

District Profile of Broward County Public Schools: Evaluating Operational Readiness for Career- and College-Focused Schools

2026

Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers



Purpose and Use of the District Profiles

These district profiles are designed to provide charter school authorizers, policymakers, and educational leaders with practical examples of how school districts review, approve, monitor, and support career- and college-focused charter schools. Each profile highlights local authorizing practices, operational considerations, and lessons learned that contribute to the successful application, opening, and implementation and oversight of specialized educational programs. Based on lessons learned, each profile also includes guidance for authorizers seeking to hold career-focused schools accountable to high quality standards. While every district operates within its own unique context, these profiles identify promising practices that may be adapted to strengthen authorizing systems and improve educational opportunities for students.

Career- and college-focused schools prepare students for success through a combination of rigorous academics, career exploration, technical skill development, and postsecondary planning. By documenting the experiences of Florida school districts, these case studies illustrate how authorizers can balance innovation with accountability while also ensuring that schools possess the instructional, operational, and organizational capacity necessary to deliver high-quality career pathways that respond to local workforce needs.



Methodology

This district profile was developed by the Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers (FACSA) as part of its work under the Pathways to Prosperity national dissemination grant, which documents and shares practices that support high-quality career- and college-focused charter schools. FACSA developed this resource primarily from information gathered through a semistructured interview conducted on March 31, 2026, with Rhonda Stephanik, Coordinator I in the Charter Schools Management/Support Department of Broward County Public Schools. FACSA analyzed the interview findings and translated them into practical guidance for authorizers.

The interview addressed application and renewal review, the use of career and technical education (CTE) experts, facilities and equipment, instructor qualifications, safety, funding, monitoring, and career pathways within alternative and credit-recovery charter schools. FACSA analyzed the interview transcript through an operational-readiness lens. FACSA used district examples, including barbering and cosmetology-related programming, to develop the review questions, site-visit look-fors, red flags, and authorizer considerations presented in this resource. Because the information is based largely on the experience of one district representative, it should be viewed as a practice-oriented account rather than a comprehensive evaluation of Broward's charter school portfolio. FACSA did not independently review school applications, inspect facilities, interview students or school personnel, or verify program outcomes through student-level data.



Focus Area: Evaluating Operational Readiness for Career- and College-Focused Schools

The experiences of Broward County Public Schools in Florida help illustrate how authorizers can strengthen review and oversight of career- and college-focused schools by looking closely at operational readiness, implementation feasibility, and long-term sustainability.

Career- and college-focused schools often require more than just a strong academic plan. Depending on the pathway they offer, they may also require specialized facilities, technical equipment, qualified instructors, safety protocols, workforce partnerships, student scheduling systems, certification alignment, and sustainable funding. Broward's experience highlights the importance of evaluating these elements early, before a school opens or expands a specialized pathway.

For authorizers, the central question is not just “Is the proposed model educationally compelling?” Authorizers also need to ask “Is the model feasible? For example, does the school have the capacity to deliver the model it promises to students and families?”

Why This Case Matters for Authorizers

A traditional charter application review process may be strong enough to evaluate curricula, governance, finance, and organizational capacity. But career- and college-focused schools introduce additional implementation risks.

A school may propose a pathway in healthcare, cosmetology, barbering, manufacturing, information technology, construction, culinary arts, aviation, or another technical field. On paper, the model may sound exciting and aligned with student interests or workforce needs. In practice, the model may fail if the school has not planned for the real conditions required to implement it.



Broward County's case can help authorizers examine questions such as the following:

- Does the school have the right facilities for the proposed pathway?
- Has the school budgeted for specialized equipment, consumable materials, maintenance, and replacement costs?
- Are instructors qualified, available, and appropriately credentialed?
- Are safety, sanitation, supervision, and compliance systems in place?
- Are partnerships meaningful enough to support implementation?
- Does the pathway fit within student schedules and graduation requirements?
- Is the model financially sustainable after start-up funding ends?
- What should be verified before students begin participating in the pathway?

