Midlands CLNA Executive Summary 2026

1. Key Successes and Strengths:

The region demonstrates strong alignment between CTE programs and workforce needs, particularly in high-demand fields such as Health Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Automotive Technology, Business, and Digital Technologies. These programs benefit from extensive partnerships with local businesses and industry stakeholders, which provide students with access to real-world experiences, certifications, and employment pathways.

Student performance data highlights significant strengths. Graduation rates for CTE concentrators exceed state targets, with regional averages near 96%. Post-program placement is also exceptionally strong, with over 98% of students entering employment, postsecondary education, or training.

Credential attainment is another major strength, with nearly 77% of students earning industry-recognized credentials—more than double the state benchmark.

Academic performance in reading and mathematics also exceeds state expectations, reflecting strong integration of academic and technical instruction.

Additionally, the region has made notable progress in nontraditional program participation through intentional recruitment strategies and awareness initiatives.

At the postsecondary level, programs show strong job alignment, with many areas categorized as “robust” or “strong” in job opening rates. Midlands Technical College programs, in particular, demonstrate close alignment with labor market demand and provide clear pathways to employment or transfer.

2. Primary Opportunities for Improvement:

Despite these strengths, several areas require improvement. A significant gap exists in science proficiency, where regional performance falls well below state targets. This issue is largely tied to a shortage of certified Biology teachers.

Capacity constraints are another major concern, particularly in high-demand programs such as Health Sciences. Limited clinical placements and postsecondary program availability create bottlenecks that restrict student advancement.

Instructor recruitment and retention is a persistent challenge across multiple program areas. Competitive industry salaries make it difficult to attract and retain qualified educators, especially in technical fields.

There are also gaps in dual enrollment opportunities within CTE programs, limiting students’ ability to earn college credit while in high school.

Additionally, some curriculum areas are outdated or not fully aligned with current industry standards.

Equity gaps exist for certain special populations, particularly homeless students, who show lower course success and retention rates at the postsecondary level.

3. Planned Actions to Address Opportunities:

To address these improvement areas, several strategic actions are planned. Efforts will focus on expanding program capacity through investment in facilities, equipment, and instructional resources, particularly in high-demand fields.

The region will strengthen partnerships with postsecondary institutions to reduce wait times and improve transitions for students.

Expansion of dual enrollment opportunities will be prioritized to enhance college and career readiness.

Targeted recruitment strategies will be implemented to attract industry professionals into teaching roles.

Additionally, ongoing professional development will be provided to ensure instructors remain current with industry trends and technologies.

Curriculum updates will be guided by industry input to ensure alignment with workforce needs.

Increased opportunities for work-based learning, including internships and apprenticeships, will also be developed.

For student performance gaps, particularly in science, efforts will focus on improving teacher recruitment, providing instructional support, and enhancing academic integration within CTE programs.

4. Significant Barriers and/or Gaps Identified:

Key barriers include the shortage of qualified instructors, especially in science and technical fields, as well as limited funding for program expansion and equipment upgrades.

Facility constraints and limited access to clinical and work-based learning opportunities further restrict program growth.

Another major barrier is the misalignment between secondary and postsecondary capacity, particularly in high-demand pathways like Health Sciences.

Additionally, policy limitations related to dual enrollment and credential recognition hinder student progress.

Equity gaps among special populations, particularly homeless individuals and economically disadvantaged students, present ongoing challenges in retention and success.

Rapid changes in industry technology also create a gap between current curriculum and evolving workforce demands, requiring continuous updates and training.

5. Planned Actions to Address Barriers and Gaps:

To overcome these barriers, the region will implement a multi-faceted approach. Recruitment and retention strategies for instructors will include partnerships with industry, alternative certification pathways, and competitive incentives.

Advocacy for increased funding will support expansion of facilities, equipment, and program offerings.

Collaboration with postsecondary partners will focus on aligning capacity and creating more seamless transitions for students.

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Policy-level efforts will aim to expand dual enrollment opportunities and recognize alternative credentials that support career readiness.

Strengthening advisory committees will ensure continuous alignment with industry needs.

Targeted support services will be enhanced for special populations, including academic support, mentoring, and retention initiatives.

Data-driven decision-making will guide continuous improvement efforts.

Finally, ongoing curriculum review and professional development will ensure programs remain responsive to emerging technologies and workforce trends.

Conclusion Overall, the region's CTE programs demonstrate strong performance and alignment with workforce needs. By addressing identified gaps and barriers through targeted strategies, the region is well-positioned to continue improving student outcomes and supporting economic growth.

Key Take Aways:

● Midlands school districts work well together and collaborate with Midlands Technical College

● There are a wide variety of businesses to partner with CTE in the area

● Dual enrollment is growing in the Midlands thanks to the positive partnership between Midlands Technical College and the local school districts

● There are many local, regional and state organizations in the Midlands to partner with such as local chambers of commerce, SCHA, SCRLA, SCADA, MEBA, JA and many more

● The NEW statewide CTE Advisory Committee is a positive and needs to be continued moving forward to help address CTE needs

● Continued work needed to increase teacher recruitment, retention and competitive salary

● Transportation is a barrier for Work-Based Learning experiences and needs to be worked on

● Scheduling is a conflict for some students wanting to enroll in CTE courses as well as AP/ Honors credit for CTE courses

● Continued emphasis on Dual Enrollment opportunities for **all** school districts

● Investigate adjunct faculty for secondary teaching needs

● Additional work to be done, in conjunction with the SC Dept. of Education and EOC, on student certifications

● Move away from vendor driven certifications

● Additional funding is needed for CTE certifications