

Meridian Technical Charter High School Stakeholder Summaries



PREPARED FOR MTCHS
AUGUST 2025



Executive Summary

As part of the Master Facility and Comprehensive Financial Planning process, Clearwater Financial conducted interviews and listening sessions with five (5) stakeholder groups: Board members (7), Alumni (11), External Stakeholders (8), Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) representatives (5), and Department Heads (11). In total forty-two (41) stakeholder interviews were conducted across the five groups. The goal was to collect broad-based input on Meridian Technical Charter High School's long-term programmatic vision, capital capacity constraints, and future readiness.

Stakeholders across all groups shared a unified respect for MTCHS's mission, technical excellence, and the school's ability to prepare students for post-secondary success. These perspectives form a foundation for shaping MTCHS's strategic path over the next 5–20 years.

Below are the unified themes found throughout the five reports. Reviewing each report included will provide a better understanding of what is important to each stakeholder group.

Stakeholder Themes

Preserving School Identity and Core Strengths

MTCHS is consistently viewed as a premier, specialized technical school offering a high-quality, hands-on, career-prep education. All stakeholder groups emphasized the importance of maintaining:

- Small class sizes
- Strong student-teacher relationships
- Internship opportunities
- Real-world tech learning experiences

There is concern that expansion, if not carefully managed, could compromise these hallmarks.

Facility Limitations

There is consensus that the current building is undersized, outdated, and not conducive to the school's evolving programmatic needs. Specific needs cited include:

- Modern labs for robotics, media, cybersecurity, and science
 - Adequate restrooms and improved HVAC/plumbing
 - Cafeteria and multipurpose space
 - Improved drop-off logistics and parking
- Facility constraints are already limiting learning experiences and will hinder future growth.

Growth with Caution

Stakeholders broadly support moderate enrollment growth (e.g., from 240 to 400–500 students) to expand access and offerings. However, they caution that:

- The expansion must be phased
- Student-teacher ratios and school culture must be preserved
- Growth must be paired with staffing, space, and financial sustainability planning.

Staffing and Program Quality

Maintaining quality instruction, particularly in advanced technical areas, is a key concern. Stakeholders emphasized:

- Recruitment and retention of qualified, tech-savvy instructors
- Adequate support staff for differentiated learning
- Preserving teacher collaboration time
- Consistent, high-quality delivery of dual credit and advanced courses.

Curriculum Innovation and Relevance

There is a strong call to keep pace with emerging tech and industry needs. Suggested additions include:

- AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, and data science
 - Applied math and chemistry
 - Business writing, languages, and arts electives
- Stakeholders emphasized a flexible curriculum that supports both specialization and holistic development.

Diversity and Admissions Strategy

Concerns were raised about female representation (~10% enrollment), with mixed views on how to address this. Stakeholders also discussed:

- More inclusive admissions pathways beyond freshman entry
- Merit- or interest-based admissions
- Equity in access via outreach and marketing.

Partnerships and Community Integration

Many stakeholders encouraged MTCHS to:

- Deepen partnerships with local tech companies and colleges
- Engage alumni in mentoring and planning
- Increase visibility and public outreach (e.g., showcases, social media)
- Explore shared facilities or co-locations with industry/education partners

Stakeholder Theme Matrix – Meridian Technical Charter High School

✓ = Strong Emphasis ⚠ = Mentioned, but not dominant

Theme	Dept. Heads	PTSO (Parents/Students)	Alumni	External Stakeholders	Community Leaders
Preserve Small Class Sizes & School Culture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Facility Limitations & Modernization Needs	✓	✓	⚠	✓	✓
Moderate Growth with Guardrails	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Staffing Challenges & Instructional Quality	✓	✓	⚠	⚠	⚠
Curriculum Innovation (AI, Data Science, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	⚠
Internships & Career Prep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Admissions & Diversity Strategies	⚠	✓	✓	⚠	✓
Student Life, Cafeteria, Collaboration Space	⚠	✓	⚠	✓	✓
Community Outreach & Visibility	⚠	⚠	✓	✓	✓
Partnerships (Industry, Postsecondary, Alumni)	⚠	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial Planning & Funding Mechanisms	✓	✓	⚠	✓	✓

Meridian Technical Charter High School Board Interview Summary



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AUGUST 2025



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Executive Summary

As part of the long-range facility and strategic planning process for Meridian Technical Charter High School (MTCHS), Clearwater Financial conducted one-on-one interviews with six (6) MTCHS Board members representing diverse backgrounds including public education, STEM leadership, and business ownership. Board members offered thoughtful insights into the current strengths of MTCHS, limitations of the facility and enrollment structure, and considerations for future growth and fiscal planning.