Broward's approach and strategies are particularly useful reference points for authorizers reviewing applications, conducting pre-opening checks, or monitoring early-stage implementation.

District Context

Located in southeastern Florida, Broward County encompasses Fort Lauderdale and surrounding communities between Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties. Broward County Public Schools serves more than 250,000 students across one of the largest and most diverse public school systems in the United States. The district's educational portfolio includes traditional public schools, magnet programs, technical education opportunities, charter schools, and alternative education models designed to meet the diverse academic and workforce needs of its communities. Within this broader landscape, Broward has recognized that career- and college-focused charter schools require an authorizing approach that extends beyond traditional academic accountability. District leaders have increasingly focused on the operational components necessary for successful



implementation, including specialized facilities, equipment, instructor qualifications, financial sustainability, and workforce alignment.

Broward's authorizing approach also emphasizes collaboration between charter school staff and CTE professionals. This interdisciplinary approach allows reviewers to better understand the instructional, technical, and operational demands of specialized programs.

Defining Quality in Career- and College-Focused Schools

Broward's career- and college-focused programming reflects the district's diversity by offering students multiple pathways that prepare them for postsecondary education, industry certifications, technical training, military service, and direct entry into high-demand careers.

CTE is an educational approach that combines rigorous academic instruction with technical knowledge, employability skills, and hands-on learning experiences that prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations. Broward County views career- and college-focused education as extending beyond traditional CTE training by integrating academic achievement, career exploration, workforce preparation, and postsecondary planning into a comprehensive educational experience. District leaders emphasized that successful programs provide students with multiple opportunities for future success rather than limiting them to a single postsecondary pathway.

With this lens, Broward defines high-quality career- and college-focused schools as those that successfully integrate rigorous academics with clearly defined career pathways supported by qualified instructors, appropriate facilities, specialized equipment, and meaningful partnerships. High-quality programs demonstrate financial and operational sustainability while also providing students with authentic opportunities to develop technical skills, earn industry-recognized credentials, and



prepare for continued education or employment. District leaders also emphasized the importance of intentional program planning, workforce relevance, and organizational capacity to ensure that specialized programs remain responsive to both student interests and evolving industry needs.

Defining Quality Through an Operational Readiness Lens

What is learned from Broward's experience reinforces a core authorizer lesson: A high-quality career- and college-focused school is not defined by the pathway name alone. Quality depends on whether the school can implement the pathway with coherence, safety, rigor, and sustainability.

To identify operational readiness of its career- and college-focused schools, authorizers can ask a range of questions that assess different areas of quality (Table 1).

Table 1. Authorizer Questions to Identify Operational Readiness

Quality area	Authorizer question
Pathway coherence	Is the pathway intentionally sequenced and connected to meaningful student outcomes?
Academic integration	Does the model support graduation, academic progress, and postsecondary readiness?
Staffing capacity	Does the school have qualified instructors with the technical and instructional expertise required?
Facilities readiness	Does the school have appropriate instructional space for the pathway?
Equipment and materials	Has the school planned for specialized equipment, supplies, maintenance, and replacement?
Safety and compliance	Are safety protocols, supervision systems, and regulatory requirements addressed?



Quality area	Authorizer question
Financial sustainability	Can the school afford to operate and sustain the pathway over time?
Workforce alignment	Is the pathway connected to labor market needs, credentials, partners, or employment opportunities?
Student supports	Are students advised and supported to participate, persist, and complete the pathway?

These quality-assessment questions about operational readiness help authorizers distinguish between a school that has a promising idea and a school that is actually ready to deliver a high-quality program.

Application Review and Authorization Practices

Broward County Public Schools evaluates career- and college-focused charter school applications through a comprehensive review process that examines both the educational quality and operational feasibility of proposed programs. As with all charter applications, reviewers assess curriculum design, instructional programming, governance, financial capacity, staffing plans, and organizational readiness. For career- and college-focused schools, however, the district recognizes that specialized programming introduces additional operational considerations that require a more comprehensive review. District leaders emphasized the importance of evaluating whether applicants have developed a realistic implementation plan that aligns educational goals with the resources necessary to successfully launch and sustain the proposed program.

