

Feasibility Study for Chapter 74 Approval

WAVM Radio and Television Broadcasting Certificate

Maynard Public School District

SPRING 2015

The following document provides brief analyses and recommendations for the general feasibility of a state-approved vocational program for Radio and Television Broadcasting Certification at Maynard High School. This document is for internal purposes only.

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Introduction

In 2013, the Maynard School Committee approved a proposed feasibility study to investigate whether Maynard High School (MHS) should apply to Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for a new vocational technical education program, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 74 (M.G.L.c.74) (Chapter 74) and the Vocational Technical Education Regulations (603 CMR 4.00). The study was conducted from December 2014 to May 2015.

The purpose of this report is to assess two main areas: 1) school community interest, support, and concerns for a new program, and 2) the high school's financial, structural, and human resource viability for such a program. Additionally, this report provides information on state and national market growth relevant to the proposed program, an overview for program structure (e.g., staffing, scheduling), observed lessons-learned from current models in nearby Massachusetts high schools, and final recommendations.

WAVM Program

Maynard High School has a proud tradition of providing the student-run [WAVM radio station club](#) for students to learn and experience a variety of roles in radio and television broadcasting. Founded in 1973, the radio station provides radio and television broadcasts in local news, sports, and church radio broadcasts. The station also hosts an annual *Beacon Santa Telethon* to raise money for families in Massachusetts.

For decades, the WAVM club has succeeded in providing students interested in communications an extra-curricular outlet to learn and experience radio and television broadcasting. The intention of restructuring the WAVM is not to replace the club; rather, the purpose of implementing a more formal structure, (i.e., an established curriculum with classes and qualified teachers)¹ is to provide MHS students the *option* to earn a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Radio and Television Broadcasting Certificate in addition to a high school diploma. Additionally, the new program may offer several more topics for study, including:

- Health and Safety in Television and Cinema Production
- Cinema and Video Production
- Broadcast Journalism
- Photography
- Audio Production
- Studio and Field Equipment Use
- Pre-Production, Production, Post-Production

¹ The Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Regulations 603 CMR 4.03 (4) require that vocational technical education programs “be based on the applicable Vocational Technical Education Framework and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.” A WAVM program must adhere to the frameworks under the Arts & Communication Services Occupational Cluster. The Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks are available on the ESE-Career/Vocational Technical Education website <http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/frameworks/>

Importance of Vocational / Career and Technical Education

Secondary vocational education is commonly known as Career and Technical Education (CTE). The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Office of Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) uses both terms—career and vocational—in its definition. Henceforth, when referencing Maynard's specific program, the CVTE definition will be used.

According to the Association for Career and Technical Education, CTE “prepares both youth and adults for a wide range of careers and further educational opportunities. These careers may require varying levels of education—including industry-recognized credentials, postsecondary certificates, and two- and four-year degrees” (2014, para. 1). CTE at the secondary level is a course of study that prepares students with the skills and knowledge to proficiently enter their field of study after high school with the option of furthering their studies at the postsecondary level.

Although CTE was originally developed as an alternative option for students with low academic promise (Agodini & Deke, 2004; Bishop & Mane, 2004; Castellano, Stringfield & Stone III, 2003; Fletcher & Zirkle, 2009; Lewis, 2000), CTE “has evolved to include an increased emphasis on academic preparation” (Dare, 2006, p. 73). Additionally, CTE is cited frequently as an important component to a modern need for national College and Career Readiness (CCR). In response to the changing demands of the national labor market, under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Reauthorization Acts II and III, traditional career and technical education (vocational education) expanded to include new career-related offerings (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). Skill sets associated with college readiness, such as academic knowledge, communication, technology skills, and critical thinking, also have become foundational components of career readiness standards (Conley & McGaughy, 2012).

High school CTE programs have been shown to positively impact students in several areas, including increased academic and social engagement, improved attitudes toward school, improved dropout rates, increased motivation, increased career aspirations, and increased occupational wage earnings (Bishop & Mane, 2004; Fletcher & Zirkle, 2009; Kelly & Price, 2009; Lewis, 2008; Plank, Deluca, & Estacion, 2008). Additionally, students who participate in a CTE program have reported feeling better prepared for the transition to college (Bragg & Ruud, 2007).

