

CAPE FEAR  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE



20  
24

# CAREER ACADEMY PROGRESS REPORT

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# Section 1: Results of the Pilot Program

## Career Academy Summer Camps Overview

The Career Academy summer camps, conducted under the pilot program, have provided an impactful introduction to career pathways and life on a college campus, targeting at-risk students from New Hanover and Pender counties. Through the camps, students are exposed to a range of hands-on learning experiences across multiple career fields. The goal of the Career Academies Program is to create familiarity and a positive experience within a postsecondary educational environment. The pilot program continues to expand in scope, with an increase in program offerings and student participation, directly supporting the target demographic.

### 2022 Career Academy Camps

- **Programs Represented:** 31
- **Presentations:** 7 , covering topics such as study skills, career personality traits, Wilmington Early College, SEA-Tech High, Pender Early College, and CFCC student clubs & organizations
- **Total Students Served:** 225

### Hands-On Instructions Provided by Programs in:

• 3D Printing	• Electrical	• Nursing
• Aviation	• Electrical Lineworker	• Occupational Therapy
• Barbering	• Engines	Assistant
• Carpentry	• Entrepreneurship	• Pharmacy Tech
• Certified Nursing Assistant	• Film and Video	• Phlebotomy
• Computer Technician	Production	• Theatre Technician
• Cosmetology	• Youth Financial	• Truck Driver Training
• Cyber Crime	Literacy (SECU)	• Information
• Dental Assisting	• First Responder	Technology
• Dental Hygiene	• Graphic Design	• Welding
• Diesel Technology	• Nail Tech	
	• Nuclear Technology	

## 2023 Career Academy Camps

- **Programs Represented:** 38
- **Presentations:** 12 , covering topics such as college athletics, youth financial literacy (SECU), CCP, TRiO Upward Bound, and Pender Early College High School
- **Total Students Served:** 240

## Hands-On Instructions Provided by Programs in:

- Architecture
- Technology
- Aviation
- Baking and Pastry
- Barbering
- Chemical Technology
- Collision Repair
- Community Spanish Interpreter
- Costume Design
- Criminal Justice
- Dental Assisting
- Dental Hygiene
- Diesel Technology
- Early Childhood Education
- Electrical
- Electrical Lineworker
- Entrepreneurship
- Film and Video Production
- First Responders
- Graphic Design
- Information Technology
- Interior Design
- Law Enforcement
- Machining Applications
- Mechanical Engineering
- Electronic Music
- Nail Tech
- Nail Tech
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Paralegal Technology
- Plumbing
- Real Estate
- Theatre Technician
- Truck Driver Training
- Veterinary Medical Technology
- Welding
- Woodworking
- Youth Financial Literacy (SECU)



## 2024 Career Academy Camps

- **Programs Represented:** 39
- **Presentations:** 13, covering topics such as general CFCC information, CFNC, career personality traits, SEA-Tech, Pender Early College High School, and TRiO Upward Bound
- **Strategic Expansion:** This year's camp expanded partnerships to include schools with many students demonstrating need, aligning with the mission to support at-risk students. New Hanover County schools like Holly Shelter Middle (49% of students receiving Free/Reduced Lunch - with key feeder school of Rachel Freeman Academy where 94.6% of students are on free and reduced lunch), and Pender County Schools of Burgaw Middle (74.7% classified as meeting the poverty rate by either receiving free and reduced lunch, Medicaid, EBT, etc.), and Cape Fear Middle (54.07%).
- **Total Students Served:** 360



## Hands-On Instructions Provided by Programs in:

• Architectural Technology	• English	• Nail Tech
• Aviation	• Entrepreneurship	• Nursing
• Baking & Pastry	• Film & Video Production	• Occupational Therapy Assistant
• Barbering	• Fine Arts	• Paralegal Technology
• Biology	• Fire & Rescue	• Plumbing
• Chemical Technology	• Forensics/CSI	• Real Estate
• Dental Assisting	• Graphic Design	• Sewing
• Dental Hygiene	• Information Technology	• Software Development
• Early Childhood Education	• Interior Design	• Sports Medicine
• Electrical	• Landscaping	• Theatre
• Electrical Lineworker	• Law Enforcement	• Truck Driver Training
• Electronic Music	• Machining	• Welding
• Engineering	• Marine Technology	• Woodworking

# Section II: Placement of Career Liaisons in Schools to Support At-Risk Students

In compliance with the legislative directive, Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) hired career liaisons for time-limited positions to support at-risk students in select middle schools within New Hanover County Schools and Pender County Schools. These career liaisons were placed in schools where students would benefit most from exposure to career and technical education opportunities, enhancing their readiness for future academic and career pathways.

