A NEW ERA AT CATEC

PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION TO SOLE OWNERSHIP BY THE CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOL BOARD

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FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL of LEADERSHIP and PUBLIC POLICY

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Batten Disclaimer

The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other agency.

Honor Statement

On my honor as a student at the University of Virginia, I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.

Logan Bowers

Acknowledgements

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Sincerely,

Logan Bowers

Logan Bowers

Notable Acronyms

ACPS	Albemarle County Public Schools
AST	Automotive Service Technology
CATEC	Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center*
CCS	Charlottesville City Schools
CCSB	Charlottesville City School Board
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PVCC	Piedmont Virginia Community College

*Official name will change to *Charlottesville Area Technical Education Center* in July 2024

Executive Summary

The Charlottesville City School Board's (CCSB) recent acquisition of the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) marks a pivotal shift away from the 50-year partnership with Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) which previously governed the institution. Given that ACPS has historically supplied the majority of students and funding for CATEC, this transition demands an urgent strategy from the CCSB to enhance enrollment in order to secure the institution's financial viability into the future. Without devising such strategies to plan for the future, the CCSB may not be able to fund CATEC long-term, and losing such a valuable resource for the community would be catastrophic, destroying a critical pathway for vocational and technical education which provides opportunities for Charlottesville residents and fuels our local economy.

Potential Strategies

Therefore, this report begins developing those strategies, which include offering enrollment preference for CATEC courses to CCS students before ACPS, investing in television commercials to attract new instructors for programs such as Welding, and initiating a limited partnership with Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) to enhance Adult Education programs and optimize facility usage. These strategies aim to increase the CCS student ratio at CATEC, attract and retain quality instructional staff to enhance enrollment, and leverage existing resources to expand program offerings beyond current capacities.

Evaluative Criteria

In order to evaluate those strategies, this report develops three criteria: (1) projected impact on enrollment at CATEC, (2) projected net revenue generated, and finally (3) implementation feasibility. These criteria form a comprehensive framework for examining each proposed strategy, ensuring a balanced analysis that captures both the quantitative outcomes of policy interventions and the practical considerations that will dictate their success in the real world.

Recommendation

Ultimately, this report recommends the simultaneous implementation of all three strategic alternatives. The non-exclusive nature of these strategies means pursuing one does not preclude engaging in the others, allowing the CCSB to address multiple facets of CATEC's operational challenges concurrently. The recommended strategies promise to enhance the CCS student ratio, generate additional revenue, and expand CATEC's program offerings, thereby ensuring its long-term sustainability and continued contribution to the local economy.

Introduction

Background on CATEC

Founded in 1973, CATEC is a local career academy designed to assist both high school and adult students in obtaining the skills needed to find valuable jobs in the trade industry. Since its inception, CATEC has been dedicated to providing technical education to individuals 16 years and older in various subjects including Auto Service Technology, Carpentry, Cosmetology, and more (CATEC, 2024). This institution plays a pivotal role in the local education ecosystem by offering practical, hands-on training that equips students with the skills needed to enter the workforce directly or pursue further education and training in their chosen fields.

Partnership between ACPS and CCS

For the last 50 years, CATEC has been governed by a partnership between the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. In practice, this has meant that both the CCSB and ACPS have played integral roles in overseeing the operations, funding, and strategic direction of CATEC. This collaborative governance structure has ensured that CATEC could serve a broad student base year after year, allowing them to rely on a steady stream of students from both the city and county populations. In addition, the partnership has facilitated cohesive investment strategies from both entities, and this has enabled CATEC to offer a diverse range of programs tailored to meet the evolving needs of the local workforce and economy (Hall, 2024). However, due to a series of events that occurred last summer, this integral partnership between CCS and ACPS which has governed CATEC for the last 50 years will no longer be in place, and CATEC stands at the threshold of a new era which will demand strategic leadership to navigate the coming challenges.

A New Era for CATEC

The partnership between the CCSB and ACPS was established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) written during the creation of CATEC in 1973. Importantly, this MOU contained a notable clause designed to prevent either side of the partnership from seeking sole ownership of CATEC through a buyout. A very basic summary of that clause goes as follows:

> If one partner (Partner A) wishes to acquire the other's stake (Partner B), they must determine a purchase price they are willing to pay and propose that number to Partner B. Upon that proposition, Partner B faces a binary choice that must be

made within 90 days: Consent to the proposed sale from Partner A or claim the right (provided in the MOU) to purchase at that proposed price themselves.

This interesting mechanism designed by the founders of CATEC ensured that if either CCS or ACPS pursued exclusive control of CATEC, they risked forfeiting their ownership entirely should the other entity choose to buy at the proposed price. So, if either side wanted to dissolve the partnership, they would have to propose a purchase price high enough that the other side would not be willing to pay in order to buttress against that risk. Consequently, this mechanism has served as an effective deterrent which has kept the partnership intact for 50 years (Morse & Torres, 2024). However, in the summer of 2023, Albemarle County took a bold and unexpected step, attempting a buyout of CATEC from the CCSB that would dissolve the initial MOU. At a critical juncture, the CCSB then had 90 days to either cede CATEC to ACPS or counter with a purchase at the proposed price. After careful consideration during that time, the CCSB chose the latter, ultimately securing sole ownership of CATEC despite lacking previous intentions to do so. Thus, starting later this summer, CATEC will embark on a fresh trajectory under the exclusive ownership and governance of the City of Charlottesville and the CCSB. This pivotal change marks the beginning of a promising new era of leadership for CATEC, and it is the intention of this report to plan for the potential challenges associated with this unprecedented shift.

