-7. In addition, funds were used to compensate 10-month CTE teachers for leading Career Camps for students in grades 6-7 during the summer.

Career and Technical Education hosted two weeks of Career camps, offering a total of eleven camps (including three repeat sessions) held Monday-Thursday from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Teachers also received compensation for 16 hours of planning time to ensure a high-quality camp experience for students. Teachers were provided funding for supplies, ensuring that each student received a “take away” item(s). The total cost of supplies was \$6,000.

Program areas featured in the camps included:

- Health Science Education
- Family & Consumer Science:
 - Foods
 - Apparel & Textile Production
- Trade and Industrial:

- Carpentry
- Automotive Services
- Business, Finance, and Marketing Education (BFM):
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Business Essentials

The CDC collaborated with counselors, English Language Arts teachers, and middle-grade administrators to guide the implementation of Xello, the platform used to complete the state-mandated Career Development Plans.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

The primary initiative with last’s years grant funding was the CTE Career Summer Camps. A total of 111 middle students participated in the eleven (three camps were repeat sessions) camps offered during the Summer of 2025.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

We currently do not have a definitive number of students who subsequently enrolled in high school courses.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Our Public School Unit (PSU) does not currently offer internships or apprenticeship programs for middle school students. However, students in the middle grades are introduced to a variety of careers through the Xello College and Career Readiness platform. In addition, sixth and seventh grade students explore careers using Paxton Patterson Labs, available at each middle school. These highly engaging, hands-on labs provide career-focused learning experiences that expose students to a wide range of Career Clusters.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

This is the first year the PSU utilized grant funding to host CTE Summer Career Camps. CTE will monitor participants’ high school enrollment and will generate CCP and articulated credit reports from Infinite Campus to identify the number of students who participated in the career camps. Additionally, the Career Development Coordinator (CDC) will collaborate with the Curriculum Instruction Management Coordinator (CIMC) to track industry certifications and credentials earned by camp participants.

Hickory City Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funds have been used to pay the salary for a middle school Career Development Coordinator/Special Populations Coordinator to provide career related services to middle school students, primarily 6th and 7th grade students, and to provide additional support to our CTE teachers and our special populations students.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

411 (193 at Northview, 218 at Grandview, counting only 6th and 7th graders)

Note that we had lower overall enrollment at both middle schools (and therefore lower numbers in CTE classes overall). The odd shift in balance between the schools was due to Grandview experimenting with a 9 week rotation. This allowed more students to experience CTE classes, even though they did not get to remain in them as long.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

In the 2024-2025 school year, there were 819 students enrolled in CTE courses at the high school level.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

There were 45 total students in this category.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

142 students earned CCP credit in a CTE course this year. 356 students earned a credential.

Hyde County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

The grant funds have been used to support a portion of a position and the needed supplies and materials for students to engage in computer science explorations at younger ages (6th and 7th grade specifically).

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

2024-25: 64 students were enrolled in CTE courses as part of the expansion grant. This was 100% of our Mattamuskeet 6th & 7th graders.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

At this stage of program implementation, it is too early to determine the number of students who have subsequently HS CTE Courses as a direct result of the CTE Grade Expansion Grant. Tracking and reporting of these outcomes will be possible once participating cohorts progress into completer pathways and credentialing opportunities in future academic years.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

At this stage of program implementation, it is too early to determine the number of students who have subsequently participated in internships, cooperative education, or apprenticeship programs as a direct result of the CTE Grade Expansion Grant. Tracking and reporting of these outcomes will be possible once participating cohorts progress into complete pathways and credentialing opportunities in future academic years.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

At this stage of program implementation, it is too early to determine the number of students who have subsequently earned college credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) or approved industry certifications/credentials as a direct result of the CTE Grade Expansion Grant. Tracking and reporting of these outcomes will be possible once participating cohorts progress into the eligible high school courses and credentialing opportunities in future academic years.

