

## **NJ county colleges and vocational schools pledge collaboration to address critical economic needs**

TRENTON, NJ – August 18, 2020 – New Jersey’s county-based community colleges and county vocational-technical schools pledged today to work together to respond to rapid technological change and upheaval by collaborating to expand high-quality educational opportunities to better prepare students for success in high-demand careers.

The New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges issued a white paper making specific recommendations for collaboration that will help more New Jerseyans launch affordable education pathways that respond to the needs of students, employers, communities and New Jersey’s economy.

“County colleges and vocational technical schools have a long track record of working together to offer all students expanded educational and economic opportunities,” said Scott Moffitt, the president of the New Jersey County Council of Vocational-Technical Schools.

“Our announcement today signifies the commitment to share resources and expand partnerships that enable high school students to get a jump start on college through dual credit agreements aligned with employer needs,” said Moffitt, who is the superintendent of the Morris County Vocational School District.

“As the career-focused educational institutions in each county, community colleges and county vocational-technical schools share a commitment to meeting labor market and employer needs with certificate and degree programs that prepare young people and adults for well-paying careers,” said Aaron R. Fichtner, president of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

“As we strengthen our partnership, we will continue to focus on preparing students for New Jersey’s innovation economy and technical fields where qualified employees remain in high demand,” Fichtner said. “We will work together to map clear pathways to critical careers that require industry credentials and two-year degrees in health care, technology, wind and clean energy, construction, advanced manufacturing, and hospitality.”

The two organizations held an online convening on August 18 to highlight best practices and establish the imperative for increased collaboration. A subcommittee of college presidents and county vocational-technical superintendents will provide leadership for collaboration among the institutions. The organizations also plan to hold regional meetings to identify new opportunities for collaboration.

The white paper makes four priority recommendations:

Community colleges -- with the support of county vocational-technical schools, four-year institutions, and key employers -- should launch Pathway and Skills Collaboratives in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and technology to map and align education and training programs with the needs of the labor market.

The two statewide organizations should lead an effort to identify fair and viable dual credit models between the county institutions that will offer more cost-effective and time-efficient pathways to credentials and degrees, swiftly moving graduates into the workforce.

Each county and region should actively seek opportunities to create partnerships for shared facilities and services such as shared shops and labs, collaborative equipment purchases leveraging federal career and technical education funds, shared faculty and staff, and joint use of classrooms and support facilities such as fitness centers.

A subcommittee of community college presidents and vocational-school superintendents should provide leadership to their respective organizations regarding collaboration. The group should focus on promising strategies for making high-quality educational opportunities and career pathways leading to employment available to all New Jerseyans, with particular emphasis on well-paying industries in which minority residents are underrepresented.

To read the full white paper click [here](#).