

# HCST

January 2026

# Connections



District Newsletter for the Hudson County Schools of Technology



## January at a Glance

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Welcome back to the latest edition of the HCST Connections Newsletter



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It is hard to believe that January is almost behind us, and I am thrilled about new leadership in the Garden State. On January 20, I was proud to attend the gubernatorial inauguration of Mikie Sherrill. Like myself, Governor Sherrill has spent her entire life serving the public, first as a U.S. Navy helicopter pilot, then as a federal prosecutor in the United States Attorney's Office, a Member of Congress, and now as the Governor of New Jersey.

Government works best when we all work together, and I'm excited to work alongside Governor Sherrill to deliver results for the people of Hudson County. By lowering costs, standing up to the Trump administration, and investing in public safety, this partnership will bring real benefits to Hudson County residents – helping working families make ends meet, strengthening our local law enforcement and first responders, and ensuring our communities remain safe, affordable, and full of opportunity.

I am thrilled that Governor Sherrill's agenda includes making necessary investments in education. On the campaign trail she said, "a high-quality education opens doors and provides New Jerseyans with the opportunity to forge their own path to success." Those words could not ring truer, and I strongly support her commitment to addressing the mental health crisis by increasing the number of school counselors, psychologists, and improving mental health services in our schools. I also applaud her plan to provide free school meals available to every student in New Jersey - as Governor Sherrill rightly said, good nutrition is essential to academic success.

As County Executive, I have prioritized efforts to improve educational outcomes for our children. Each year, Hudson County funds our innovative Arts in Education Program (AiEP), which builds a bridge between local nonprofit arts organizations and schools in our 12 municipalities to increase students' access to quality arts education programs that would not otherwise be offered in their schools. These nonprofits partner with schools to give students access to a variety of artistic disciplines during the school day in a classroom setting.

## A Message from Craig Guy, Hudson County Executive

In addition to AiEP, my administration founded the Sports in Education Program (SiEP), which provides sports instruction combined with a valuable educational component to students at participating schools in the county. Last year, we celebrated the culmination of the SiEP pilot program with a successful combine designed to measure, test, and analyze physical skills at Hudson County Prep High School with over 250 student athletes from seven participating schools throughout the county.

Finally, in October we opened the Hudson County Schools of Technology Craig Guy Center at Bayonne High School. This new facility will welcome 400 students and offer career-focused programs in mechanical, construction, finance, medical/clinical, criminal justice, digital communications, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, and cosmetology.

We are working hard to enhance the educational experience, but we know there is still more to be done. I have already met with Governor Sherrill several times and emphasized the critical role of education in creating and expanding opportunities for our residents. I will continue to work closely with her administration to deliver services - inside and outside the classroom- for all the residents of Hudson County.



**CRAIG GUY** *CgA*  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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& The Board of County Commissioners

## HCST Students Earn Induction into Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Hudson County Schools of Technology proudly recognizes an outstanding group of County Prep High School and High Tech High School students who were inducted into Hudson County Community College's Beta Alpha Phi Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society for high-achieving students at associate degree-granting institutions. Through HCCC's Early College Program, these students earned college credits while meeting the rigorous academic standards required for PTK membership.

Students inducted from County Prep High School include Ahmed Ali, Lauren Edwards, Lori Kim, Mohreel Fekri, Nervana Nasr, Richie Nguyen, and Yostina Hanna. Students inducted from High Tech High School include Aarya Patel, Alexa Yuscavitch, Anthony Masciale, Cassidy Gormley, Hilarya Ishaq, Jayden Karim, Kevin Riera, Léna Planche-Odry, Mia King, Mohammed Gezzaz, Nicholas De Hombre, Riya Patel, Ryan Neal, Sofia Balza, Yousef Mohammed, and Zamiel Perez.

Phi Theta Kappa honors students who demonstrate exceptional scholarship, leadership, and commitment to academic excellence. This achievement reflects both the dedication of these students—who are excelling at the college level while still in high school—and the strength of the partnership between Hudson County Schools of Technology and Hudson County Community College in expanding access to advanced academic opportunities.