## Career Liaisons Deployment

- **Williston Middle School (New Hanover County):** Two career liaisons were placed at Williston Middle School, which has an enrollment of 681 students, 73.4% of whom are on free and reduced Lunch.
- **West Pender Middle School (Pender County):** One career liaison was stationed at West Pender Middle School, which has 182 students and 87.43% of the population classified as meeting the poverty rate by either receiving free and reduced lunch, Medicaid, EBT, etc.
- **Career Liaison Coordinator:** A fourth career liaison served as a coordinator, overseeing initiatives at both schools and managing the logistics of the summer camp programs.

## Liaisons' Role and Impact

The liaisons worked year-round, offering support services such as academic tutoring, career counseling, mentoring, and financial aid/scholarship information. Their focus is on dual-enrollment opportunities for students as they transition into high school. Below is a brief overview of the programming provided at each school during the 2022-2024 academic years.



## 2022-2023 Academic Year

### WILLISTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Liaison-led classroom presentations:** Liaisons presented to 70 classrooms with an average of 23 students in attendance per session. They covered topics such as career academy information sessions, marine careers, and targeted tutoring of student athletes.
- **Guest presentations:** 73 hands-on presentations led by local professionals, organizations, and CFCC faculty/staff. Topics covered include:
  - Nursing
  - Interior Design
  - Social Work
  - Occupational Therapy Assistant
  - Website Development
  - Engineering
  - Dental Hygiene
  - Chemical Technology
  - Marine Technology
  - Culinary
  - Carpentry
  - Radiography
  - Sustainable Technology
  - Study Skills
  - Spanish Community Interpreter
  - Manufacturing
  - Career Planning
  - Goal Setting
  - Resume Building
  - Interviewing Skills
- **Field Trips:** 5 field trips were held, including:
  - CFCC Manufacturing Day Expo
  - CFCC 8th Grade Campus Tour
  - Film & Video Production Program Tour
  - Veterinary Technician Program Visit
  - Marine Careers Day

### WEST PENDER MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Liaison-led classroom presentations:** Career Liaisons hosted 25 presentations with an average attendance of 22 students. Topics covered career exploration tools such as major clarity and creative writing workshops.
- **Guest presentations:** 41 hands-on guest presentations featuring local professionals, organizations, and CFCC faculty/staff from a variety of disciplines covering topics such as:
  - Electronic Music
  - Manufacturing & Machining
  - Occupational Therapy Assistant
  - Website Development
  - Chemical Technology
  - Veterinary Medical Technology
  - Interior Design
  - Dental Hygiene
  - Pharmacy Tech
  - Medical Lab Tech
  - Career Planning
  - Goal setting
- **Field Trips:** 6 field trips were held, including:
  - CFCC Manufacturing Day Expo
  - CFCC Downtown Campus Tour
  - CFCC E.A.S.E. Day STEM Experience
  - CFCC Roadshow

## 2023-2024 Academic Year

### WILLISTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Liaison-led classroom presentations:** Career Liaisons held 184 classroom sessions with an average of 22 students per session. Sessions focused on career interest inventories, study skills, and high school planning through Xello workshops.
- **Guest Presentations:** 28 hands-on presentations from local professionals, organizations, and CFCC faculty/staff in subjects such as:
  - CFCC Wilson Center
  - Nursing
  - Marine Biology
  - Culinary Arts
  - Veterinary Medical Technology
  - Arts Industry Entertainment
- **Field Trips:** 4 field trips were held, including:
  - CFCC Manufacturing Day Expo
  - City of Wilmington Trip
  - NC Aquarium Trip
  - Be Pro Be Proud Event

### WEST PENDER MIDDLE SCHOOL

- **Liaison-led classroom presentations:** Career Liaisons held 59 sessions with an average class size of 22 students. Topics covered include STEM activities, 4-year high school planning, and the creation of Garden Club - a career-educational club.
- **Guest Presentations:** 21 presentations from local professionals, organizations, and CFCC faculty/staff in covering areas such as:
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Music
  - CFCC Wilson Center
  - Arts Entertainment Industry
  - Nursing
  - Coding/Software Engineering
  - Computer Integrated Machining
  - Interviewing Skills
  - TRiO Upward Bound
- **Field Trips:** 14 field trips were held
  - Mojotone Manufacturing Tour
  - CFCC Manufacturing Day Expo
  - Pender County Career Fair
  - Broadway for a Better World Grant Field Trips at CFCC's Wilson Center
  - CFCC Downtown Campus Tour
  - CFCC North Campus Tour
  - Corning Inc. Industry Tour
  - Cameron Art Museum
  - CFCC Landscaping & Horticulture Tour



# Section III: Number of Students Who Enrolled in CCP Pathways Following Completion of Career Academies

Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) offers students the opportunity to apply to the Career and College Promise (CCP) program in the spring of their sophomore year of high school, with enrollment beginning in the fall of their junior year. This allows students to be eligible for dual enrollment as both juniors and seniors. Since the first Career Academy camp in 2022, CFCC has made a concerted effort to track and support students through this pathway, ensuring that those who have participated in the Career Academies Program are aware of and prepared for CCP opportunities.