Jackson Day School

Use of Grant Funds:

Middle school students were offered classes in the culinary arts program to explore their interests. Additionally, our CTE coordinator has been working with The Roc in Charlotte NC (<https://www.roccharlotte.org/>) to establish a program where students can enter the program (in lieu of a dual enrollment track) to receive certificates in areas such as construction and electrical fields.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

25

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

N/A at this time.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A at this time.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A at this time.

Lenoir County Public Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

The grant funding is being used to pay for a Middle Grades Career Development Coordinator who will serve all four middle schools in Lenoir County. Schools were previously served by the high school Career Development Coordinator. The MG CDC began her position in August 2024. She is based at

Frink Middle School but has a rotation schedule to work with all four middle schools each week. Because of the CDC's work, we have been able to expand our partnership with Lenoir Community College to include middle grades exposure to CCP pathways. Additionally, the CDC has partnered with middle grades counselors to ensure that all students begin their career development plan in 7th grade with the intention of revising the plan in the 8th grade prior to high school course enrollment. She has strengthened the middle grades CTE teacher professional learning community connecting them with outside businesses, the community college, and other resources designed to enhance their programs.

These were the outcome measures detailed in the grant:

- Number of fully completed career development plans for 8th grade students
- Number of assigned activities completed in Major Clarity for 6th and 7th grade students
- Completion of a 5th grade transition visit
- Completion of an 8th grade transition visit
- Number of guest speakers obtained by the CDC
- Number of off-site experiences led by the CDC including "Career Jumpstart" visits to Lenoir Community College (formerly known as Middle School Mondays)
- CDC licensure added to the CDC's professional teaching license
- Number of lesson plans developed by the CDC (shows evidence across all four middle schools)
- Completion of 5th grade career awareness activities survey

The MG CDC completed the Facilitating Career Development coursework and is a fully licensed CDC.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

There are approximately 1459 students enrolled in middle school CTE courses in 2024-25. There were approximately 1,844 middle school students in Lenoir County in 2024-25.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

- KHS- 184
- NLHS- 196
- SLHS- 173
- LCLA-0 (Alternative High School)
- ECHS- 0 (Early College High School)

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Not applicable at this time.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

Not applicable at this time.

Martin County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Funds were used to secure a teacher with a background in computer science to teach middle school students the middle school computer science explorations curriculum. The assignment included the courses EY10, EY30, and CY20.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

As we are in a transition phase in Martin County Schools, South Creek Middle has an enrollment of 120 in CTE for the year, or about 20 students per semester. With a new Martin Innovative Middle School housed at Riverside Middle, and the school choice initiative, the number of students at South Creek Middle School decreased this year. However, it is the first time in the district that computer science has been offered to the students at SCMS, and they have flourished in the opportunity.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

This was the first year offering Computer Science and Career Explorations at South Creek Middle School. The reason to offer Computer Science there is due to a CTE survey, where it was noted there was a disparity in the CTE and elective course offerings. This investigation provided CTE Administration and district leadership clear data on what areas of CTE are important to students and the areas where they would like to have classes. Middle school students as well as high school students going for CCP credits or attending computer or technology related courses at MCC or MCS will have a greater foundation. It is projected that 30 of the 60 students will enroll in HS CTE courses next fall from SCMS.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A - data not sufficient for only 2 years

McDowell County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funds have been instrumental in expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities for sixth and seventh-grade students across our Public School Unit. These funds supported the development and alignment of middle school CTE course offerings with existing high school pathways, ensuring students have early exposure to a wide range of career fields.

As a result, our middle school students now have access to a comprehensive selection of exploratory CTE modules, including:

- Agriculture
- Business
- Engineering
- Introduction to Family and Consumer Science
- Health Science
- Introduction to Trade and Industry

This alignment allows students to explore interests and develop foundational skills that directly connect to high school CTE courses and future career pathways. Early exposure not only supports student engagement but also strengthens long-term workforce development efforts across the district.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

We have 866 students enrolled in CTE courses between the three middle schools.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

We have 870+ students enrolled in high school CTE courses from the program start date. This number will continue to increase.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

We have 75 students who have participated in internships, cooperative education, pre-apprenticeship, or apprenticeship program as a result of the CTE Grade Expansion Grant as a junior or senior. This number will continue increase.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

We have 500+ students who have earned college credit and certifications/credentials as a result of the CTE Grade Expansion Grant. This number will continue to increase.

