

# eCP brief

Conversations on ways to ensure “All means All”



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## USHYEE: Taking Students to New Heights



The U.S. Hispanic Youth Entrepreneur Education (USHYEE) was founded in 2004 to address the high school to college continuum for Hispanic youth. USHYEE introduces high school youth to various career paths and helps them understand that entrepreneurship is a career option.

In late 2004, USHYEE and the Hispanic College Fund (HCF) partnered in order to bring an HCF program to Maryland. The program, the Hispanic Youth Symposium (HYS), was launched in Maryland at the University of Maryland Baltimore County in July of 2005. Since the success of that initial program, USHYEE has developed other programs including the Achieve Forum, hosted at Towson University and Johns Hopkins University, and USHYEE Student Chapters, currently piloted at Lansdowne High School, Woodlawn High School, and Owings Mills High School.

As college readiness increasingly becomes an important aspect of students' education, USHYEE has strived to see that its students are prepared for life after high school. The Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency had an opportunity to speak to Gaetano Vinas and Gaby Vinas of Dulaney High School, Maria Cabrera of Woodlawn High School, Amalia Moctezuma-Aguillon of Lansdowne High School, and Jeffrey Molina of Owings Mills High School, all members of USHYEE chapters, to learn more about how USHYEE has helped them prepare for college and beyond.

### New Aspirations

**ECP:** What perceptions did you have about college before joining USHYEE? How has USHYEE affected your perceptions about college?

**Jeffrey:** I wanted to go to college after finishing high school. I knew that going to college would be essential for my future; I just didn't know how to get there. USHYEE has made me more aware of the benefits of college and how important and valuable going to college is. I've also learned how to handle the application process, which, looking back, would have been difficult to deal with had I not joined USHYEE.

**ECP:** Has USHYEE affected your educational and career goals?

**Gaby:** I wanted to go to nursing school. I had thought about becoming a doctor, but I didn't think I would be able to make it. Since joining USHYEE, I have learned that I can have big goals and I can accomplish them. I've learned to expect more from myself, and now I plan on pursuing becoming a surgeon.

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## Achieving College and Career Readiness



Forty-one states have adopted the Common Core State Standards (the Standards) in order to increase college and career readiness in our high school graduates. College readiness, as defined by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), is the “level of achievement a student needs to be ready to enroll in and succeed—without remediation—in credit-bearing first-year postsecondary courses (two-year and four-year institutions, trade and technical schools).” Career readiness can be described using four general components: achieving a rigorous level of academic proficiency; applying academic skills in context; possessing employability skills including flexibility, critical thinking, and problem solving; and gaining technical skills prior to entry into the labor market.

The implementation of the Standards have taken on primary importance, and this transition introduces a number of challenging questions: What is the baseline of student performance on the Common Core State Standards? What reasonable expectations should we hold for students moving forward? What does student college and career readiness look like today through the lens of the Standards?

According to a study conducted by the American College Testing (ACT), much work must be done to prepare all students for the rigors of postsecondary education and workforce training programs by the time they graduate high school. For example, the ACT found that too few students are able to understand complex text; relative to the Common Core,

only 31% of students are performing at a college- and career-ready level with respect to successfully understanding complex text. The Standards define a “staircase” of increasing text complexity designed to move all students to college- and career-ready levels of reading by no later than the end of high school. To help prepare all students for the challenges of reading at the college- and career-readiness level, states should ensure that students are reading progressively more complex texts as they advance through the grades.

The study also emphasized the importance of reaching out to students as early as possible. Across the board, Hispanic and African American students performed below their Caucasian counterparts in all Common Core math domains. States must ensure that teachers have the resources necessary to identify struggling math students as early as possible (K-4) so that proper interventions are made. Providing teachers with adequate opportunities to collect achievement data that functions diagnostically is crucial to supporting students’ learning progression and creates the optimal condition for growth to occur.

In order to prepare its students, the MSDE redesigned its Career and Technical Education (CTE) program to prepare students for the 21st century’s global economy and its rapidly changing workforce needs. With 350 business and industry representatives, the state created a CTE program that emphasizes problem solving and critical thinking, rather than a program that reinforces procedural knowledge. The Office of

Equity and Cultural Proficiency had the opportunity to speak with Leila Walker, coordinator of the Office of Career and Technology Education, about how CTE programs are being implemented in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

### Career Clusters

MSDE, in partnership with statewide industry advisory groups, identified ten career clusters that represent core business functions across broad industry areas in Maryland. Through consultations with business partners, MSDE identified career pathways based on the business processes within career clusters. Career clusters allow students to explore a wide range of career options and to apply academic and technical skills in a career area. Using the career clusters framework to develop new CTE programs at the high school helps students gain a better understanding of the world of work and what is required to prepare for a career.

Through the career clusters, BCPS students can choose to follow a specific program of study. BCPS offers a wide range of pathways, including: arts, media, and communication; business, management, and finance; construction and development; consumer services, hospitality, and tourism; environmental, agriculture, and natural resources; health and biosciences; human resource services; information technology; manufacturing, engineering, and technology; and transportation technologies.

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## Technology: Enhancing Student Learning and Teacher Instruction



Technology is everywhere, touching almost every part of our lives, our communities, and our homes; however, most schools are challenged when it comes to integrating technology into classroom learning. Many are just beginning to explore the potential technology offers for teaching and learning. Properly used, technology will help students acquire the skills they need to survive in a complex, sophisticated, knowledge-based economy.

