



## Burlington County Institute of Technology School District

Recognized as a Lighthouse Awardee during the 2021-2023 term for increased equity in career and technical education enrollment.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Lighthouse District Initiative recognizes districts that have demonstrated measurable progress for equitable outcomes. The NJDOE is proud to welcome the Burlington County Institute of Technology School District to the third cohort of Lighthouse Districts.

### Burlington County Institute of Technology School District Demographics

- 2,240 Total Students
- 9–12 Grades Offered
- 42.4% Economically Disadvantaged
- 14.0% Students with Disabilities
- 0.6% English Learners
- 14:1 Student to Teacher Ratio

### Want to learn more? Contact us.

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### Burlington County Institute of Technology School District Equity Story

Below, you will find a narrative describing the ways that Burlington County Institute of Technology School District has increased equity in career and technical education enrollment.

#### Engaging Underrepresented Student Groups for Equity in Career and Technical Education Enrollment

The Burlington County Institute of Technology (BCIT) school district has gathered together a group of students committed and engaged to equity and diversity for our district, appropriately named “Student Equity Champions”. This group of dedicated students participated in the district’s Equity Action Committee meetings and are an integral part of the shared decision-making process for matters relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Student Equity Champions collaborated on the creation of the Board of Education’s (BOE) Gender Non-Conforming bathroom policy and the Equity in Education BOE policy. When the school administration and staff members looked at course enrollment, the Student Equity Champions brought specific recommendations such as creating clubs that are more inclusive to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) shops, such as Girls that Build. The Student Equity Champions successfully advocated for all students to cycle through exploratory programs that would expose them to non-traditional career skills. Weekend exploratory opportunities exist for students wanting to sample non-traditional career pathways.

#### Faculty and Staff Collaboration for Equity in Career and Technical Education Enrollment

The district selected key staff members to be part of a group dedicated to fostering a culture of acceptance and inclusion, as well as honoring diversity and equity for the students and staff at BCIT. These staff Equity Champions led and turn-keyed professional development on foundational issues surrounding implicit bias and microaggressions which, in turn, led to the staff being more informed and receptive to changes resulting in more equitable policies and practices. The district disaggregated data by subgroups for teachers to understand trends within their student class populations. In addition to a Board and District goal to support DEI, each CTE teacher set a smart goal for increasing enrollment of underrepresented groups into their programs. Among the key efforts made was the involvement of the guidance department to recruit students from underrepresented groups to register for those classes while looking at data and assessing student vocational career program interest, and particularly, in non-traditional areas. Career and Technical

Advisory Boards collaborate with faculty and staff on ways to increase the efforts and create initiatives of attracting diversity in the career pathways

### **Engaging Families of Underrepresented Students for Equity in Career and Technical Education Enrollment**

As part of the planning process, parents are members of the Equity Action Council and have input on policies and procedures in our admissions process. Surveys, check-ins, and roundtable communications are used to gain valuable feedback and address concerns or foster ideas on how BCIT can be a leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion. BCIT Equity Champions launched a book club for the school community to read and discuss books related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Students, staff, and families participated in the club with robust conversations challenging the status quo and inviting ideas for change in the school community.

### **Structural Changes Made to Increase Equity in Career and Technical Education Enrollment**

The district realized, based on the population of students, that it was important to formally address DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) with great emphasis. A decision was made to create a position at the district central office dedicated to the coordination of efforts to support a district focus on DEI. Subsequent to that decision, outreach took place to involve the University of Pennsylvania among other DEI resources to address a thoughtful, research-based, and customized approach to our District. Upon review of the data, the district created structures to engage in a process that included students, staff, and parents. Those structures focused on different metrics for student engagement and class selections beyond the typical GPA. Opening the aperture of opportunity to participate having equal access and inclusion, students may register for those classes and can expect to be provided academic enrichment to ensure that they are successful.

### **Integration of Quantitative Data Sources for Improvement in Career and Technical Education Enrollment**

BCIT is deeply committed and dedicated to making diversity, equity and inclusion a focal point for the entire school community. The district has embarked on a mission to create a platform in both schools to address equity and diversity as a board of education goal, district goal, and building-level goals to span across all aspects of our district, both horizontally and vertically. A multitude of quantitative and qualitative data, through various methods, has been gathered, disaggregated, and extrapolated to yield definitive trends. With the data points, extra-curricular activities have been created, policy changes have been made, increased professional development opportunities and numerous interventions and support have been put into place to align with the mission of the school district related to DEI.