Mount Airy City Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Mount Airy City Schools used the CTE Grade-Expansion grant to expand CTE programming at Mount Airy Middle School. We have a career development coordinator (CDC) who successfully supports a multi-faceted role to support our middle school students while also strengthening the bridge between our middle school and our high school CTE programming. He serves students in class by teaching lessons and co-teaches with core content teachers to strengthen the programming and build relevance between school and workplace and college readiness skills. During the instructional day, the CDC

utilizes Xello to meet with students and develop their plans for course selection and the development of their career development plans. The CDC also works with the community to align guest speakers who represent a variety of diverse careers. Opportunities for this information are available to all middle school students throughout the year. Additionally, the CDC works to highlight opportunities for Career and College Promise (CCP) coursework with our partners at Surry Community College (SCC). He also aligns experiences to tour college campuses and works closely with both the middle school counselor and the high school counselors.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

403 students were enrolled in CTE classes in grades 6-8.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

139 enrollments in eligible high school courses for 9th grade based on 132 students.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

- Internships for the 2024- 2025 school year (SY)- 54
- Cooperative Education for the 24/25 SY- NA
- Apprenticeships for the 24/25 SY- 23 Pre-Apprentices through Surry Yadkin Works

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

716 credentials were attained in the 24-25 school year.

Mountain Island Charter School

Use of Grant Funds:

With the ending of ESSER funds, this grant allowed us to continue to cultivate two programs that we began after COVID.

1. The Academic Accelerator club, rebranded as Raptor Navigators Career Readiness Program, went from meeting after school two days a week to meeting daily and added a CTE focus, allowing students to explore trades, business, engineering/architecture, and agriculture. Hosting this program after school allowed students to participate in CTE even if their schedules did not allow for it during the school day.
2. The Career Accelerator Summer program allowed students to explore careers and businesses in our surrounding communities. This is a 3 week long program filled with community business field trips. This year they met with sports management programs, hospitality companies, science-focused businesses, business leaders, and more.

These two middle school programs continue to grow, and students look forward to the activities. This grant allowed us to add a second middle school Business Exploration course with plans to add a third CTE course in middle school in 25-26 (Digital Literacy).

Continuous enhancements in this program allowed students to be more engaged in the community, continuing to learn about what types of careers our surrounding areas are in need of and providing guidance on what paths are available in a variety of CTE fields. Expansion and focus on sixth and seventh grade opportunities allowed us to begin deepening the impact and implementation of the Career Leadership Project to create a community impact where students could interview and present career leadership projects.

Funds were used for several positions to plan, organize, and lead these programs. We would fund several part-time positions with this grant.

- An afterschool coordinator who organized the lessons, field trips, guest speakers, and monitored the daily program. This position also conducted surveys and analyzed the impact of the afterschool program.
- An administrative assistant worked during the summer to order supplies, work with businesses and higher ed partnerships to fulfill the needs of the program, advertise, recruit, and assist the program leads.
- An administrator position to oversee the additional programs outside of the normal contracted hours.
- And six part-time instructional positions (3 for the afterschool program and 3 for the summer program).

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

We increased the number of students enrolled in CTE courses from 31 in 2023-2024 to 59 in 2024-2025. That number will increase this year with a third course added to the schedule.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

Our high school courses have also increased, and we will see this increase subsequently after the middle school students matriculate into the grade levels where CTE courses are a choice in High School. Through on campus courses and NCVPS courses, our High School student CTE enrollment went from 84 in 2023-24 to 102 in 2024-25. Our Dual Enrollment CTE numbers have increased from 30 students in 2024-2025 to 40 currently enrolled for the upcoming school year.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Not applicable at this time.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

We are working on credentialing and certification opportunities. We had 2 students take the ACT Workkeys this year and earn a silver and bronze badge. We had three students take the CNA pathway, one student complete an associates degree, and two students attend the welding pathway at Gaston College. Through the CTE Grade Expansion Grant and the programs we are implementing in the middle school, we will see these numbers increase in the future.