Radio and Television Broadcasting Market Growth

The average number of CTE credits acquired by U.S. public high school graduates declined between 1990 and 2009; however, average CTE credits in communication and healthcare increased during these years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Figure 1 displays the change in the percentage of public high school graduates earning credits in each occupational area between 1990 and 2009. The umbrella term “communication” includes radio and television broadcasting, including topics such as cinema and video production, broadcast journalism, photography, audio production, studio and field equipment training, and pre and post-production.

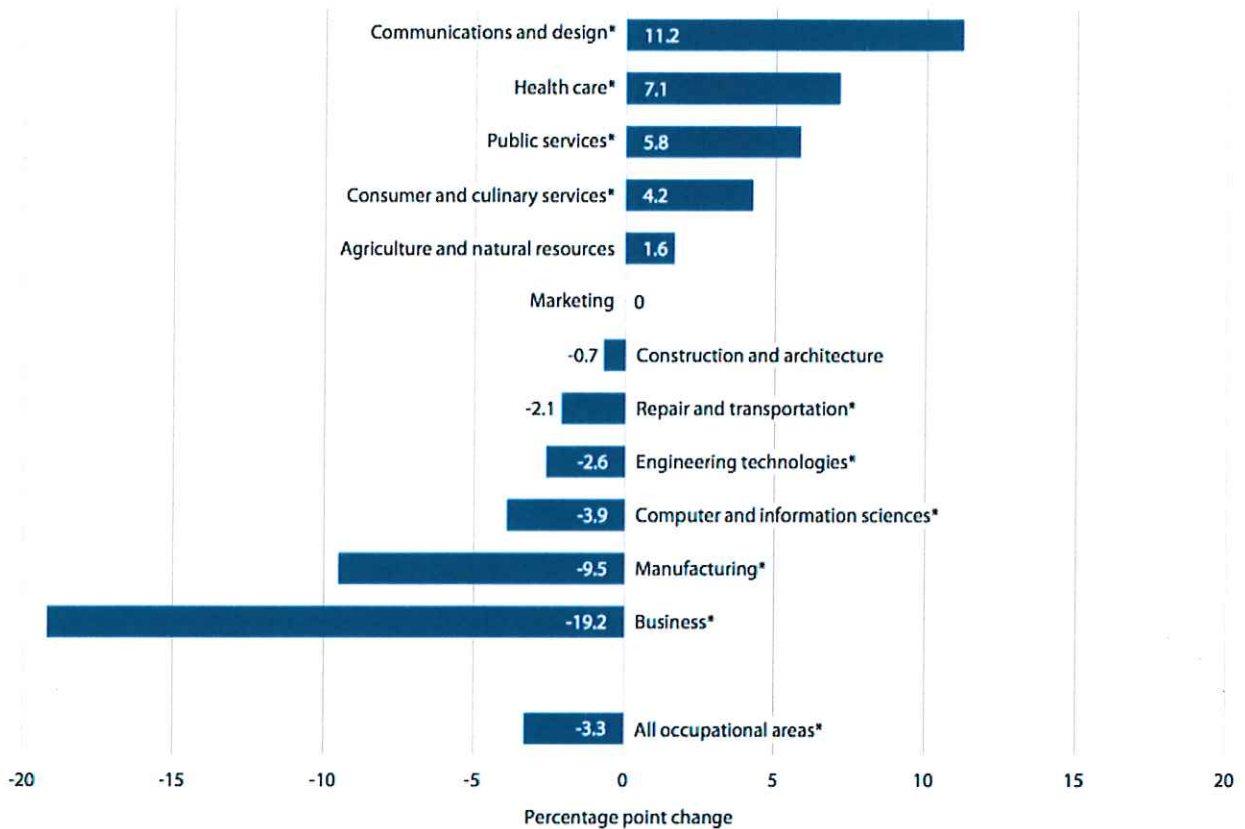


Figure 1. Change in the percentage of public high school graduates earning credits in each occupational area between 1990 and 2009 (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Transcript Study, 1990, 2000, 2005, and 2009).

