



MCTA Meeting Summary

October 7, 2026 | Member Discussion and Feedback

Major Themes and Key Takeaways

1. Graduation Requirements and Two-Course CTE Pathways

Members raised concerns about the implications of students meeting CTE graduation requirements after completing two courses.

- Enrollment in third- and fourth-level courses may decline, threatening advanced course offerings.
- Minimum class-size requirements and financial constraints could make advanced courses unsustainable, especially in smaller districts.
- Staffing reductions and potential program closures were identified as significant risks.
- Members questioned whether two courses provide sufficient preparation to meet industry expectations.
- Opportunities to apply CTE courses toward other graduation requirements, such as computer science/technology and financial literacy, were suggested.

Possible Solution:

- **Instead of changing the requirements to be a completer, could MSDE change that a concentrator is considered a graduation requirement**

Key takeaway: MCTA should advocate for policies that preserve advanced CTE pathways and support program sustainability beyond the minimum graduation requirement.

2. Program of Study Updates and Implementation Timelines

Members expressed concern about the number of changes occurring simultaneously and the limited time available to implement them.

- Teachers and administrators are experiencing significant change and uncertainty.
- Districts are developing course catalogs and schedules while state requirements continue to evolve.
- Aligning revised courses, standards, and curriculum presents challenges.
- Completing industry-recognized credentials (IRCs) within two courses may be difficult.
- IRC costs, expiration dates, and instructional time requirements create additional barriers.

- Members questioned whether the instructional time allocated within Programs of Study is sufficient for high school students to meet industry credentialing requirements, particularly when assessments are designed for adult learners.
- Some POS requirements may not align with industry credentialing expectations (e.g., Cosmetology), while others may be developmentally unrealistic within existing course structures.
- Members emphasized the need for ongoing opportunities for teachers and administrators to review and refine Programs of Study to align industry expectations with high school classroom realities.
- Members suggested promoting three-course-plus-flex pathways even when students can meet graduation requirements in two courses.
- Yearlong courses and earlier pathway entry were discussed as possible scheduling solutions.
- Members noted that initial Programs of Study were presented as working versions subject to refinement, but a clear process for continued stakeholder feedback and revision has not been communicated.

Key takeaway: Districts need clear implementation guidance, realistic timelines, and flexibility in pathway design. MCTA should advocate for an ongoing, collaborative POS review and refinement process involving teachers and administrators to ensure instructional expectations, credentialing requirements, and course structures are feasible and developmentally appropriate for high school students.

3. Career-Connected Learning (CCL)

Members identified both opportunities and significant implementation barriers related to CCL.

- Existing work-based learning structures do not always align with the proposed CCL model.
- Scheduling sufficient internship hours remains challenging.
- Employer engagement and participation in capstone experiences vary significantly across districts.
- Staffing implications and funding requirements remain unclear.
- Potential strategies include leveraging CTSOs, school-based enterprises, existing employer partnerships, and shared CCL experiences across multiple pathways.
- Establishing a CCL Program Advisory Committee was suggested.
- What is the difference between CCL used as the "Flex option" connected to a CTE pathway and CCL used as an entire pathway outright? Do students need to have completed any prerequisite coursework prior to using CCL as its own pathway?

Key takeaway: MCTA should seek greater clarity regarding CCL expectations while advocating for flexible implementation models that recognize local workforce capacity.

4. Six-Year Career Plans and Statewide Platforms

Members expressed concerns about implementing and monitoring six-year plans while a potential statewide platform is being developed.

- Districts questioned continued investment in existing platforms such as Xello and SchoolLinks.
- Uncertainty about the timeline and expectations for the Maryland-made platform complicates purchasing and renewal decisions.
- Members raised questions about monitoring student plans and tracking postsecondary outcomes.
- Greater involvement from special education, Section 504 personnel, families, and other staff was suggested.
- Members questioned accountability expectations during the transition to a possible statewide system.

Key takeaway: MCTA should request guidance on the statewide platform's timeline, functionality, funding implications, and accountability requirements before districts make additional investments.

5. Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

Members raised concerns about state-level announcements reaching teachers before local CTE directors receive adequate information.

Uncertainty surrounding requirements, timelines, and expectations makes it difficult for local leaders to communicate effectively with staff, students, and families.

Key takeaway: More coordinated and timely communication between MSDE and local CTE leadership is needed.

Recommended MCTA Leadership Priorities

Based on the discussion, I would recommend organizing MCTA's follow-up efforts around five priorities.

Priority	Recommended Action
1. Graduation Requirements	Seek clarification on two-course completion expectations and advocate for sustainability of advanced CTE coursework. Possible recommendation: Instead of changing the requirements to be a completer, could MSDE change that a concentrator is considered a graduation requirement

2. POS Implementation	Request finalized implementation guidance, realistic timelines, and flexibility in course sequencing and IRC requirements. Advocate for a formal, ongoing POS review process involving local CTE administrators and teachers to evaluate instructional time, developmental appropriateness, credentialing expectations, and alignment with industry standards.
3. CCL Implementation	Work with MSDE to clarify staffing, funding, employer engagement, and acceptable CCL models.
4. Six-Year Plans	Request a timeline and transition guidance for the statewide platform, including current software investments and accountability measures.

Questions MCTA Could Bring to MSDE

1. What flexibility will districts have to maintain third- and fourth-level CTE courses when students can satisfy graduation requirements after two courses?
2. What transition timeline will be provided for revised Programs of Study, particularly when course catalogs and staffing decisions must be finalized before guidance is complete?
3. How will CCL be defined, staffed, and funded across different CTE pathways?
4. What is the anticipated implementation timeline for the statewide six-year planning platform, and how should districts approach existing software contracts?
5. How will MSDE address the unique resource and capacity challenges facing smaller school systems?
6. Can CTE coursework satisfy multiple graduation requirements when aligned to the appropriate standards?
7. How will MSDE ensure local CTE directors receive timely information before statewide announcements?