Programs offering specialized career pathways receive additional inquiry during the application review process to ensure that schools have adequately planned for the unique requirements associated with CTE programming. Reviewers consider the availability of specialized equipment, appropriate instructional space, safety



protocols, instructor qualifications, and the financial resources necessary for supporting high-cost technical programs. District representatives noted that successful applications do not treat these components as separate operational considerations; rather, successful applications clearly demonstrate how these components work together to support both student learning and long-term program sustainability.

A distinguishing feature of Broward's authorizing approach is the involvement of CTE experts throughout the review process. District leaders emphasized that charter authorizing staff benefit from collaborating with staff from the CTE Department who possess technical knowledge of industry standards, pathway implementation, instructor certification requirements, and specialized equipment. CTE experts review the program design, staffing, facilities, equipment, and credential requirements during the application review process. This interdisciplinary review process helps ensure that proposed career pathways are educationally rigorous, operationally feasible, in alignment with workforce expectations, and capable of delivering meaningful outcomes for students.

Building on Broward's experience, authorizers have an opportunity at the school application stage to assess the likelihood of a school team developing a high-quality and career- and college-focused program for students. These include example look-fors noted in Table 2.

Table 2. Application Review Look-Fors for Authorizers

Review area	Evidence authorizers should request
Pathway design	• Course sequence • Program of study • Credential map • Student progression plan



Review area	Evidence authorizers should request
Workforce relevance	• Labor market rationale • Employer input • Advisory board plans • Credential value
Staffing	• Instructor qualifications • Certification requirements • Hiring timeline • Contingency plan
Facilities	• Floor plans • Lab/classroom specifications • Space requirements • Safety considerations
Equipment	• Equipment list • Cost estimates • Installation timeline • Maintenance plan • Replacement schedule
Safety	• Safety protocols • Student supervision plan • Required training • Compliance requirements
Budget	• Start-up costs • Recurring costs • Consumables • Staffing • Equipment maintenance • Certification fees



Review area	Evidence authorizers should request
Partnerships	• MOUs • Advisory board structure • Employer/postsecondary roles • Work-based learning supports
Student scheduling	• How pathway participation fits with graduation requirements and academic supports
Sustainability	• Multiyear implementation plan • Enrollment assumptions • Funding sources • Risk mitigation

In general, when using these sorts of review look-fors, the authorizer should calibrate the depth of review to the complexity of the pathway. A low-cost exploratory career program may require less technical review than a pathway involving labs, tools, chemicals, equipment, licensure, or specialized safety requirements.

The Core Authorizer Question: Is the Model Feasible?

Broward's case should help authorizers pressure-test feasibility before approval. Based on Broward's experience, a proposed pathway is feasible when the school can show the following:

- The pathway is clearly designed.
- Students can access and complete the pathway.
- The school has qualified staff to teach the pathway.
- The facility can safely support the pathway.
- Equipment and materials are available and maintained.
- The budget includes real start-up and ongoing costs.



- The pathway connects to meaningful credentials, employment, college credit, technical training, military service, or further education.
- Leaders and the board understand the operational demands of the model.
- The school can monitor whether students are benefiting from the pathway.

A proposed pathway is not yet feasible when the school's plan depends too heavily on future partnerships, future funding, future staff, future facilities, or assumptions that have not been verified.

Pre-Opening Readiness Review

Broward has shared that an authorizer's approval of career- and college-focused schools should not be the final check before implementation. Authorizers should verify that key pathway conditions are in place before students begin participating.