## Tracking CCP Applications from the Inaugural 2022 Group

Outreach was conducted for students who attended the inaugural camp in 2022 and reached 10th grade by the 2023-24 academic year, providing them with information about their eligibility and the benefits of applying to the CCP program. Of this group:

- **Total Number of Eligible Students:** Out of the inaugural cohort, 28 students were in the appropriate grade level to apply for CCP for their junior year.
- **Transfers:** 3 students had transferred out of the district.
- **Ineligible due to GPA:** Six were ineligible for the Career and College Promise Program due to their GPA unless a special waiver was granted from their high school principal or their designee for participation in a CTE pathway not containing a Universal General Education Transfer Course (UGETC).
- **Applications:** Of the 19 remaining eligible students
  - Eight students (42%) applied to participate in CCP at their traditional high schools.
  - Three students (15%) applied through an Early College/Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) setting.

In total, 57.89% of the eligible students from the 2022 cohort applied to the CCP program, a promising indicator of interest in continued academic and career preparation through dual enrollment.

## Early College Enrollment

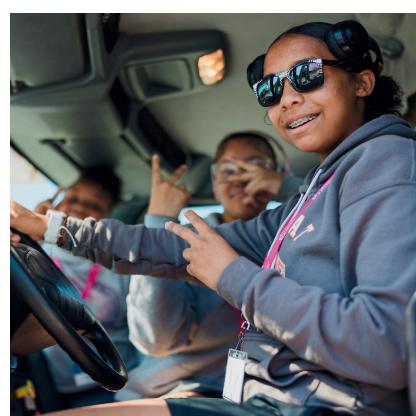
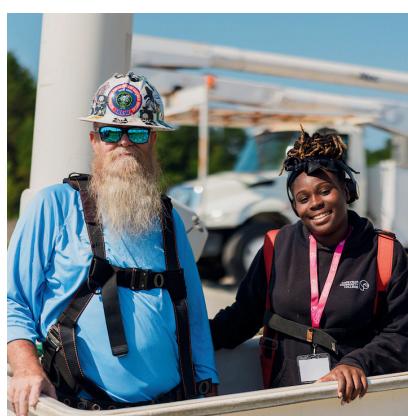
In addition to the students applying for CCP, many students from the 2022 Career Academies Program Cohort have opted for Early College High School/CIHS opportunities:

- **Ineligible Cohort:** Out of 115 students from the inaugural group who have not yet reached the age of eligibility for CCP (but will be eligible to apply in the spring of 2025), 14 students have already enrolled in Early College/CIHS options:
  - Four at Southeastern Area Technical High School (SATS)
  - Six at Wilmington Early College High School (WECHS)
  - Four at Pender Early College High School (PECHS)
- This shows that our intentional programming regarding Early College/CIHS options as a part of the summer camp experience is beginning to take root and yield results.

## Plan for Continued Outreach

As the 2024-25 academic year progresses and additional students from the Career Academies Program approach eligibility for CCP, CFCC is working closely with area high schools to further increase the number of students participating in CCP. To support this initiative we will hold monthly liaison visits. Career Academy Liaisons will visit each of the four high schools that feed into the Career Academies Program (New Hanover High School, Hoggard High School, Pender High School, and Heide Trask High School) one day per month. These visits will connect Career Academies Program graduates and the Career Liaison to offer guidance and support for the CCP application process.

CFCC believes that maintaining strong, active relationships with Career Academies Program graduates through regular liaison visits will increase CCP participation rates and improve overall college and career readiness for students. This proactive outreach model is expected to increase the percentage of Career Academies Program students matriculating into CCP and further bolster the success of both the Career Academies Program and CCP programs.



# Section IV: Other Relevant Student Outcome Data for At-Risk Students

The most recent data from the 2023-24 academic year shows significant progress for Williston Middle School, a key partner in the Career Academies Program initiative. For the first time in several years, Williston Middle School has been removed from the state's low-performing list. Additionally, the school's performance rating improved from an "F" to a "D," exceeding growth expectations. This growth status has shifted from "not met" to "exceeds," underscoring the remarkable academic strides made by students at the school. We believe that the Career Academies Program presence at Williston has been a part of the recipe for this success.

