

GREATER LAWRENCE TECHNICAL SCHOOL
57 River Road, Andover, Massachusetts 01810

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 7, 2026

A meeting of the Greater Lawrence Technical School Program Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at Greater Lawrence Technical School.

The following members were in attendance:

Facilitator: John Chester	CTE Program: Carpentry
Recorder: Eli Sprague	
Materials Manager: Shaun Cohan	
Dialogue Monitor: Andy DeLuca	
Timekeeper: Shaun Cohan	
Faculty Present	
Shaun Cohan	10th Grade Carpentry
John Chester	11th Grade Carpentry
Andy DeLuca	12th Grade Carpentry
Eli Sprague	9th Grade Carpentry
Advisors Present	Name of Business
Brian Liveritt	Carpenters Union
Mark Torissi	Jackson Lumber
Dave Cunningham	Cunningham Builders
Steve Cote	Cote and Foster
Bob Williams	Star Remodeling
Yadielis Ayala	12th grade student
Guest Present	

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

- a. Welcome/Introductions John Chester called the meeting to order at 5:15pm

Status report:

Agenda Item #2 Verification of committee members' contact information, phone numbers and emails.

- a. Please verify the e-mail address for each member.
- b. Per DESE PAC Guidelines, it is important that every effort has been made to ensure the membership of our Advisory Boards are inclusive and diverse. Review the **composition populations** listed on the Program Advisory membership forms. Ask members to sign-in using the [Google Form](#) (Share link with all members) and ask that they select any of the sub-groups they are able to represent.
 - i. Persons of racial or linguistic minorities.
 - ii. Persons are nontraditional by gender for the program.
 - iii. Persons are well-equipped to represent the perspectives of persons with disabilities.

Status Report:

- a. Email Addresses have been verified for each member. Emails have been verified for each member.
- b. The facilitator asked for members to review representative populations. Union representation will be updated when the members fill out the Google form. Form has been shared and filled out by all members.

REPORT OF OLD BUSINESS**Agenda Item #3: Minutes**

- a. Review minutes from the Program Fall Advisory meeting, and voice comments, questions, or concerns (Minutes are posted on the GLTS website).
- b. Provide an update on action items from the previous meeting. The facilitator should recap the conversation ([Link to recommendations updates](#))
- c. Solicit a motion to approve minutes, 2ND the motion.

Status Report:

- a. Copies of the minutes have been handed out and reviewed by all members with no further discussion at this time.
- b. No action items at this time
- c. Mark Torissi solicited a motion to approve Fall minutes, Brian Liverit seconded the minutes

Recommendation: Facilitator should recap the conversation and make a recommendation to approve.

Motion: Dave Cunningham moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2025

2ND: Steve Cote

Vote: Unanimous Pass

NEW BUSINESS**Agenda Item #4: CTE Program Facilities Review****a. CAPITAL EQUIPMENT PLANNING & INVESTMENT**

1. **Capital Equipment Replacement (5-Year Outlook)** Are there any major pieces of equipment (approximately \$25,000+) that we should plan to replace or upgrade within the next five years?
2. **Emerging Tools & Industry Upgrades** What new tools, equipment, or facility upgrades are becoming standard in your industry that we should consider incorporating into our program? Bob W asked if a lull would be beneficial. Steve C talked about the benefits of renting equipment and also purchasing from rental companies. Bob W wants to continue to replace corded tools with battery powered tools for all 4 grade levels to keep up with the industry.

b. FACILITY DESIGN, FUNCTIONALITY & SAFETY

1. **Shop Design & Industry Alignment** Does our current shop layout and design reflect industry standards and real-world work environments?
2. **Safety, Repairs & Functionality** Are there any safety concerns, needed repairs, or workflow inefficiencies in the space (e.g., layout, storage, equipment placement) that we should address?
3. **Facility Conditions & Improvements** Are there any updates, cosmetic or structural, that would improve the learning environment or better reflect industry expectations? Mark T stated that a garage door with ability to move materials in and out of the shops is needed. Having students move materials could be taking time away from other competencies. Mark T feels the administrators are not listening. We've been talking about more space for years.

c. COMPLIANCE & PROGRAM REVIEW (NIOSH + PROGRAM CHECKLISTS)

3. After reviewing the NIOSH and program-specific checklists, are there any areas where our facilities, equipment, or practices do not fully align with current standards?