Table 3. Pre-Opening Readiness Checklist for Authorizers

Readiness area	What the authorizer should verify
Instructor readiness	Qualified instructor hired or documented contingency plan put in place
Facility readiness	Specialized space completed, inspected, and deemed appropriate for intended use
Equipment readiness	Required equipment purchased, installed, tested, and made ready for student use
Safety systems	Safety protocols, student training, supervision procedures, and emergency plans in place
Compliance requirements	Licensure, sanitation, insurance, inspection, or regulatory requirements addressed
Student schedule	Pathway courses fit within graduation requirements and student schedules



Readiness area	What the authorizer should verify
Budget confirmation	Start-up and recurring costs reflected in the approved operating budget
Partnership activation	Partners understand their roles and have committed to specific activities
Student recruitment	Students and families understand pathway expectations and opportunities
Data systems	School can track enrollment, participation, completion, credentials, and outcomes

This type of readiness review helps authorizers identify implementation gaps before they become student-facing problems.



Operational Capacity and Governance

Broward County recognizes that successful career- and college-focused schools require a level of operational planning and governance that extends beyond traditional charter school implementation.

Operational Capacity

District leaders identified instructor recruitment, specialized facilities, equipment acquisition, and sustainable funding as critical components that directly influence a program's long-term success. Many specialized CTE pathways require instructors with both industry expertise and appropriate teaching credentials, making recruitment and certification an ongoing challenge for schools proposing highly technical programs. As a result, applicants are expected to demonstrate thoughtful staffing plans and realistic implementation timelines before receiving approval.

Operational readiness also includes careful planning for specialized instructional spaces, equipment purchases, safety requirements, and ongoing maintenance costs. Programs in fields such as barbering, cosmetology, healthcare, manufacturing, or other technical disciplines often require significant up-front investments that extend well beyond the needs of traditional academic classrooms. District representatives emphasized that schools must demonstrate not only the financial capacity to acquire these resources but also the long-term sustainability necessary to maintain high-quality programming as enrollment grows and industry standards evolve.





Operational Challenges for Authorizers to Assess

There are several operational challenges that are especially important for career- and college-focused schools.

- **Specialized Staffing:** Many pathways require instructors with industry expertise and appropriate credentials. In some fields, qualified instructors may be difficult to recruit because they can earn more in industry than in education. Authorizers should examine whether the school has a realistic staffing plan and whether leaders understand certification requirements.
- **Facilities and Equipment:** Programs such as barbering, cosmetology, healthcare, manufacturing, culinary arts, or automotive technology may require specialized instructional spaces and equipment. These are not minor add-ons to a traditional school model. They are core conditions for implementation.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Specialized pathways often include recurring costs that are easy to underestimate: consumable supplies, licensing fees, equipment repair, technology upgrades, exam fees, protective equipment, and instructor professional development. Authorizers should look beyond the start-up budget and evaluate whether the school can sustain the program over time.

Governance

Governance serves as another important indicator of organizational capacity. Broward leaders emphasized that governing boards benefit from members with business, workforce development, or industry experience who understand the operational and strategic demands of career- and college-focused programming. These individuals can provide valuable oversight related to financial planning, workforce partnerships, program expansion, and long-term sustainability. Early collaboration among charter school staff, CTE specialists, district personnel, and



school leadership further strengthens implementation of CTE programming by identifying operational challenges before a school opens and establishing a foundation for ongoing communication throughout the authorization process.

Governance Questions for Authorizers

Authorizers could ask the following questions to assess the governance capacity of career- and college-focused schools:

- Does the board understand the true cost and complexity of the proposed pathway?
- Does the board include or have access to workforce, industry, facilities, finance, or technical expertise?
- How will the board monitor pathway quality and sustainability?
- Does the school have a plan for equipment replacement and program growth?
- How will leaders know whether the pathway is producing meaningful student outcomes?

Monitoring and Accountability

Broward County Public Schools monitors career- and college-focused charter schools through its established charter oversight framework. It recognizes that specialized educational models require broader measures of success than traditional academic accountability alone. District representatives continue to evaluate school performance through academic achievement, organizational compliance, financial stability, and operational effectiveness.

As career- and college-focused charter schools continue to evolve, Broward anticipates strengthening its monitoring practices by incorporating measures that better reflect workforce preparation and pathway implementation. Broward is



considering monitoring a variety of additional potential areas, including student participation in career pathways, industry-recognized certification attainment, pathway completion, workforce readiness, postsecondary placement, and the overall effectiveness of specialized programming. District leaders noted that these additional indicators will provide a more comprehensive understanding of school quality and will complement existing academic accountability measures rather than replace them.