## Impact of the Career Academies Program on School Culture and Student Outcomes

The program has become a vibrant and integral part of the school's culture, exposing students to diverse career pathways and hands-on learning experiences that complement their academic coursework.

### Williston Middle School

Teachers at Williston Middle School who have participated as chaperones in the summer Career Academy camps have reported that their relationships with students during the summer positively influence their interactions throughout the academic year. These strengthened connections have been particularly beneficial for at-risk students, fostering an environment of trust and support that enhances their academic and personal development.

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*The initiative, including both the school-year activities and the summer camp, has significantly impacted our students at Williston Middle School. It has opened their eyes to new career pathways, fostering curiosity and ambition while providing practical, hands-on learning experiences. These opportunities have enhanced their academic understanding and inspired them to envision their futures more clearly. The summer camp, in particular, was invaluable in helping students make real-world connections to what they learn in school, building both confidence and engagement. We truly appreciate the continued support and investment in our students' futures through the CFCC Career Academy Initiative.*

**Michael Mitchell, Middle School Career Development Coordinator, NCHS**

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*The Career Academy Initiative has created many real-world opportunities for our middle school students. It generates interest and pushes students to determine goals, and they can also visit local businesses and organizations to see the possibilities. This supports our day-to-day classroom objectives and helps create an aspirational culture within our school.*

**Jeff Swanson, Assistant Principal of Williston Middle School**

## West Pender Middle School

West Pender Middle School achieved academic growth in both the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. While it remains classified as a low-performing school, it continues to demonstrate consistent progress. The school has implemented intervention programs in ELA and Math to support students. Additionally, the career liaison has contributed to these efforts by assisting the school in tutoring and providing student mentorship. We believe the continued involvement of career liaisons will contribute to West Pender's upward trajectory.

Transition data at West Pender shows positive results, with academic growth increasing as students move from 5th to 6th grade. The Career Academy camp plays a vital role in this transition, providing students with a structured plan that helps them acclimate to their new environment. While the state and county typically see a decline in academic performance during this transition, West Pender is bucking the trend. The data for current 7th and 8th graders, both of whom attended the Career Academy as rising 6th graders, clearly shows upward academic growth. Unlike any other school in the county, West Pender is not only maintaining but improving academic performance during this critical transition period.

West Pender has also expanded its CTE course offerings to five, thanks to the support of Career Liaisons in the schools. The principal noted that she would not have agreed to add these courses without the Career Liaisons' assistance, as they play a crucial role in making the courses more relevant by connecting classroom learning to real-world careers and the programs offered at CFCC.

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*The CFCC Career Academy has impacted PCS students in many ways. Some of these can be quantified: field trips, special speakers at West Pender Middle, summer career academy attendees, classroom activities and lessons, and many other opportunities. Some impacts can't be counted, but I've seen them firsthand. The liaison presence at our annual 8th-grade career fair brought significant CFCC representation and support beyond what our staff could typically manage. The program's presence at West Pender added opportunities not just to WPMS but also to Burgaw Middle and Cape Fear Middle schools.*

**Michele Simmons, Middle School Career Development Coordinator, Pender County Schools**

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Pender County has had a county-wide career development program for three years, with activities focused on all middle schools. However, the Career Academy liaisons have been instrumental in bringing these activities to 6th and 7th graders at West Pender, offering early exposure to career pathways. They have provided hands-on support to CTE teachers by managing field trip planning and submission processes, opening doors for students that one teacher alone could not. They have also brought in special speakers, many from CFCC, which has helped normalize CFCC as a viable and comfortable option for students' futures.

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The positive relationships between liaisons and students extend beyond career guidance. Their consistent presence has allowed them to influence student behavior positively. While not part of their formal duties, these relationships will undoubtedly pay dividends beyond what data can measure. Continuing the liaison program and following these students through high school would provide valuable insights into the program's long-term benefits.

This feedback reflects the meaningful influence the Career Academy has had on students' personal and academic growth, particularly for those at risk of academic failure. By exposing students to a wide range of career opportunities and offering real-world, practical experiences, the initiative has successfully engaged students who may have otherwise struggled to find relevance in their education. As a result, these students are more confident, motivated, and equipped to pursue further academic and career opportunities. Through ongoing partnerships and continued support, CFCC and its Career Academy program remain committed to fostering student success and improving outcomes for at-risk populations and are immensely grateful for the opportunity to pilot such a program within the state of North Carolina.

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