

Report of Findings

Catoosa County College and Career Academy



Table of Contents

Summary of Findings	Page 3
Site Visit Participants	Page 12
I. Organization and Administration Indicators	Page 13
II. Instructional Staff	Page 14
III. Facilities, Equipment & Safety	Page 15
IV. Curriculum and Instruction	Page 16
V. Student Preparation - Employability Skills, Career Development, & CTSO	Page 17
VI. Advisory Committee, Industry and Community	Page 18
Commendations/Recommendations – Accreditation Status	Page 19
Links to interview notes and photos	Appendix 1

Site link: <https://sites.google.com/catoosa.k12.ga.us/cca-industry-certification/home>

Program of Excellence (ICPE) Site Visit Report

Overview

On March 11, 2026, representatives from the **Law and Public Safety Education Network (LAPSEN)** conducted an Industry Certified Program of Excellence (ICPE) site visit for the **Law and Public Safety program at Catoosa County College and Career Academy (CCCA)**.

The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the program's instructional quality, industry alignment, community partnerships, student outcomes, facilities, and overall effectiveness in preparing students for careers in law enforcement and public safety.

The evaluation included interviews with:

- School administration
- Students and alumni
- Advisory committee members and industry partners
- Counseling staff

The site visit team also conducted a tour of the program facilities and reviewed the instructional environment, training equipment, and certification opportunities available to students.

Program Description

The **Law and Public Safety program at Catoosa County College and Career Academy** provides students with career-focused training designed to prepare them for immediate employment in public safety fields or continued education in criminal justice and related disciplines.

Students enrolled in the program have the opportunity to earn **industry-recognized certifications and dual enrollment college credit** through a partnership with **Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC)**.

Key certifications available to students include:

- **POST Certified Detention Officer (Basic Jailer Certification)**
- **POST Certified 911 Communications Dispatcher**

Through these certifications, students can graduate from high school with the credentials required to begin employment in local law enforcement agencies, corrections facilities, or emergency communications centers.

The program also incorporates extensive hands-on training, simulations, and partnerships with local public safety agencies, particularly the **Catoosa County Sheriff's Office**.

Program Facilities and Learning Environment

The Law and Public Safety program operates in a facility designed to simulate real-world public safety environments rather than a traditional classroom setting.

Program training facilities include:

- Forensic investigation laboratory
- Mock courtroom and mock trial training space
- Shooting simulator system with extensive scenario library
- Emergency vehicle driving simulator
- Dispatch communications training system
- Jail operations training environment
- Crime scene investigation training areas

The dispatch training system uses the **same software platform utilized by the county's 911 center**, allowing students to train on industry-standard systems. Students also have access to a **training version of the county jail management system**, allowing them to learn booking procedures, property documentation, and corrections processes.

While the system is intentionally separated from live GCIC systems for security purposes, the equipment and procedures closely mirror those used in actual law enforcement operations.

The training facility also includes a mock booking area with scanning equipment and booking procedures identical to those used by the Catoosa County Sheriff's Office.

Additionally, the academy maintains strong operational connections with the county's 911 center, which is located on site, providing students with additional opportunities for observation and career exploration.

Student Interview Summary

Students Interviewed

- Gabriel Cunningham
- Hunter Gilliam
- Grayson Gregory
- Wesley Brown (Alumni)
- Ashlyn Richards (Alumni)

Program Reputation Among Students

Students consistently described the program as engaging, hands-on, and highly valuable for career preparation. They noted that the program provides real-world training experiences that help them feel prepared for careers in law enforcement, corrections, and emergency services.

Students specifically highlighted the use of simulators, including:

- Driving simulator
- Shooting simulator
- Dispatch communications equipment

These experiences allow students to practice real-world scenarios in a controlled and safe environment.

Students also emphasized the interactive nature of the program, noting that instruction often involves scenario-based learning rather than traditional lecture.

Administrative Support

Students reported strong support from school leadership and administration. They pointed to the significant investment in specialized equipment and training resources as evidence that the program is highly valued by the school system.

Students also referenced opportunities to visit local public safety facilities, including tours of the jail.

Reasons for Enrollment

Students cited several motivations for enrolling in the program, including:

- Interest in law enforcement careers
- Encouragement from family members working in public safety
- Exposure to the program through academy tours and recruitment events
- Prior coursework in criminal justice pathways at feeder high schools

Students described the program as providing a strong early start toward careers in public safety.

Work-Based Learning Interest

All interviewed students indicated strong interest in participating in work-based learning opportunities if they were available.

Students expressed that work-based learning would allow them to:

- Explore specific career specialties
- Learn procedures used by professionals
- Gain practical workplace experience

Some students expressed interest in exploring specific career paths such as detective work or wildlife law enforcement.

