A local community can change its future through collective action on essential components of economic and social success. One of those essentials is readiness for college and for living-wage careers. Built on the Postsecondary and Careers Expectations (PaCE) Framework, this guide provides support for teams that represent all sectors – businesses, community organizations, schools, and families. Teams may already exist within collective impact organizations, or they may need to be pulled together. Some of the guide’s many activities will be operating but need more support. Others will present new opportunities. The activities are organized around three key areas for student success, which are directly linked to the community’s future.

• Career exploration and development
• College exploration, preparation and selection
• Financial aid and literacy

Potential Members of the C&CR Community Team

• Elementary school representative
• Middle school representative
• High school representative
• Community college representative
• Two-year college representative
• Four-year college representative
• Postsecondary representatives from career services offices
• Library representative
• Chamber of Commerce
• Other business representatives
• Religious organization leader
• Local service organizations
• Community based organizations
• Afterschool programs
• YMCA or YWCA
• Local governmental agencies
• United Way
• Other entities essential to the future of the children in the community

Sample Process

1. Form a broad-based planning team that will be responsible for action plan development and will organize and pass off plans to a community implementation team.

2. Inventory current college and career readiness activities conducted by school and community-based organizations for elementary, middle and high school students.

3. Utilize guiding questions to determine unmet needs and additional opportunities.

4. Develop an action plan for addressing opportunities; include metrics for monitoring programs, an evaluation component and a mechanism for revising the plan as needed.

5. Implement the plan. Evaluate, report results, and revise plan as needed.
### Guiding Questions – Career Exploration and Development

Use these questions to identify unmet needs and additional opportunities

#### Late High School Students (11-12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What supports are in place in school and in the community for students and families preparing for life after high school?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Resume/personal statement/goals and steps to attain those goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interviews for internships/jobs/scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Job/internship searches and applications in their career pathway</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Earning and receiving industry-based certifications</td>
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<td>• Capstone projects</td>
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#### Early High School Students (9-10)

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<th>How are students transitioned from thinking about career clusters to identifying careers of interest and making plans for the future in school and in the community? What opportunities are there to</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hear from alumni and community leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Visit businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn about credentials required for various jobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Align summer or other out of school time with career activities or interests</td>
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<tr>
<th>What supports exist to help students ensure progress to “on track” status by the end of 9th grade?</th>
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<tr>
<td>How are students’ career interests used to create a schedule of courses throughout high school?</td>
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<td>How is career planning a part of school coursework and extracurricular activities?</td>
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<td>What opportunities are there for leadership roles for all students within various clubs and activities?</td>
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#### Middle School Students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is needed for students to learn about the 16 career clusters as they begin identifying career options?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to all of the career clusters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mechanisms to learn more about individual careers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to identify their interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Career exploration events</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connections to career professionals</td>
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<th>Integration of career activities into classroom work</th>
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<tr>
<td>Development of soft skills (e.g. communication, teamwork, problem solving, curiosity, etc.)</td>
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<th>How are students’ plans for high school aligned with their interests and career pathways?</th>
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<td>How are learning opportunities in the classroom contextualized with real world situations and careers?</td>
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<tr>
<th>How are families of ELL or first generation students included and supported in making career exploration plans with their students?</th>
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<tr>
<td>How are families of students with special needs supported in exploring careers with their students?</td>
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#### Elementary School Students

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<tr>
<th>What opportunities do students have in school and in the community to learn about different careers?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are student interests connected to the 16 career clusters in school and outside of school?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What supports are in place for identifying and communicating with families of ELL or first generation students about career exploration and development?</th>
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<tr>
<th>How are community leaders involved in connecting student interests to work skills?</th>
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<th>How are students exposed to other pathways than those modeled at home?</th>
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</table>
### Late High School Students (11-12)

**Fall (August - December)**
- Create a resume and personal statement
- Participate in mock job interviews
- Serve as a leader in your extracurricular activities
- Register for appropriate dual credit, AP, or IB courses aligned with career pathway
- Consult with the local community college about any articulated credit earned as part of a career tech course.

**Spring (January - May)**
- Volunteer at nonprofit organizations in your interest area (e.g. Animal Shelter, Homeless Center, Food Bank, Hospital)

**Summer (June - August)**
- Receive recognition for attainment of industry credentials as part of the school honors banquet/assembly

### Early High School Students (9-10)

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in a workshop series on careers in our community and hear from professionals about careers of interest; follow up with a professional by phone, email or letter and ask for advice on preparing for your own career
- Participate in a career fair with specific local institutional information about the amount and type of education required
- Enroll in classes that will stack as part of a career pathway

**Spring (January - May)**
- Participate in career pathway oriented visit days (e.g. manufacturing day)
- Connect with mentors for STEM career pathways projects

**Summer (June - August)**
- Volunteer at organizations connected to career interests and/or personal values
- Job Shadow career professionals during summer months

### Middle School Students

**Fall (August - December)**
- Complete a career cluster survey
- Complete a module that explores careers connected to career clusters of interest and write a reflection about which careers are most interesting or appealing and why
- Choose a career cluster of interest and develop a plan for high school that supports that area of interest
- Participate in community group activities that emphasize students' interests and careers.