The feedback summarized below highlights recurring themes and key insights expressed in the interviews. Comments have been anonymized and synthesized to preserve confidentiality and allow for honest, open input.

Key Takeaways:

Strong Alignment on MTCHS's Mission and Success

Board members spoke with pride about the academic quality, leadership, and career-focused programming that define MTCHS. They consistently highlighted the school's effectiveness in preparing students for both college and technical careers. The teaching staff, curriculum relevance, and culture of professionalism were viewed as core strengths that set MTCHS apart from traditional public high schools. Several board members specifically mentioned the school's industry partnerships and strong student outcomes as proof points of success.

Multiple interviewees noted that MTCHS is recognized as one of the best-performing high schools in the state, particularly in STEM disciplines. The school's tight-knit learning environment and emphasis on real-world readiness were seen as both culturally defining and practically effective.

Facilities Seen as Constrained but Strategically Located

Board members generally agreed that while the current MTCHS facility is functional and centrally located, it is at or near capacity. Several acknowledge that the physical size of the building limits opportunities for new programs and restricts the number of students the school can accept. The need for additional lab space, collaborative learning environments, and general-purpose classroom flexibility was cited repeatedly.

Other facility priorities identified included improved technology labs, better infrastructure for project-based learning, and access to athletic or extracurricular space, though often with the caveat that such space could be shared or leveraged through partnerships.

Growing Interest and Pressure on Enrollment

There was broad agreement that demand for MTCHS outpaces capacity. Board members cited low dropout rates and high levels of student interest as signs that the school is well-positioned to grow. Some suggested that MTCHS could feasibly expand to 400 students while still preserving its culture, though others urged caution and stressed the importance of managing that transition thoughtfully.

Concerns about expansion included maintaining educational quality, ensuring appropriate staff ratios, and the risk of losing the school's distinctive learning environment. There was consensus that any growth strategy must be matched by proportional investments in staffing, programming, and physical space.

Concerns About Representation and Access

Several Board members raised concerns around the gender imbalance in student enrollment, observing that recent classes had very few female students. Some attributed this to cultural or outreach challenges, and others emphasized the importance of adjusting the school's messaging or recruitment practices to better reflect community diversity. Expanding student access—both demographically and geographically—was mentioned as an important consideration if MTCHS grows in scope.

Future Challenges and Planning Needs

Looking forward, Board members identified several key challenges MTCHS may face over the next two decades. Among these were:

- Securing sustainable funding for facilities and program expansion.
- Remaining competitive and relevant as industry and technology evolve.
- Scaling the school's model without losing quality or identity.

Some also pointed to demographic shifts and post-COVID enrollment uncertainties in the region. These trends, they noted, may influence both student interest and the future of education delivery models. To stay ahead, MTCHS will need to continue evolving its curriculum and infrastructure in alignment with community and workforce needs.

Fiscal Philosophy and Financing Comfort

When discussing facility funding, Board members supported a mixed funding strategy. Public grants, private partnerships, and targeted fundraising campaigns were all endorsed as viable and appropriate. Several Board members were comfortable with the idea of borrowing to finance a new or expanded facility but emphasized the need for clear planning and debt limits.

There was no consensus on what percentage of the budget should be dedicated to debt service, but most agreed it should be conservative and based on careful analysis of operating needs. One Board member proposed a three-tiered funding plan, beginning with partnerships and grants, followed by sponsor engagement, and lastly debt if necessary. Others echoed the importance of maintaining budget flexibility and financial sustainability over time.

Opportunities for Improved Outreach and Storytelling

Several Board members noted the importance of sharing MTCHS's story more effectively. They called for greater outreach to families and the community, both to increase awareness and to support future enrollment growth. Suggestions included:

- Broader public engagement about MTCHS's programs and impact.
- Enhanced efforts to recruit underrepresented students.
- Stronger narrative development to communicate the school's value to potential partners, funders, and families.

