

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: Shaun Toomey	CTE Program: Information Technology
Recorder: Shaun Toomey	
Materials Manager:	
Dialogue Monitor:	
Timekeeper: Jose Volquez	
Faculty Present	
Shaun Toomey	Instructor
Jose Volquez	Instructor
Advisors Present	Name of Business
Reynaldo Cruz	Industry Representative
Cesar Carrera	Industry Representative (Remote)
Ambar Saloman	Student
Aitor German	Student
Jay Termini	Industry Representative
Guest Present	
Armando Tabares	Industry Guest
Lucas Getman	Student

Agenda Item #1: Call to Order

- a. Welcome/Introductions

Status Report: Shaun Toomey called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM. Mr. Toomey welcomed members of the Program Advisory Committee, introduced co-instructor Jose Volquez, and invited everyone to introduce themselves before beginning the agenda.

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. E-mail addresses were verified for each member in attendance. Outstanding membership paperwork was distributed and collected; members were asked to return any pending forms to Sue Ouellette.
- b. Members were asked to complete the DESE Google Form indicating the perspectives they are able to represent so that union representation and demographic information can be updated for the committee.
- c. **Special Announcement:** Superintendent John Lavoie briefly addressed the committee, thanking members for their service and reaffirming the district's commitment to keeping CTE programs current with industry trends and emerging technologies. The Superintendent noted that funds are being relocated within the vocational program budget to support priority IT investments and encouraged the board to continue providing candid feedback to strengthen the program.

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. **Minutes Review:** Mr. Toomey recapped the October 23, 2025 meeting, noting the program had just completed its move into the new instructional space. Items previously discussed included the HVAC build-out, network drops planned for summer, the rebuilding of the inventory system and disposal of obsolete equipment, the program's alignment with Fortinet, Cisco, Microsoft, and AWS instructional products, preventative maintenance, and emerging industry trends.
- b. **Action Items Update:** HVAC and air-conditioning work in the IT shop is nearly complete. The permanent network wiring will be installed by the school's IT department over the summer. Capital purchases approved at the Fall meeting are progressing. Cabling has been temporarily repaired and dressed (with 3D-printed brackets fabricated in-shop) until permanent cable raceways are installed. The trouble-ticketing system, ticketing curriculum, and Linux instruction track are all underway.
- c. A motion to approve the Fall minutes was solicited and seconded.

Recommendation: The facilitator recapped the conversation and recommended approval of the Fall minutes as posted.

Motion: Ambar Saloman moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2025.

2ND: Cesar Carrera

Vote: Unanimous (advisory voice vote)

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?

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?

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. **Equipment replacement:** The committee discussed the program's ongoing transition to upgraded networking infrastructure. Priority investments include moving from layer 2 to layer 3 switches, deploying additional managed switches, installing relay racks with dedicated switches in each shop classroom for hands-on labs, and adding monitoring software to better track the internal IT network. The 40-Gig Fortinet firewall/VPN appliance remains in service and supports the department's independent (filtered) network. The committee also reviewed the plan to rotate laptop purchases on a 10-unit annual cadence rather than buying a full classroom set every four to five years.
2. **Emerging tools & industry upgrades:** Three dedicated lab servers are being deployed (one per classroom) to support a domain controller, virtualization, and isolated experimentation. Members reaffirmed alignment with Fortinet, Cisco, Microsoft, and Amazon (AWS) instructional ecosystems and emphasized the need for current-generation Wi-Fi access points, additional active outside IP addresses, and an updated cable-management environment.

b. Facility Design, Functionality & Safety

1. **Shop design & industry alignment:** The new IT space is functional and the dedicated server room is in service. The current layout supports three classrooms with separate experimentation networks, mirroring an enterprise IT environment.
2. **Safety, repairs & functionality:** HVAC and air-conditioning installation are nearing completion. Temporary cabling that had been taped to the wall has been repaired; in-shop 3D-printed brackets, fasteners, and dressed cabling now provide a more presentable and serviceable installation while the program awaits permanent network drops, which the school IT department will install over the summer. The committee acknowledged that the unplanned shop move created challenges and commended the instructional team's perseverance.
3. **Facility conditions & improvements:** Additional storage continues to be a need. Permanent cable raceways, finished trim, and completed wall/ceiling work in the new space remain outstanding. Wi-Fi coverage will be expanded with additional access points after summer wiring is completed.