District representatives described monitoring as a process of continuous improvement that should evolve alongside changes in career- and college-focused education. Rather than relying on static evaluation tools, Broward continues to refine its oversight practices by incorporating lessons learned from implementation, expanding collaboration with CTE specialists, and adapting review processes to reflect emerging educational models. This commitment to continuous improvement positions the district to effectively support innovation while maintaining rigorous accountability and ensuring that career- and college-focused charter schools provide students with meaningful opportunities for long-term academic, career, and workforce success.

For authorizers, the key is to monitor both traditional charter performance and pathway-specific implementation to ensure that quality programming continues to serve students.

Table 4. Monitoring Indicators for Career- and College-Focused Schools

Domain	Possible evidence
Academic progress	• Attendance • Credit accumulation • Course completion • Graduation progress • Academic performance



Domain	Possible evidence
Pathway participation	• Number and percentage of students enrolled in the pathway • Demographics • Persistence
Pathway completion	• Completion of course sequence • Capstone • Practicum, clinical, or required pathway milestones
Credentials	• Certification attempts • Pass rates • Credential attainment • Credential value
Work-based learning	• Internships • Job shadowing • Clinical experiences • Mentorships • Employer feedback
Staffing	• Instructor vacancies • Qualifications • Certification status • Turnover
Facilities and equipment	• Equipment condition • Maintenance logs • Safety inspections • Facility adequacy
Safety	• Student safety training • Incident logs • Supervision • Compliance with program-specific requirements



Domain	Possible evidence
Finance	• Budget-to-actual pathway costs • Replacement planning • Grant dependence • Sustainability
Student experience	• Student interviews • Advising evidence • Sense of relevance • Understanding of postsecondary options
Postsecondary outcomes	• Employment • Technical training • College enrollment • Military service • Apprenticeships

Authorizers should also use monitoring to determine whether the pathway is still aligned with student interests and workforce needs. A pathway that was relevant at approval may need refinement with changing industry expectations, credential requirements, or student demand.

Site Visit Look-Fors

Career- and college-focused charter school site visits should help authorizers verify whether the proposed model is actually being implemented.

Classroom and Lab Observations

Reviewers should look for the following:

- students using tools, equipment, technology, or materials appropriate to the pathway
- clear safety routines and supervision
- technical vocabulary and applied problem-solving



- connections between academic content and career applications
- evidence that students are building skills over time, not just completing isolated activities

Student Interviews

Students should be able to explain the following:

- why they chose the pathway
- what skills they are learning
- what credential, certification, college credit, or career opportunity the pathway may lead to
- how the pathway connects to graduation and postsecondary plans
- what supports they receive if they struggle academically or technically

Teacher and Leader Interviews

Staff should be able to explain the following:

- what the pathway sequence is
- how students progress through the program
- how academic and technical instruction are connected
- how safety and equipment needs are managed
- what data are used to improve the pathway

Document Review

Authorizers should review the following documents:

- course sequences
- student schedules
- equipment inventories



- safety logs
- instructor credentials
- advisory board minutes
- partnership agreements
- certification data
- budget records
- student participation and completion data

District Practice Example: Career Pathways in Alternative and Credit Recovery Settings

Broward's experience illustrates how career- and college-focused programming can be used within alternative education and credit recovery settings to strengthen student engagement, support graduation progress, and connect students to practical workforce opportunities. In these contexts, career-focused instruction is not simply an elective add-on. It can serve as a strategy for helping students see a clearer connection between school, skill development, and life after graduation.

One example highlighted in district interviews is barbering and cosmetology-related programming. These pathways are especially useful for authorizers to examine because they make the operational demands of career-focused schooling visible. Unlike lower cost exploratory programs, barbering and cosmetology pathways may require specialized instructional space, equipment, consumable materials, safety and sanitation protocols, qualified instructors, and clear alignment with credentialing or employment opportunities.