The New Agreement

With a new MOU between the two divisions which is set to last for the next two years, the terms of the initial agreement have changed. In the past, the number of slots allocated to ACPS and CCS was tied to a formula that granted 25% of the slots to each of the four High Schools across ACPS and CCS. Now, instead of dividing the slots equitably across the four individual schools, the terms outlined in the new MOU state that ACPS can purchase up to 75% of the total slots at CATEC in this initial year of the agreement (2024), and then CCS is responsible for allocating the remaining slots at its own discretion. In subsequent years, CCS will set the percentage of slots offered to ACPS at its own discretion. Recently, ACPS decided to purchase 254 slots for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year, at $7,743 per slot, and that almost perfectly matches the number of students they have at CATEC for this year (252) (Morse, 2024). Furthermore, the MOU also states that CCS shall not reduce the number of slots for ACPS by more than 50% in any given year, and that means that ACPS is guaranteed a minimum of 127 slots for the 2025-2026 school year (Charlottesville City Schools & Albemarle County Public Schools, 2024).

The Primary Concern

The main concern for the CCSB regarding this buyout is that CATEC has historically relied more on ACPS than CCS to supply students for the school, and that trend is clearly reflected in the enrollment data over the past five years. *Figure 1* highlights that 78.26% of CATEC's student body has been composed of ACPS students, whereas only 21.74% have come from CCS. This disproportionate reliance on ACPS raises concerns about the sustainability of CATEC's operations going forward, given that ACPS will likely reduce or stop sending students to CATEC at some point in the near future (Morse & Torres, 2024). If that were to happen with current enrollment dynamics unchanged, CATEC could be left with an untenably small cohort from CCS, jeopardizing the institution's financial situation which has for so long depended on revenue from ACPS student enrollment. Without developing enrollment enhancement strategies for CATEC to protect against this risk, the CCSB could face significant financial challenges that may threaten the viability of the institution into the future.

Figure 1. (M. Hall, 2024)

Enrollment: History and 5-Year Averages							
ACPS + CCS Enrollment Totals				CATEC Enrollment Totals			
Year	ACPS	CCS	Total	Year	ACPS	CCS	Total
2019-2020	4,374	1,197	5,571	2019-2020	225	71	296
2020-2021	4,330	1,205	5,535	2020-2021	230	56	286
2021-2022	4,354	1,210	5,564	2021-2022	225	64	289
2022-2023	4,489	1,356	5,845	2022-2023	288	70	358
2023-2024	4,472	1,399	5,871	2023-2024	252	78	330
Totals	**22,019**	**6,367**	**28,386**	**Totals**	**1,220**	**339**	**1,559**
Ratio	**77.57%**	**22.43%**	**100%**	**Ratio**	**78.26%**	**21.74%**	**100%**

Problem Statement

The Charlottesville City School Board's (CCSB) recent acquisition of the Charlottesville Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) marks a pivotal shift away from the 50-year partnership with Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) which previously governed the institution. Given that ACPS has historically supplied the majority of students and funding for CATEC, this transition demands an urgent strategy from the CCSB to enhance enrollment in order to secure the institution's financial viability into the future. Without devising such strategies to plan for the future, the CCSB may not be able to fund CATEC long-term, and losing such a valuable resource for the community would be catastrophic, destroying a critical pathway for vocational and technical education which provides opportunities for Charlottesville residents and fuels our local economy.

Evaluative Criteria

This report develops three criteria to evaluate potential strategies and compare their relative efficacies. These three criteria are: 1) projected impact on enrollment at CATEC, 2) projected net revenue generated, and 3) implementation feasibility. Together, these criteria form a comprehensive framework for examining each proposed strategy. By utilizing this approach, the report ensures a balanced analysis that captures both the quantitative outcomes of policy interventions and also the practical considerations that will dictate their success in the real-world.

Impact on CATEC Enrollment

The first and most important criterion utilized by this report to evaluate alternatives is the projected impact on enrollment at CATEC. Impact on enrollment can be captured by two different metrics. First, given that the CCSB wants to maximize the resources that CATEC has to offer for the community, this report will analyze the impact that each alternative has on total enrollment at CATEC. Second, given that the CCSB has stated the goal of increasing the ratio of CCS students at CATEC by 10% annually (Charlottesville City Schools, 2023), this report will evaluate how each alternative impacts that ratio.

Net Revenue Generated

The second criterion utilized by this report to evaluate alternatives is the projected net revenue generated by each alternative, and these projections will be made on a two-year time horizon which covers the short life of the new MOU. However, given the complexities involved in accurately forecasting the cost and revenue associated with each policy alternative, these projections may not be the most reliable and precise figures. Thus, rather than relying on these projections as exact estimates, this report instead uses net revenue projections as a relative metric. This method involves weighing the net revenues associated with each alternative against the others, thereby ranking them by profitability. This comparative analysis allows for a more pragmatic assessment of financial feasibility, ensuring that decisions are made with a keen eye on maximizing resource efficiency and effectiveness within the context of CATEC's goals.

Implementation Feasibility

The third and final criterion utilized by this report to evaluate alternatives is implementation feasibility. It will consider the feasibility of each policy alternative from multiple dimensions, ultimately assigning each a feasibility grade by answering the following questions with the best information available and weighting the responses appropriately:

1) Are there prominent stakeholders who might not support each alternative?

2) How many actors are required to successfully implement each alternative?

3) How novel is each alternative for the actors required to implement it?

To develop a standardized and sophisticated mechanism for determining a feasibility score for each policy alternative, this memo employs a scoring system that quantitatively evaluates the criteria outlined: stakeholder support, number of actors required, and novelty of the alternative. This scoring system functions as follows:

Stakeholder Support (0-5 Points): Based on the level of support from key stakeholders. A score of 5 indicates universal support, while 0 indicates significant opposition.
Number of Required Actors (0-5 Points): Based on the number of actors needed for successful implementation, with fewer actors scoring higher due to simplified coordination and lower complexity.
Novelty to Actors (0-5 Points): Based on how novel the alternative is to those required to implement it. A lower score (indicating higher novelty) suggests a greater need for training and a longer adaptation period, reducing feasibility.