Post-Graduation Plans

Students described a variety of career plans after graduation, including:

- Military service followed by law enforcement careers
- Entering the workforce and pursuing public safety careers later
- Attending college after working to save money

Students stated that the program helped them better understand career options and plan for the future.

Instructor Feedback

Students spoke extremely positively about their instructor.

Students described the instructor as:

- Knowledgeable and experienced
- Professional and supportive
- Engaging and motivating
- Able to provide both career guidance and life lessons

Several students noted that the instructor's real-world experience makes classroom instruction more meaningful and realistic.

Student Recommendations

Students reported very few areas for improvement.

The primary recommendation was the addition of **expanded work-based learning opportunities** to provide additional exposure to specific career specialties.

Administration Interview Summary

Interviewee: Mark Pierce

Position: CTAE Director & Principal

Mr. Pierce described the Law and Public Safety program as a **career-focused training environment designed to equip students with practical skills and credentials that prepare them for employment immediately after graduation.**

He emphasized that the program is designed to give students **“handlebars for their future,”** meaning practical training and real career opportunities rather than simply classroom knowledge.

Program Environment

According to Mr. Pierce, the program functions more like a **professional training lab than a traditional classroom.** Students voluntarily choose to participate in the program and are typically highly motivated, resulting in a positive learning environment with minimal behavior concerns.

Recruitment Process

Students and parents are introduced to the program through a structured recruitment process that includes:

- 8th grade tours of the College and Career Academy
- Career exploration using the YouScience assessment
- Extended pathway visits during 10th grade
- Parent information sessions and dual enrollment nights

This process ensures students have multiple opportunities to explore career pathways before enrolling.

Dual Enrollment Integration

The program is fully integrated with **Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC).**

Students who complete the program earn both **college credit and industry certifications,** allowing them to either enter the workforce immediately or continue their education.

Program Expansion Plans

Future program growth includes:

- Launch of a **Fire Science pathway**

- Development of **EMT training partnerships**
- Increased collaboration with fire departments and EMS agencies

Mr. Pierce expressed a long-term vision of developing the academy into **Georgia’s leading “First Responders Academy.”**

Advisory Committee Interview Summary

Advisory Member: Tim Busby

Organization: Catoosa County Sheriff’s Office

Mr. Busby described the program as a **highly successful collaboration between the Sheriff’s Office and the College and Career Academy** that allows students to graduate with state-recognized public safety certifications.

The Sheriff’s Office has played a significant role in program development, curriculum design, and certification alignment with Georgia POST standards.

Industry Partner Involvement

Law enforcement professionals contribute directly to student instruction, providing approximately **35–40% of specialized training** in areas such as:

- Defensive tactics
- Investigative procedures
- Mental health response
- Corrections operations

Workforce Outcomes

The program has produced strong workforce results:

- Approximately **45% of program graduates are hired by the Catoosa County Sheriff’s Office**
- The agency retains **80–85% of those hires**

Graduates entering the workforce through the program have demonstrated strong professionalism and job readiness.

Program Support

The Sheriff’s Office provides substantial support including:

- Training equipment
 - CPR mannequins and medical training tools
 - Instructional assistance from certified trainers
 - Access to facilities for student observation
-

Counselor Interview Summary

Counselor Interviewed: Shaneka Hunt

The Career Academy serves students from three feeder high schools:

- Ringgold High School
- Heritage High School
- Lakeview High School

Students typically enroll during their junior and senior years while continuing academic coursework at their home schools.

Career Exploration

Students begin career exploration in ninth grade through the county course **“From Here to Career.”**

Students complete the **YouScience career aptitude assessment**, which helps guide them toward appropriate career pathways.

Postsecondary Opportunities

Students completing the Law and Public Safety pathway can earn up to **eight dual enrollment courses** through Georgia Northwestern Technical College.

These credits contribute toward technical college certificates and associate degree programs.

Student Outcomes

The counselor reported strong employment outcomes, including graduates who have:

- Been hired by local law enforcement agencies
- Received recognition within their agencies
- Advanced quickly within public safety careers

Program Impact

The program provides students with:

- Clear career pathways
 - Industry certifications
 - Professional skills
 - Immediate employment opportunities
-

Program Outcomes and Certifications

During the site visit, program leadership reported that **14 students recently earned POST dispatcher certification**, and those same students are expected to complete **detention officer certification** during the current semester.

These students are expected to graduate fully prepared for employment in:

- 911 dispatch centers
- County detention facilities

Upon turning 18 and being hired by an agency, their training is recognized through Georgia POST certification processes.

Site Visit Team Observations

The site visit team observed an exceptionally well-developed program with outstanding collaboration between the school system, public safety agencies, and community partners.