*Significantly different ($p < .05$) from zero.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, media and communication jobs are projected to rise nationally at 8.3% by 2022, with the largest rise in public announcing (7.6%) and public relation jobs (12%), and a slight decline in jobs for reporters and news analysts. Miscellaneous media and communications jobs are projected to rise 32.7%, and media and communication equipment jobs are expected to rise 5.4%, with a sharp 13.7% rise in audio and video equipment technician jobs.²

According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the outlook for jobs in the communications field statewide are mostly on the rise for 2022, with declines in areas indicative of the national projects (e.g., broadcast news analysts, news reporters). However, the majority of communication jobs are on the rise in Massachusetts, with jobs in audio and video equipment (15.66%), public relations (14.77%), sound and engineering (6.09%), and film and video editing (7.35%) as some of the highest. In the Massachusetts Metro South/West region, the percentages of growth are similar: the region is projected to see a decline

² For a full report on labor projects, see: http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_102.htm from the U.S. Department of Labor

in news reporting (-13.7%), and a substantial rise in public relations (12.7%), and film and video editors (10.57%). Salaries in communications jobs in Massachusetts range from \$42,170 to \$84,000. Some jobs, such as radio operators, require only a high school diploma, but most require a bachelor's degree.

Part I. School Community Support

Assessing school community support is an important area for determining the feasibility of a Chapter 74 program, as these are the major stakeholders in such a program. The *school community*, for the purposes of this report, consists of teachers, students, and parents. This section reviews the support of this community for Chapter 74, primarily the interests, perceived benefits, and potential concerns in reforming the current WAVM club into a formal program integrated into the full school day.

Methods and Collection

This section is based on survey data collected from teachers, students, and parents at the Maynard high school and middle school. Each survey includes open and closed response questions and likert-type scale questions. The instruments were created within Qualtrics, which provides a flexible set of question types for the researcher with options for long-term data storage.

The high school principal, Mr. Caragianes, administered surveys via email to all participants to help ensure adequate response rates. An introductory email was sent to prepare participants for the survey, following with the initial request for survey responses. The initial request to participants was sent March 19th, 2015 and the deadline for receipt of responses was March 27th, 2015 for teachers and students, and April 3rd 2015 for parents. On this date, the survey was closed to further responses and analysis began.

Participants included students, teachers, and parents. Participation was voluntary, and each survey was designed to take 5-10 minutes. The student survey ($n=280$) responses include students in grades 7-12. The teacher survey ($n=41$) includes teachers of grades 6-12. Maynard parents ($n=145$) include those with children in grades 6-12, and children who have recently graduated.

Maynard Parents

145 parents completed the WAVM survey. Of these parents, 6% have children who recently graduated from MHS. Parents with children in the 6th grade (28%) made up the highest percentage of respondents, and the remaining percentages of parents ranged from 15% (10th and 12th grade) to 21% (8th grade). 10% of parents indicated having a background in or currently involved in radio and television broadcasting. 45% reported sometimes listening or watching the WAVM broadcasts (14% indicated never watching or listening to WAVM broadcasts). Lastly, 53% of parents reported having a child involved in the WAVM program, either currently or in the past; of these parents, 78% reported their child(ren) having a positive experience, 22% neutral, and no parents indicated that their child had a negative experience.

Maynard Parent Support

Parents of Maynard high school and middle school students, along with a few parents of recent high school graduates, indicated overwhelming support (92%) for altering WAVM to make it suitable for state-approved certification in radio and television broadcasting. **94% reported that an option for MHS students to gain certification in radio and broadcasting would be good for students.** 63% of parents would encourage their child to become involved in the program if an option for certification became available.

Parents presented several supportive comments on the benefits of a WAVM Chapter 74 certification in radio and television broadcasting. Most comments indicated general support for the opportunity of such a program—an opportunity for students and for the school itself, as illustrated below:

The kids learn so much presently and to have the certification behind the knowledge will give them an edge with the competition. It will also empower some kids who might not have any future educational goals to seek higher education in this field. It would also be a HUGE draw from the surrounding communities for other interested kids to want to use school choice into Maynard. Maynard would finally have something unique.

One parent, for example, wrote simply, “the more options for our students, the better!” Another wrote, “WAVM has always been a big part of Maynard and the community. Anything that would enhance the station would be welcomed.” Other parents stated it would be “important to broaden options at MHS,” and that adding this option “is a good thing, whether or not this will be a life long career—it adds to their experience and knowledge.”