High Tech



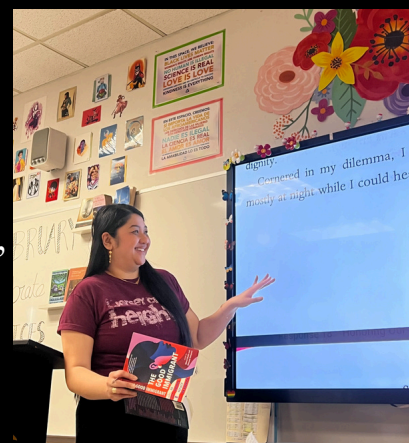
High Tech



County Prep

## Governor's Educator of the Year - Bianca Torres for the Academic Category County Prep

Ms. Torres is an exceptional educator whose presence is felt throughout our entire school community. She consistently sets the standard for professionalism, dedication, and care, and her impact extends far beyond her classroom. Whether working directly with students or collaborating with colleagues, Ms. Torres brings warmth, leadership, and commitment that strengthen our school's culture every day. She is deeply invested in the success of those around her and approaches her work with sincerity, energy, and purpose.



In the classroom, Ms. Torres creates an environment where students feel challenged, supported, and genuinely valued. Her instruction is thoughtful and engaging, blending academic rigor with empathy and encouragement. She takes the time to know her students as individuals and is intentional about building trust, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Outside the classroom, her influence continues through her leadership as advisor to Student Council and Peer Leaders, where she empowers students to take initiative, build community, and lead with integrity. Through school-wide events, service projects, and daily mentorship, Ms. Torres models what it means to serve others and lead by example. Her dedication to students, colleagues, and the broader school community makes her a truly deserving nominee for this honor.



## Governor's Educator of the Year - Mary Redondo for the CTE Category County Prep/ATD

Ms. Redondo has had a lasting and meaningful impact on both our Career and Technical Education department and the many students who aspire to careers in the medical field. She has played a key role in shaping a strong, thoughtful medical science pathway that prepares students for what lies ahead, not just academically, but professionally. Her work reflects deep expertise, careful planning, and a clear commitment to giving students real opportunities to succeed beyond high school.



In the classroom, Ms. Redondo creates an environment that is engaging, challenging, and grounded in real-world application. Her lessons connect medical concepts to authentic healthcare practices, allowing students to gain hands-on experience and develop confidence in their abilities. Beyond instruction, she serves as the advisor for HOSA – Future Health Professionals, opening doors for students through competitions, conferences, service initiatives, and leadership experiences. She also coordinates the school's annual blood drive and other service-focused events that reinforce compassion and responsibility. In addition, Ms. Redondo is a trusted academic coach and resource for colleagues, offering thoughtful guidance and support that strengthens instruction across programs. Her leadership, professionalism, and dedication to students make her a truly deserving nominee for this recognition.



Mr. Andrew Zhang has been a valued member of the County Prep High School community for seven years, teaching in the Music and Audio Technology CTE program. In his classroom, students are actively engaged in hands-on, real-world learning that reflects the expectations of professional music and production environments. Mr. Zhang teaches a range of courses across music, audio technology, and performing arts, and he consistently challenges students to think critically, work collaboratively, and take pride in their work. His lessons balance technical skill with creativity, helping students build both confidence and competence.



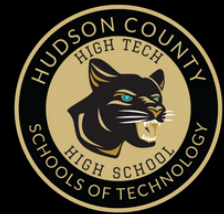
In addition to his teaching, Mr. Zhang is deeply committed to supporting students beyond the classroom. He serves as a HOSA advisor and regularly mentors students as they explore college options, certifications, and career pathways. Colleagues and students alike respect him for being approachable, patient, and genuinely invested in student success. He holds high expectations while providing the guidance students need to meet them, making a lasting impact on their academic and personal growth.

