Maryland & P-TECH

Maryland adopted the state’s first P-TECH, or Pathways in Technology Early College High School, model in the fall of 2016. Originally starting with two schools, the programs have since quadrupled—with eight schools currently in the state.

The model marries school districts, higher education institutions, and committed business partners to offer a high school diploma and an industry focused two-year associates degree—at no cost. For grades nine-14, the program incorporates academic, technical and workplace skills to satisfy a growing demand for skilled workers.

The idea is to provide a direct path from high school to college to career, ensuring a steady pipeline of educated professionals. It also focuses on inclusion and opening doors to opportunities for students of every background.

During the 2015 General Assembly, there was a unanimous, bi-partisan approval to bring the P-TECH model to Maryland. With a $600,000 commitment from the governor’s budget, P-TECH began.

At the governor’s recent roundtable, P-TECH student Justice Heughan, a junior in the P-TECH Carver program said, “P-TECH has given me exposure to different career pathways. My father always told me to take advantage of every opportunity, and P-TECH has given me so many. It is nice to have someone who is invested in my future.”

P-TECH PARTNERS

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce has 11 members currently involved as P-TECH partners. We asked those members: With a number of education and workforce development initiatives in Maryland, why P-TECH? What distinguishes this model from the others?

“This program is unique because of the involvement from our industry partners. They have been instrumental in structuring the mentor program, arranging site visits and providing input on the curriculum,” Community College of Baltimore County’s Director of Early College Access Programs Brian Hammond said. “The curriculum piece is so valuable because they have a say in the skills that the students will possess when they start on the job site.”

There’s a reason that over 400 businesses are involved in this program—of those reasons are the skills gaps that exist in the state.

“Alban decided to participate in P-TECH because of the trade skills shortage. We also believe that if businesses get involved with students entering high school, they can become more aware of business acumen and business standards. Students learn the soft-skills required in a business environment,” noted Leah Summers, talent acquisition specialist at Alban CAT.

P-TECH has proven to be beneficial for both students and businesses. According to James Deriu,
vice president and regional practice leader at KCI Technologies Inc., there are several advantages from a business perspective. "Oftentimes, entry level candidates will require a substantial investment to learn the basics of what we do. This could be a financial investment in formal, technical training but also informal mentoring and guidance in their first years. This program kick starts their technical development by giving [students] real-life experiences before they even enter the workforce."

For KCI, participating in P-TECH not only helps to better prepare candidates for open positions, but it also directly aligns with its vision to support the communities where they live and work.

"Bringing real and lasting improvements in our communities, through increased economic opportunities and workforce development, will take a lot of hard work," Deriu said. "We are excited to get to know our students and start them on the path to a prosperous career."

While business benefits are nice—it really boils down to the benefits for the students.

"Technology is a high-demand field with countless growth opportunities; those with technical skills will have the upper-hand when searching for their dream career," Marissa Ferraraccio, director of marketing at Dataprise, Inc., said. "For us, it is exciting to see students provided with an opportunity they may not be able to afford on their own. Their enthusiasm about technology will propel them into their future and open countless doors."

Ferraraccio added, "We are so proud to be a part of such a wonderful organization and look forward to watching the growth of the students."

**THE PROGRAM’S ROOTS**

New York was the first state to pilot P-TECH in 2011 with IBM as a co-founder. This original program expanded to span Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Rhode Island, and even internationally. It is expected to grow to more than 100 schools worldwide by the end of the year.

The first graduating cohort was in 2018, across four cities, with scholars receiving their associates degrees in STEM in six years or less—more than four times the U.S. on-time graduation average for all students in community college. Degrees can be obtained in applied science, engineering, computers and other STEM disciplines in order to prepare students for “new collar” positions.

Since its inception in 2011, more than 400 business partners have forged relationships in participating states to prepare graduates for the workforce.

**MARYLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED IN P-TECH**:

- Alban Cat
- Community College of Baltimore County
- Dataprise, Inc.
- Johns Hopkins University
- Kaiser Permanente
- KCI Technologies, Inc.
- Marriott International
- MedStar Health
- Stanley Black & Decker
- University of Maryland-Baltimore
- Whiting-Turner Contracting Co.

*As of January 2019

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From the original Brooklyn P-TECH class, 99% graduated high school within six years, 55% had earned an associate college degree in applied science during that time.
P-TECH has grown rapidly both nationally and internationally over the last seven years. In the timeline below, see how the program has spread across the globe.