New Hanover County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

These grant funds allowed us to have 4 middle school CDCs that covered 2 schools each. The funds were used to pay a portion of the salary for 1 of our middle school CDCs.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

I don't think this grant affected our middle school enrollment.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

If we receive the grant again this year, we should have data for this performance indicator by comparing this year's 9th grade CTE enrollment numbers (1575) with enrollment data from 26-27.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

We will have data for this performance indicator at the end of the 28-29 school year when the current 8th graders are old enough to enroll in internship.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

We will have data for this performance indicator at the end of the 28-29 school year when the current 8th graders are old enough to enroll in CCP courses.

North East Carolina Preparatory School

Use of Grant Funds:

North East Carolina Prep used the Grade Expansion grant funds to offer:

- Middle grades business 6th grade Keyboarding and Basic Word Processing
- Middle grades Agriculture Exploring Agriculture Issues
- Middle grades Computer Science CS10 Introduction to Computer Science
- Exposure to multiple pathways available to students as high school options
- Connections to industry-related job WBL opportunities
- Connections to Edgecombe Community College CCP options

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

6th Grade students – 81 students

7th Grade students – 50 students in Exploring Agriculture Issues

7th Grade Students – 100 students in Introduction to Computer Science

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

N/A currently, but the plan is to see an increase in high school enrollment within the next 2-3 years.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A currently, but the plan is to see an increase in high school enrollment within the next 2-3 years.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A currently, but the plan is to see an increase in high school enrollment within the next 2-3 years.

Pender County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

With two years of implementation, the Grade Expansion Grant has transformed Career and Technical Education (CTE) for middle school students in Pender County Schools (PCS). Grant funds were used to create and sustain a full-time Middle School Career Development Coordinator (CDC), whose leadership and coordination have been instrumental in ensuring 100% compliance with Career Development Plan legislation and increasing meaningful career exposure for students in grades 6–8.

Before the grant, CTE offerings at the middle school level were limited primarily to courses in Computer Science and Information Technology Education, Business/Finance/Marketing Education, and Technology Education. Over the past two years, PCS has successfully expanded programming to include Health Science Education, Trade and Industry Education, and Family and Consumer Science (FACS) Education. These additions have opened doors for middle school students to explore broader career interests aligned with high-demand pathways.

The Middle School CDC played a critical role in developing, implementing, and maintaining these expanded offerings. Through the CDC’s efforts, career exploration has become an intentional part of the curriculum, including grade-level career development lessons, the integration of soft skills and workplace readiness training, and support for students in developing individualized four-year Career Development Plans starting in middle school.

The CDC also led systemwide initiatives such as:

Organizing and sustaining career fairs, industry tours, and guest speaker events at every middle school.

Coordinating job shadowing experiences and connecting CTE content to real-world applications.

Facilitating 8th grade transition planning events and site visits to high schools.

Collaborating with counselors and administrators to ensure smooth articulation between middle and high school CTE pathways.

Additionally, the CDC has fostered relationships with local industries and postsecondary partners, laying the groundwork for future internships and apprenticeships as students progress through their CTE journeys.

This strategic and intentional use of grant funds has not only expanded course offerings, but also embedded a culture of career readiness throughout PCS middle schools. As a result, students are more aware of career options, better prepared for high school CTE courses, and increasingly confident in mapping their paths toward being enrolled, enlisted, or employed after graduation.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

2,100

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

2,100

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Not applicable at this time due to grant funding being utilized for less than 2 years; expecting to observe progress by end of year 4.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

Not applicable at this time due to grant funding being utilized for less than 2 years; expecting to observe progress by end of year 4.