Teacher of the Year & Governor's Educator of the Year Nominee : Dr. Shelly Witham High Tech/ACTE

Dr. Shelly Witham has been named High Tech High School Teacher of the Year and is officially nominated for both the Governor's Educator of the Year Award and the County Teacher of the Year Award. For 24 years, Dr. Witham has been a steady and transformative presence at High Tech. As the founder and leader of the Environmental Science Academy, she has built one of the district's strongest programs, providing students with the unique opportunity to earn an associate degree in Environmental Studies before graduating high school. Under her guidance, students consistently excel, earning top honors in competitions such as eCYBERMISSION, FFA, Envirothon, and the Global Youth Institute. Beyond the classroom, Dr. Witham is a trusted mentor, collaborator, and advocate whose warmth, professionalism, and dedication continue to inspire generations of students and staff.



Ms. Stephany Petito has been named Academy of Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year and is also nominated for both the Governor's Educator of the Year Award and the County Teacher of the Year Award. As a ninth-grade English Language Arts teacher, Ms. Petito plays a vital role in welcoming students to High Tech with compassion, creativity, and high expectations. Known for her imaginative teaching style—famously channeling Ms. Frizzle each Halloween—she brings literature to life while fostering trust, curiosity, and deep engagement. Beyond the classroom, her impact extends through her leadership in building community, including the teacher book club she founded, which has become a meaningful space for connection and professional growth.



Mr. William Lawson is an exceptional educator whose dedication to teaching Construction Trades and Electricity Trades has made a lasting impact on students. He provides hands-on, real-world instruction that equips students with practical skills, industry knowledge, and workplace readiness. Through his engaging lessons, Mr. Lawson emphasizes safety, problem-solving, and technical precision, preparing students for careers, apprenticeships, and postsecondary opportunities in the skilled trades.



Beyond technical instruction, Mr. Lawson fosters professionalism, responsibility, and a strong work ethic in his classroom. He builds meaningful relationships with students while maintaining high expectations, encouraging them to take pride in their work and pursue excellence. His commitment to career and technical education, student success, and workforce development makes him highly deserving of recognition as a Teacher of the Year nominee.



It is with great pride and full confidence that Explore Middle School's GEOY Selection Panel endorses Norrey Benito as our school's Teacher of the Year! As an alumna of both Explore and County Prep, she embodies the spirit, values, and community commitment that define Explore Middle School. Her dedication to giving back - professionally, personally, and consistently- makes her a remarkable representative of our school and an exceptional educator.



### High Tech Theatre Shines at Statewide STANJ Competition

High Tech High School's Theatre Arts Department proudly competed in the STANJ Competition on January 10, 2026, earning multiple honors among top student performers from across New Jersey. STANJ (Speech and Theatre Association of New Jersey) is a statewide organization that celebrates excellence in speech, theatre, and musical theatre through competitive performance events. This year's competition included 48 schools and more than 1,100 students.



Senior musical theatre major Noah Sendon earned 2nd place overall for his outstanding dramatic monologue. Musical theatre sophomores Zac Kiltchko and Maxwell Wissing were recognized for their musical duet, while junior musical theatre major Alfred Lemon received an award for his exceptional musical theatre solo. Drama majors Yariliz Tapia and Anthony Wenzel were named finalists for their strong performances in the improvisation category.

Congratulations to all of the Theatre Arts students who represented High Tech High School with such talent and professionalism.

THANK YOU to instructors Ms. Colette Jackson-Belle and Ms. Raluca Shields!

## Wolfpack Winter Sowing in Action

Our Winter Sowing project is officially underway, and we are so excited to watch it grow. Winter sowing allows seeds to experience natural winter conditions, helping them germinate at the right time in spring and grow stronger and more resilient.