c. Compliance & Program Review

3. Review NIOSH & program-specific checklist:
 1. **NIOSH & program checklist review:** The Program Lead provided the PAC with copies of the applicable NIOSH and All-Programs checklists for review. The

committee found no significant deviations from current standards. Items flagged for follow-up include completing the permanent cable installation, finalizing storage solutions, and ensuring all relocated equipment is properly inventoried, labeled, and grounded in the new space.

Recommendations: It was recommended by the board that the school complete the permanent network wiring this summer; that the program continue to invest in layer 3 switching, managed network monitoring, and per-classroom relay racks; that capital laptop purchases continue on a rolling 10-unit annual replacement cycle; and that storage and cable-management improvements be prioritized to bring the new IT space fully in line with industry expectations and NIOSH guidance.

Motion: Not enough members for a quorum.

2ND:

Vote:

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:** Approved purchases from the Fall meeting are progressing, including networking infrastructure upgrades (managed switches, layer 3 switching, monitoring software), Fortinet security appliances, and the first lab servers. Desktop PCs in the IT classrooms have been refreshed within the last year and are current.
- ii. **Appropriate Equipment:** The committee confirmed that current allocations support student readiness for entry-level industry roles, particularly in networking, hardware support, and cloud foundations. Budgeted items align with CompTIA, AWS, Azure, and Cisco-aligned instructional pathways.
- iii. **Tool / Equipment Replacement Needs:** The classroom laptop fleet is approximately four to five years old and is beginning to show wear, including TPM/Windows 11 compatibility issues on a portion of the fleet. The plan is to procure approximately ten replacement laptops in FY27/28 and continue this rotation annually rather than purchase a full set at once. Aging laptops that cannot run Windows 11 are being repurposed as Linux instructional machines, supporting the growing Linux track.
- iv. **5-Year Outlook:** Over the next five years the program plans to (1) complete the network infrastructure build-out (layer 3 switching, structured cabling, expanded Wi-Fi, monitoring); (2) maintain Fortinet, Cisco, Microsoft, and AWS instructional ecosystems; (3) refresh laptops on a 10-unit annual cycle; (4) expand server and virtualization capacity to support cybersecurity and AI workloads; and (5) phase out obsolete equipment that no longer supports current operating systems or industry-standard tools.

Recommendations: It was recommended by the board that the FY27/28 draft budget continue prioritizing networking infrastructure completion, the 10-unit rolling laptop refresh, server/virtualization expansion for AI and cybersecurity instruction, and ongoing license renewals for CompTIA, Microsoft, and AWS Academy resources.

Motion: Not enough members for a quorum.

2ND:

Vote:

