

Career & Technology Subcommittee Proposal for the Adaptive Re-use of the William Penn campus and buildings

Environmental Stewardship and Climate Technology:

A plethora of green technological careers and community based endeavors could proceed under the umbrella of this branch of the Career & Technology Academy. Areas of instruction that the district could seek Department of Education program approval and state, federal and private funding for include, but are certainly not limited to:

Transportation and warehouse logistics * Urban wildlife conservation * Urban forestry * Urban foraging * Aquaponics * Urban farming * Hydro Energy * Wind technology * Urban forestry, including growth programs for hemp and bamboo * Training designed to harvest and reclaim for beneficial use trees and other wood debris, as an alternative to mulching and/or landfilling * Electric vehicle design, technology, maintenance and operation * Fish farming * Training to serve the full spectrum of professions associated with solar powered heating and power generation, including but not limited to design, corporate and private sales, installation, repair and community wide adaptation for use in communities that are not well funded.

Harrisburg Academy of Theater, Arts & Music:

Would act as a much needed alternative to sports for students that gifted in these fields, and/or have an interest in pursuing careers in theater production and staging, music therapy, music production, writing and/or performance and other aspects of these humanities including, but not limited to art curation, artist representation, songwriting, choreography and copyright protection to name only a few of the fields where people of color have lost billions of dollars as a result of their lack of knowledge of industry standards, policies and regulations. The focus of these programs would not be limited to performance training, but would include training on how to protect intellectual and creative property.

Cottage Industry Shared Workspace:

Would be open to all citizens of the City of Harrisburg to provide a shared work space designed to serve those who are interested in preserving the skills associated with the crafts, including, but not limited to:

Woodworking * Quilting * Furniture and auto upholstery * Pottery
Metalworking, including but not limited to jewelry making & design * Blacksmithing
Furniture making (which was a program offered at the William Penn campus at one point before it's unfortunate closing)

The Entrepreneurial Incubator:

Would be open to all citizens of the the City of Harrisburg, providing a shared work space at little or not cost that would be open extended hours with access to printer, desktop computers, 3-D printers, conference rooms, video conferencing, audio and video recording and other amenities that are generally out of reach to those who are launching businesses or working toward that end.

Language Academy:

In order to build upon the strengths that many of our students who come from households where English is not the primary language spoken, if it is spoken at all, already possess, it is recommended that the WP campus include a language training academy. Students who attend schools throughout our district speak not only Spanish, but Farsi, Arabic, Nepali, Portuguese, Mandarin, various Indian dialects and more. This learning venue should be open to all students, even those beginning in our district at the elementary and middle school levels, and continue into the evenings as a source of training for parents/guardians and other adults (including educators and other district employees) who want to expand their foreign language proficiency. It is an appalling state of affairs that those of us who are educated in the United States lag so far behind the rest of the world when it comes to language proficiency. And also quite unsettling that the Harrisburg School district does not offer language programs at the middle and high school levels. At one point college preparatory programs required that students take at least 2-3 years of a foreign language, and that requirement should be incorporated into all grade levels in our district to ensure that our students are prepared to enter a global economy. Offering adult training is a potential source of income for the district, and will help to prepare teaching staff, administrators and others (who would like to partake of the service on a voluntary basis) who are on a daily basis asked to work with and educate students that they do not have even the most rudimentary ability to communicate with.

Alternative Education:

Many educators who have been serving in the Harrisburg school district for decades recall that the alternative school placement was located in the William Penn building. They report that the efforts to get students who had to be placed back on track academically and socially were far more successful when the program was under the direct control of district employees, as opposed to a plethora of private, for-profit companies. Returning this critical educational component to the WP campus would no doubt save money as the cost of handling this in-house would be less than what the district has assumed under the current system which requires contracts with multiple private providers, most of whom do not have corporate offices that are located within the Commonwealth.