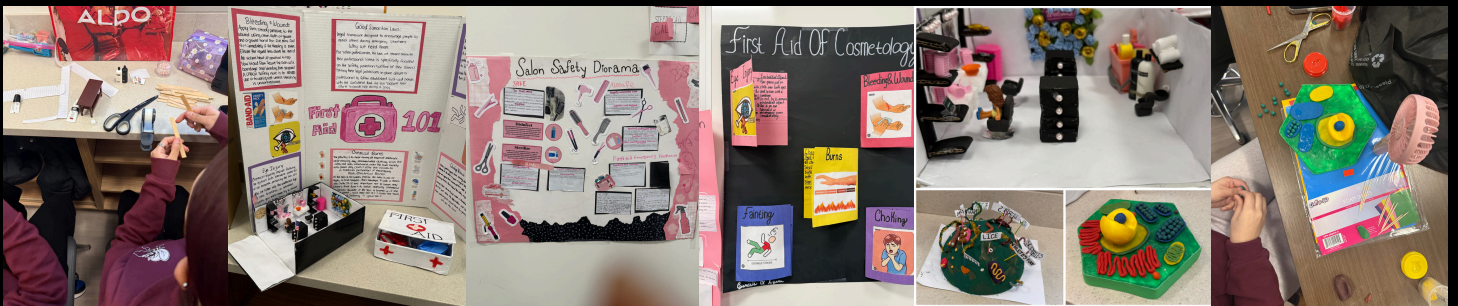
A huge thank you to our wonderful expert parents, Ms. Jenny and Ms. Beth, for making this hands-on learning experience possible. Students planted a variety of native flowers and vegetables that will support pollinators and strengthen our local ecosystem.

Thank you to our Wolfpack families for donating containers and supporting sustainability. We love learning by doing and caring for our environment together.



## Leadership in Action: Student Council Making a Sweet Impact

Cosmetology students combined creativity with core safety lessons, showcasing hands-on projects focused on infection transmission, infection control, and first aid essential skills for maintaining a safe, sanitary, and professional salon environment.



## Bringing Stories to Life with Author Saadia Faruqi

We loved welcoming Saadia Faruqi to Explore Middle School. Students asked thoughtful questions and learned about the writing process, what it means to be an author, and Ms. Faruqi's life and journey as a writer. Her visit was inspiring and empowering for our Wolfpack.



## HTHS Chess Team Advances to National Playoffs

Congratulations to the HTHS Chess Team and Coach, Jared Krinsky!

The team qualified for the playoffs on December 19th, 2025, facing the 8 best teams from across the nation. There were 32 teams in total from different schools, including Palm Beach Lake Community High School, Florida; WP Davidson High School, Alabama; and Jose Marti STEM Academy from Union City, NJ.



The team captain, D|Fab major, junior Ali Issa, played the final game that secured the team's victory. The team played against Denison High School, Texas, team name "DHS YJ-C."

[Click](#) the link to read news article.

## Where Classroom Learning Meets Athletic Excellence

The Wolfpack had the opportunity to participate in this initiative through our Exercise Science CTE program, connecting sports instruction with classroom learning. By partnering with coaches and educators, students build teamwork, confidence, problem-solving skills, and overall physical wellness while engaging in meaningful, hands-on physical education.



### A Day of Leadership, Learning, and Wolfpack Spirit

Our Peer Leaders did an incredible job guiding activities like gingerbread house building, handprint adjective art, and writing letters and designing cards for people in service. Their leadership, creativity, and care truly made the day special. Great job, Peer Leaders!

We also welcomed @hcia\_online (Kayt and John) for an engaging seminar on environmental shopping, helping students think more intentionally about sustainability and everyday choices.

To wrap up the day, we enjoyed the exciting 6th vs. 7th grade showdown, with our 8th graders stepping up as mentors, coaches, and cheerleaders. The teamwork and Wolfpack spirit were on full display!



## Seniors Make Dollar Wars a Sweet Success

On Monday, January 12th, Ms. Young and Mr. Rivera got pied in the face on the main cafeteria steps as a result of the Senior Student Council's Dollar Wars fundraiser! The teacher or administrator with the most money in their jar got pied. Ms. Young came in **FIRST PLACE** with an incredible \$600!!! Thank you to everyone who participated in this fundraiser. The Class of 2026 raised over \$1,000, making this a huge success!