All three facets of the feasibility score have an equal weight, making the highest possible score 15 points. This system allows for a nuanced comparative analysis of each alternative's feasibility based on qualitative data gathered from interviews with stakeholders, offering a blend of quantitative scoring based on qualitative insights to rank alternatives by relative feasibility.

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Policy Alternatives

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#1 Enrollment Preference to CCS Students

The focus of this first policy alternative is to improve the ratio of CCS students that attend CATEC. One way that the CCSB can start to improve that ratio is to offer enrollment preference for courses to their own students prior to offering slots for purchase to ACPS. Given the changes to the partnership agreements discussed previously, and the fact that CATEC has recently added 40 new slots for a new Automotive Service Technology (AST) program in the upcoming year (Heltz, 2024), the CCSB could offer enrollment preference for the AST course to CCS students prior to offering those slots to ACPS. Importantly, this recommendation extends beyond the singular example of the new AST course, since the CCSB could always offer slots for new courses to its own students prior to ACPS going forward, but this report will use the new AST course as a concrete example of the positive impact that this alternative could have on the CCS enrollment ratio at CATEC.

How would this policy change impact enrollment at CATEC?

Unfortunately, CATEC does not keep records for the most valuable statistic needed to estimate the specific effect that this policy change would have if implemented, and that statistic is the ratio of students across ACPS and CCS who wanted to enroll in CATEC in previous years but could not due to capacity limitations. If that data were available, then it could be used to estimate the specific impact that this alternative would have on the ratio of CCS students at CATEC. However, since that data is unavailable, this report instead uses a sensitivity analysis to describe the potential impact that this alternative could have on enrollment at CATEC. This sensitivity analysis answers the following questions:

1) **What would the ratio of CCS students be, and how would CATEC revenue be impacted, if all the new AST slots go to ACPS students?**

78 / 330 = 23.64% (this year) → 78 / 370 = 21.08% (next two years)
– 2.56 percentage points
Revenue = ($7,743 * 40) * 2 years = $619,440

2) **What would the ratio of CCS students be, and how would CATEC revenue be impacted, if all the new AST slots go to CCS students?**

78 / 330 = 23.64% (this year) → 118 / 370 = 31.89% (next two years)
+ 8.25 percentage points
Revenue = ($7,743 * 0) * 2 years = $0

3) **How many CCS students need to sign up for the new AST course to maintain the current enrollment ratio? (This is considered the status quo outcome)**

(78 + n) / 370 = 23.64% → (78 + n) = 0.2364 * 370
→ n = 87.468 – 78 → n = 9.468
Revenue = ($7,743 * 30) * 2 years = $464,580

4) **What would the ratio of CCS students be, and how would CATEC revenue be impacted, assuming that enrollment preference doubles the signup rate of CCS students for the AST course? (This is the estimated impact of enrollment preference)**

78 / 330 = 23.64% (this year) → 98 / 370 = 26.49% (next two years)
+ 2.85 percentage points
Revenue = ($7,743 * 20) * 2 years = $309,720

So, at least ten students from CCS would need to sign up for the new AST course to maintain the current enrollment ratio, and if that happened then CATEC would raise $464,580 in revenue from ACPS tuition dollars. If less than ten sign up, the CCS ratio would decrease, and if ten or more sign up then the CCS ratio would increase. If no CCS students sign up then the enrollment ratio would bottom out at 21.08%, but CATEC would raise $619,440 in revenue from ACPS tuition dollars. And if all of the slots went to CCS students, then there would be a significant boost in the CCS ratio up to 31.89%, but CATEC would not raise any revenue in that scenario. Given that we are lacking the relevant waitlist data needed to project the result of offering enrollment preference to CCS students, a reasonable assumption is that such a policy change could double the number of CCS students who enroll in the AST course, meaning that 20 CCS students would sign up for the 40 new AST slots instead of the status quo of ten. In that scenario, the CCS ratio at CATEC would increase to 26.49% and CATEC would raise $309,720 in revenue from ACPS tuition dollars.

What is the projected net revenue from this policy change?

In order to determine the net revenue generated by offering enrollment preference to CCS students for new courses, it is necessary to compare the revenue generated by the status quo outcome to the revenue generated by the projected outcome associated with implementing this alternative. That comparison yields $464,580 (status quo) – $309,720 (projection) = $154,860. So, following the assumptions made for the purposes of this report, offering enrollment preference to CCS students for new courses would result in a loss of $154,860 in potential additional revenue that would have been generated by the status quo outcome.

How feasible would this policy be?

Stakeholder Support – 3
This score reflects a moderate level of support from key stakeholders, driven by the consideration that ACPS may not be fully supportive of this policy. Given the historical context, any shift that appears to prioritize CCS students for enrollment in new courses might be met with concern or resistance from ACPS. This concern is particularly relevant considering the need to maintain a collaborative and positive relationship between CCS and ACPS. While there is likely substantial support for the initiative within CCS, the potential pushback from ACPS could impact the smooth implementation and success of this policy alternative.

Number of Required Actors – 5
This high score is justified because the policy change is primarily administrative, requiring minimal coordination beyond the decision-making processes of the Charlottesville City School Board (CCSB) and CATEC administrative staff. The implementation of this policy does not necessitate a broad coalition of new actors; instead, it leverages the existing administrative framework and decision-making authority of the CCSB, now the sole operator of CATEC.

