Fairfax County PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ENGAGE • INSPIRE • THRIVE



# Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee

## 2025-26 Annual Report to the School Board

# 2025-26 Committee Charge

In collaboration with key stakeholders, ensure equitable awareness, access, and participation in all CTE programs. Ensure greater awareness of career-readiness options provided by CTE programs with emphasis on exposure to high-demand fields, emerging workforce trends, and evolving leadership skills.

## Chair

Irvin Varkonyi

## Vice Chairs

Marissa Appelbaum

Paul Thieberger









# Committee Members

## School Board Representatives

Renee Small, Hunter Mill
Elaine Ho, At Large
Kara Danner, Providence
Ruhana Hafiz, Dranesville
Syed Rishad, Student Representative
David Silversmith, Braddock
Claire Kim, Student Representative
Marissa Appelbaum, Mason
Rich Kang, At Large
Anitha Raj, Sully
Niki Haubner, Springfield
Paul Thieberger, Mount Vernon
Wendy Williams, At Large
Shawn Gregorie, Franconia
Sally Driver, City of Fairfax
Scott Driver, City of Fairfax
Naser Akhtar, PTA

Mateo Dunne, School Board Member Liaison

## Business and Industry Representatives

Matthew Bechtel, Work-Based Learning & Transportation Pathways
Sarah Blake, Career and Transition Services
Virginia Judd, Skills Source Group
Irvin Varkonyi, Supply Chain Operations
Todd Franklin, Career Pathways
Ashlee Young, Partnerships
Kristy Balbuena, NVCC
Mary Lewis, Academic and Career Planning
Joseph Parker, iN2STEM Solutions, Inc.
Shivani Trivedi, Cyber Security Engineer – JP Morgan Chase
Cindy Conley, Nontraditional Schools
Shonna Smith, When Doves Code

## Staff Liaisons

Whitney Ketchledge, Senior Manager III, CTE
Jen Glaser, Director, CCCR

# Committee Activities

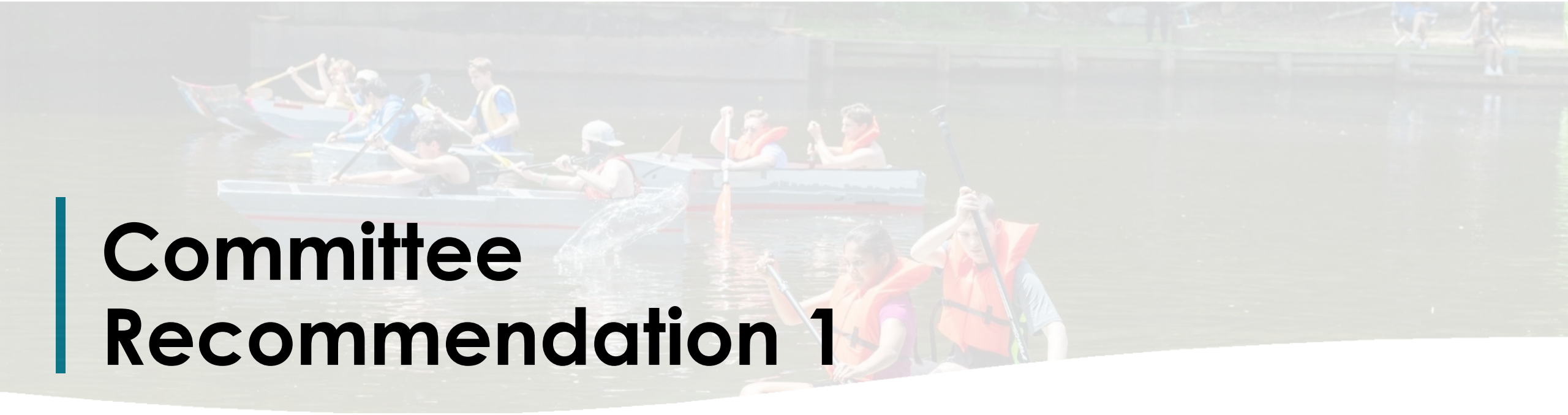


- ✓ Highlights of CTE programs and student achievements
- ✓ Business partner experiences working with CTE programs
- ✓ School Board updates
- ✓ Tours of CTE programs
- ✓ Endorsement of new courses/changes for the upcoming school year
- ✓ Support of student activities and events
- ✓ Discussion of recommendations