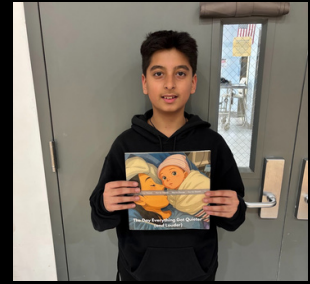
## Slam Dunk Showdown: Sophomores Take the Win in Underclassmen vs. Teachers Game

On Dec. 23, 2025, High Tech held its annual Underclassmen vs. Teachers' basketball game. This highly anticipated event was both energetic and memorable with all participants showing school spirit through friendly competition. While the teachers and freshmen put up a fight all the way to the final seconds of their game against the sophomores, the sophomores came out victorious. On the court, the sophomores stood out with their strong teamwork, skills, and determination. With a loud, supportive crowd and exciting moments throughout the games, this event brought both students and staff together. We can't wait for next year's game. Will the sophomores (Class of 2028) continue to reign as champions? Or will the teachers or freshmen get the win next year? Whatever the outcome, the Underclassmen vs. Teachers' basketball game is an awesome display of the school community engaged in developing positive team culture and resilience through sports.



## Student Spotlight

Congratulations to Arya B. (6th grade) on the release of his newly launched book, *The Day Everything Got Quieter (and Louder)*! We're proud to celebrate his creativity and hard work.



If you love supporting student authors, check out his book and help spread the word:  
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FL658G3F>

Keep writing and sharing your voice, Arya, the Wolfpack is cheering you on!

## Staff Spotlight

We recently celebrated Rob McCaig's final day with us and want to thank him for his years of dedication, hard work, and care for our students and staff. His impact on our school community will continue for years to come. We wish him a happy and well-deserved retirement. Rob will always be part of the Wolfpack.



# Hudson Technical

We are proud to celebrate our recent graduates from the ESL classes offered by Hudson Technical and the HCST Community Resource Center. This achievement represents months of dedication, growth, and determination, and we are excited to recognize the hard work of each student.

Throughout their ESL journey, students strengthened their English skills while building confidence for everyday life, work, and continued education. Many balanced classes with jobs, family responsibilities, and other commitments, making their success even more meaningful. With the guidance and support of our instructors, graduates reached an important milestone that opens the door to new opportunities.



Our ESL classes are designed to be practical, supportive, and welcoming. Instruction focuses on real-world communication that students can use immediately at home, in the workplace, and in the community. The classroom environment encourages participation, collaboration, and steady progress at every stage of learning.

We congratulate our recent ESL graduates on their accomplishments and are proud to continue offering ESL classes to members of our community. Whether students are working toward career goals, further education, or personal growth, our program is here to support them every step of the way.

Anyone looking for more information on our ESL class offerings should contact





# HUDSON COUNTY SCHOOLS OF TECHNOLOGY

## ADULT HIGH SCHOOL

### NEW LOCATION:

HCST Earl W. ByrdCenter  
525 Montgomery Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07302

Free transportation from Harrison

### ABOUT US

Adult High School offers a flexible and personalized approach to education, designed to help adult learners achieve their academic goals. We provide guidance through counseling and academic advisement, helping students understand and earn the credits needed for graduation.

### SERVICES OFFERED

- Learn Your Way – Flexible classes that fit your schedule.
- Earn & Transfer Credits – Get the credits you need to graduate
- Personalized Guidance – Tailored plans and career advice.
- Support & Counseling – Help with school, career, and life goals.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW](#)



### CONTACT

Phone Number: (201) 631-6361

Email Address: [hcstahs@hcstonline.org](mailto:hcstahs@hcstonline.org)

# REAL-ESTATE COURSE 2025-2026



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**FALL SEMESTER**

**SPRING SEMESTER**

## TOPICS:

- Real Estate Concepts
- Real Estate Law
- Mortgages
- Contracts
- Title Closings
- Property Interest & Much More

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Must be 18 years of age or older
- Must have a high school diploma or equivalency

**EXAM FEE NOT INCLUDED IN TUITION**

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ACCESS WEBSITE



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COURSE SCHEDULE & TUITION PLEASE VISIT:**



[hudson-technical.hcstonline.us/](http://hudson-technical.hcstonline.us/)



[hudsontechnical@hcstonline.org](mailto:hudsontechnical@hcstonline.org)



(201) 662-6791

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# Yoga

## COMMUNITY CLASS

BREATH, STRETCH, & CONNECT ALL LEVELS WELCOME!