Many comments focused on the benefits for postsecondary education and career readiness, particularly in forming a “deeper connections to content and real world opportunities.” One parent wrote, “[WAVM] can give students the opportunity to explore different fields of education before getting into college.” Another parent, whose son is involved with WAVM, commented that a more “robust” program could “provide a career for somebody in the field.” A state-approved certificate can not only help prepare students for future careers in communications, but also “help their ability to get an internship or job in the field while still in school.” Exploring and preparing for careers was a common positive theme in the open-response section. These comments are in line with survey results. **57% of parents reported that a certification program would “most likely” help students succeed in post-secondary education and/or career, and 17% said it would “definitely” help students succeed.**

Lastly, some parents felt a more enhanced WAVM program would be an appropriate use for the new “state of the art” WAVM facilities at MHS. “It has always been my feeling that WAVM is an underutilized resource for our students. We have a new facility without any real classes.”

Summary of Perceived Benefits

A WAVM Chapter 74 certification program would...

- Raise the profile of Maynard High School
- Put the new facilities and equipment to good use
- Improve career readiness
- Provide opportunity to explore potential career paths
- Validate the work students have already been doing (through certification)

- Provide more opportunities for students, regardless of career path, is beneficial for their development
- Generate revenue for school district (e.g., bringing in more students from neighboring districts)

Maynard Parent Concerns

While parents expressed concerns for MHS seeking state-approved certification for a WAVM Chapter 74 program, the overall number of unsupportive comments or comments indicating a clear concern were far outnumbered by supportive comments. The most commonly noted concerns are explained below.

Excluding students who may not be interested in receiving certification, or limiting the extent to which students can be involved in WAVM opportunities, was perhaps the most common concern in the open-response section. As one parent summarized, “while I am in support of offering a certificate, I do not believe it should be all or nothing. There are students involved in WAVM that would have no interest in getting a certificate.” The apparent apprehension for a more structured program derives from the concern that it may change the student-run culture of the WAVM club, which was described as “fun” and less formal. As one parent stated, “I think many kids go to WAVM to be social but also to learn about radio. If this is a required course study, only the most serious students will go to WAVM. It will not be a welcoming place for just any student with varied levels of interest. My child would not go if class work was required to participate.” On the other hand, one parent expressed a need for a formal structure to replace the less formal, student-run culture. This parent was concerned with how quickly MHS will pursue state approval:

A much more formalized system of classes and leadership should replace the current ‘student-run’ model if our students are actually going to receive valuable instruction that could lead towards post-secondary career choices. I just hope you don’t take forever to make this change so that my son, and others, lose out on a valuable educational opportunity.”

Most parents, however, expressed concern about student involvement (or exclusion) in the form of a question. One parent asked, “I don’t know how a more structured program would impact my children if they choose NOT to pursue certification. Would they still be able to participate? Have a radio show? Help out where they can on radio and television shows? More or less than currently?”

The second most common concern was a combination of program costs and, perhaps related to cost, its general impact on other resources or programs. One parent, for example, cautioned, “please keep funding and costs in mind.” Other parents said they support the program as long as it does not “take funding away from core education programs,” or that the program “does not come back as an increase in fees to the students or an additional tax to the townspeople.”

Summary of Parent Concerns

- Extent to which students can be involved in WAVM if it becomes a Chapter 74 program
- Whether the WAVM club (or its informal culture) will continue to exist
- Cost of the program
- Impact on other programs (e.g., core education programs)

Maynard Teachers

41 teachers completed the WAVM survey. Teachers are from the middle school and high school, grades 6-12. 55% of respondents have been involved with the current WAVM club in some capacity, and 20% of teacher respondents indicated having a background in radio and/or broadcasting or communications in general. Lastly, 85% of teacher respondents reported seeing students benefit from the current WAVM club, including postsecondary pursuits, technology skills, and in social development.