- a. [NIOSH Department Checklist Review & All Programs Checklist Review](#) (Each Program Lead should provide their PAC with a copy of the applicable NIOSH Checklist for review)

Status Report:

- a. Capital Equipment Planning & Investment
1. The group discussed the need for dedicated vehicles to transport equipment, materials, and the trailer. It was noted that while the department currently lacks its own fleet, they have been fulfilling these needs by borrowing equipment from the maintenance department. To improve shop efficiency, the purchase of a LULL or similar machine was recommended, with a specific suggestion to investigate used options available through United Rentals. This item will be added to the department "Wish List."
 2. Emerging tools & industry upgrades: The group reviewed the condition of current equipment, noting that while some items remain serviceable, others are showing signs of **corrosion and rust**. To address this, the following recommendations were made:
 - **Infrastructure Upgrades:** It was advised to prioritize replacing existing staging with **aluminum versions** (specifically from Vanguard). While the initial cost is higher, the increased durability will reduce long-term replacement expenses.
 - **Maintenance Priority:** The group reached a consensus that updating both **power tools and staging** must remain a top priority to ensure safety and operational efficiency.
- b. Facility Design, Functionality & safety
1. Shop design & industry alignment: The outside house project was highlighted as a valuable, real-world work environment for the students, effectively aligning the program with industry standards.
 2. The current shop layout was described as **functional**, though a significant structural limitation was identified: the **absence of a garage door**. The group noted that adding a garage door would be a necessary improvement to facilitate the movement of large materials and projects in and out of the workspace.
 3. Safety, repairs & functionality: The group raised concerns regarding the current **shop density**, noting that the limited workspace becomes a **safety hazard** when multiple students are active simultaneously. It was specifically highlighted that the process of **cutting and handling building materials** requires significant clearance, and the current "tight space" may compromise safe operational distances between students and machinery.
 4. Facility conditions & improvements: The persistent issue of **limited shop space** was identified as a primary concern for the department. The discussion reflected significant frustration and urgency regarding the following points:
 - **Ongoing Constraints:** Members noted that space limitations have been a chronic issue, leading to questions about whether a permanent solution or expansion will ever be implemented.
 - **Board Concerns:** Board members expressed dissatisfaction with the current student-to-space ratio, emphasizing that the shop is overcrowded for the number of students enrolled in the program.
 - **Contingency Planning:** A critical question was raised regarding the plan for **Junior and Senior students** should external project opportunities (outside builds) decrease. Without these off-site projects, the current shop cannot accommodate the entire cohort.
 - **Safety and Efficacy:** The group reached a firm consensus that a larger, more organized space is **100% necessary** to ensure a safe, professional, and successful learning environment for the students.
- c. Compliance & Program Review
3. Review NIOSH & program-specific checklist: Members have gone over the checklist.

1. What feedback or insights can the PAC provide? It was asked if the students are fall protection certified? A member will give us information on this training.

Recommendations: It was recommended that we update tools and scaffolding (aluminum staging planks) that we need in each shop, especially for the 12th grade class. It was also recommended that the department get a machine to help lift building materials as well as find more space for our shop as this has been an issue that has been brought up with each meeting with no changes made.

Motion: Bob Williams made a motion to add a tele-Lift or a similar machine to our wishlist.

2ND: Brian Liveritt

Vote: Unanimous Pass

Agenda Item #5 Equipment / Budget

Review Budget for FY26/27 & Prepare Budget for the upcoming school year (SY27/28)

- a. Review [Voc Budget FY 26/27](#) and begin Draft Budget for FY27/28.