One participant summarized this sentiment by emphasizing the need for MTCHS to “craft and tell our story”—especially as it seeks support for future investments.

Conclusion

Meridian Technical Charter High School Board members expressed high levels of confidence in MTCHS's leadership, programming, and future potential. While challenges related to growth, diversity, and funding were acknowledged, these were seen as manageable with thoughtful planning and continued community support. To guide future decisions, Board members recommend MTCHS:

- Preserve its unique educational culture and mission-driven programming.
- Expand strategically in ways that protect quality and student experience.
- Prioritize flexible, modern learning spaces and industry-aligned facilities.
- Develop sustainable financial models, including grants, partnerships, and carefully planned financing.
- Improve community outreach and increase awareness of MTCHS's strengths and student outcomes.
- Address access and representation challenges as part of any enrollment expansion.

These insights from MTCHS's governing body offer a strong foundation for moving forward with clarity, confidence, and a deep respect for what makes the school successful.

Meridian Technical Charter High School Alumni Stakeholder Summary



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As part of the facility and strategic planning process for Meridian Technical Charter High School (MTCHS), Clearwater Financial collected feedback from MTCHS alumni who graduated between 2003 and 2013 and are currently working in fields such as software engineering, information technology, law, and public education. In total, eleven (11) alumni were interviewed as stakeholders. Alumni shared reflections on the school's impact, the relevance of its programs, and their perspectives on how MTCHS can continue to serve students in a rapidly changing technological and social landscape.

The feedback summarized below highlights recurring themes and key insights expressed in the interviews. Comments have been anonymized and synthesized to preserve confidentiality and allow for honest, open input.

Key Takeaways:

Strong Educational Foundation and Career Preparedness

Across the board, alumni expressed high regard for the educational experience at MTCHS. Respondents credited the school with equipping them for success in college and the workforce, noting the professional environment, rigorous expectations, and hands-on opportunities such as internships. Alumni repeatedly emphasized that MTCHS was a meaningful alternative to traditional high schools and cited small class sizes, close faculty relationships, and a focus on individual development as key contributors to their success.

Several alumni highlighted the school's emphasis on real-world readiness, with internship experiences and community engagement described as "most special" and worthy of preservation. There was broad agreement that MTCHS fostered technical confidence, critical thinking, and early professional exposure.

Areas for Improvement and Programmatic Growth

While overall perceptions were positive, alumni did identify opportunities for improvement. Several called for expanding coursework to reflect new and evolving industry needs. Recommendations included the integration of artificial intelligence, data science, and system-level problem solving into the curriculum. Some suggested that MTCHS could better emphasize how tech skills relate to broader societal needs, including communication, teamwork, and ethics in technology.

A few respondents also noted that some teachers during their time at MTCHS could have been more patient or student-centered. Suggestions for programmatic

enhancements included improved support for transfer students, expanded dual credit opportunities, and more comprehensive career preparation beyond IT-specific roles.

Culture, Belonging, and Student Experience

Alumni were especially passionate about the culture of MTCHS and the community it fostered. Many mentioned student activities, tech events, and the ability to connect with like-minded peers as highlights of their high school years. The emphasis on individualized learning paths, supported by small class sizes, was described as a defining feature of the MTCHS experience.

Some participants reflected on the importance of diversity and belonging, with one respondent raising concerns about the long-term retention of women in tech fields and how the school might play a role in addressing this. Others encouraged more inclusive activities and mentorship models that reflect the full range of student identities and aspirations.

Facilities and Technology Infrastructure

While most alumni had not visited the current MTCHS facility in recent years, those who commented generally remembered the campus positively. Some voiced uncertainty about the school's current capacity and facilities but offered ideas for future readiness. These included maintaining strong cybersecurity protocols, implementing modern learning spaces, and ensuring that facilities align with cutting-edge industry standards. One participant questioned how MTCHS might approach the growth of hybrid or online education models, suggesting this could be an area of opportunity in the long term.

Future Challenges and Institutional Agility

Alumni saw the evolving demands of the tech industry as the primary challenge MTCHS will face over the next two decades. They cited the need to stay agile as technologies such as AI, cybersecurity, and data science become increasingly dominant. Others mentioned external challenges such as federal funding instability, political influence on education, and the social complexities of technology use among young people.