Maynard Teacher Support

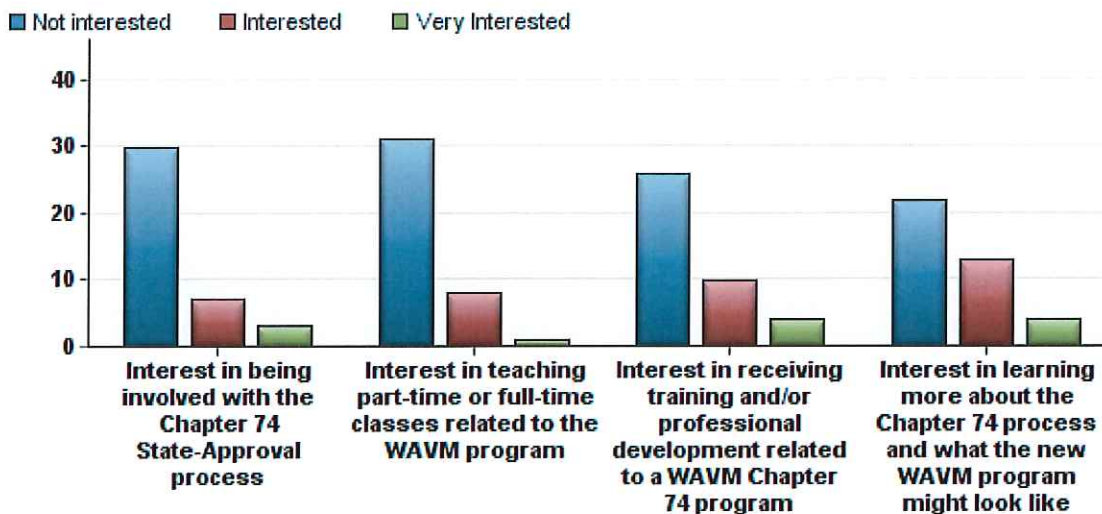
Survey results indicate a high level of support from Maynard teachers for a state-approved WAVM program at MHS. **84% of teachers felt that students would benefit from having the option to graduate with a certification in radio and broadcasting in addition to their high school degree.** 92% of teachers believe that some students would join a certification program if presented with the option.

Teachers indicated students would benefit from a state-approved WAVM certification program in several ways, including improved social skills and experiences, preparation for postsecondary education, and career readiness. One teacher wrote, “the district has had many students leave MHS and go on to pursue a career in radio/TV. What a step up they would have had if this option was in place.” Another teacher’s comments echoed this sentiment: “. . . it would give them 21st century skills in the communications job market.” One teacher commented that providing more hands-on programs would be beneficial to students. This teacher wrote,

I believe that the more we offer students through typical classroom or hands on experience are always beneficial. It was a shame that we cut essential programs like Project Adventure and Health, which provided invaluable life skills. Perhaps this addition will give our students something more to look forward to. In addition, they will gain so many valuable life/work skills.

Teachers also reported their interest levels in a WAVM Chapter 74 program (or the process to obtain state approval for one). The graph below displays these interest levels.

Teacher Interest in WAVM Chapter 74 (Figure 1)



As displayed in the graph above, teachers revealed a consistent level of interest in WAVM involvement. While the numbers for “very interested” remain low, ranging from 1 to 4 teachers, between 7 and 13 teachers indicated “interest” in several areas, including teaching and/or receiving training or professional development around WAVM Chapter 74. The highest levels of interest were in learning more about the Chapter 74 process and how the new program might look—4 teachers were very interested and 13 were interested.

Summary of Perceived Benefits

- Utilizing new equipment and facilities for radio and television broadcasting
- Career preparation
- Help develop 21st Century skills
- Official validation and recognition for students
- Help develop life skills
- Unique offering to raise Maynard’s profile

Maynard Teacher Concerns

A few teachers indicated practical concerns about a WAVM Chapter 74 program, mainly regarding program costs, and the financial or logistical impact(s) on other programs or teachers. Two teachers inquired about additional expenses, and how the program might impact the budget. One asked, “what will wind up going away or being downgraded when such an upgrade occurs at a public school?” Another teacher worried that a program might “detract from academics,” and another suggested that a new program might create “great scheduling difficulties during the school day—and it seems the high school is already strapped for cash.” Along with scheduling difficulties, one teacher worried that it may “spread teachers too thin.” Overall, however, the comments indicating a concern or lack of support for the program were limited—about 7 of 26 (about 27%) open ended responses included concerns.