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 committee discussed the rapid evolution of the IT, programming, and cybersecurity fields. The instructional team has rebuilt the curriculum from the ground up to emphasize hands-on labs, including Raspberry-Pi networking exercises, Wireshark packet capture, subnetting and DNS practice, and “gamified” networking activities to keep students engaged. The program continues to align with CompTIA A+ as the foundational baseline, with Network+ and Security+ as preferred follow-on certifications. Cloud services (AWS and Microsoft Azure) are now introduced to juniors and seniors as a core competency rather than an elective topic.
- b. **Industry Evolution (Past Year):** Members observed that industry hiring expectations are shifting away from narrow specialization toward broadly capable, multi-skilled candidates who can pivot quickly. Mr. Tabares cautioned the board against teaching students a single, deeply specialized stack at the high-school level: industry increasingly values employees who can work across infrastructure, support, scripting, and cloud, gain experience, and then specialize on the job. The instructional team agreed and noted this aligns with the program’s shift toward general competency followed by elective specialization in the senior year.
- c. **AI Integration & Readiness:** Greater Lawrence Technical School has enabled Google Gemini for student use across the building. The IT department has implemented strong policies on the ethical and responsible use of AI: AI is not permitted for essay or homework completion, but its use as a problem-solving and learning tool is encouraged. Freshmen receive an AI-ethics introduction during their five-day exploratory rotation. The program also covers AI-driven scams and social-engineering threats as part of the cybersecurity unit. “Vibe coding” tools (Claude Code, GitHub Copilot, OpenAI ChatGPT, and Google’s Antigravity) are being introduced in the programming track so students learn to use them as professional tools rather than as substitutes for fundamentals. Members noted that no formal state curriculum currently exists for AI; the program is establishing a foundation now and will adopt state guidance once issued. Mr. Volquez and Mr. Toomey both serve on the school’s technology committee and are advocating for broader AI safety training across the school.
- d. **Curriculum Adaptation:** The four-year program plan was reviewed. Freshmen begin in April with a basic computing introduction and CompTIA A+ licensing distributed in the first week, with the goal of completing the early hardware chapters before the end of the freshman year and reviewing/continuing into the sophomore year. The first two years build foundational skills (CompTIA A+ entry-level professional baseline). After that, students choose between an infrastructure path (servers, networking, cybersecurity, cloud) and a programming path (web, Python, C++, game-development concepts). Customer service and other soft-skills instruction are embedded into every unit. The committee discussed building a more robust web/programming course sequence; the school has historically advertised programming and web design without consistent staffing, and Mr. Toomey is pursuing the appropriate certification while taking the lead on the programming track.
- e. **Outdated Skills & Equipment:** Older laptops without TPM 2.0 are being phased out of the Windows fleet and repurposed as Linux instructional machines, which has the added benefit of strengthening the program’s Linux instruction. Legacy Cisco hardware that cannot run modern IOS, outdated servers, and older switches/cabling continue to be cataloged for decommissioning.

Hyper-narrow specialization tracks are being de-emphasized in favor of broad foundational competency.

Recommendations: It was recommended by the board that the program continue to anchor curriculum on the DESE framework and the CompTIA A+/Network+/Security+ pathway; continue building cloud (AWS, Azure) and AI-ethics instruction into the upper-class curriculum; expand the programming pathway with Python, C++, and web development, supported by a fourth instructor with a programming background; maintain the broad-foundation-then-specialize approach that better matches current industry hiring; and continue formal coverage of AI-driven scams within the cybersecurity unit.

Motion: Not enough members for a quorum.

2ND:

Vote:

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. **a.** Industry advisors reported that the most common gaps for entry-level candidates are written and verbal communication, ticket and documentation discipline, customer-facing professionalism, and the discipline to work through first-step troubleshooting before escalating. Mr. Terman observed that the industry is currently asking for college graduates who can already perform at a near-senior level because early work is being delegated to AI; he noted candidly that this expectation is unrealistic at any level of compensation, and that secondary programs like GLTS still need to teach the fundamentals.
- b. **b.** Hiring high-school graduates into pure entry-level IT remains challenging because employers are simultaneously evaluating college candidates for the same roles. Mr. Volquez raised the question of how to position GLTS graduates competitively, given how rapidly AI services are reshaping the entry-level job description.

