

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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