Public Schools of Robeson County

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant Fund Utilization Summary:

The grant funds were utilized to support the salary of a sixth-grade Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher who served three K–6 schools. This position enabled the delivery of a dedicated computer science curriculum to sixth-grade students across all three sites. The instructional program used was Computer Science Discoveries by Code.org, which provides foundational knowledge in computer science and fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

Through the support of the CTE Expansion Grant, a total of 125 sixth-grade students across three K–6 schools were able to participate in Career and Technical Education (CTE) during the academic year. The grant funded a dedicated CTE teacher position, allowing students to engage in the Computer

Science Discoveries curriculum provided by Code.org. This program introduced students to foundational computer science concepts and skills, supporting early exposure to STEM career pathways.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A

Randolph County School System

Use of Grant Funds:

The funding was utilized to continue employment for a Middle School Career Development Coordinator. In order to effectively meet the goals of the vision statement of the RCSS CTE Department and support our College and Career Continuum to provide targeted experiences in career awareness (Grade 5), career exploration (Grades 6-8), and career development (Grades 9-12), the RCSS needs additional staff to effectively provide these opportunities. This staff member is also responsible for ensuring that all students in grades 6-8 have a documented career development plan. The Middle School CDC met twice with each middle school student at each of our 6 traditional middle schools to have targeted conversations regarding self-exploration, SMART goal setting, and career research. This information was then used to generate a career development plan for each student. The Middle School CDC also worked with school-based staff to facilitate 2-year Community College, 4-year University and industry tours to provide students with exposure to post-secondary opportunities.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

All 6-8 grade students in the 6 traditional middle schools were served by this staff member. She served 3,395 students in this capacity. Thanks to the funding received in this grant, all middle school students now have a targeted Career Development Plan that aligns with their post-secondary goals. This is the second school year that the CTE department has been able to provide this opportunity to students at the middle school level.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

N/A due to a Middle School position.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A due to a Middle School position.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A due to a Middle School position.

Roanoke Rapids City Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funds were strategically utilized by Roanoke Rapids Graded School District (RRGSD) to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities to sixth and seventh grade students, aligning with the district's goal of increasing early career awareness and exploration.

During the summer of 2024, a full-time Computer Science/Career Counselor was initially reassigned from the high school to the middle school to support this expansion. However, due to an unexpected teacher resignation at the high school, the district had to return this staff member to fill that critical vacancy.

To continue momentum at the middle school level, RRGSD successfully hired a retired school counselor who also had prior experience as a Career Development Coordinator (CDC). This individual now works 21 hours per week doing career awareness activities, allowing the district to maintain support for CTE awareness and exploration activities for middle grades students.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

376

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

0

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

0

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

0

Rockingham County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

The Grade Expansion Grant (PRC 079) allowed Rockingham County Schools to employ a second Career Development Coordinator (CDC) focused specifically on supporting sixth and seventh grade students in our middle schools. Our district includes four middle schools, and this additional position enabled a more effective service model, with each CDC assigned to two schools.

This position played a vital role in introducing all sixth-grade students to career pathways through the use of Major Clarity, a digital platform that helped them begin developing their Career Development Plans. By seventh grade, all students across the district had completed individualized Career Development Plans aligned with their interests, strengths, and future aspirations.

In addition to individualized planning, this grant-supported position expanded access to career awareness activities. For the first time in RCS, middle school students participated in a district-wide job shadowing event, offering first hand exposure to local career opportunities. Seventh-grade students also took part in ENVISION, a county-wide Career Expo that connected students to industry partners and educational pathways.

Furthermore, the CDC position supported the implementation of our Exploring Career classes, which incorporate Paxton Patterson modules and Computer Science Discoveries (CSD). These courses provide hands-on, exploratory learning experiences that introduce students to high-demand career fields in STEM, health sciences, engineering, and technology.

These efforts have significantly enhanced our middle grades CTE programming, ensuring that students begin exploring career options early and are better prepared for the academic and technical pathways ahead.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

1034

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A

Rocky Mount Preparatory School

Use of Grant Funds:

Funds from the CTE Grade Expansion Grant were effectively used to spread CTE programmed in the sixth and seventh grades of our Rocky Mount Preparatory School. Key investments included:

- Curriculum Development: Offering of basic CTE courses such as Exploring Careers, Business & Entrepreneurship, and STEM Fundamentals for middle-grade students.
- Personnel: Recruitment of CTE instructors and career development coordinator(CDC) and/or IMC (instructional management coordinator) who are certified to provide program delivery.