For authorizers, the lesson is not that every district or school should offer barbering or cosmetology. The stronger lesson is that career-focused pathways must be evaluated as full implementation models. A pathway that sounds compelling on paper may not be ready for students unless the school can



demonstrate that the facilities, staffing, budget, equipment, safety systems, course sequence, and student support structures are in place.

Broward's example reinforces a core authorizer question that runs throughout this profile: Can the school actually deliver the pathway it is promising to students and families? When specialized pathways are implemented well, they can help students remain engaged in school while developing marketable skills and continuing toward a high school diploma. When the operational conditions are weak, however, the pathway may create risk for students rather than opportunity.

This practice example also helps explain why authorizers should look beyond traditional academic plans when reviewing, opening, and monitoring career- and college-focused schools. Strong oversight should verify not only whether the model is educationally compelling but also whether it is feasible, safe, sustainable, in alignment with workforce expectations, and likely to produce meaningful student outcomes.

Red Flags and Possible Authorizer Responses

The experience at Broward of having a thriving and sustainable school offers some reflection opportunities for authorizers to identify when schools are beginning to show signs of subpar or deteriorating implementation, all deemed risks of quality. For authorizers with career- and college-focused schools within their portfolio, Table 5 provides some “red flags,” or warning signs of implementation risks.

Table 5. Implementation Risks and Possible Authorizer Responses

Red flag	Why it matters	Possible authorizer response
Pathway is described broadly but lacks a course sequence	The school may have a theme but does not have a clear pathway.	Require a pathway map or program of study.



Red flag	Why it matters	Possible authorizer response
Facility is not secured or not appropriate	The program may not be safe or feasible.	Make facility readiness a condition of opening.
Equipment costs are underestimated	Program quality may decline quickly.	Require an equipment budget, a maintenance plan, and a replacement schedule.
Instructor(s) has/have not been identified	The program may not launch as promised.	Require a staffing plan and contingency plan.
Partnerships are informal or aspirational	Promised opportunities may not materialize.	Require MOUs or documented partner commitments.
No plan for consumable supplies	Recurring costs may strain the budget.	Require multiyear operating cost projections.
Safety protocols are vague	Students may be placed at risk.	Require a safety plan before implementation.
Career programming conflicts with graduation requirements	Students may lose academic ground.	Require student schedule and credit alignment reviews.
Board lacks relevant expertise	Oversight may be too shallow.	Require an advisory structure or board development.
Success measures are unclear	The authorizer cannot evaluate the impact.	Require pathway-specific performance indicators.

Replicable Practices and Authorizer Implications

The experience of Broward County Public Schools demonstrates that career- and college-focused charter schools require an authorizing approach that extends beyond traditional academic review. While curriculum quality and organizational capacity remain fundamental components of the authorization process, district leaders emphasized that specialized programs require additional consideration



related to pathway design, instructor qualifications, facilities, specialized equipment, financial sustainability, and long-term implementation planning. Incorporating CTE expertise throughout the application review process allows authorizers to more effectively evaluate whether proposed programs are realistic, operationally feasible, and commensurate with industry expectations.

The district's approach to its career- and college-focused charter schools also highlights the importance of collaborating across multiple departments when authorizing specialized educational models. Broward routinely relies on CTE specialists to review applications, evaluate course sequencing, verify certification requirements, and assess specialized program components. This collaborative review process strengthens decision-making by ensuring that applications are evaluated by individuals with the technical knowledge necessary to understand the operational complexities associated with CTE. The district's practice of engaging additional subject-matter experts for other specialized instructional models further reinforces the value of matching reviewer expertise with program design.

Several practical look-fors emerge from Broward County's approach. Strong career- and college-focused applications should demonstrate clearly sequenced pathways leading to meaningful student outcomes, realistic implementation plans, sustainable funding strategies, qualified instructional staff, specialized facilities and equipment, and governance structures capable of supporting long-term program success. The district's approach also reinforces the importance of continuously refining monitoring and renewal practices as career- and college-focused programming evolves. By combining rigorous academic accountability with specialized technical expertise, Broward provides a practical framework for authorizers seeking to strengthen oversight while supporting innovative educational opportunities that prepare students for college, careers, technical training, military service, and workforce success.