Several factors stood out during the visit:

- Strong leadership support from district administration and school leadership
- Extensive investment in specialized training equipment and facilities
- Exceptional instructor leadership and industry experience
- Strong partnerships with local law enforcement agencies
- Direct alignment between training and workforce needs
- Clear career pathways leading to employment immediately after graduation

The presence of the **911 dispatch center on site** further enhances the program by providing students with direct exposure to real public safety operations.

Overall ICPE Evaluation

Based on interviews, facility observations, and program outcomes, the **Law and Public Safety program at Catoosa County College and Career Academy represents an exemplary model of career and technical education.**

The program demonstrates:

- Strong industry alignment
- Exceptional instructional leadership
- High student engagement
- Documented workforce outcomes

The collaboration between the academy, the Catoosa County Sheriff's Office, and other public safety agencies creates a powerful pipeline for developing the next generation of public safety professionals.

The site visit team believes this program represents **a national model for career-focused public safety education and workforce development.**

Site Visit

Site Evaluators:

- LAPSEN – Dr. Thomas Washburn
- GBOE - Sandra Martin

Administration and Staff Participants:

- Travis Head - Instructor
- Mark Pierce - Principal and CTAE Director
- Marissa Broward - CEO
- Sheriff Sisk
- Lt. Busby
- Brian Stuckeberry - Fort Oglethorpe PD
- Steve Quinn - 911 Center

Student Leaders

- Gabriel Cunningham
- Hunter Gilliam
- Grayson Gregory
- Wesley Brown - Alumni
- Ashlyn Richards - Alumni

Program Operational Standards

I. Organization and Administration Indicators

I. Organization and Administration Indicators	Meets Criteria Y/N	Points
The program supports upper-level mission statements	Y	1/1
Goals appropriate for a program of excellence	Y	1/1
Copy of Annual Plan/Program of Work available if applicable	Y	1/1
Copy of Local Extended Day Annual Plan available if applicable	Y	1/1
The current student/instructor ratio appropriate for teaching occupational skills	Y	2/2
The program is well promoted within the school, school system, and to prospective students.	Y	5/5
Quality program marketing materials and website	Y	5/5
Ongoing collaboration between school counseling departments that influence student enrollment in the program in place	Y	2/2
Proper policies in place for training equipment and materials	Y	1/1
Proper budgeting process	Y	2/2
Plans in place for maintaining and replacing consumables, course content, software, equipment, and/or instructional support materials.,	Y	1/1
19 of 22 possible points are required to pass this section	Total	22/22
Notes:		
	FAIL	PASS

II. Instructional Staff

II. Instructional Staff Indicators	Meets Criteria Y/N	Points
Does the instructor meet all state certifying requirements	Y	1/1
The high school LPS teacher is an active member of ACTE, LAPSEN, and SkillsUSA	Y	2/2
The instructor has appropriate current industry certifications and instructor certifications for program needs	Y	2/2
The instructor has adequate professional development for program needs	Y	2/2
The instructor has a personal/professional plan to grow as an educator and maintain an industry knowledge base	Y	1/1
Instructor attends relevant conferences and training	Y	1/1
The system adequately supports instructor's participation in conferences and training	Y	1/1
8 of 10 possible points are required to pass this section	Total	10/10
Notes:		
	FAIL	PASS

III. Facilities, Equipment & Safety

III. Facilities, Equipment & Safety Indicators	Meets Criteria Y/N	Points
The LPS lab and/or classroom are equipped with updated and functional equipment per GA DOE requirements as reflected on the inventory	Y	2/2
An equipment replacement plan is available.	Y	1/1
There are sufficient consumable materials and supplies	Y	1/1
Accounting of industry certification funds demonstrates proper use	Y	1/1
Adequate storage available	Y	1/1
Program space meets or exceeds state requirements, or an actionable plan is in place to meet such requirements. In spaces with multiple teachers, space demands are being addressed adequately.	Y	5/5
Facilities are clean, organized, and well maintained	Y	2/2
Each instructor has adequate personal space to plan and work	Y	2/2
Classroom instructional technology is updated, functional and available	Y	1/1
Students have adequate technology to meet program goals and prepare students for LPS careers	Y	1/1
Program spaces are safe and have proper safety equipment	Y	/PASS
Forensics labs follow proper science lab safety policies	Y	1/1
The accident report policy is available	Y	1/1
Students and staff are aware of emergency procedures	Y	1/1
Chemicals/combustibles are located and stored properly	Y	/PASS
The classroom and laboratory meet all state and federal safety requirements	Y	1/1
Policy for student check-out of equipment	Y	1/1
Tools and equipment mirror what is used in industry appropriate to skills being taught	Y	2/2
20 of 24 possible points are required to pass this section	Total	24/24
Notes:		
Note – 2 items automatically pass/fail	FAIL	PASS