### WHEN

*Mondays & Thursdays*

### TIME

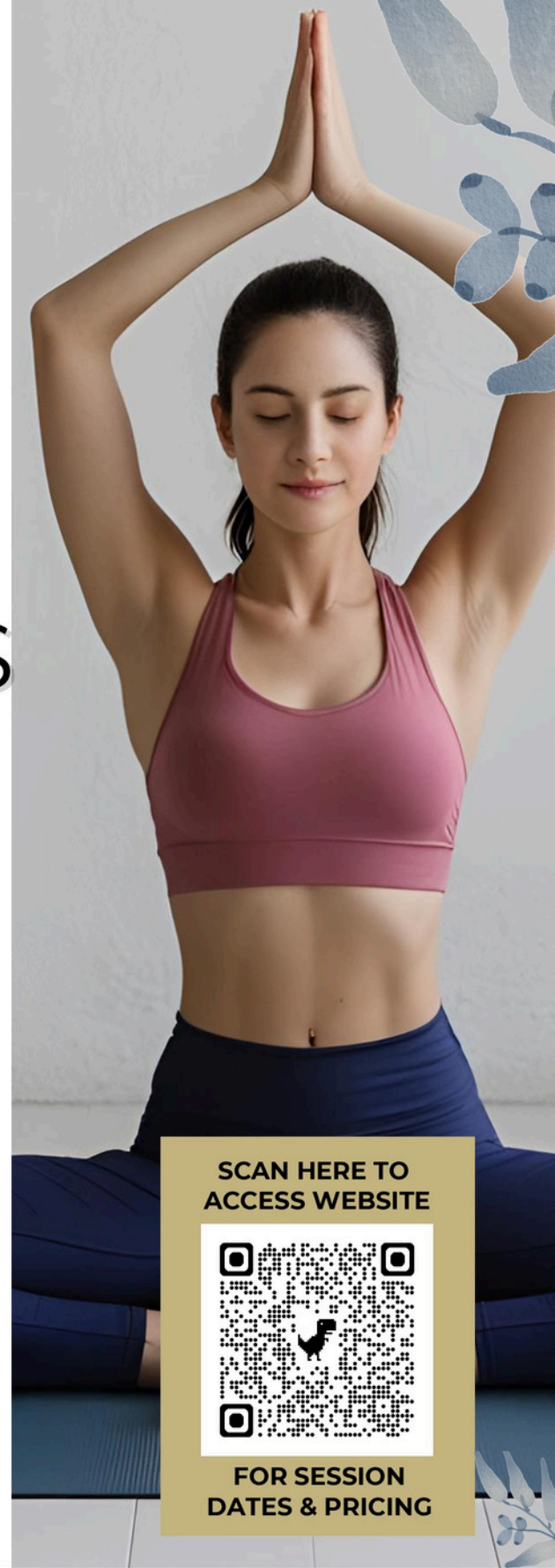
*6:30PM - 7:30PM*

### WHERE

Frank J. Garguilo Campus  
High Tech High School  
One High Tech Way  
Secaucus, NJ 07094

**BRING YOUR OWN YOGA MAT - IS HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!**

*Book Your Spot Now!*



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FOR SESSION  
DATES & PRICING

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- Must be 18 yrs old at time of application
- Must be a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident (Green Card)
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- Must successfully complete the NJ required training course
- Must be electronically finger printed by IdentoGo finger services (fee required)

## WE PROVIDE:

- NEW OFFICER TRAINING CERTIFICATION
- RENEWAL OFFICER TRAINING CERTIFICATION



## FRANK J. GARGIULO CAMPUS

High Tech High School  
One High Tech Way,  
Secaucus NJ, 07094  
(FREE PARKING)

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- ✓ PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL HYGIENE & SANITATION
- ✓ TIME & TEMPERATURE CONTROL
- ✓ PREVENTING CROSS-CONTAMINATION
- ✓ SAFE FOOD PREPARATION
- ✓ AND MORE...