Novelty to Actors – 5
This high score is attributed to the policy's familiarity to the actors involved in its implementation, suggesting no significant need for new training or adaptation. Given that the policy leverages existing structures and merely requires adjustments to how enrollment preferences are set, it doesn't introduce novel practices or procedures that would necessitate a learning curve or adaptation period for the staff.

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#2 TV Commercial for New Instructors

Background
One of the first discoveries that became clear throughout initial conversations with stakeholders was that if the goal of this APP is to devise strategies focused on increasing enrollment at CATEC, then those strategies should focus on methods to address the challenges around hiring instructors for new programs that could facilitate such an expansion. The issue so far which has stalled the launch of such new programs is that CATEC has been unable to identify and hire suitable instructors, and that is definitely the case for their potential new Welding program. Currently, CATEC owns state-of-the-art welding equipment, they have consistent interest from adult students in a welding course, and they have the capacity within the schedule to run the class, but they just haven't been able to find and hire a suitable instructor for the program (Heltz, 2024). So, the focus of this section of the report is analyzing a marketing strategy aimed at improving the likelihood of hiring such an instructor.

Why Invest in Marketing for New Instructors?
Through conversations with CATEC administrators about potential strategies to hire instructors, it became clear that there is a significant opportunity available to better leverage marketing to attract potential new instructors (Jay, 2024). The current marketing budget is $10,000, and this report outlines in *Addendum A* the various initiatives on which that money is spent, almost all of which focus on student recruitment rather than instructor recruitment. Most notably, CATEC spends $5,000 – half its total marketing budget – on a commercial that airs in the Spring and ends by encouraging viewers to visit the CATEC website to learn more about what they have to offer. Based on anecdotes from stakeholders and the limited data available to measure the impact of that commercial, it seems as though this has been an effective strategy thus far to increase awareness about CATEC. Therefore, this report investigates the potential of a new TV commercial that is instead aimed at finding a new instructor for the Welding program.

How would this TV commercial impact enrollment/revenue at CATEC?

The addition of one new Adult Education instructor for a new Welding course would create 40 additional slots for adults to enroll in CATEC. This course would be held in four sections of ten students each, with each section having a weekly class lasting three hours for a total of 15 consecutive weeks. Students would pay an estimated $1,400 in tuition for that course, which would generate a total annual revenue of $1,400 x 40 = $56,000. Every Adult Education instructor at CATEC is paid an hourly rate of $55, and given that the instructor is expected to teach 180 hours (3h x 4d x 15w), then the total annual cost of the new instructor would be $9,900 (Tomlin, 2024). *Addendum B* estimates the additional annual costs associated with running the welding program, which total

$51,998.17, and therefore the annual net revenue generated by a welding program would be $56,000 – $9,900 – $31,998.17 = $14,101.83, which totals $28,203.66 over the two-year time horizon relevant for this report. Thus, this new program would be profitable and should be launched at CATEC.

What is the projected net revenue from this TV commercial?

This section of the report projects the impact of the proposed tv commercial on the likelihood of obtaining the $28,203.66 in revenue from the Welding program. In order to do that, this report first assumes that 8% of applicants for a given job are suitable for the role (Boskamp, 2023), and that assumption is used to develop an equation for the likelihood that CATEC hires a new welding instructor, which goes as follows: P = 1 – (0.92)^N, where P is the percent chance of hiring a new welding instructor and N is the total number of applicants for the welding instructor role. Given that over the last year, CATEC has only received 10 applicants for this role, then it follows that their chance of hiring someone for the role over that time period was 1 – (0.92)^10 = 56.56%. From there, this report uses the boost in website traffic associated with the launch of CATEC's existing TV commercial as a proxy to estimate the boost in interested applicants for the welding position. In the month of January 2022, prior to CATEC running its commercial that encouraged people to visit their website, 6,736 individuals visited the CATEC website. In March 2022, after CATEC ran that commercial, the number of individuals who visited the website was 7,886. Thus, running that commercial was associated with a 17.1% increase in CATEC website traffic. Before proceeding, it is important to note that this calculation is not meant to serve as a causal exercise, but rather this estimation is the best that this report could accomplish at estimating the impact of the local TV commercial with relevant data rather than extrapolating from unrelated research. That estimation would then suggest that if CATEC were to launch a local TV commercial marketing the open welding instructor position, then the number of applicants for that role would also increase by 17.1% from 10 to 11.71, and this report rounds to the nearest whole person for practicality, so the projected number of new applicants in the first year after launching the commercial is 12. Then, in the second year of running the commercial (assuming that no instructor was hired in the first year), the total number of applicants would increase again to 14.4, rounded to 14 for practicality. Thus, if CATEC were to run this commercial for the next two years in the same way that they have run their existing commercial, then they would receive 26 applications over that time period. This increase in applications raises the likelihood that CATEC hires a new welding instructor to 1 – (0.92)^26 = 88.56%. In order to quantify the value of this boosted hiring likelihood, this report compares the expected value of the Welding program conditioned on the pre-commercial hiring likelihood to the expected value of the Welding program conditioned on the post-commercial hiring likelihood. Those calculations yield:

$$EV_{\text{pre-commercial}} = \$28{,}203.66 * 0.5656 = \$15{,}951.99$$
$$EV_{\text{post-commercial}} = \$28{,}203.66 * 0.8856 = \$24{,}977.16$$

Thus, the expected value of the commercial aimed at hiring a new Welding instructor is equal to

$$\$24{,}977.16 - \$15{,}951.99 = \$9{,}025.17.$$

Given that the total cost of the new TV commercial is estimated to be $11,500 – as outlined in *Addendum C* – then it turns out that running a new TV commercial aimed at hiring a new welding instructor may not actually be a cost-effective strategy. However, that does not mean that the CCSB should disqualify this alternative from consideration, as it might be worth losing an estimated $2,474.83 to secure the new Welding program for CATEC students.