IV. Curriculum and Instruction

IV. Curriculum and Instruction Indicators		Meets Criteria Y/N	Points
Syllabus is appropriate		Y	/PASS
Program is using GaDOE curriculum, prerequisites, and sequences		Y	/PASS
Students can complete pathway in 3 years		Y	/PASS
Program implements a clear and intentional literacy plan		Y	/PASS
Instructor Showcase			
Course Name:			
Unit Plan	Teacher Name:		
Adequately matches standards	Y		1/1
Developmentally appropriate	Y		1/1
Evidence of differentiation	Y		1/1
Evidence of addressing different learning styles	Y		2/2
Multiple modalities	Y		2/2
Bias-free instruction and materials	Y		1/1
Academic integration	Y		1/1
Higher order assessment elements	Y		1/1
Multimedia and or technology-based elements	Y		1/1
Use of clear and easy-to-understand rubrics	Y		1/1
Clear instructions	Y		1/1
Content is updated to industry standards	Y		1/1
Appropriate materials	Y		1/1
Assessments meet educational standards	Y		1/1
Evidence assessment is used to drive instruction	Y		2/2
Unit plan is organized, well thought out, and clear	Y		2/2
17 of 20 possible points required to pass this section		Total	20/20
Notes:			
		FAIL	PASS

V. Student Preparation - Employability Skills and Career Development Activities, CTSO

V. Student Preparation Indicators	Meets Criteria Y/N	Points
Cohesive career awareness and employability plan is in place across all courses	Y	1/1
Each student has individual career counseling offered	Y	1/1
There is a plan in place to ensure students graduate	Y	1/1
There is a plan in place to track graduates	Y	1/1
The appropriate number of students are passing End of Pathway Assessment and/or certification tests or an actionable plan is in place to improve performance	Y	2/2
Students are offered industry certification opportunities	Y	2/2
The program has an appropriate number of students complete the pathway	Y	1/1
A good number of enrolled students are members of SkillsUSA – may be waived with an explanation	Y	1/1
Students participate in SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference	Y	1/1
Student leadership participates in at least one out-of-school leadership event or activity that is not a state conference	Y	1/1
SkillsUSA chapter achieved at least a bronze level for the Chapter of Excellence Program	Y	2/2
Students are made aware of career opportunities offered in the community	Y	1/1
Students are participating in work-based learning, shadowing, and/or internships	Y	1/1
Students have individual career plans and portfolios	Y	1/1
Guest speakers from industry and/or field trips are a part of classes	Y	1/1
Student recognition is in place such as a student of the month or similar	Y	1/1
Students can join NTHS with LAPSEN Endorsement if they qualify	Y	1/1
16 of 20 possible points are required to pass this section	Total	20/20
Notes:		
	FAIL	PASS

VI. Advisory Committee, Industry and Community

VI. Advisory Committee, Industry and Community Indicators	Meets Criteria Y/N	Points
The program has an active advisory committee	Y	1/1
The program advisory committee is well represented by community, industry, and reflective of the diversity of the school community	Y	1/1
The advisory committee is engaged with program students whether through SkillsUSA or similar activities	Y	1/1
A public relations plan in place and being implemented	Y	1/1
Industry is involved in the program beyond the advisory committee	Y	1/1
5 of 5 possible points are required to pass this section	Total	5/5
Notes:		
	FAIL	PASS

Summary of Results

X **Program meets certification** ___ ~~Program does not meet certification~~

Commendations / Program Strengths

- Exceptional collaboration between the school system, the Catoosa County Sheriff's Office, and community partners.
- Students graduate with **POST certifications and college credit**, making them immediately employable.
- Outstanding hands-on training facilities that simulate real-world public safety environments.
- Strong instructor leadership with extensive industry experience and effective student mentorship.
- Demonstrated workforce success with graduates employed by local law enforcement agencies.
- Highly engaged and motivated students who value the program's real-world relevance.
- Strong administrative support and a clear strategic vision for program expansion.
- On-site 911 dispatch operations that enhance student exposure to public safety careers.
- Strong alignment between educational training and regional workforce needs.

Recommendations / Areas for Improvement

While the program is operating at a very high level, the following opportunities may further strengthen the program:

- Continue expanding **job shadowing opportunities** to provide students additional exposure to specific public safety careers.
- Continue recruitment efforts to ensure students enrolling in the program have a strong interest in public safety careers.
- Expand partnerships with fire departments and EMS agencies as the Fire Science and EMT pathways develop.
- Continue professional development and training opportunities for program instructors to maintain the program's high instructional quality.

Appendix 1

Administrator Interview Questions

[Click Here](#)

Advisory interview Questions

[Click Here](#)

Counselor Interview Questions

[Click Here](#)

Student Interview Questions

[Click Here](#)

Photos

[Click Here](#)