## 📍 EARL W. BYRD CENTER

COUNTY PREP HIGH SCHOOL  
525 MONTGOMERY ST.  
JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302  
(FREE PARKING)

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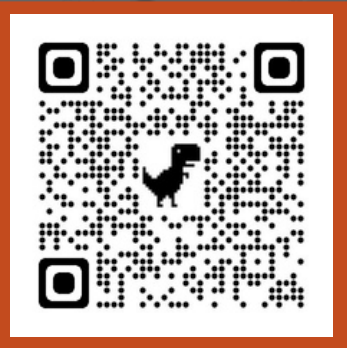
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<https://hudson-technical.hcstonline.us/>



 **FACILITY LOCATION:**  
Bayonne High School  
669 Avenue A, Bayonne, NJ 07002  
-Entrance between 29th & 30th Street -  
**DOOR #12**

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# HCST-HUDSON TECHNICAL POST SECONDARY COURSES



## ON-SITE COURSES



- HVAC Basics
- SORA Training
- Auto Mechanics Basics
- Plumbing (Basics & Advanced)
- Cosmetology & Hairstyling
- EKG (CET) & Phlebotomy (CPT) Technician
- Culinary Arts & ServSafe Manager Certification

## ONLINE COURSES



- Clinical Dental Assistant
- Medical Billing & Coding Training
- Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA)
- CompTIA IT Fundamentals (Voucher Included)
- Professional Bookkeeping & Online QuickBooks
- OSHA 30 Hour Construction
- Teacher Assistant / Aide (With ParaPro Prep)

## COMMUNITY COURSES



- Yoga
- Tech Savvy For Seniors
- Intro To Law & The Legal System
- Health Is Wealth - Fitness
- Community Cooking Nights (Different Cuisines)

New courses continuously added. Check our website for a detailed listing of all courses.



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BECOME A LIFE-LONG LEARNER, STACK  
YOUR CREDENTIALS & UP-SKILL!



Explore Middle School  
180 9th St. Jersey City,  
NJ 07302



Earl W. Byrd Center  
525 Montgomery St.  
Jersey City, NJ 07302



Bayonne High School  
669 Ave. A (Door #12)  
Bayonne, NJ 07002



Washington Middle  
School 1 N 5th St,  
Harrison, NJ 07029



Community  
Resource Center  
530 48th St. 6th FL,  
Union City, NJ 07087



Frank J. Gargiulo  
One High Tech Way  
Secaucus, NJ 07094

## Application Requirements:

- Must be 18 years of age or older
- High School Diploma or equivalent
- Capable of performing coursework and financial obligation

✓ WIOA Eligible

✓ Flexible Learning

✓ Low Cost & Short Term

✓ Job Placement Assistance

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"It is the policy of the Board of Education of the Hudson County Schools of Technology not to discriminate in employment or educational opportunity against any person by reason of race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, or atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait of any individual, in employment or in educational opportunities. Further state and federal protection is extended on account of disabilities, social or economic status, pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy related disabilities, actual or potential parenthood, or family status." Inquires regarding affirmative action, discrimination (including Title IX requirements), sexual harassment or equity should be directed to: **Alicia Abraham**, Affirmative Action Officer/504 Officer/Title IX Coordinator E-mail: aabraham@hcstonline.org | **Derrick Thompson**, Affirmative Action Officer/504 Officer/Title IX Coordinator E-mail: dthompo@hcstonline.org  
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# EKG & PHLEBOTOMY TRAINING



Explore a new career in healthcare

**REGISTER NOW!**

**2025-2026**

**FALL SEMESTER  
SPRING SEMESTER**

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- Medical Terminology
- Anatomy & Physiology
- EKG Placement & Interpretation
- Infection Control
- Skin Punctures & Venipuncture
- Blood Collection Procedure
- Special Collections
- Cell & Blood Makeup
- Lab Safety Practices

## CREDENTIALS EARNED:

**CET & CPT Credentials**

## PROVIDED BY:

**The National Healthcareer Association (NHA)**

✔ **STUDENTS MUST PURCHASE BLACK SCRUBS AND CROCS WITHOUT HOLES**

📍 **Earl W. Byrd County Prep High School  
525 Montgomery Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07302**