How feasible is the implementation of this TV commercial?

Stakeholder Support – 5
It's reasonable to expect broad stakeholder support regarding the push to market for new instructors. The budget allocation for this initiative is minimal in the grand scheme of the CCSB budget, and there is low risk involved in this effort.

Number of Required Actors – 4
The production of a commercial requires a collaborative effort involving multiple actors, including a creative team (for scriptwriting and storyboard development), a production team (for filming and editing), and CATEC administrative staff (for content approval and logistical coordination). While CATEC has done this before, the number of actors required for this alternative result in a score of 4.

Novelty to Actors – 5
While the content of the commercial will be different, the staff at CATEC already has experience carrying out this very same task in the past. They know which professionals to contact, they know how they want to execute the project, and if anything, creating a commercial this time around would be easier than it was before.

Total Feasibility Score: 14/15

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#3 Limited Partnership with PVCC

A partnership between CATEC Adult Education and Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) could be a mutually advantageous proposition that leverages the strengths and addresses the needs of both institutions. Currently, CATEC boasts well-equipped facilities and resources capable of supporting an expanded Adult Education program, but they face challenges in recruiting instructors to realize this potential. Conversely, PVCC has a high demand from both adult students and instructors for more technical education courses but is constrained by its current campus capacity, limiting its ability to expand programs as desired (Tomlin, 2024). By entering into a collaborative arrangement, PVCC could utilize CATEC's available space to conduct its programs, effectively extending its educational offerings beyond the limitations of its campus. This solution not only enables PVCC to meet the growing demand for its courses but also allows CATEC to maximize the use of its facilities, which are underutilized during significant portions of the week. Furthermore, PVCC's rent payments for the use of CATEC's space would provide additional revenue to CATEC, further enhancing its financial sustainability and capacity to serve the community.

Importantly, there is relevant historical context to consider in which previous attempts to merge or sell CATEC's Adult Education program to PVCC were unsuccessful due to financial disagreements between leadership at each institution (Tomlin, 2024). However, the changes that have since occurred in both CATEC and PVCC leadership present a fresh opportunity for new negotiations between the parties. These new dynamics could foster a more favorable environment for both entities to revisit discussions and explore a limited partnership that benefits from shared goals and mutual interests, ultimately enriching the educational landscape of the community.

Additionally, one of the compelling reasons for CATEC to enter this partnership stems from PVCC's ability to utilize G3 funding in Virginia, which enables it to offer courses to low-income students at no cost (Virginia's Community Colleges, 2024). This significant advantage positions PVCC as a formidable competitor in the adult education market, potentially overshadowing CATEC Adult Education's offerings.Because CATEC cannot compete with free tuition, the rationale of "*if you can't beat them, join them*" seems fitting in this case. By aligning with PVCC, CATEC can circumvent that competition and attract a broader student base to secure a stable flow of revenue that might otherwise be diverted directly to PVCC. Furthermore, this partnership has minimal downside for CATEC. By utilizing its underused facilities more effectively, CATEC can generate additional revenue through rent payments from PVCC, without incurring significant operational costs. This arrangement optimizes the use of CATEC's space while contributing to its financial sustainability.

How would this limited partnership impact enrollment at CATEC?

If the CCSB were to embark on this limited partnership with PVCC, they would obviously see a boost in the number of students taking courses at CATEC. However, that boost would be the result of an influx of PVCC students, not CATEC students, and therefore this alternative would have no impact on CATEC enrollment figures. Thus, when analyzing the effectiveness of this strategy, it is more important to analyze the projected net revenue generated by the partnership rather than enrollment changes.

What is the projected net revenue from this limited partnership?

To calculate the annual revenue generated by this partnership, this report assumes for simplicity that PVCC would begin with just three classes at the state maximum capacity of 20 students, and those classes would meet on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday given that these are days in which no Adult Education programs are running at CATEC. This means that PVCC would start the partnership by bringing in 60 students, and that number is used to project how much PVCC should pay in rent to CATEC. Similar to the process completed for previous alternatives, a per-student operating cost is determined and then multiplied across the 60 new students to project the operating costs for which PVCC would be responsible for throughout the duration of their programs at CATEC over the course of one year. As shown in *Addendum D,* that number is added to the additional wages that would be needed for janitorial staff that needs to be in the building with PVCC, and that calculation yields an annual total cost for PVCC of $21,952.33. That number is marked up 20% to establish annual rent for PVCC, which would be $26,342.80. This means that over the course of two years, PVCC would pay $52,685.60 in rent, and $8,780.93 of that would be net revenue for CATEC. That money would act as a income stream for CATEC which could be used in various ways to invest back into the Adult Education program or buttress the financials for the High School as has been done in the past.

How feasible is the implementation of this limited partnership?

Stakeholder Support – 4
It is reasonable to expect broad stakeholder support for this initiative given the mutually beneficial nature of the partnership and the changes that have occurred regarding leadership on both sides since the last negotiations failed. The biggest obstacle will be coming to an agreement on a number for rent that both sides perceive as fair and advantageous for their cause.

Number of Required Actors – 2
This low score reflects the partnership's inherent need for a broad coalition of participants, including administrative staff from both institutions, faculty members, and possibly external contractors or consultants to adapt spaces for dual use. This complexity is deemed to necessitate significant coordination efforts.

Novelty to Actors – 1
While there is some precedent for collaboration between these two institutions, the specific nature of this partnership—especially its operationalization, scale, and the integration of PVCC's programming within CATEC's existing framework—introduces considerable novelty. This might require new procedural knowledge, adaptation of spaces, and perhaps even the development of new administrative protocols. Additionally, while new faces in leadership roles are advantageous for the purposes of negotiations regarding this alternative, they are disadvantageous in the sense that the required leaders likely have no experience with this kind of initiative.

