Biddeford Schools

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# MEMO

**TO:** Biddeford School Committee

**CC:** Jeremy Ray, Superintendent

**FROM:** Paulette Bonneau, Director of BRCOT

**RE:** The Landing School—Biddeford Regional Center of Technology

**DATE:** November 9, 2026

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## WHAT WE DID

From November 5 to 10, 2026, we surveyed students in grades 8 to 12 at 11 sending schools about programs at The Landing School. 1,876 students responded. Each chose up to five of 19 possible programs, named the two they would most want to take, and told us what would make a program appealing and what could keep them from attending.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Demand is strong.** **1,365** students (73%) chose at least one of the five programs we propose as a top-two pick, and **1,248** of them will still be in high school in fall 2027.
- **Vet Tech leads by far.** **782** students picked it, nearly three times the next program. Most of these students plan a four-year college and want college credit.
- **HVAC/Clean Energy and Diesel lead the trades programs.** HVAC combined with solar and renewable energy draws 309 picks, and Diesel draws 259. Marine Technology and Outboard Repair (113) and Composites (78) have smaller, steady interest.
- **Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing draws strong interest.** 378 students (20%) picked one of the two, and 124 of them picked none of the five launch programs.
- **Students want hands-on work, paid internships, and college credit.** These were the top three features students chose.
- **Scheduling is the biggest barrier.** Students worry about missing sports, jobs and required classes. Transportation and cost also came up.
- **Students asked for programs we did not list.** Health careers, cosmetology, and art and design led their write-in requests.

**We recommend that the Committee approve planning to open five programs at The Landing School in September 2027: Vet Tech, Diesel, Marine Technology and Outboard Repair, HVAC/Clean Energy, and Composites. We also ask the Committee to approve Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing as a future program allowing us to develop the programming over the next two years.**

## STUDENT DEMAND BY PROGRAM: *Students who chose each program as one of their top two.*

| # | Program | Picks | Share |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Vet Tech** | **782** | **41.7%** |
| **2** | **HVAC/Clean Energy** | **309** | **16.5%** |
| **3** | **Diesel** | **259** | **13.8%** |
| **4** | **Marine Technology and Outboard Repair** | **113** | **6.0%** |
| **5** | **Composites** | **78** | **4.2%** |
| Future | Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing | 378 | 20.1% |

## DEMAND BY SENDING SCHOOL *Top-two picks for the five proposed programs and the future program, by school.*

| School | Students | Vet Tech | Diesel | HVAC/ CE | Marine | Comp. | Any of 5 | Aqua/Fishing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Massabesic | 619 | 260 | 109 | 90 | 35 | 27 | **449** | 120 |
| York | 204 | 78 | 13 | 44 | 11 | 13 | **144** | 56 |
| Thornton Academy | 198 | 74 | 29 | 32 | 13 | 7 | **144** | 35 |
| Marshwood | 191 | 79 | 17 | 36 | 9 | 6 | **136** | 34 |
| Sanford | 178 | 86 | 29 | 25 | 11 | 6 | **139** | 26 |
| Biddeford | 131 | 54 | 18 | 27 | 6 | 2 | **99** | 32 |
| Noble | 105 | 48 | 16 | 14 | 7 | 2 | **75** | 20 |
| Wells | 86 | 41 | 7 | 14 | 8 | 4 | **62** | 23 |
| Traip Academy | 63 | 30 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 3 | **43** | 12 |
| Kennebunk | 61 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 5 | 7 | **43** | 16 |
| Old Orchard Beach | 40 | 19 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | **31** | 4 |
| **All schools** | **1,876** | **782** | **259** | **309** | **113** | **78** | **1,365** | **378** |

## WHAT WOULD MAKE A PROGRAM APPEALING *Share of students choosing each feature. Students could choose more than one.*

| Feature | Trades students | Vet Tech students | Aquaculture and Fishing students | All students |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Working with my hands on real projects** | 51% | 36% | 41% | 45% |
| **Paid internships or job placement** | 48% | 51% | 51% | 48% |
| **Earning college credit in high school** | 43% | 63% | 53% | 50% |
| **Earning industry certifications** | 26% | 18% | 16% | 22% |
| **A path into a registered apprenticeship** | 18% | 15% | 13% | 16% |
| **Working on boats and on the water** | 12% | 8% | 21% | 10% |

## PROGRAMS STUDENTS ASKED US TO ADD *Written answers grouped by topic. One answer can count in more than one group.*

| Topic | Students |
|---|---|
| Health careers (nursing, CNA, EMT, dental) | 172 |
| Cosmetology and esthetics | 90 |
| Art and design | 79 |
| Law and law enforcement | 61 |
| Construction and plumbing | 57 |
| Welding | 56 |
| Teaching and childcare | 49 |
| Engineering | 34 |
| Sports medicine and athletic training | 34 |
| Culinary arts | 29 |
| Electrician | 27 |
| Psychology | 27 |
| Auto repair | 21 |

Source: Student Interest Survey (TLS), 1,876 responses from 11 schools, November 5 to 10, 2026 (through 10:50 AM on November 10). Massabesic is 33% of responses. Vet Tech is the survey's "Veterinary Science and Animal Care," Marine Technology and Outboard Repair is "Marine Maintenance and Outboard Technology," and Composites is "Composite Boat Building." HVAC/Clean Energy combines "HVAC and Refrigeration" and "Solar and Renewable Energy"; Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing combines "Aquaculture and Marine Science Technology" and "Commercial Fishing and Marine Operations." A student who picked both programs in a pair counts once. No student names were collected.