To proactively address these challenges, alumni recommended teacher training in emerging fields, enhanced civics and ethics education, and stronger alumni engagement to bring current workforce trends back into the classroom. Several emphasized the importance of being forward-thinking, not only in technical terms but in how students understand the broader impact of technology on society.

Conclusion

Alumni of Meridian Technical Charter High School remain deeply supportive of the school's mission and appreciative of the foundational role it played in their personal and professional development. Their insights reinforce the school's long-standing strengths, technical rigor, personalized instruction, and real-world preparation, while also offering valuable ideas for how MTCHS can adapt and thrive in a changing landscape.

To build on this feedback, MTCHS should:

- Continue emphasizing internship opportunities and community-connected learning.
- Expand curriculum offerings to include AI, data science, and systems thinking.
- Explore opportunities to increase diversity in program participation and leadership.
- Maintain small class sizes and a student-focused culture, even amid growth.
- Increase alumni engagement to inform planning and mentorship opportunities.
- Address emerging needs in cybersecurity, ethics, and digital literacy within the classroom.

These alumni perspectives serve as a reminder of the school's long-term impact and offer a valuable lens for future-focused decision-making.

Meridian Technical Charter High School External Stakeholder Summary



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Executive Summary

On behalf of Meridian Technical Charter High School (MTCHS), Clearwater Financial conducted interviews with eight (8) external stakeholders representing business, education, civic leadership, and community engagement sectors. The purpose of these interviews was to collect input on long-range facility and strategic planning priorities. The stakeholders shared insights on what MTCHS is doing well, what challenges lie ahead, and what the school should consider as it evaluates future facility needs and programmatic growth.

The feedback summarized below highlights recurring themes and key insights expressed in the interviews. Comments have been anonymized and synthesized to preserve confidentiality and allow for honest, open input.

Key Takeaways:

Widespread Support for MTCHS's Mission and Culture

Stakeholders overwhelmingly praised MTCHS for its educational quality and the strength of its culture. The school was recognized for producing highly capable graduates with strong technical skills, maturity, and professionalism. Stakeholders frequently mentioned the school's role in preparing students not only academically but also for the workforce through internships and soft skills development. Many Stakeholders cited the school's small size, student-centered approach, and close relationships between staff and students as core attributes that must be preserved through any future expansion.

Stakeholders also complimented MTCHS's success in building a professional learning environment and noted that its reputation is strong among families and industry partners. Several emphasized that the school's track record of placing students in internships and maintaining relevant, up-to-date curriculum is a distinguishing strength.

Facility Limitations and Expansion Needs

While stakeholders generally viewed the current location as accessible and functional for the existing student population, many emphasized that the physical space will not meet long-term needs. Several common facility priorities were identified:

- Modern **technology and innovation labs** that reflect current and emerging industry standards.
- **Collaborative project-based spaces** to support teamwork and interdisciplinary learning.
- A **multipurpose auditorium or community event space** to host speakers, industry showcases, and school events.
- **Enhanced cafeteria and kitchen facilities**, which were noted as inadequate for both current and future needs.

- **Expanded parking and improved transportation infrastructure** to better support staff, students, and community engagement.

Some stakeholders also emphasized the importance of athletic or extracurricular space, not necessarily for full athletic programs, but to promote balance, wellness, and broader student development. Others suggested exploring shared use agreements with neighboring schools or institutions for these offerings.

Broad Support for Growth—With Caution

There was a clear consensus that MTCHS is turning away qualified students each year due to enrollment limits, and that demand for technical education is growing regionally. Many stakeholders expressed interest in expanding the school's capacity to serve more students and meet local workforce needs.

However, stakeholders were also cautious about the risks associated with rapid growth. Several emphasized the need for a phased expansion plan to protect the school's academic quality, culture, and student-teacher relationships. Concerns were raised about student-teacher ratios, facility strain, and the potential dilution of MTCHS's hands-on, personalized learning model. One participant stressed the importance of preserving the school's "STEM mentality" the critical thinking and problem-solving culture, through careful and intentional growth.