Total Feasibility Score: 7/15

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Outcomes Matrix

	Enrollment	Net Revenue	Feasibility
Enrollment Preference to CHS Students	**CCS Ratio:** 23.64% → 26.49% + 2.85 PP	**– $154,860.00**	Stakeholders: 3 # of Actors: 5 Novelty: 5 **Total: 13**
Commercial for New Instructor	**Total:** + 40 Students (+ 0.68%)	**– $2,474.83**	Stakeholders: 5 # of Actors: 4 Novelty: 5 **Total: 14**
Limited Partnership with PVCC	**N/A**	**+ $8,780.93**	Stakeholders: 4 # of Actors: 2 Novelty: 1 **Total: 7**

Recommendation

This report recommends the simultaneous implementation of all three strategic alternatives discussed throughout this report. None of the three options presented are mutually exclusive from the others, meaning that pursuing one does not preclude the CCSB from engaging in the others concurrently, and thus there is no specific reason why the CCSB has to choose only one of these alternatives over the others. The following sections outline the rationale behind implementing each of these strategies, highlighting how the projected benefits of each alternative outweigh the potential negatives associated with each one.

#1 Enrollment Preference to CCS Students

While it is difficult to project the exact impact of this policy alternative due to the limitations of the available data, the sensitivity testing conducted in this report revealed that there is significant potential upside to this policy change. The reasonable conclusion drawn from that analysis is that offering enrollment preference to CCS students prior to selling slots to ACPS would likely improve the ratio of CCS students at CATEC by at least a few percentage points, and representatives from the CCSB have said that the resulting loss of potential revenue from ACPS is a price they are more than willing to pay to offer CATEC programs to more of their students. So, given that this policy change is likely to have at least some marginal positive impact, and the CCSB has stated the projected loss of potential net revenue is acceptable, then there is no significant downside to pursuing this policy. In other words, the worst case outcome with this policy alternative is that the current status quo CCS ratio at CATEC is maintained, and in that scenario the only cost to the CCSB would be the minor risk of political pushback.

Furthermore, the implementation of this policy is the simplest among the three strategic options presented in this report. Given that this alternative is a policy decision that can be made by the CCSB without the influence of any outside actors, implementation of this policy change requires no more than a vote among Board members and potential minor changes to the enrollment timeline in future years. Therefore, the decision to offer enrollment preference to CCS students not only aligns with the CCSB's strategic goal of enhancing local student participation but also leverages the Board's autonomy to begin affecting immediate change to shape CATEC going forward. This policy's straightforward implementation, coupled with its potential to significantly benefit CCS students without substantial financial risk, positions it as a viable and strategic choice for the CCSB to pursue going forward.

#2 TV Commercial for New Instructors

While acknowledging the concern regarding the immediate cost-effectiveness of producing a commercial aimed at recruiting a welding instructor for CATEC, the CCSB should still consider proceeding with this initiative. The analysis revealed that the expected value of the commercial does not surpass its projected costs, highlighting an upfront investment that may not directly yield a favorable financial return. However, this should not necessarily deter the CCSB from pursuing the commercial, primarily because of its strategic importance to address a critical staffing need. The likelihood of hiring a qualified welding instructor could significantly improve as a result of the commercial, and that prospect makes this alternative enticing. Moreover, the report's financial projections do not fully encapsulate the indirect or intangible benefits of increased institutional visibility or enhanced reputation that could result from the commercial, and these factors hold considerable value. They contribute to a conducive environment for broader engagement with the community, which aligns with CATEC's long-term strategic goals. And regardless, even if the commercial were fruitless on the hiring front, this would be a minimal investment relative to the total CCSB budget, and representatives from the CCSB have said that the associated costs are acceptable for them to at least expand their hiring efforts on the margins. This investment reflects a commitment to taking tangible steps towards maximizing CATEC's operational capacity, even if the immediate financial returns do not clearly justify the investment. Essentially, the commercial represents a strategic decision to address a pressing need, with the potential for indirect benefits that support CATEC's broader mission, making the associated costs an acceptable aspect of pursuing this necessary objective.

#3 Limited Partnership with PVCC

Despite receiving a lower feasibility score, this alternative also merits earnest consideration by the CCSB. This alternative presents a mutually beneficial opportunity with minimal downside for the CATEC, and it embraces a strategic, long-term perspective that acknowledges the competitive landscape of adult education in Virginia. The value of this partnership lies in its reciprocal benefits. CATEC, with its well-equipped facilities and untapped potential, stands to significantly enhance its utilization and operational efficiency. Conversely, PVCC faces capacity constraints despite high demand for its adult education courses. By hosting PVCC's overflow programs, CATEC can fill its underused spaces, directly addressing its challenge of maximizing facility usage. This not only elevates CATEC’s role in the community but also solidifies its financial stability through additional revenue streams from PVCC’s rent payments. Furthermore, the partnership aligns with the CCSB's strategic vision of expanding access to vocational and technical education for adult learners in Charlottesville. It directly confronts the competitive pressures of the adult education market, particularly the challenge posed by PVCC's access to G3 funding which allows it to offer courses to low-income students at no cost. By collaborating with PVCC, CATEC positions itself as a complementary partner rather than a competitor, extending the reach and impact of both institutions. This alternative also anticipates the future landscape of adult education, where partnerships and collaborative efforts will increasingly define success. It acknowledges that the traditional silos between institutions are becoming barriers to meeting the educational needs of today's workforce. In embracing this partnership, the CCSB not only secures immediate benefits for CATEC but also champions a forward-thinking approach that values cooperation over competition, thereby enhancing the overall educational ecosystem in Charlottesville. In conclusion, despite the operational challenges and the initial low feasibility score, the strategic partnership with PVCC represents a prudent and visionary choice for the CCSB. It promises to unlock new potentials for CATEC, ensuring its relevance, financial health, and continued contribution to the community's educational needs. The CCSB is encouraged to pursue this partnership with a clear focus on the long-term advantages and strategic positioning it offers, making it an essential component of CATEC's future success.