2. TECHNICAL & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- a. **a.** Essential technical skills identified include CompTIA A+ baseline competency (hardware, troubleshooting, OS fundamentals), basic networking (DNS, DHCP, IP addressing, subnetting), Windows and Linux administration fundamentals, foundational scripting/Python, and beginning cloud literacy (AWS, Azure).
 - b. **b.** Soft skills the board prioritizes include clear communication with non-technical users, customer service and patience, teamwork (including remote collaboration), professional documentation, problem-solving discipline, adaptability, and time management. A board member asked specifically how soft skills are taught given that CompTIA does not directly cover them; the instructional team described how they are embedded into hands-on labs (project-managed team networking exercises), the 5S workplace organization program championed by Mr. Volquez, and dedicated soft-skill instruction during the school's related/CTE Readiness block using Skills USA materials.
 - c. **c.** In the first 90 days, the skills that most determine success are reliability, willingness to ask clarifying questions, taking initiative, and consistent professional written communication — especially in ticketing systems.
3. **PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & STUDENT PREPARATION**
 - a. **a.** Strengths cited in GLTS students include strong technical curiosity, willingness to learn, and solid foundational hardware and networking knowledge once basics are reinforced. Areas for continued growth include customer-facing communication, professional writing, ticket documentation discipline, and confidence in presenting technical work to non-technical audiences.
 - b. **b.** The board recommended continuing the program's back-to-basics approach, embedding more customer-service role-play and presentation opportunities into weekly labs, expanding the use of the new Spiceworks-based ticketing system as a teaching platform, and continuing the Skills USA workplace-readiness materials in related time.
4. **FUTURE-FOCUSED & PROGRAM PRIORITIZATION**
 - a. **a.** Members agreed that broadly capable, AI-literate, cloud-aware technicians who can also script and document well will be the most employable profile over the next several years. AI literacy, prompt engineering, and ethical AI use are becoming essential. Cloud foundations (AWS, Azure) and basic cybersecurity (Security+ level) are increasingly considered baseline rather than advanced skills.
 - b. **b.** Skills and tools becoming less relevant include legacy on-premises-only administration without any cloud awareness, hyper-narrow programming specialization at the high-school level, and outdated networking gear that cannot run current IOS or modern firmware. The committee supported reducing emphasis on these areas in favor of cloud, automation, and AI-aware instruction.
5. **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
 - a. **a.** The committee supported continued expansion of co-op partnerships. Active and prospective partners discussed include Nexamp (a senior IT student is currently placed there), Xfinity/Comcast (initial conversations under way), the City of Lawrence IT Department, and additional regional managed-service providers, telecommunications firms, and cloud-aligned employers. Members offered to make introductions through their professional networks and encouraged the program to formalize a recurring employer-feedback channel between Fall and Spring meetings.

Recommendations: It was recommended by the board that the program (1) continue prioritizing breadth-first technical fundamentals over narrow specialization at the high-school level; (2) expand and formalize embedded soft-skills instruction — customer service, communication, documentation, professionalism, and 5S — across all four years; (3) deploy the Spiceworks ticketing system as a year-round instructional tool; (4) continue building structured AI-ethics and AI-tool instruction into the program; (5) continue and expand co-op partnerships with Nexamp, Xfinity/Comcast, the City of Lawrence IT Department, and additional regional employers; and (6) gather systematic employer feedback between meetings to keep curriculum aligned with the rapidly changing industry.

Motion: Not enough members for a quorum.

2ND:

Vote:

Agenda Item #8: Other:

Status Report:

Personnel Update: Mr. Evans, who served the IT department for over ten years, has accepted a position at a school closer to his home in Allenstown, NH. The department thanked him for his decade of service. The school has hired Mr. Dan McLeod as a new instructor; he is taking on the sophomore cohort and was unable to attend the April meeting. Mr. Volquez has moved to the freshman cohort to provide continuity for incoming students. The department continues to recruit a fourth instructor, ideally with a programming background, to strengthen the web/programming pathway.

Trouble-Ticketing Instruction: A new Spiceworks-based ticketing workflow has been built and will be used both as a real internal tool and as a teaching platform. Mr. McLeod will lead this instruction once on-boarded. The system has already proven its value: a recent internal outage was identified, escalated, and resolved within twenty minutes, with student Lucas Getting leading the diagnosis.

Board Engagement: Mr. Toomey acknowledged that, given the recent staffing transitions, the department has not engaged the advisory board as frequently as it would like, and committed to more regular touchpoints with members between Fall and Spring meetings. Members were invited to suggest additional industry contacts and to consider a brief mid-year check-in.

Recommendations: It was recommended by the board that the department continue recruiting a fourth instructor with programming expertise; that the Spiceworks ticketing system be fully integrated into both day-to-day operations and the curriculum; and that the program establish a lightweight mid-year communication channel with the advisory board to share progress on Fall recommendations.

Motion: Not enough members for a quorum.

2nd Motion:

Vote:

ADJOURNMENT at 6:45 PM.

Recommendations: Facilitator made a recommendation for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Ambar Saloman

2ND: Cesar Carrera

Vote: Unanimous (advisory voice vote)

Next Meeting: Fall — October 2026

Respectfully Submitted: Shaun Toomey, Lead Instructor & Recorder