Workforce Alignment and Curriculum Relevance

Participants praised MTCHS for its collaboration with employers and its responsiveness to industry feedback. Internship programs were repeatedly cited as a valuable tool for both students and businesses. However, some noted that as technology evolves, so must the curriculum. Stakeholders encouraged the school to maintain its agility by:

- Regularly reviewing its course offerings in areas such as coding, AV production, cybersecurity, and robotics.
- Investing in **certifications and credentials** that are recognized by industry.
- Teaching **transferable soft skills**, such as professionalism, communication, and adaptability.
- Exploring opportunities to bring in industry professionals as part-time faculty or mentors.

A few stakeholders also recommended building stronger pathways for students to understand career options earlier, especially those who may be overly focused on one specific field.

Funding and Financial Planning

Stakeholders endorsed a variety of funding strategies to support facility improvements and expansion. Common recommendations included:

- Seeking **public grants**, workforce development funding, and private partnerships.
- Building relationships with **local tech employers and investment groups**.
- Exercising caution when considering certain funding sources, especially those that may carry strings or reduce flexibility.
- Exploring **creative financing options**, such as leasing arrangements, to avoid long-term debt obligations or reduce up-front capital requirements.

Some participants also noted the value of alumni fundraising and community engagement campaigns, particularly when the school's mission is clearly communicated.

Communication and Community Visibility

Stakeholders noted that while MTCHS is highly regarded among those familiar with it, many in the broader community, including some employers, are unaware of the school's existence or capabilities. As a result, several emphasized the need for increased visibility and outreach. Suggestions included:

- Expanding use of **social media, newsletters, and digital storytelling** to showcase student work and program outcomes.
- Hosting **community open houses, school showcases, and public events** to increase awareness.
- Partnering with organizations like the **Idaho Technology Council** and **local chambers of commerce**.
- Tapping into the **alumni network** to serve as ambassadors and expand reach.

Stakeholders also encouraged the school to engage students and families early in the process, especially those in middle school, to increase awareness of the MTCHS opportunity before high school applications are due.

Equity, Representation, and Access

One stakeholder raised specific concerns about the school's enrollment lottery system, required by Idaho law, particularly around equity and representation. They suggested revisiting the lottery process to ensure broader inclusion of underrepresented groups. This theme, while not widely raised, reflects a broader sentiment that as the school grows, it should remain accessible to all qualified students—regardless of background or prior exposure to STEM opportunities.

Conclusion

Stakeholders expressed strong and unified support for Meridian Technical Charter High School and its mission, along with optimism about its future growth. The school's culture, educational model, and employer relationships are widely seen as assets to the region. However, stakeholders also voiced important considerations around scale, communication, and long-term planning.

To support the school's successful evolution, MTCHS should:

- Preserve its personalized learning environment and hands-on instruction model.
- Prioritize modern, flexible, and technology-aligned facilities.
- Develop a phased growth plan to manage enrollment expansion without compromising quality.
- Strengthen workforce alignment through curriculum updates and industry collaboration.
- Expand visibility in the broader community and increase outreach to underserved populations.
- Leverage diverse funding sources while maintaining mission alignment and flexibility.

By honoring its core strengths while embracing thoughtful change, MTCHS is well-positioned to grow its impact and serve as a regional model for technical education.

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 students, 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.

Meridian Technical Charter High School Department Head Summary



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Executive Summary

A 12-question form was developed and distributed to the Meridian Technical Charter High School (MTCHS) department heads to learn more about what opportunities and challenges its staff sees now and for the future. Question topics included public perception, program models, infrastructure and facility enhancements and future considerations. Twelve out of sixteen responses were received.

Feedback highlights that MTCHS is widely perceived by its department heads as a great or amazing specialized school that excels at providing a tech-focused education, preparing students for life after high school, and offering valuable real-world experiences through its internship program.

Key strengths highlighted include the small teacher-to-student ratio and class sizes which foster strong relationships and allow for personalized attention. However, the surveys reveal a significant and widespread concern regarding the current facility's size and limitations, which are already impacting program delivery and will be a major challenge for future growth.

The desire for growth to serve more students is present, but there is considerable apprehension that growth could negatively impact the unique aspects of the school, particularly small class sizes, student-teacher relationships, and the overall quality of the educational experience.