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Implementing a Limited Partnership with PVCC

Given that the potential partnership with PVCC presents the most difficult implementation feasibility questions to answer, the following sections delve into the details of what entering this partnership might look like for the CCSB. This endeavor requires a strategic and collaborative approach, engaging a variety of stakeholders to ensure alignment of goals and expectations. By meticulously planning the logistics, clearly defining immediate next steps, and proactively addressing potential concerns, CCSB can navigate the complexities of this partnership. This process not only demands thorough preparation and ongoing dialogue with PVCC but also a commitment to transparency and adaptability as the partnership evolves. Through careful consideration and deliberate action, the CCSB can forge a partnership with PVCC that not only enhances the educational offerings at CATEC but also secures its position as a leading institution in vocational and technical education within the region.

Stakeholders

The following is a list of relevant stakeholders that the CCSB should begin to build relationships with in order to foster the collaborative environment necessary for the implementation of this alternative to be successful.

Jean Runyon

President of PVCC

Email**: jrunyon@pvcc.edu**

Dr. Jean Runyon, as a fresh face in leadership at PVCC, brings a new perspective uninfluenced by past negotiation outcomes between PVCC and the Charlottesville City School Board (CCSB). This fresh outlook positions her to be more receptive to exploring the mutually beneficial aspects of a proposed partnership with an open mind. Her commitment to serving the broader community, a cornerstone of her leadership philosophy, aligns with the goals of this collaboration, promising to enhance educational opportunities and resources for both institutions. Furthermore, feedback from individuals at CATEC and within CCSB who have interacted with Dr. Runyon describe her as kind and reasonable. Such personal qualities suggest she would approach discussions with a constructive and collaborative spirit, significantly increasing the likelihood of a successful partnership.

Rebecca Parkhill

Special Projects Coordinator

Email: rparkhill@pvcc.edu

Ms. Parkhill holds a pivotal role that makes her an essential contact for the CCSB. Her position involves a close working relationship with Dr. Jean Runyon, providing her with insight into the strategic priorities and decision-making processes at the highest levels of PVCC. Moreover, her responsibility for special projects means she has experience in managing initiatives that require cross-departmental coordination and external collaboration, skills that are crucial for implementing a successful partnership, and ultimately building a relationship with Ms. Parkhill could facilitate smoother communication between CCSB and PVCC's leadership.

Tracy Cersley

Director of Financial Services

Email: tcersley@pvcc.edu

Building a relationship with Tracy Cersley, the Director of Financial Services at PVCC, is crucial for the CCSB because she handles the college's budget and financial decisions. For a partnership to work well, understanding each other's financial needs and constraints is key. Ms Cersley's role means that she would be directly involved in shaping any financial agreements between PVCC and CCSB, making her a key person to build rapport with for a successful collaboration.

Scott Jefferies

VP of Finance & Administrative Services

Email: sjefferies@pvcc.edu

Similar to Ms. Cersley, Mr. Jefferies holds a vital position at PVCC. His role involves overseeing the college's financial health and operational logistics, and his insight could greatly influence the feasibility and design of a partnership with CATEC and the CCSB. Engaging with him early in the process would help navigate the complexities of such an arrangement, making the collaboration more likely to succeed and be mutually advantageous.

Harry Stillerman

VP of Institutional Advancement

Email: HStillerman@pvcc.edu

Mr. Stillermam plays a pivotal role in developing partnerships and enhancing the college's presence across the community. Building a relationship with him is crucial because he has the expertise and connections to help make a partnership between PVCC and CATEC successful. His job involves finding ways to support the college's goals through collaborations, which means he's well-positioned to understand and promote the mutual benefits of such a partnership. Thus, engaging with Mr. Stillerman could lead to stronger ties and more effective communication between the two institutions.

So, for this partnership to be effective, the CCSB must establish connections with these key PVCC personnel. Each individual, from leadership to financial and project coordinators, plays an integral role in various aspects of the potential partnership. By fostering collaborative relationships with these pivotal figures, the CCSB can secure a better understanding of PVCC in order to ensure the success of this partnership.

Next Steps

For the CCSB to successfully navigate the complexities of implementing a limited partnership with PVCC, the following is a list of next steps to consider:

Establish Key Relationships with PVCC Leadership

- Reach out to Jean Runyon, President of PVCC, to foster a collaborative spirit and explore the partnership's potential benefits.
- Connect with Rebecca Parkhill, Special Projects Coordinator, for smoother communication and logistical coordination.
- Engage Tracy Cersley, Director of Financial Services, and Scott Jefferies, VP of Finance & Administrative Services, for financial negotiations.
- Build a rapport with Harry Stillerman, VP of Institutional Advancement, to leverage his expertise in partnerships and community engagement.

Logistics and Planning

- Detailed planning on how PVCC's classes will integrate into CATEC's schedule, especially focusing on utilizing underused time slots (e.g., weekends).
- Assess and prepare CATEC's facilities to accommodate PVCC's classes, ensuring they meet the necessary requirements for technical education courses.
- Establish a clear financial model including rent calculations, operational costs, and revenue sharing agreements to ensure financial transparency and mutual benefit.

