

Meridian Technical Charter High School PTSO Meeting Summary



PREPARED FOR MTCHS
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Executive Summary

As part of the Master Facility and Comprehensive Financial plan projects, Clearwater Financial met with three (3) representatives from the Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), one (1) parent who was a spouse of the PTSO member and one (1) student to gather feedback. This information will be helpful in determining and supporting Meridian Technical Charter High School's long-term goals for sustainable growth, technical excellence, and student success. These projects will provide a strategic framework across 5-, 10-, and 20-year timelines, guiding decisions related to facilities, staffing, and financial planning.

With no current pressure from West Ada School District to vacate the existing site, MTCHS has the flexibility to pursue long-term lease arrangements in their current location, allowing for thoughtful consideration of various scenarios for future needs. The project's planning process is data-driven and inclusive, incorporating site tours, stakeholder interviews, demographic analysis, and facility assessments. Key insights from growth and housing data related to the West Ada District's service area will also help inform realistic projections and resource planning.

The school's charter status and lottery-based enrollment - required by law, remain stable, preserving MTCHS's identity as a specialized technical school. Maintaining this identity is a top priority, as PTSO members, especially parents and student, deeply value the school's small class sizes, personalized instruction, internship opportunities, and hands-on learning model. These features are seen as essential to student engagement, academic rigor, and post-secondary readiness.

Moderate growth—such as expanding enrollment from 240 to approximately 400-500 students—is generally supported, as it could enhance course offerings and student pathways. However, expansion beyond that level raises concerns about preserving MTCHS's close-knit culture and its ability to maintain strong student-teacher relationships. Any future development must prioritize maintaining educational quality and a supportive environment.

Ultimately, this planning effort aims to align MTCHS's physical and financial infrastructure with its mission, ensuring that growth enhances rather than compromises the qualities that define its success. The resulting roadmap will help the school adapt to future demands while staying rooted in its core values and educational strengths.

Key Takeaways:

Staffing and Program Quality

- Staffing constraints are a key challenge and concern. It is important that expansion be synchronized with the recruitment and retention of qualified technical educators. PTSO members emphasize that hands-on learning, small class sizes, and technical excellence are foundational to MTCHS's success and must not be compromised.
- Maintaining the integrity of internships, dual credit opportunities, and real-world preparation is essential as enrollment grows.

Facility Constraints and Needs

- Current facilities significantly restrict MTCHS's ability to grow. More classrooms, restrooms, and improved traffic patterns are necessary to accommodate additional students and staff.
- Online course offerings are not a preferred solution for core content, as in-person engagement is considered critical to retention and student satisfaction.
- Physical space limitations impede not only academic offerings but also extracurricular and social activities.

Admissions Strategy and School Fit

- The current freshman-entry model results in attrition, as some students join without a clear understanding of the school's technical rigor.
- A shift toward merit- or interest-based admissions for students at any grade was discussed to better align students and reduce early departures.
- Enhancing marketing and outreach may increase the size and quality of the applicant pool, though this must be balanced to maintain school culture.

Curriculum Expansion and Teacher Recruitment

- PTSO members express strong interest in broadening the curriculum to include additional languages, chemistry, business writing, and arts-based electives.
- These additions are seen as important for supporting differentiated learning and college/career readiness.
- Recruiting tech-savvy teachers remains difficult, though MTCHS's strong culture and competitive compensation help mitigate this challenge.
- Ensuring consistent, high-quality instruction across all subjects, especially advanced offerings and dual credit, is a top priority.

Facilities, Logistics, and Student Life

- Facility expansion must address core operational needs, such as restroom access, parking, drop-off logistics, and shared spaces for lunch and collaboration.
- Students currently lack a cafeteria and large meeting areas. Additionally, while extracurriculars like sports and cheerleading exist through students' home schools, the absence of on-site options may deter some applicants.

Diversity and School Culture

- Female enrollment remains low (~10%), prompting discussions on how to encourage more gender diversity without compromising programmatic authenticity.
- While some advocate for increased outreach and programmatic adjustments, others stress the importance of maintaining a focus on genuine student interest in tech fields.
- Current female students appreciate the school's inclusive environment, and any recruitment strategies must align with the broader culture of equity and academic seriousness.

Location, Partnerships, and Future Opportunities

- The school's current Meridian location is broadly preferred, though its proximity to high-traffic roads raises safety concerns.
- Expansion scenarios were discussed including building on the existing site, moving to a new location, or co-locating with industry or post-secondary partners like CWI or Micron.
- These models offer opportunities to deepen career and technical education offerings but raise concerns about maintaining independence, student safety, and school culture.

Conclusion

The parents' feedback reflects the importance that MTCHS's future align with its current strengths and stakeholder priorities. While there is enthusiasm for strategic, moderate growth, there is also clear concern about preserving the distinctive qualities that define MTCHS—particularly its small, supportive, and technically rich learning environment.

Moving forward, planned growth should ensure that space constraints are addressed holistically, and that growth is supported by financial sustainability, staffing readiness, and a commitment to academic and cultural integrity.

Parents feel that MTCHS is well-positioned to build upon its strengths, but success will require a disciplined, transparent approach that centers student experience and educational excellence.