



Topical Brief

PROMOTING CAREER PATHWAYS

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, state education leaders have been developing numerous innovative approaches to supporting high school students who are pursuing career pathways and preparing them for successful outcomes beyond secondary education. This topical brief summarizes state needs and strategies related to supporting and promoting career pathways in two Comprehensive Centers (CC)- Region 5 (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia) and Region 14 (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas).

State Education Needs

State Needs	Region 5				Region 14		
	KY	TN	VA	WV	AR	LA	TX
Comprehensive Graduation Planning and Advising					✓	✓	✓
Industry Partnerships		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Virtual Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Expanding In-Person and Virtual Options for CTE Coursework and Industry-Based Credentials	✓			✓	✓		✓

State Education Agency Strategies

Region 5

State	Strategies
KY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kentucky introduced a variety of virtual professional development and networking opportunities for CTE teachers during the pandemic.
TN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennessee created a toolkit for CTE instructors with links and best practices related to providing high-quality work-based learning opportunities to CTE students.
VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia holds virtual professional development events focused on work-based learning, as well as a CTE Creating Excellence Awards program, complete with a virtual awards ceremony. • Virginia also established initiatives, such as the Microsoft Imagine Academy Program, which allow students to get virtual certifications and industry credentials as part of their CTE diploma.
WV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Virginia offers a “virtual CTE completer” certificate for CTE students who have fulfilled the classroom hour requirements for their programs of study within the state’s Simulated Workplace CTE program, but were unable to access the necessary hands-on learning for certification. • West Virginia also provides virtual professional development sessions for its CTE teachers in order to hone and improve their skills in providing CTE instruction in hybrid and virtual environments. • West Virginia Department of Education’s (WVDE) strategic plan for CTE is focused on expanding entrepreneurship training and military career preparation for West Virginia students.

State Education Agency Strategies (cont)

Region 14

State	Strategies
AR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas' Career Pathways Initiative, a partnership between community colleges, workforce development agencies, employers, and social service providers, provides low-income individuals with the higher education skills and credentials they need to gain immediate entry into targeted occupations, such as teaching. Ready for Life is a one-stop platform, where students can explore career pathways, identify necessary skills to succeed in their chosen career fields, take virtual courses, and search for high-skill, high-demand jobs in Arkansas.
LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jump Start, an innovative career and technical education (CTE) program, prepares students to lead productive adult lives, capable of continuing their education after high school while earning certifications in high-wage career sectors.
TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texas developed the Effective Advising Framework so districts have a blueprint for developing or improving a coordinated, high-impact College and Career Readiness Advising program. Texas' College and Career Readiness School Models provide a smooth transitional experience for at-risk students from high school to postsecondary education and employment. It provides students with an opportunity to earn a postsecondary credential and/or industry-based certification. The Texas Regional Pathways Network (TRPN) supports districts to provide career pathways, which include college credit opportunities in high school, industry-based certifications, work-based learning opportunities, and high-quality advising beginning in early grades.

Region 5 and Region 14 Comprehensive Center Supports

State	Region	Strategies
VA	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team is supporting Virginia Department of Education's effort to develop stakeholder recommendations on expanding student access to Virginia's Advanced Studies Diploma
AR	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team serves as a thought partner in developing Arkansas' broader graduation planning strategy. Team supported the effort to redesign ADE's Ready for Life career planning platform.
LA	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team is building Louisiana Department of Education's (LDOE) capacity to create industry partnerships with Louisiana schools and provide students with increased work-based learning opportunities. Team is supporting LDOE's efforts to improve statewide individual graduation planning practices and data collection.