Summary of Teacher Concerns

- Cost of WAVM program
- Scheduling and Staff Changes
- Impact on other programs (e.g., academic)

Maynard Students

280 students completed the WAVM survey. Although the survey was administered to students in grades 6-12, only student in grades 7-12 completed the survey. Of these students, the highest respondents were in 8th and 9th grade, comprising 51% of respondents. Overall, 58% of students indicated being currently involved or plan to be involved with WAVM.

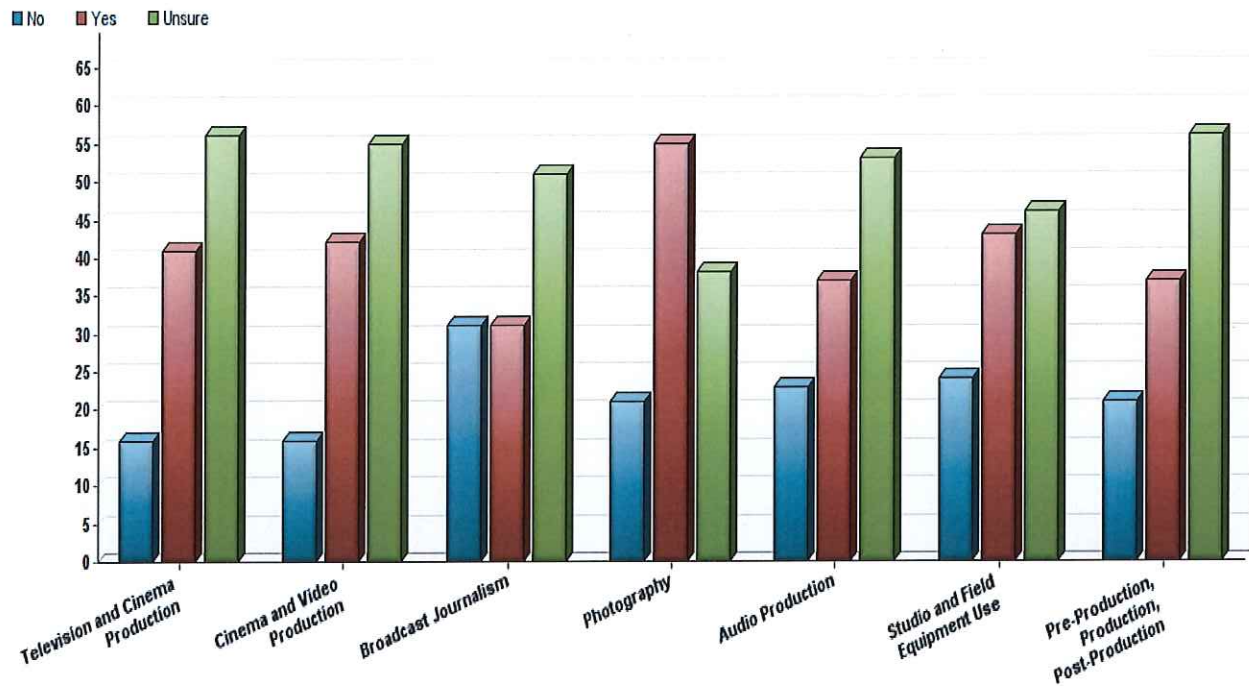
Maynard Student Support

Students indicated a high level of support for a change to WAVM for state-approved certification. **81% of students agreed that an option at MHS for certification in radio and television broadcasting would be good for students,** and 70% would support enhancing WAVM to add structured classes. 38% of students said they would be interested in joining the program if MHS offered WAVM classes, and 40% said they might be interested.

The tables below displays a cross-tabulation of students who agreed or strongly agreed that they planned to pursue a career in communications, or that they planned to attend a school in communications, and their perceptions regarding the importance of WAVM in preparing them for careers in several related areas.

5% of students said they plan to attend a school for radio and television broadcasting upon graduating high school. 37% said they might attend a school for radio and television. The results in Figure 2 show the results of survey question #8 (will studying this topic help prepare you for your plans after graduating high school) of this combined subgroup of students ($n=115$).