Authorizer Moves From the Broward County Case

Broward's experience suggests several practical moves for authorizers (Table 6).

Table 6. Authorizer Moves

Authorizer move	Why it matters
Involve CTE experts in application review	Specialized models require technical expertise.
Require pathway-specific implementation evidence	A compelling idea is not enough.
Conduct pre-opening readiness checks	Key conditions should be verified before students enter the pathway.
Review facilities and equipment carefully	Specialized spaces and tools are central to implementation quality.
Examine instructor qualifications and hiring timelines	Staffing delays can undermine the model.
Require realistic budgets for specialized programs	High-cost pathways need sustainable funding.
Monitor safety and compliance	Technical environments require strong safety systems.
Track pathway participation and outcomes	Authorizers need to know whether students are benefiting.
Evaluate governance capacity	Boards must understand and oversee the specialized model.
Use site visits to verify implementation	Observations and interviews can reveal gaps that are not visible in documents.



Conclusion

Broward County Public Schools demonstrates a thoughtful and evolving approach to authorizing career- and college-focused charter schools that balances rigorous academic accountability with the unique operational demands associated with specialized educational programs. While the district continues to rely on established charter school oversight processes, district leaders increasingly recognize that CTE programs require differentiated review practices, specialized expertise, and broader accountability measures to effectively evaluate program quality and long-term sustainability. This reflects the district's commitment to supporting innovative educational models while maintaining high expectations for organizational capacity, instructional quality, and student achievement.

Throughout the authorization process, Broward places significant emphasis on operational readiness, structured pathway design, financial sustainability, qualified staffing, and collaboration with CTE specialists. The district's reliance on internal subject-matter expertise strengthens both application review and renewal processes by ensuring that specialized programs are evaluated through an informed technical lens. District representatives also recognize the importance of continuously refining oversight practices to better address emerging workforce needs, evolving instructional models, and the growing complexity of career- and college-focused programming.

As career- and college-focused charter schools continue to expand, Broward County offers valuable lessons for authorizers seeking to strengthen specialized program oversight while maintaining flexibility and innovation. Its emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration, intentional implementation planning, continuous improvement, and workforce relevance demonstrates how traditional authorizing practices can evolve to better support high-quality CTE programs. By aligning academic excellence with meaningful career preparation and long-term student success, Broward County provides a practical model for authorizers working to prepare students for an increasingly dynamic postsecondary landscape.



For authorizers, Broward's experience reinforces the importance of asking implementation questions early. Specialized pathways can expand opportunity for students, particularly when they connect learning to tangible skills, credentials, graduation, employment, technical training, college, military service, or other postsecondary options. But those opportunities depend on careful planning and ongoing oversight.

The central authorizer responsibility is to verify that the school can deliver what it promises. That means reviewing operational readiness during application review, confirming key conditions before opening, monitoring implementation through site visits and data, and using renewal to determine whether the pathway has produced meaningful outcomes for students. Broward's case reminds authorizers that high-quality career- and college-focused oversight is not about slowing innovation. It is about making sure innovation is safe, sustainable, coherent, and real for students.





© 2026 WestEd. All rights reserved.



Suggested citation: Florida Association of Charter School Authorizers. (2026). *District profile of Broward County Public Schools: Evaluating operational readiness for career- and college-focused schools*. WestEd.

WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that aims to improve the lives of children and adults at all ages of learning and development. We do this by addressing challenges in education and human development, increasing opportunity, and helping build communities where all can thrive. WestEd staff conduct and apply research, provide technical assistance, and support professional learning. We work with early learning educators, classroom teachers, local and state leaders, and policymakers at all levels of government.

For more information, visit [WestEd.org](https://www.wested.org). For regular updates on research, free resources, solutions, and job postings from WestEd, subscribe to the *E-Bulletin*, our semimonthly e-newsletter, at [WestEd.org/subscribe](https://www.wested.org/subscribe).