**P-TECH EXPANSION TIMELINE**

Rhode Island Governor Raimondo proposes a budget that includes a request for funds to establish P-TECH schools. In August 2015, the government of Australia announces it will open two P-TECH schools with IBM's help. In May 2015, Colorado Governor Hickenlooper signs a bill to allow P-TECH to be established in the state. September 2015 in New York, 10 more schools modeled on P-TECH open. Connecticut also plans on opening two additional schools. In November 2015, Maryland Governor Hogan announces commitment to bring P-TECH schools in Maryland.

In the fall of 2017, P-TECH goes international with Morocco, Africa's first two P-TECH schools. More Maryland businesses sign on to the growing Maryland programs. Texas launches 18 schools in the Dallas area. In 2017, Taiwan launches the P-TECH program.


In November 2015, Maryland Governor Hogan announces commitment to bring P-TECH schools in Maryland.

April 2018, in Louisiana, Governor Edwards welcomes an IBM P-TECH partnership with a Baton Rouge high school. By late 2018, Australia has 14 P-TECH schools in operation. In fall of 2018, Maryland opens two more P-TECH schools. 2018, California announces funding set aside for the launch of P-TECH in 2019. In 2019, P-TECH will grow in Asia, with plans to launch in Singapore and Korea.
Three Maryland Chamber of Commerce members have been granted funding for an innovative education and workforce development program created with bipartisan support.

Through the P-TECH program, KCI Technologies, Whiting-Turner Contracting Company, and the Community College of Baltimore County have formed a partnership to help young Marylanders finish high school and get an associate’s degree or certificate in a professional specialty, in six years, at no cost.

P-TECH is the acronym for Pathways in Technology Early College-High School. The plan, with funding from the state, matches companies, community colleges, and high schools in economically distressed areas to form a direct line from school to work. What distinguishes the program from a more typical employee training initiative is the educational attainment involved.

The concept caught the attention of Whiting-Turner CEO and President Tim Regan.

"The enhancement and development of career opportunities for local high school students who are interested in engineering and construction is critical both for our industry as well as our local communities," Regan said.

Regan’s company often works with KCI Technologies, an engineering firm based in Sparks, Maryland. So it was a natural fit to pair up again, and work with CCBC on academic approaches that would help ensure young people’s success in the classroom and beyond.

"There has been a huge emphasis on the four-year college education, and rightly so given the needs of our society," said KCI President Nate Beil, who is also chair of the Maryland Chamber Board of Directors. "However, there is a substantial number of well-paying jobs that do not require a four-year degree. These jobs are well within reach of students and need to also be emphasized."

The partnership came together when Maryland Chamber President & CEO Christine Ross connected KCI and Whiting-Turner with CCBC. The school was already heavily involved in early college education programs in its community, but this partnership gave CCBC a chance to work directly with businesses in a new way.

"We’re the academics, we know all about that part, but the Chamber is business industry, so we are very grateful that Christine brought two business industry partners to the table," said CCBC President Sandra Kurtinitis, Ph.D.

CCBC already has the academic foundations for pathways toward careers at KCI or Whiting-Turner. The P-TECH partnership will allow the companies to help guide a plan for that career development. Then, CCBC will work with Dundalk High School to ensure that the curriculum worked for the six-year program.

It’s work with which CCBC is familiar, since it has already partnered with area high schools on similar plans.

“Any time that we can influence an opportunity for the students we all care about, any edge that we can give to students to advance their degree completion and do so at a low or minimal cost, that’s a gift we can both give together to our communities,” said Kurtinitis.

For KCI and Whiting-Turner, this is a chance to invest in both education and workforce needs.

"When the need arises to hire entry level workforce, rarely is there room built into the project schedule to then train them from scratch," explained Beil. “This program could alleviate that gap by preparing the workforce in advance of hire.”

Both presidents say the individualized approach is a key to success for both the students and the companies, for years to come.

“We know from experience that it is the personal and continuous relationship that enables young people to recognize and then realize their full potential,” Regan said. “Young people are as talented and industrious as they have ever been, but they need to be attracted to the industry.”

With jobs that pay well and opportunities for no-cost achievement in disadvantaged areas, KCI, Whiting-Turner and CCBC could build much more than business.

At a Whiting-Turner Contracting Company construction site, P-TECH students gain hands-on, real-world job experience.