- Resources & Materials: Acquisition of instructional materials, lab equipment, and software licenses for students that are relevant to the industry as well as supported by the local community for hands-on learning.
- Professional Development: CTE instructors get to go through training sessions and externships so that middle-grade content can be aligned with high school pathways and industry.

The improvements have created a great CTE pipeline that is helping young people become aware of the workforce and develop their interests in workforce pathways that are in line with the labor market needs of the region.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

Total middle school CTE enrollment: 145

- Grade 6: 45
- Grade 7: 23
- Grade 8: 77

A 27% increase in CTE exposure at the middle grades compared to the previous academic year.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

Number of students enrolled in high school CTE courses: 21 (SY2024-25)

This reflects strong vertical alignment and growing interest in CTE pathways across the continuum.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Through collaboration with local business and industry partners:

- Internship/Co-op/Apprenticeship participation: 22 (SY2024-25)
 - Internships: 10
 - Pre-apprenticeship/Youth Apprenticeship: 12

These placements improved real-world readiness and provided important work-based learning experiences.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

As a direct result of early CTE exposure and continued pathway participation:

- Students earning CCP or articulated college credit: 35
- Students earning approved industry certifications or credentials: 10

Use of Grant Funds:

Sampson County Schools utilized PRC 079 Grade Expansion funds to hire a part-time middle school Career Development Coordinator (CDC) in November 2024. This position will work with Grades 6-8 to fulfill our Career Awareness Continuum, but will also work to extend career awareness activities down to Grade 5. . This position focused on expanding early career awareness and exploration opportunities through integration of Career and Technical Education concepts into middle school instruction. The middle school CDC collaborated with CTE teachers, core content teachers, and school counselors to deliver career exploration lessons, coordinate interest inventories, arrange career-related field trips and guest speakers, and facilitated the development of career development plans with middle school students. She has also worked to develop a career awareness continuum for Grades 5-8 and has also been working with middle school CTE teachers to facilitate the implementation of the Career Development Plan among middle school students. These efforts ensured that sixth and seventh grade students were introduced to the full range of CTE program areas available in high school, including Agriculture, Business, Family & Consumer Sciences, Health Science, and Trade & Industrial Education.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

N/A – Sampson County Schools’ Grade Expansion program focused on career exploration activities and pre-CTE course engagement at the middle school level rather than direct enrollment in CTE courses. Sixth and seventh graders participated in exploratory career activities aligned to CTE program areas.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

Since being hired in November 2024, our middle school CDC has focused her efforts on Grades 6-7. This outcome data will be available in future reporting years once those students transition to high school.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Not applicable for the 2024–2025 reporting year; students served are currently in middle school.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

Not applicable for the 2024–2025 reporting year; students served are currently in middle school.

Shining Rock Classical Academy

Use of Grant Funds:

100% of our grant funds were allocated to cover salary and benefits for two faculty members who offered additional CTE courses for middle school students, including sixth and seventh graders. With the help of this grant, we were able to offer a Coding course using Project Lead the Way curriculum and a keyboarding/word processing/basic computer skills course. Both of these courses allowed us to offer programming to sixth and seventh grade students.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

During the 2024-2025 school year, Shining Rock Classical Academy Middle School (grades 6,7,8) was able to expand our STEAM curriculum through the Project Lead the Way program and offer six courses (three in the fall semester, three in the spring semester). A total of 62 students were able to receive daily instruction in Block Coding using mini-computers, electronics, wiring, sensors, and motors.

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

Shining Rock Classical Academy High School currently has a total of 18 freshmen enrolled in CTE courses: 17 in Marketing and 1 in Computer Science.

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Our oldest cohort of students positively impacted by Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Program are now freshmen. Therefore, none of them have participated in internships, cooperative education, or apprenticeship programs currently. Shining Rock Classical Academy High School does offer these opportunities for upperclassmen and had multiple students involved in these activities over the summer of 2025.

