Information Technology
Program Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 20th, 2026

The Information Technology Program Advisory Committee met on Tuesday, January 20th, 2026, at 6:30 PM.

Members Present: Ben Gillespie (Chair), Brady Lepage, William Torres-Ortiz, Doug Kapinos, Kylie Spice, David Alger, Vlad Moshkovskiy, Evan Gasiewski, Stan Gasieweski and Rene M. Laviolette.

Members not present: Brian Candido, Bob Burch, Mike Pedro, Josh Pedro, Thanh Vo, John Westcott, Nick Bishop, Oleksandr Stuzhuk, Phoenix Durkee, Cody Benjamin, Thomas Fortini, John Dessaro, Joe Zazzaro, Carson Mayer, Stan Gasieweski, Ed Bigos, Mark Krikunov, Mike Noftall, Nicole Muller, Mike Anderson, Sean Hogan, Mark Mkrtchian, and Ed Watson.

Present Instructors: Kevin Grimsley, Scott Lockwood

Instructors not present: David Flaherty

Mr. Gillespie called to order the second Program Advisory Committee meeting for the 2025-2026 school year. The first line of business was the review and acceptance of November 6th, 2025, PAC meeting minutes. Mr. Kapinos approved with Mr. Alger seconding the approval.

The second item of business was the program CTE report, which highlighted a consistent operating budget and staffing model. The Exploratory is now complete at this time with the freshman class staying at 6 students, a rare occurrence in the department. The Junior class also decreased due to some students going to the high school or transitioning into homeschooling with the senior class remaining the biggest class. The committee did acknowledge that non-traditional enrollment numbers are still lower than desired. Mr. Gillespie asked if the shop knew what the non-traditional freshman class percentage was across the entire school compared to who applied for the IT shop. Mr. Grimsley responded that it was about 30% for the entire freshman class.

For the co-op employers list, Mr. Grimsley stated that he would like to reach out to some of the employers later this year to determine availability for students who haven't hired in a while from the shop.

For CyberPatriot, four teams completed this year and one team won 3rd place in the whole state of Massachusetts.

Students across three grades entered the National Cyber League and together the shop ranked 32nd out of 100 high schools in the country.

The shop is continuing to work closely with the Westfield Tech Center. Some of their work includes chrome book repair guidance and cybersecurity tabletop exercises.

The shop has also been helping the community broadcasting station with camera feed setups and also helping senior centers with technology support.

The students in the programming and web development department continue to build websites for surrounding businesses.

Many of the shop's training materials and initiatives continue to be funded by grants, such as the 2025 summer cyber camp, funding by Mass Cyber Center.

The shop has joined Project Lead the Way, who provides robotics equipment to the shop.

For Curriculum concerns, the shop continues to struggle finding placement for students in the web and programming development space. This is largely due to most of these job settings being remote or hybrid and there are fewer entry level positions in this space, especially with the advent of AI.

For Building and Finances, the IRC exam vouches continue to be something that the shop cannot afford with all of the other shop obligations due to lack of funding. In an effort to keep the shop's technology and software, as well as training materials, the shop would requirement approximately $50k in grants or other funding. The next item in the upgrade rotation is the workstation towers, which are approximately $600 each.

Concerns were raised around the nature of the exploratory for the IT shop surrounding lack of engagement and appeal to the shop. A big concern is the way the safety training is administered by each shop teacher, as opposed to an OSHA certified instructor. Another aspect under review is the lack of something tangible that the students can take with them when they leave the shop. In years prior, the students used to make and keep Cat6 cabling they made. This information was also based on a survey that was delivered to the students after the exploratory period ended, with hardware being the highest interest and programming/cybersecurity scoring lowest in interest. A positive that was noted was working directly with the instructors and having students lead some of the lessons.

It was discussed at length that the students need to be engaged in more hands-on activities that still require thought and planning but result in tangible or visible progress as the student works through the activity.

The committee reviewed the Cyberpatriot results and it was also mentioned that due to the success of the cybercamp in the summer, it will be offered again in the summer of 2026.

Several students obtained their A+, with one of the students also earning their Network+.

Mock Interviews are set to be done in May on the 12th at 11 AM.

The current project stem computer science course that is offered through AWS is currently ending their grant but Project Lead the Way through Westfield State University will be funding it through a supplemental grant for the shop.

As for the budget, the ELA funds are at about $5k and the revolving account is close to being depleted due to a clerical error in recent spending where the payments should have been made with the revolving account.

One of the new initiatives being considered is a game development training course for the cost of about $700 later this year. Additionally costs include cyber league vouchers ($700), the AP curriculum ($500 this year and $3,000 in the future), replacement hardware ($2,000).

Mr. Torres-Ortiz mentioned that it might be good to integrate some tools into the curriculum such as NinjaOne for patch management and ConnectWise for a SIEM tool amongst other cybersecurity tools.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:32 PM.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

March 18, 2026 @ 5 PM (GAC Dinner to follow)

Mock Interviews – May 12th 2026 @ 11AM