

COLLEGE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZER

Prepared by the National High School Center

The National High School Center has created a college and career development organizer to synthesize and organize an increasingly complicated and crowded field of college and career readiness initiatives. The organizer, composed of three strands, can be used to map the efforts of state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) as well as the many organizations devoted to researching and providing support for college and career readiness. By mapping these diverse initiatives against a static organizer, it becomes easier to see how the many components of career and college readiness fit together and how organizations and other entities can be leveraged to establish meaningful collaborations in helping high school students actualize their goals.

The organizer also can be used to help SEAs, LEAs, schools, and other organizations develop college and career readiness strategies and initiatives to address student needs. Stakeholders can use the components of the organizer to ensure that they are designing comprehensive college and career readiness definitions and strategies that address all aspects of the field that are essential to their context. Schools and organizations may choose to limit the organizer components they plan to address because some of the components may not apply to their local context. Similarly, components can be prioritized to allow schools or organizations to harness limited resources to effectively address their most pressing college and career readiness needs. The mapping aspect of the organizer also can be referenced to identify organizations and relationships to leverage after schools have identified areas that they lack the capacity to address.

As with any building blocks, identifying the components that will be used to structure ongoing efforts is only part of the planning process. It is also essential to consider the relationships between these components and how they will fit together to create a coherent and cohesive college and career readiness effort and to align concurrent strands of work. Although the organizer is intended to serve as a planning tool to help frame these efforts, the planning, alignment, and implementation of college and career readiness initiatives is and should be driven by local contextual factors, stakeholder needs and interests, resources, and policies and priorities. Therefore, the organizer intentionally does not provide a universal framework or model for addressing the selected components.



STRAND 1: Goals and Expectations for College and Career Readiness

What should high school graduates know and be able to do?

| THREADS | COMPONENTS | EXAMPLES |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Core Content | Common Core State Standards | English/language arts, literacy, and mathematics content standards |
| | Individual State Standards | English/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, and technical standards |
| Pathways Content | College and Career Knowledge and Access | College and work trajectories, environments, and eligibility requirements |
| | College and Career Goals | Student-declared educational and career aspirations |
| | Pathway Content Standards | Programs of study standards (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; health; business) ▶ Career and technical education standards |
| Lifelong Learning Skills | Social and Emotional Skills | Self-management ▶ Responsible decision making ▶ Self-awareness ▶ Social awareness ▶ Relationship skills |
| | Higher-Order Thinking Skills | Problem solving, critical thinking, and reasoning ▶ Synthesis and precision |
| | Academic Success and Employability Skills | Inquisitiveness and intellectual openness ▶ Organization, study, and research skills ▶ Attendance and engagement ▶ Teamwork and collaboration ▶ Effective communication |
| | Civic/Consumer/Life Skills | Civic engagement ▶ Financial literacy and management ▶ Information technology and social media skills |

STRAND 2: Pathways and Supports for College and Career Preparation

What policies, programs, and structures will help high school graduates meet expectations?

| THREADS | COMPONENTS | EXAMPLES |
|---|--|--|
| Personalized Learning Supports | Individualized Learning Strategies | Individual learning plans ▶ Flexible grouping and differentiated instruction ▶ Mentoring and counseling |
| | Targeted Interventions | Content/credit recovery and tutoring ▶ Health and wraparound family services ▶ Tiered interventions/positive behavioral interventions and supports ▶ Student, family, and community engagement |
| Rigorous Programs of Study | Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment | Middle school preparation and pathway selection (career exploration, academic preparation) ▶ Accelerated learning programs ▶ Blended learning |
| | Well-Defined Pathways With Postsecondary Alignment | PK–20 initiatives ▶ Multidisciplinary programs of study ▶ Alternative pathways and Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) Pathway |
| | Postsecondary Experiences and Preparations | College visits and career fairs ▶ Dual enrollment, internships, and work experience ▶ Enrollment and financial aid applications and enrollment preparation |
| Aligned Resources, Structures, and Supports | Physical and Organizational Structures | Block scheduling, increased learning time, and advisories ▶ Career academies and smaller learning communities |
| | Human Capital | Recruitment and hiring ▶ Professional development and support ▶ Supervision and evaluation |
| | Community Partnerships and Resources | Tutoring/mentoring programs and service learning ▶ Internships |
| | Fiscal Resources | Funding, facilities, and equipment |

STRAND 3: Outcomes and Measures for College and Career Success

How do we know when high school graduates meet expectations?

| THREADS | COMPONENTS | EXAMPLES |
|--|--|--|
| On-Track Indicators | Academic/Technical Performance and Engagement | Credit accumulation and recovery ▶ Attendance, grade point average, and suspensions ▶ Participation in accelerated learning programs and/or college- and career-ready courses of study ▶ Performance on aligned assessments of high school core content (e.g. Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and Smarter Balance assessments, high school end-of-course and exit examinations) ▶ Performance on career and portfolio assessments |
| | Postsecondary Access and Enrollment | Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and postsecondary applications completed ▶ Postsecondary program enrollment ▶ Employment applications completion |
| Attainment and Authentication | Secondary Certification | High school diploma (standard, alternative, college and career readiness) or GED ▶ College credits in dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate courses ▶ Postsecondary degree(s) ▶ Awarded industry-recognized credential or certificate |
| | Postsecondary Success | Postsecondary education graduation certificate ▶ Postsecondary training certification ▶ Earning wage in “middle-skills” (e.g., jobs that require an associate’s degree, a vocational certificate, on-the-job training, or some college) or higher skills job ▶ Postsecondary remediation not needed |
| Accountability and Improvement Feedback | Accountability Reporting Systems | High school and district report cards, reporting college and career readiness measures ▶ Performance-based assessments |
| | Data-Informed Improvement Cycles | High school and district diagnostic assessments ▶ State and district improvement plans ▶ Early warning systems for dropout and college and career readiness ▶ National High School Senior Survey and school climate surveys |

Learn More About College and Career Readiness

The National High School Center has conducted a scan of organizations that address college and career readiness and identified more than 70 such organizations, including those focused on policy, practice, advocacy, access and research. Through this scan, we identified three major strands of work and created the College and Career Development Organizer.

In addition, the National High School Center has created a series of tools and briefs to extrapolate on the College and Career Development Organizer and provide further insight into this increasingly complicated field of college and career readiness initiatives. Other college and career tools and resources in the National High School Center's Knowledge Database (<http://www.betterhighschools.org/KnowledgeDataBase/>) can be used to assist in the development of plans to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college and career.

Learn more about the National High School Center's college and career readiness work by visiting <http://www.betterhighschools.org/CCR/overview.asp>.

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