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

Our oldest cohort of students positively impacted by the Expansion Grant are now freshmen. Therefore, none of them have earned college credit or approved industry certifications/credentials currently. Shining Rock Classical Academy High School does offer these opportunities for students completing two consecutive CTE courses and has multiple students on track to be completers by graduation.

Surry County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funding has allowed expanded career development opportunities by providing three Career Development Coordinators (CDCs) for the district. The CDCs partner with the Exploring Career Decisions teachers to connect businesses with students. In addition, CDCs begin career development plans with 6th graders and create a three year process that transitions into 7th and 8th grade. This process and partnership has expanded the Career Exploration Course for middle schools students by providing connections between their coursework and the business and industry field. This has strengthened our ability to assess career interest in 6th and 7th graders.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

- Central Middle 6th Grade:167 7th Grade:151
- Gentry Middle 6th Grade:96 7th Grade:108
- Meadowview Middle 6th Grade:111 7th Grade:105

- Pilot Mountain. Middle 6th Grade:131 7th Grade: 114

Total Enrollment: 6th Grade: 505 7th Grade 478 (6th and 7th Grade: 983)

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

N/A

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

N/A

Wilkes County Schools

Use of Grant Funds:

Grant funds were used to employ a full time middle school CDC to serve the four middle schools in Wilkes County. The middle school CDC did a variety of Career Development Activities and Career Events targeted to 6th-7th grade students to include but not limited to guest speaker scheduling, career fairs, STEAM Expo, BeProBeProud events, BetaBox event.

Number of Students Enrolled in CTE Courses as Part of the Grant:

- North Middle 26
- East Middle 17
- West Middle 28
- Central Middle 21

Number of Students who Subsequently Enrolled in High School CTE Courses:

Students from the first year of the expansion grant are entering their 9th grade year this year. These numbers will be available at the end of the year.

- 23-24 Grant Students- Rising 8th and 9th Grades
- 24-25 Grant Students- Rising 7th and 8th Grades

Number of Students who Subsequently Participated in Internships, Cooperative Education, or Apprenticeship Programs as a Result of the Grant:

Not applicable based on program dates.

- 23-24 Grant Students- Rising 8th and 9th Grades
- 24-25 Grant Students- Rising 7th and 8th Grades

Number of Students who Subsequently Earned College Credit (CCP and/or articulated credit) and Approved Industry Certifications or Credentials as a result of the Grant:

Not applicable based on program dates.

- 23-24 Grant Students- Rising 8th and 9th Grades
- 24-25 Grant Students- Rising 7th and 8th Grades

UPDATED LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS ON REPORTING

Pursuant to the legislative changes passed in House Bill 259 / SL 2023-134 to the reporting requirements for the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission Grants Report, the following recommendations have been made:

- 1. An accounting of how funds and personnel resources were utilized for the program and their impact on student achievement, retention, and employability.**
 - a. These are included in the local reports.
- 2. Recommended statutory and policy changes.**
 - a. Currently, there are no recommended statutory or policy changes.
- 3. Recommendations for improvement of the program.**
 - a. At this time, the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission is undergoing a transition of leadership (electing a new Chair and Vice-Chair) and has just seen several individuals' appointments begin in July 2025. The Commission has always prioritized the improvement of both programs through increasing awareness of the grant opportunities, being of service to grant applicants, and prioritizing the inclusion of equity and equality in Commission initiative planning. As the Commission moves forward with new leadership and appointees in 2026, it will continue to foster and improve upon these initiatives. At this time, the Education and Workforce Innovation Commission has no recommendations for improvement of the program.
- 4. For the Career and Technical Education Grade Expansion Grants, recommendations on increasing availability of grants after the first two years of the program to include additional local school administrative units, charter schools, or providing additional grants to prior recipients.**
 - a. The Commission prioritizes increasing availability of, awareness of, and access to these grant opportunities. It is the belief of the CTE division at NCDPI that this priority will continue into the 2026-27 grant year with new Commission leadership and members.