Status Report:

- a. **Review of FY26/27 Budget and Draft Budget for FY27/28**

- i. Purchases: The discussion touched on the transition from traditional resources to digital tools:
 - **Instructional Materials:** In response to inquiries regarding an increase in physical textbook requirements, it was noted that students are increasingly pivoting toward digital research.
 - **Digital Integration:** Observations show that students are more likely to utilize **smartphones and computers** to look up building code information and technical data in real-time rather than relying on traditional printed code books.
- ii. Appropriate Equipment: All agree to continue as such.
- iii. What tools and/or equipment replacement need: It was emphasized that equipment maintenance is a critical safety concern. Members were reminded to decommission and **replace tools proactively**, ensuring they are removed from service well before they become unsafe or unusable.
- iv. 5 year outlook for tool/equipment replacement needs: the conversation concluded with a focus on equipment upgrades and shop logistics:
 - **Tool Modernization:** It was noted that battery technology and tool efficiency are rapidly improving, requiring the shop to update equipment regularly to remain current with industry standards.
 - **Safety and Air Quality:** Advances in air filtration systems were highlighted, noting their increased effectiveness in maintaining a safe work environment.
 - **Shop Footprint:** The integration of smaller, modern CNC machines was discussed. While newer models are more compact, it was emphasized that they still require a dedicated "footprint" that must be carefully managed to avoid overcrowding existing shop space.

Recommendations: The board recommended to continue to monitor and replace all tools as needed. It was recommended that we continue as such.

Motion: Mark Torissi made a motion

2ND: Steve Cote

Vote: Unanimous Pass

Agenda Item #6: Curriculum

- a. **Emerging Technology & Techniques:** What new technologies, tools, or techniques are gaining traction in the industry that students should be exposed to?
- b. **Industry Evolution (Past Year)** How has the industry changed over the past year, and what new or evolving skills are now essential for entry-level employees?

- c. **AI Integration & Readiness** What specific AI tools or applications are becoming essential in our industry, and what foundational skills do students need to use them effectively and ethically?
- d. **Curriculum Adaptation** How are emerging technologies, beyond AI (e.g., automation, sustainability practices), fundamentally changing job roles, and how quickly should our curriculum be adapted to address these new industry needs?
- e. **Outdated Skills & Equipment** Are there any tools, equipment, or skills that are becoming outdated or no longer widely used in your industry that we should consider reducing or phasing out?

Status Report:

- a. **Emerging Technology & Techniques:** The group discussed how these programs are increasingly essential for streamlining project communication, tracking progress, and managing resources effectively in the field.
- b. **Industry Evolution (Past Year):** The discussion concluded by reinforcing that, despite advancements in technology, the maintenance of soft skills remains just as important as ever for professional success in the industry.
- c. **AI Integration & Readiness:** It was noted that **AI programs** are increasingly valuable tools in the industry, specifically for their ability to streamline the **building process** and enhance **client relationship management**.
- d. **Curriculum Adaptation:** It was emphasized that computer literacy is now a fundamental requirement for students, as digital proficiency is essential for navigating modern industry tools, documentation, and communication platforms.
- e. **Outdated Skills & Equipment:** It was observed that while specific tools vary by project, all possess intrinsic value. The discussion noted that maintaining a broad set of skills—even those not utilized daily—is vital, as this knowledge serves as a transferable resource for future challenges or unique situations encountered on the jobsite.

Recommendations: Continue teaching what we are, look into simulation software.

