

# Workforce Pathways Guiding Policy Principles

(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/gi/guidingpps.asp>)

The Workforce Pathways Joint Advisory Committee plans to address workforce pathways to address California's regional economies.

## Guiding Policy Principles to Support K-14+ Pathways

### Preamble

Several common themes have emerged from the work of the California Workforce Pathways Joint Advisory Committee (WPJAC) since it reconvened in 2017. The goal of the WPJAC is to build connected, equitable, accessible, and high-quality K-14+ college and career pathways by: 1) signaling the infrastructure needs, 2) promoting regional and local educational agency efforts for alignment, and 3) reinforcing student supports during critical transitions leading into high school, community college, and beyond.

The Guiding Principles to Support K-14+ Pathways highlight salient points raised to the WPJAC members since 2017, build upon existing practices across systems, and focus on key pressure points for supporting cross-system collaboration. They are intentionally designed to be inter-related because individually they are narrow in scope, so it's important to view them as a complementary whole. The Committee embraces the principle of continuous improvement, as it applies to its own work, thereby acknowledging that the Guiding Policy Principles, Essential Elements, Working Norms, and Glossary of Terms are dynamic and will continue to evolve and adjust over time, as necessary.

### Guiding Policy Principles and the **Get Stay Focused!** program

A priority is to pivot towards purposeful integration of the student experience across systems and into college and career while addressing industry needs by incorporating the following guiding policy principles to:

1. Focus on a **Student-Centered Delivery of Services** for all K-14+ college and career pathways, which accommodates multiple entry points to facilitate students' needs to build their skills as they progress along a continuum of education and training, or advance in a sector-specific occupation or industry.

**Get Stay Focused!** coursework can begin in middle school and continues throughout high school. If implemented with fidelity for ALL students, they will enter postsecondary with an informed major and program of study. Students' online My10yearPlan.com®, the integral online portion of the curriculum, is available for advisory and counseling functions.

2. Promote **Equity and Access** by eliminating institutional barriers and achievement gaps for all students to realize their educational and career aspirations.

**Get Stay Focused!** is designed for ALL students in a middle and high school. Middle school students are introduced to the curriculum and begin exploratory career exploration/research. The program is then designed for ALL ninth-grade students to take the Get Focused comprehensive guidance course, which is a dual/college credit opportunity. As students progress throughout high school, they then complete 16-lesson (1 college credit) Stay Focused Follow-up Modules 1 - 3 in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. The Stay Focused modules allow for more career exploration/research as well as college preparation lessons and students updating their My10yearPlan.com® plans. They enter postsecondary with a Skills-based Education Plan that can easily translate into college education plan online platforms, like Canvas for example.

3. Achieve **System Alignment** in the economic regions of the state in order to create a comprehensive and well-defined system of articulation of high quality K-14+ pathway courses (i.e., both in-person and online) and work-based learning opportunities with a specific emphasis on career technical education. Bring greater coherence to programming, common use of terminology, appropriate data collection and sharing, and attainment of student outcomes in a timely way that lead to upward mobility in California's industry sectors.

**Get Stay Focused!** has been endorsed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office as a Strong Workforce Program Project-in-Common and is currently being implemented by more than 450 CA high schools working closely with 40+ community colleges and two Cal State Universities: Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Sacramento. GFSF is seen as a student onramp to Guided Pathways and propels students to make truly informed pathway choices.

4. Support the **Continuous Improvement and Capacity Building** at all levels and components to ensure smooth transitions in the system and focus efforts on implementation of state standards, attainment of student outcomes, and a strengthening of California’s regional economies.

**Get Stay Focused!** *Resource Center (501c3) provides professional development specifically designed to bring together high school and college teams, including counselors. The goal of these trainings is to introduce college and career readiness teams and counselors to the GFSF curriculum’s online My10yearPlan.com®, which students refine as they move through high school. This professional development will also acquaint educational leadership to the GFSF curriculum program elements so that students enter postsecondary prepared for community college Guided Pathways and meta-majors. The GFSF program also offers high-quality and continuous professional development to faculty and administrators. A principle goal of the GFSF program is to ensure a smooth student transition from high school to postsecondary.*

5. Ensure that **State Priorities and Direction Lead the State Plan** with opportunities in Perkins leveraged to assist in accomplishing the state goals and objectives, also known as “the California Way.”

**Get Stay Focused!** *is currently working with the California Department of Education to see if the semester-long ninth grade curriculum can receive a CBEDs code (7000’s) for Perkins as it serves as a student onramp to career pathways. The curriculum qualifies for the University of California a-g as area g. Because GFSF receives extensive dual/college credit with community colleges across the state, it is a key element in helping high school students reach the “Prepared” level of the College and Career Indicator (CCI).*

## Essential Elements of a High-Quality College and Career Pathway

To realize the guiding policy principles outlined above, California recognizes the importance of the following essential elements of a high-quality college and career pathway:

