

## Recommendations

- WIOA Core Partners must examine ways to reduce public workforce system infrastructure costs and improve access to services and training in areas of greatest prime-age employment gap and areas with existing and anticipated high labor market demands. AccelerateMS must provide recommendations to the SWIB by August 2024 for review and consideration.
- The secondary system must improve K-12 passer rates for all credentials on the SWIB-approved list to not less than 65% (if currently below 50%) and no lower than 70% (if currently above 50%) by the end of FY25. Simply meeting this goal would increase the credentials earned by high school students by 1900 credentials annually.
- Legislature should consider establishing a post-secondary SWIB Credential list and increasing the SWIB Credential reimbursement dollars available from \$600,000 to \$3M combined.
- The secondary and post-secondary system should examine models to increase retention in programs beyond the first semester and year to increase the output of qualified workers in critical occupations.
  - K-12 Example: A five-year average (AY 2017-2021) shows a retention rate of 36% from year 1 (27,141) to year 2 (9,876) of a K-12 CTE program. The retention rate per individual program needs to be no lower than 50%. If the state average rose from 36% to 50% this would produce 3695 more CTE graduates.
- To support existing and expanding priority sector employment in Mississippi, the K-12 and community college systems must add and expand the following:
  - Industrial Maintenance programs in AccelerateMS Ecosystems 1, 2, 4, 7, & 8 must be added and expanded to double the number of completers and graduates to close the gap in number of new workers needed in these regions.
  - Advanced Manufacturing k-12 programs in Ecosystems 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 must produce triple the state's current enrollment of 164 total students by FY26.
  - To support existing and expanding construction workforce needs, Construction Electrical programs must be established and/or expanded in Ecosystems 3, 5 and 7 for both K-12 and adult learners.
- The k-12 College and Career Readiness Course (CCR) should be implemented earlier to allow for earlier exploration and ensure students can utilize their senior year for internship opportunities. Currently, most students take CTE in 10th grade and this would also allow for more students to do internships their senior year.
- To encourage more students to work, business/industry should examine policies that are age prohibitive. Many students do not turn 18 until well into their senior year of high school which creates barriers to employment.
- Local Workforce Development Areas must review the Priority Occupation list provided by AccelerateMS to ensure local needs are reflected on the list and establish highest priority labor market demands for their area by July 2024.
- K-12 and partners must ensure ALL students have access to internship opportunities for priority sector jobs opportunities through career coaches.
- State should consider adding a requirement to funding models ensuring priority sector class size maintain a minimum enrollment of 10 students per class.

- ROI: MCCB and partners must develop initiatives to increase the enrollment and retention of underrepresented groups, particularly black male students who currently make up only 16% of the avg. CTE graduates.
- ROI: Mississippi Core WIOA partners should join a Multi-State Data Collaborative to improve accountability and student tracking, specifically for those who leave Mississippi-currently we cannot account for approximately 32% of CTE students post-high school.
- Career coaches and counselors at all levels must provide targeted career guidance to students and potential students that emphasizes priority sector and occupation opportunities as these provide higher earnings potential in Mississippi.
- MDE should establish more strenuous early graduation requirements. Many students leave high school early (either after junior year or mid senior year) for various reasons (early college entrance, military enlistment, parenthood, etc.).
  - Partnerships with local community colleges should provide workforce training to get early graduates skilled for the workforce.
- AccelerateMS and partners must establish a means by which to track coached students beyond high school to track outcomes of individuals receiving services.