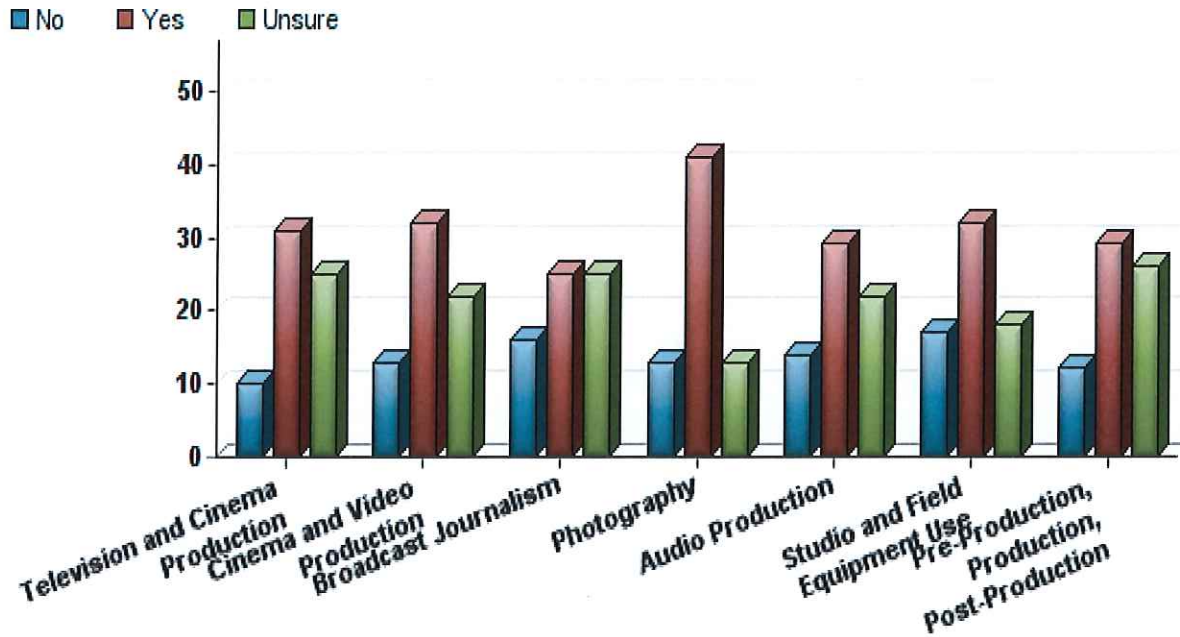
Student (Subgroup) Perception of Topic Relevance to Career Path (Figure 2)



While many students were unsure as to whether studying these particular topics—topics likely to be offered in a formal, state-approved certification program—many students felt that studying these topics would help prepare them for their post graduation pursuits. Each topic area received a yes from at least 30 students, and photography, studio and field equipment, and production received the most support, with over 50 students indicating photography as a topic that will prepare them for post graduation plans.

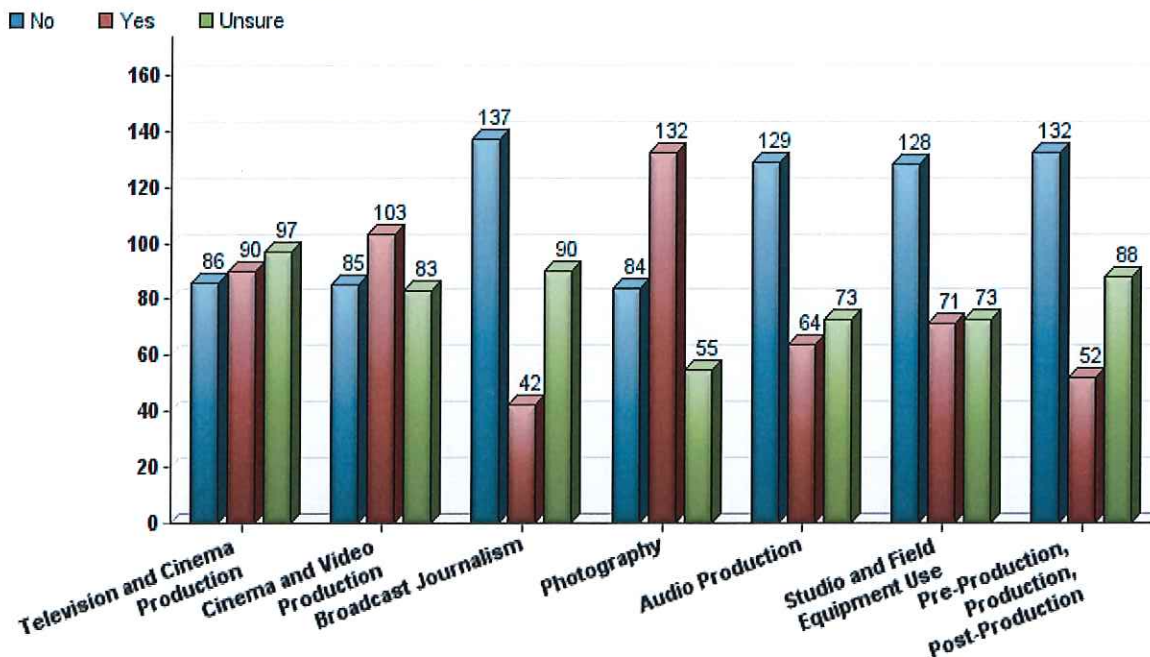
Figure 3 displays results to the same question, filtered for a subpopulation of students ($n=69$) who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I plan to pursue a career in an area related to radio and TV broadcasting.” For the majority of students planning to pursue a career specifically in radio and TV broadcasting, every topic would help prepare them.