# Committee Recommendation 1

## Expand Awareness of CTE Through Strategic and Creative Outreach

Increase student and family awareness by leveraging coordinated communications. Engage PTAs, school leaders, central communications, and School Board members to promote CTE pathways through consistent, high-impact messaging.



# Committee Recommendation 2

## Address Staffing Gaps to Strengthen Partnerships

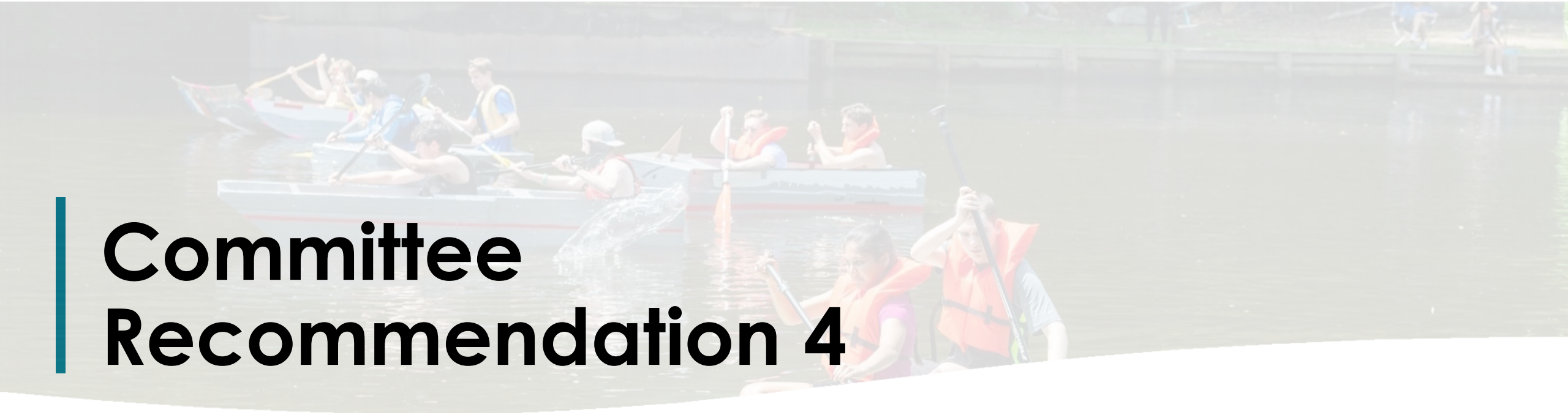
Enhance capacity for business and community engagement by addressing staffing limitations and implementing a coordinated outreach strategy to increase awareness of formalized partnerships. Expand and leverage partnerships with the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, and Educate Fairfax to scale outreach, strengthen employer engagement, and increase access to CTE programming, including off-site learning and alignment with emerging workforce trends such as artificial intelligence.



# Committee Recommendation 3

## Expand and Promote Apprenticeship Opportunities

Grow work-based learning opportunities by reducing barriers to employer participation. Pilot and expand initiatives such as "Apprentice-for-a-day" experiences, employer storytelling campaigns, and industry-led projects, while increasing apprenticeship opportunities for students within FCPS.



# Committee Recommendation 4

## Update and Align CTEAC Bylaws

The CTEAC bylaws have been revised for the first time since 2014 to align with the updated FCPS Committee Handbook, ensuring compliance and strengthening committee governance

# New Leadership 2026-2027







**Chair**
Kristy Balbuena

**Vice Chair**
Nasser Akhtar



# THANK YOU

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