**ENTRANCE AND FREE PARKING IN THE REAR  
OF THE BUILDING OFF OF BRIGHT STREET**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COURSE SCHEDULE AND TUITION PLEASE VISIT:**



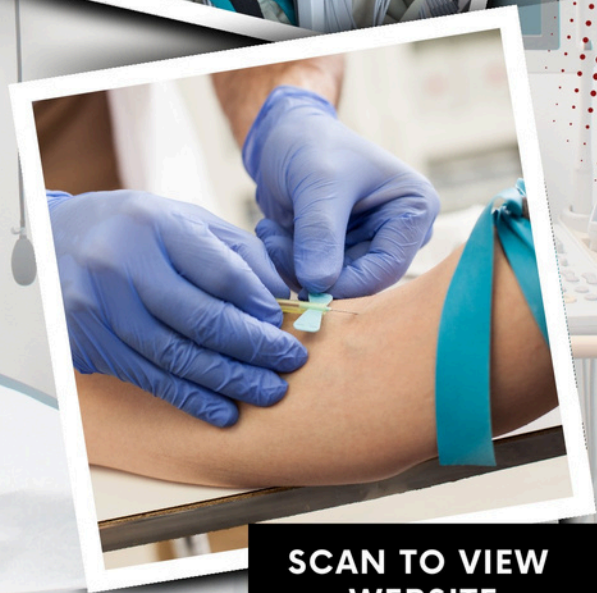
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**(201) 662-6791**



**SCAN TO VIEW  
WEBSITE**



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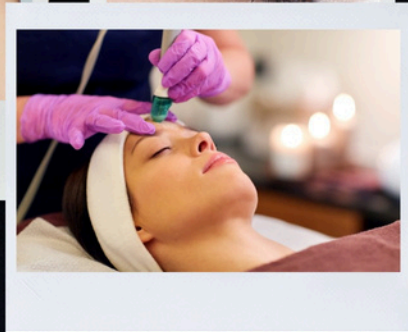
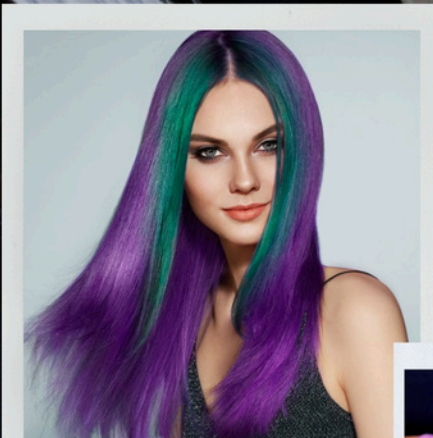
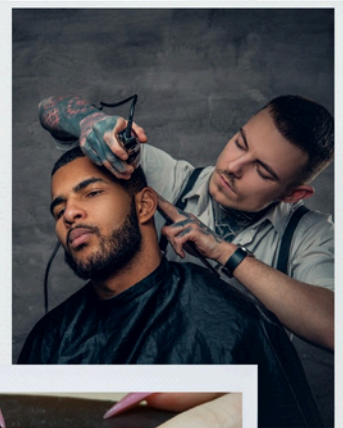
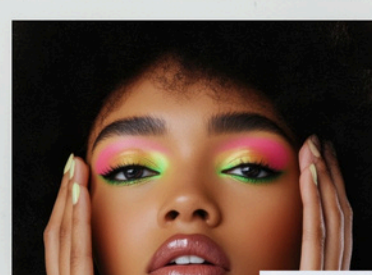
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# Cosmetology & Hairstyling Program



**ENROLL NOW!**

The 10 month program is designed to teach students the theory and practical skills necessary to prepare them for the NJ State Board Cosmetology Licensing Exam.



**EARL W. BYRD CENTER**  
COUNTY PREP HIGH SCHOOL  
525 MONTGOMERY ST.  
JERSEY CITY NJ, 07302  
**FREE PARKING**

SCAN HERE TO  
ACCESS WEBSITE



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