1. **Student-Centered Delivery of Services** for all K-14+ college and career pathways incorporates the removal institutional or systemic barriers that impede the progress of students in achieving their education and career goals. This includes a renewed commitment to offer an engaging learning experience and support the diversity of individual student needs while accommodating their multiple entry points as they progress along a continuum of education and training, or advance in a sector-specific occupation or industry.
2. **Equity** goes beyond the reduction of institutional barriers to create an environment of being fair, impartial and free from bias or favoritism, promote educational and employment attainment, and to eliminate the achievement gap for all students including, but not limited to, English language learners and students with disabilities in the K-14+ college and career pathway system.
3. **Access** denotes a broader vision of equity ensuring that all students are provided ample opportunities to attain the necessary skills, education and training required to maximize their individual goals including a collective awareness of all the supports that are available to students both inside and out of class. **Access** also facilitates the elimination of the achievement gap by providing information on how to access programs, services, and rigorous course work for all California students regardless of region, gender, socio-economic status, special needs, and/or English proficiency.
4. **Leadership at All Levels** is required to achieve greater integration across systems and programs to ensure that the contexts for an engaging learning experience can occur and programs connect, so all students succeed with their desired outcomes including employment, and employers have the workforce needed to thrive.
5. **High-Quality, Integrated Curriculum and Instruction** informed by labor market information, student interest, technology, industry standards, and real-world engagement through relevant work-based learning opportunities is essential to prepare students. Rigorous and aligned programs should be supported to guide students through relevant course sequences (i.e., both in-person and online) and work-based learning opportunities leading to a mastery of standards, high school graduation, and transition to postsecondary education, training, apprenticeship, and/or employment, as appropriate. Courses and programs may be designed to use cross-system strategies like dual enrollment and/or dual credit with community colleges and universities or other articulations to create a seamless student experience, and avoid unnecessary repeating of courses or other inefficient practices to facilitate “on-time” postsecondary graduation, where appropriate. Stackable badging and credentials can ensure frequency of assessment and a value-added outcome.

6. **Skilled Instruction and Educational Leadership, informed by Professional Learning**, is the cornerstone of the public education system in California. The educational experience is only as strong as the capacity and investment made in faculty, educational leaders, and the other key field talent to provide in-class, online, or work-based learning opportunities as well as developing an awareness of student support services. California encourages the culture of innovation and entrepreneurialism in program instruction and design.
7. The strong presence of **Career Exploration and Student Supports** is an essential component for establishing a learning plan for all K-14+ students. This includes identifying appropriate foundational courses (i.e., using competency-based learning) and information about jobs, determining student progression in a single pathway or along multiple pathways or sequences of learning, or making available in-class and online course offerings and work-based learning opportunities. To complement their learning plan, students should also have access to comprehensive counseling, individualized supports along their journey (including, but not limited to, for students who are part-time, face barriers to learning, need academic or cultural supports, transportation, child care, or financial aid), or opportunities through student leadership development organizations to achieve their individual goals and aspirations, through a variety of transitions, in an ever-changing workforce.
8. **Appropriate Use of Data and Continuous Improvement** should continue to drive Career Technical Education through relevant accountability that is outcomes-based, is supported both vertically and horizontally across systems, and ensures equity and access for all students. Focusing on students' and employers' needs will allow for identification of capacity building, refinement of programs, and elimination of inefficiencies to meet the existing and emerging needs of regional economies. Through intentional sharing of specific data elements that are actionable across systems will help to showcase student attainment, including mastery of standards, and be informed by industry needs to achieve relevant system outcomes. Responsible data use is to inform practice and improve programs, not to track students.
9. Opportunities for strategic and intentional **Cross-System Alignment** should be informed by the ongoing analysis of student data, and alignment of data definitions across systems to provide, for example, deliberate sector-based programs, deployment of technical field assistance using a regional distribution, or evidence-based practices and processes to optimize pathway success and upward mobility opportunities for all participants.
10. **Intentional Recruitment and Marketing (Promotion, Outreach, and Communication)** should reflect an understanding of students' and employers' needs, be consistent in its messaging to stakeholders across all segments, and use tools and reports as a platform to display the added value of high quality K-14+ college and career pathway programs.
11. **Sustained Investments and Funding through Mutual Agreements** must be present to encourage regional alliances along with industry sector strategies, especially with a focus on current and/or emerging high-skill, high-wage, and/or high-demand occupations. This includes but is not limited to K-12 Education, Adult Education, Higher Education, Labor, Economic Development Councils, Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Development Boards, career advisory boards, and regional industry alliances aligned by sector that lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate, postsecondary training, apprenticeship, and/or employment.

### Working Norms for Fostering a Mutually-Beneficial Intersegmental Relationship

These working norms are designed help guide state, regional and local entities in building high-quality K-14+ college and career pathways. This collaborative work necessitates:

1. **Frequent, Open, and Intentional Communication** between Educational Agencies, Workforce Agencies, and Employers.
2. A **Mindset Shift** from insular to **Coordination of Planning** and from independent to **Interdependent Implementation of Systems** to make better use of and maximize scarce public funds.
3. A continual scan for opportunities to **Leverage, Build Upon, and/or Replicate Effective Models and Practices** in order to benefit from the scale of the state.
4. An understanding of the existing eco-system as a basis to **Build a New Culture for our Institutions** and **Incentivize Behaviors and Relationships**.
5. **Ongoing Alliances through Sustained Funding** and **Mutual Agreements** in order to “stay the course” despite governance changes.
6. A **Commitment** to the work to create **Stability and Sustainability** of the K-14+ college and career pathway system.