Addressing Potential Concerns

- Proactively identify and address potential concerns from both institutions regarding the partnership. This includes financial implications, operational logistics, and any potential impact on existing programs or stakeholders.
- Engage in open and transparent communication with all stakeholders involved to manage expectations and foster a sense of shared goals and benefits.

Implementation Strategy

- Develop a phased approach to implementation, starting with pilot programs or a limited number of classes to assess the partnership's effectiveness and address any issues that arise.
- Regularly review the partnership's progress and impact, adjusting strategies as necessary to ensure it meets the goals of both institutions.

Community Engagement and Marketing

- Develop a joint marketing and community engagement plan to promote the partnership and its benefits to potential students and the broader community.
- Highlight success stories and the positive impact of the partnership on students' educational and career paths to build support and interest.

Policy and Agreement Documentation

- Finalize a detailed memorandum of understanding or partnership agreement that outlines the roles, responsibilities, financial arrangements, and goals of the partnership.
- Ensure legal review and approval from both institutions to solidify the partnership's framework and operational guidelines.

Evaluation and Adaptation

- Establish metrics for success and a schedule for regular evaluation of the partnership's outcomes against these metrics.
- Be open to adapting the partnership structure based on feedback from stakeholders and the results of ongoing evaluations to maximize its effectiveness and sustainability.

By following these steps, the CCSB can effectively navigate the complexities of establishing and enhancing its partnership with PVCC, ensuring that both institutions benefit from shared resources, expertise, and opportunities for their students and the community.

Conclusion

This partnership represents a forward-thinking strategy to broaden opportunities for students and strengthen the adult education landscape in the region. Through careful planning, stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to mutual benefits, this collaboration has the potential to be a model for how educational institutions can work together to meet the evolving needs of their communities and workforce. By addressing logistical challenges, financial considerations, and operational integration with clarity and foresight, the CCSB can lay the groundwork for a successful and enduring partnership with PVCC. This effort not only exemplifies a dedication to enhancing the offerings at CATEC but also underscores a broader commitment to educational innovation, community development, and the empowerment of students through accessible, high-quality technical education. As this partnership progresses, it will undoubtedly require adaptability, open communication, and a shared vision, but the foundation established through this collaborative process promises to yield significant benefits for all involved, cementing CATEC's role as a key player in the regional educational ecosystem.

Addendum A

CATEC Marketing Initiatives
TV Commercial
Website
Social Media
Professional Photos
Brochure
Curriculum Nights
Merchandise
Community Partnerships
Monthly Newsletter
Student Spotlights
Signing Day
Yearbook
Press Releases

Addendum B

Projecting the Non-Instructor Costs of the New Welding Program		
CATEC does not conduct individual cost calculations for each of its programs that incorporate operating costs. Instead, they only outline the costs of specific instructional supplies purchased by the instructors of the individual courses. For the potential new Welding course, there is obviously no current line item for Welding instructional supplies, but this report will assume $500 per student, which would amount to $20,000 needed for instructional supplies.		
There are currently 506 students at CATEC that attend in-person across both High School and Adult Education programs. Therefore, CATEC's operating costs can be estimated on a per student basis by dividing each budget line item by 506. To then project the operating costs of the Welding course, that per student figure can be multiplied by the 40 students who would enroll in the new Welding course. That number is then added to the instructional supplies budget associated with Welding, which equals $20,000, to arrive at the total non-instructor cost of the Welding program.		
Line Item	One-Year	Two-Years
Welding Instructional Supplies	$20,000.00	$40,000.00
Building Maintainence & Operations	$3,557.31	$7,114.62
Electrical Service	$3,760.16	$7,520.32
Gas Utilities	$986.56	$1,973.12
Water & Sewer Service	$699.76	$1,399.53
Phone Service	$109.00	$218.00
Insurance	$1,857.71	$3,715.42
Janitorial Supplies	$1,027.67	$2,055.34
Total	**$31,998.17**	**$63,996.34**

Addendum C

Projecting the Costs of the New Commercial	
Professional Scriptwriting	$400.00
Professional Voiceover	$50.00
Professional Videography	$500.00
Music Licensing	$50.00
Professional Editing + Mixing	$500.00
TV airtime (year 1)	$5,000.00
TV airtime (year 2)	$5,000.00
Total	**$11,500.00**

Addendum D

Projecting the Revenue Generated by a Limited Partnership with PVCC		
There are currently 506 students at CATEC that attend in-person across both High School and Adult Education programs. Therefore, CATEC's operating costs can be estimated on a per student basis by dividing each budget line item by 506. The rent rate charged to PVCC for this potential partnersip would be based on the operating costs for the building, plus the wages of an additional janitorial staff member to be in the building when PVCC is running classes. The per-student operating costs can be multiplied by the total number of students that PVCC would hold classes for at CATEC, and that would be added to the wages of the additional janitor to determine the total cost of rent for PVCC over the course of one academic year. This report assumes that at the beginning of this partnership, PVCC would bring in three classes of the maximum of 20 students, and those classes would be held Friday-Sunday.		
Line Item	**One-Year**	**Two-Years**
Janitor Wages	$4,000.00	$8,000.00
Building Maintainence & Operations	$5,335.97	$10,671.94
Electrical Service	$5,640.24	$11,280.47
Gas Utilities	$1,479.84	$2,959.68
Water & Sewer Service	$1,049.64	$2,099.29
Phone Service	$118.58	$237.15
Insurance	$2,786.56	$5,573.12
Janitorial Supplies	$1,541.50	$3,083.00
Cost Total	**$21,952.33**	**$43,904.66**
Rent Total (20% Markup)	**$26,342.80**	**$52,685.60**
CATEC Revenue	**$4,390.47**	**$8,780.93**

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