Hospitality/Special Event Venue and training space:

This space would cater to the diverse population of the City of Harrisburg by providing an industrial kitchen that could be rented out at reduced or not cost to those who are in need of such a space to launch catering operations, and/or provide for special events that can be hosted on the William Penn campus. Programs to train youth and adults to work in the service industry beyond the normally limited roles of dishwasher, backwaiter, receptionist, line cook and the like could be offered over extended weekly hours and on weekends. Penn State main campus has an established program and there are a host of local restaurants and chefs, a number of whom are female lead, who can be called upon to help to jump start this initiative which would benefit not just local dining establishments, but the staff as well. Programs to train bartenders, food and beverage managers, hotel managers, sous chefs, sommeliers and farm market managers and produce buyers are just some of the professions that can be offered. And if the campus can establish community gardens the students can learn to grow, maintain, and market the produce,

which could include, but not be limited to bee colonies for honey, mushrooms (which grow in moist dark places) and fruit trees.

Video Gaming and Artificial Intelligence High School Certification Initiatives to be developed in partnership with Harrisburg University:

As funding from the Harrisburg School District helped in no small measure to launch the construction and maintenance of the Harrisburg University, it makes sense to expand upon existing partnership with this now thriving internationally recognized institution to promote and develop programs designed to pull urban youth from not just the City of Harrisburg, but the entire nation and globe into the field of gaming designing and professional competition. Anyone who has spent ten minutes serving the district as a teacher, paraprofessional or substitute can confirm that the majority of students spend an inordinate amount of time gaming, without any real understanding of how to turn this skill set into a highly lucrative profession. And, while I am personally not a fan of AI, it is certainly a field that our students should receive advanced training in the development, operation and maintenance thereof.

PA State Police and Harrisburg Fire & Police Public Safety Academy:

In light of the recent directive instituted by Governor Shapiro to eliminate the requirement that State Police candidates have college credits, (meaning that high school graduates and those who have earned a GED may now apply), and the recent request by Chief Enterline to utilize approximately 2 acres of the William Penn campus to site a fire station and a police substation designed to serve the neighborhoods that are north and south of Division Street...the CT subcommittee has resurrected a years old request that has been put before the school board and city council to establish a law enforcement and community safety academy designed to recruit, and prepare for services the urban youth population of our city on the William Penn (WP) campus grounds. The academy would offer school age, city students, training in CPR, Narcon administration, AED, emergency response training as well as prepare them for the physical and skill testing associated with each of these disciplines. The academy could work with local, state and regional fire fighting organizations to establish a steady stream of Black, Hispanic and Asian youth to join this honorable profession, expanding exponentially the diversity of the force and ensuring that our community will have safety professionals serving the neighborhoods that they grew up in, and know well. The same sentiments would apply to both the HPB and PSP, both of whom are greatly in need of recruits who are ready and able to serve in urban environments, not just in Central PA, but across the country. Partnerships could be established with Commissioner Carter, Chief Enterline as well as local fire departments and regional police forces, in addition to Harrisburg Area Community College and the national fire training facility that is just across state lines in Maryland.

Miscellaneous other professions for which the campus could offer training in fields that are not currently offered by DC Tech that would be beneficial skills for Harrisburg City students include, but are not limited to:

Court reporting
Anesthesian

Athletic Trainers

Service animal training and animal placement, as well as breeding certification

And last but certainly not least, the astounding and once nationally recognized recreational and sports training history of the campus should be preserved with facilities and programs constructed to include income generating operations, such as:
A roller rink staffed and maintained by students and city residents
An indoor skatepark and BMX track
Indoor trampoline facility
Indoor flag football training arena, which as I am sure you all know will be debuted as an Olympic sport in Paris, in 2024.

It should go without saying that what is proposed herein is NOT a pipe dream, but a well-thought out 5-10 year plan to preserve this historic site, and provide a model that can be duplicated across the country that demonstrates how city properties can be maintained and adapted to benefit those who have dwelled in, and supported through their generational commitment this and other similarly situated cities. Our children and the residents of this community deserve nothing less than a clear and complete commitment to utilizing this space to the fullest extent of its beneficial use.

Submitted on November 1, 2023 to Dr. Suski on behalf of the members of the William Penn Task Force, Career & Technology Subcommittee:

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