Student (Subgroup) Perception of Topic Relevance to Career Path (Figure 3)



Lastly, figure 4 shows the numbers of students interested in studying these topics, regardless of whether they plan to pursue a career in a related field or plan to attend a school for radio and television broadcasting. Students who did not indicate a plan to pursue a career in

Student Interest in Radio and Television Broadcast-Related Topics for Study (Figure 4)



communication have an interest in studying several of these topics. Photography, and cinema and video production are topics in which students are most interested; broadcast journalism and pre-production garnered the least interest.

Several students provided insight into how WAVM has influenced them. Students identified academic, social, and emotional skills gained from their involvement. According to students, they acquired skills and experience in technology, leadership, organization, community service, and communication, such as public speaking. One student wrote, “Helped me with skills in leadership, organization, as well as given me some of the best experiences that I got to share with very close friends that I made there.” Another said they had learned “valuable communication skills not found in any other educational opportunities.”

Maynard Student Concerns

Students noted few concerns regarding WAVM; however, three students expressed frustration over perceived excess in funding for WAVM. One student wrote, “Spend the money elsewhere. In all seriousness, There are more useful things we can use the budget for. Such as the heavily underfunded athletic programs. The amount of money going toward WAVM is ridiculous. We should consider cutting funding rather than increasing it.”

Summary of WAVM Survey Findings

	Summary of Perceived Benefits	Summary of Concerns
<i>Parents</i>	<p>A WAVM Chapter 74 certification program would...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of Maynard High School • Put the new facilities and equipment to good use • Improve career readiness • Provide opportunity to explore potential career paths • Validate the work students have already been doing (through certification) • Provide more opportunities for students, regardless of career path, is beneficial for their development • Generate revenue for school district (e.g., bringing in more students from neighboring districts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which students can be involved in WAVM if it becomes a Chapter 74 program • Whether the WAVM club (or its informal culture) will continue to exist • Cost of the program • Impact on other programs (e.g., core education programs)
<i>Teachers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing new equipment and facilities for radio and television broadcasting • Career preparation • Help develop 21st Century skills • Official validation and recognition for students • Help develop life skills • Unique offering to raise Maynard's profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of WAVM program • Scheduling and Staff Changes • Impact on other programs (e.g., academic)
<i>Students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career preparation • New program would be good for MHS students • Opportunities to study new programs (e.g., photography) and explore new career avenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of WAVM program • Impact on other programs (e.g., academic)

Quick Recommendations

In moving forward, we want to...

- be clear about levels of student involvement and continuation of WAVM Club
- be clear about the financial aspects: how will this be funded?
- be clear about impact on other programs: will any other programs be affected?
- Outline all changes in scheduling
- Keep staff and parents up-to-date on WAVM Chapter 74 timeline and overall procedure

Part II. WAVM Program Outlook

Staff Considerations

Infrastructure

Scheduling

Financial Needs

Lessons from Current Models in MA

Part III. Conclusion and Final Recommendations

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Appendix A. Surveys

Appendix B. Chapter 74 Application

Chapter 74 Application

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