While most technology has been promoted in classrooms through the use of hardware applications such as Nooks and iPads, the reality is that most districts can't afford to stock all their schools with such technologies. School districts, especially large school districts, must look towards different types of technologies in order to enhance their students' learning and their teachers' instructional practices.

*We are committed to building "information silos" where teachers must access a multiplicity of sources to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century instruction.*

This article explores how students are benefiting from new technology in BCPS. The Office of Equity and Cultural Proficiency collaborated with the Office of Library Information Services coordinator, Della Curtis, to describe how various innovative technologies enhance learning, improve student achievement, and

address the *Blueprint for Progress*.

### **Achieving the *Blueprint for Progress***

As described in the foundational document, the *Blueprint for Progress*, BCPS embraces technology to enhance classroom teaching and learning and prepare BCPS students for higher education and careers. Library media centers are the technology and information hub of every school where students learn and apply 21<sup>st</sup> century information and technology literacy skills supported by quality library media collections and certified library media specialists.

The Elementary Media Curriculum: Literacies for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners is a model curriculum that fully integrates the use of technologies from Webcams to Web 2.0 tools with an emphasis on student inquiry and research. Middle and high school students are actively engaged in conducting high-level research using locally designed online research models that fully integrate technologies in the context of all core content curriculum.

The curriculum also allows for library media specialists to subscribe to a diverse collection of digital databases that provide 24/7 access to teachers, students, and families to information in text and multimedia formats that support all learning styles and all content areas. Digital content includes the following: America the Beautiful, BrainPop, BrainPop Jr., NetTrekker, CultureGrams, SIRS Discoverer, Tumblebooks, World Book Kids, World Book Students, DefinedSTEM, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Literature Resource Center, Opposing Viewpoints,

Opposing Viewpoints Critical Thinking, SIRS Knowledge Source, Student Resources in Context, Tumble Readables, Visual Thesaurus, World Book Advanced, World Book Spanish. Professional digital content includes ProQuest Education Journals and the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development e-book collection.

Web 2.0 tools enable students to apply 21<sup>st</sup> century skills to share new knowledge gained in the course of their learning. Specifically these skills are, but not limited to, the following: collaborative problem solving and projects, creating and constructing knowledge and collaborative writing, developing critical thinking skills by critiquing and evaluating content shared on the wiki, applying and practicing digital citizenship, and collaboration beyond the "brick and mortar" school house.

*Library media centers are the technology and information hub of every school where students learn and apply 21<sup>st</sup> century information and technology literacy skills.*

Safari Montage has enabled BCPS to build a strong district network characteristic of a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment. Our vision is to use Safari Montage as our "digital content management system" as the "go to resource" for digital content in all formats; e.g., video, podcasts, Safari Live Web conference recordings, e-textbooks, etc. We are committed to building "information silos" where teachers must access a multiplicity of sources to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century instruction.

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**ECP:** What activities do you participate in through USHYEE?  
**Maria:** I've attended the Achieve Forums, Student Chapter meetings, and the Latino/Black Summit.

**ECP:** What components of USHYEE have been the most helpful/beneficial?

**Amalia:** Having the opportunity to meet a multitude of professionals from the government, non-profit sector, and private sector. I've also learned about the various scholarships that are offered. I've learned how to make college affordable.

**ECP:** What has been your most memorable experience with USHYEE?

**Amalia:** I've had so many it's hard to choose just one. I suppose some of the most memorable experiences have been the fun activities we've done as a group, such as rock climbing. Another great activity was teaming up to form various types of businesses and learning how to survive in the real world.

**ECP:** If you could describe your experiences with USHYEE in one word, what would it be and why?

**Maria:** Inspirational. The people who have come to speak to us and teach us about their college and career experiences have taught us so much about ourselves and the potential we have.

*"USHYEE has made me more aware of the benefits of college and how important and valuable going to college is."  
 – Jeffry Molina, Owings Mills High School*

**ECP:** Would you recommend your peers to joining/ becoming involved with USHYEE?

**Gaetano:** Yes, I would. I want USHYEE to help prepare other students as it helped me. Many students are discouraged from going to college because they don't feel prepared. USHYEE helped me prepare myself and make pursuing a college education a reality.

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*Achieving College and Career Readiness, continued from page 2*

BCPS CTE programs are designed to support students in making decisions about education and career options. While students generally enroll in a CTE program in 10th or 11th grade, career exploration begins far earlier. In middle school, students participate in career-awareness activities—for example, field trips, job-shadowing, interest inventories—and develop high school plans, mapping out academic coursework and career options.

To support students in learning about careers, work-based learning opportunities are

made available to all CTE students. Supervised work-based learning experiences allow high school students on-the-job training related to their career choice. Students may also elect to complete the work-based learning CTE program, Career Research and Development. The program is designed to link the classroom with specific work experiences and includes two school-based courses followed by at least two work-based learning credits (generally in the last year of high school). These experiences are organized around a work plan that is cooperatively developed by the school and employer to add value to and extend a student's career preparation. Additionally, along with earning college credit and/or industry certification, students that successfully complete both the career requirements and the academic requirements are certified as "Dual Completers."

Under Dr. Hairston's leadership, BCPS is committed to strengthening its partnerships with universities and businesses. Additionally, the Office of School Counseling prepares students to be college and workforce ready by supporting students' academic, career, and personal/social development. With the extensive array of career clusters and pathways, BCPS is poised to meet the job markets of the 21st century.

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