Financial considerations, including the potential for operating in the red and making decisions based on money rather than student best interests, were voiced concerns related to expansion.

Future challenges, such as the rapid evolution of technology (especially AI) and changes in student learning styles, necessitate flexible facilities and adaptable programs.

Addressing these challenges proactively will require careful planning regarding space, staffing, curriculum, and financial sustainability while preserving the core strengths that make MTCHS special.

Key Takeaways:

Core Strengths & School Identity

- MTCHS is widely perceived as a premier tech-focused institution.
- Key attributes to preserve include:
 - Small class sizes and low student-teacher ratios
 - Hands-on, tech-integrated curriculum
 - Personalized instruction and relationships
 - Strong internship and work-based learning programs
 - Supportive and intentional learning environment

Maintaining these strengths during any expansion will be critical to preserving the school's identity.

Facility Challenges & Space Needs

The current building is significantly undersized and outdated for existing and future programming. Identified issues include:

- **Overcrowded classrooms** and tight common spaces (e.g., Haley Hall)

- **Shared and inefficient spaces** for Robotics, Networking, and IT
- **Specialized space needs**, such as:
 - Dedicated robotics lab and field setup area
 - Simulated server room for Cybersecurity/Networking
 - Media production space (video, audio, VR/AR)
 - Modern science lab with lab stations
 - Work-based learning suite with offices, meeting space, and collaborative workspace
 - Flexible classrooms mimicking real-world workspaces
 - General collaboration areas for students
- **Basic infrastructure issues:** inadequate restrooms, plumbing odor near staff lunch area, thin walls causing noise disruption
- Facility feels dated despite current technology installation

Stakeholders emphasize that space constraints already hinder educational delivery and will inhibit future growth unless addressed.

Growth Impact & Financial Considerations

Stakeholders acknowledge the potential to serve more students but highlight risks associated with unchecked expansion:

- Loss of small class sizes, personalized relationships, and school culture
- Strain on internships and work-based learning partnerships
- Staffing and structural challenges to maintain quality with more students
- Financial concerns:
 - Risk of operating at a deficit for the first time
 - Pressure to retain students for funding over fit or performance
 - Budget-driven decisions potentially impacting academic rigor and student support

Any growth plan must include robust financial modeling that sustains school values while enabling strategic investment in space and staffing.

Program & Curriculum Development

To stay relevant and meet evolving student needs, stakeholders identified several desired program enhancements:

- **New or expanded tech pathways** and elective offerings:
 - Robotics
 - ML/AI courses and AI ethics module
 - Customer service for work-based learning prep
 - Chemistry and applied math (e.g., Linear Algebra, Data Analysis)
- **Curriculum flexibility** to serve diverse student interests and strengths
- **More realistic, hands-on simulations** in Networking/Cybersecurity
- **Support for non-traditional learners** and differentiated instruction
- **Staffing needs:**
 - Additional tech instructors (e.g., 0.5 FTE for IT/Electronics)
 - Support staff for students with learning differences
- **Teacher collaboration time** is currently limited and needs expansion

Future Challenges & Strategic Planning

MTCHS must proactively plan for the following challenges:

- Rapid evolution in technology and AI's impact on tech careers
- Student behavioral shifts, including shorter attention spans and varying learning styles
- Increased competition from schools with similar offerings
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff as the school grows

Recommended Strategies:

- Engage industry partners to stay aligned with workforce needs
- Design a flexible facility that allows for rapid programmatic pivots
- Offer structured staff mentorship and ongoing professional development
- Rethink assignments susceptible to AI automation
- Deepen parent/community engagement on educational direction
- Study innovative school models nationally and globally (e.g., West MEC, Cardinal Manufacturing, hybrid/virtual models)
- Promote student wellness and physical activity (e.g., outdoor programs)

Conclusion

MTCHS is highly regarded for its unique blend of rigorous academics and applied technical learning in a close-knit community. However, the current facility and operational model limit its ability to grow and adapt. Expansion should be guided by a facility master plan and financial model that upholds educational quality, preserves the school's distinctive identity, and allows flexibility to respond to future challenges. Strategic planning, investment in staff and space, and a commitment to innovation will be essential to MTCHS's sustained success.