Motion: Dave Cunningham

2ND: Bob Williams

Vote: Unanimous Pass

Agenda Item #7: Cooperative Education/Industry Trends

1. **HIRING & SKILL GAPS**
 - a. When hiring entry-level employees, what skill gaps do you most commonly see?
 - b. What are your biggest challenges when hiring new employees in your industry?
2. **TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**
 - a. What technical skills are essential for success in entry-level roles at your company?
 - b. What specific professional (“soft”) skills do you prioritize, and what distinguishes a strong candidate from an average one?
 - c. In the first 90 days, which professional skills most impact whether a new hire succeeds or struggles?
3. **PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & STUDENT PREPARATION**
 - a. If you have hired our co-op students or graduates, what are their strengths? Where do they need further development?
 - b. What should we be doing differently in our programs to better prepare students for success in your company/industry?
4. **FUTURE-FOCUSED & PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION**
 - a. As technologies (including AI) evolve, what new skills or competencies are becoming most important?
 - b. Which skills, tools, or processes are becoming less relevant or outdated? Where should we consider reducing emphasis to make room for higher-impact learning?

5. **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

- a. What other companies or organizations would you recommend we partner with for co-op placement?

Status Report:

1. **HIRING & SKILL GAPS**

- a. The importance of mastering fundamental tools was discussed, specifically **circular saws, nail guns, and reciprocating saws (Sawzalls)**. It was emphasized that a strong foundational knowledge and the skillset to properly operate **basic hand tools** are essential for success in the trade.
- b. It was noted that students must achieve competency in the full range of basic equipment, encompassing both **hand tools** and **power tools**, to ensure they are fully prepared for the field.

2. **TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

- a. The discussion highlighted that soft skills are just as critical as technical ability. It was emphasized that students must be **coachable, teachable, and maintain a positive attitude**. Furthermore, having a sense of **enthusiasm** for the work was noted as a key trait for long-term success in the industry.
- b. It was further emphasized that key qualities for success include being **teachable**, possessing the ability to **get along well with others**, and maintaining a high level of **dependability**.
- c. The conversation further defined essential professional habits, emphasizing the importance of **strong listening skills**, as well as the necessity of being **punctual** and maintaining consistent time management.

3. **PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & STUDENT PREPARATION**

- a. The discussion underscored that **common sense** is an essential asset, with participants noting that it accounts for approximately 80% of the job's success. Additionally, the importance of **professional readiness** was emphasized—specifically showing up every day prepared to work and actively listening to mentors, journeymen, or supervisors to maximize learning opportunities.

4. **FUTURE-FOCUSED & PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION**

- a. None at this time
- b. It was noted that the current curriculum and training methods remain both **relevant and consistent** with industry standards.

5. **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The following updates regarding cooperative education (co-op) opportunities were discussed:

- **Current Placements:** A junior (11th grader) was recently hired for a co-op position.
- **Future Opportunities:** Potential partnerships are being explored with local businesses, such as Norfolk Kitchen & Bath.
- **Outreach:** Plans are in place to reach out to the wider community to identify and engage additional employers interested in hosting co-op students.

Recommendations: It was recommended to keep up with the demands of the trade as well as keep the students up to par with their soft skills.

Motion: Bob Williams made a motion to continue soft skills training in the curriculum.

2ND: Brian Liveritt

Vote: Unanimous PASS

Agenda Item #8: Other: Passive house project

Status Report:

Project Progress & Materials The team discussed current progress, highlighting the use of **Nudura** for the foundation work. Visual documentation (photos and videos) was shared to demonstrate the site's advancement.

Educational Impact It was noted that the project is proceeding smoothly and has served as an excellent hands-on learning experience for all participating students.

Purpose of the Build In response to inquiries regarding the final use of the structure, it was clarified that the building will serve as a **high-performance training facility** for the various trade shops.

Recommendations: Continue with real world student projects. Walk out to take a look at the progress of the project and leave from there.

Motion: Bob Williams

2nd Motion: Brian Liveritt

Vote: Unanimous Pass

ADJOURNMENT

Recommendations: It was recommended that we adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:45. John Chester mentioned that those interested can walk out to take a look at the progress of the project, he can answer any questions they may have and the advisory members can leave from there.

Motion: Mark Torrisi

2ND: Steve Cote

Vote: Unanimous Pass

Next Meeting: October 2026

Respectfully Submitted: Eli Sprague