**Spring (January - May)**
- Participate in a career exploration day with a parent or family member
- Visit workplaces aligned with career interests
- Participate in career pathway oriented visit days (e.g. manufacturing day)

**Summer (June - August)**
- Participate in community activities that build relationships with career professionals (e.g. Rotaract, Kiwanis Kids, Leo Club)

### Elementary School Students

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in career highlights days and ask questions of professionals in 8 of the 16 different career clusters
- Engage with professionals who work with the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H and other student groups about activities to explore careers
- Attend community programs with business leaders to build relationships with career professionals

**Spring (January - May)**
- Participate in hosting high school seniors visit day in their caps and gowns
- Participate in career highlights days and listen to / ask questions of professionals in 8 of the 16 different career clusters

**Summer (June - August)**
- Participate in workshops with family members that introduce the 16 career clusters with professionals from the community
- Participate in summer reading programs and camps that emphasize different student interests and their connections to careers
### Guiding Questions – College Exploration, Preparation and Selection
Consider these questions to identify unmet needs and additional opportunities

#### Late High School Students (11-12)
In what ways can students catch up or speed up (e.g. AP or dual credit) in preparation for their postsecondary goals?
- Applying to postsecondary institutions
- Selecting the best fit postsecondary institution
- Completing the admissions and enrollment process
- Enlisting in the military

What supports are in place in school and in the community to help students and families, including ELL and first generation, to understand and prepare for the complete college experience including:
- Pre-college
  - Educational requirements
  - Cost
  - Entrance exams
  - Applications
  - Financial aid applications, assessments
- During college
  - Paying bills
  - Staying on top of coursework/time management
  - Navigating college support systems
- After college
  - Expected starting salary
  - Repaying student loan debt
  - Mid-career salary

How does the community celebrate the paths of special needs students as a part of the celebrations for the accomplishments of traditional students?
What supports help undocumented students to navigate the college application and selection process?

#### Early High School Students (9-10)
How are educators and community members empowered in schools and in the community to support students in determining their postsecondary plans?
- School counselors
- Teachers, librarians and other school staff
- Public librarians and other informal educators
- Religious leaders
- Business leaders in all 16 career clusters
- Community leaders
- Military

In what ways are all students, including ELL and first-generation students, prepared for their postsecondary goals through:
- Academic preparation
  - attendance
  - grades
  - rigorous courses
- Extracurricular activities
- Community service and activities
- Leadership opportunities
- Mentoring programs
- Campus visits
- Development of soft skills

What opportunities are there for students to apply learning to existing problems and situations?
How are families of special needs students provided with resources for understanding and making choices among postsecondary options for their students?
What opportunities help undocumented students to receive support and direction in considering postsecondary options?

#### Middle School Students
How are students encouraged to build an ongoing relationship between community service, student interests, extracurricular activities and postsecondary?
How are cultural expectations respected and addressed when introducing families to the importance of a postsecondary education?

What opportunities are there for students in school and in the community to attend classes or activities or challenges/events held on local college campuses (i.e., tours, concerts, summer camps, Saturday Faire)?

How are students’ high school course plans aligned with their post-secondary goals?
How are families of ELL or first generation students included and supported in making high school plans with their students?
How are families of special needs students connected to supports and resources to assist their students in the transition to and success in high school?

#### Elementary School Students
How are students introduced to the idea of going to college in school and in the community?

In what ways do the schools and the community communicate with students and families about postsecondary expectations? What efforts are made to ensure that all families included?

What opportunities are there for students to go to local college campuses for Saturday events or summer camps?
### Late High School Students (11-12)

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in a college fair
- Participate in school activities supporting a postsecondary orientation
  - College T-Shirt Dress-up Day
  - Hang pennants for destination schools in a public place
  - Display teachers’ degrees and alma maters
  - Present college reps in the school building
- Take SAT, ACT, and AP exams
- Participate in College Application Month activities, including workshops focused on
  - Choosing colleges to apply to
  - How to complete and submit college applications
- Become a leader in student activities, clubs and/or sports. Keep a record of your activities to use for scholarship applications
- Encourage families to participate in a parent university postsecondary orientation

**Spring (January - May)**
- Visit the Disabilities Resource Centers on the campuses of postsecondary schools of choice
- Participate in a college application completion party to kick off choosing and completing college applications
- Complete a profile in the College Scholarship Service system for access to scholarships
- Participate in National College/Signing/Decision Day
- Take prom pictures with each student indicating a postsecondary destination
- End of year banquets and senior nights – students announced with postsecondary destination

**Graduation Activities**
- Recognition for college acceptance/military enlistment
- Graduates wear emblem of chosen college
- High school graduates pair up with K graduates for Kindergarten ceremony
- Encourage families to participate in a parent university postsecondary orientation

**Summer (June - August)**
- Visit colleges of interest
- Encourage students to make sure they have completed the “Nine steps to making your college plans a reality”
- Mentors meet with students and families to make sure they understand
  - The Academic Side
    - Registering for and attending orientation
    - Taking placement tests
    - Registering for classes
  - The Other Details
    - Receiving required immunizations
    - Completing housing forms
    - Arranging transportation
    - Navigating online portals

### Early High School Students (9-10)

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in a college fair
- Participate in school activities supporting a postsecondary orientation
  - Host College T-Shirt Day
  - Hang pennants for destination schools in a public place
  - Teachers placards outside their doors with their degrees and alma maters
  - College visitors in the counseling center
- Register and take the PSAT or other college entrance practice exams

**Spring (January - May)**
- Increase responsibility within student activities, clubs and sports. Keep a record of your activities to use for scholarship applications
- Visit the campuses of postsecondary institutions
- Encourage families to participate in a parent university
- Engage undocumented families in conversations about postsecondary options and overcoming barriers
- Connect families of students with special needs to one another to discuss college plans

**Graduation Activities**
- Course catalogue prominently features

**Summer (June - August)**
- Enroll in classes for next year according to requirements for your post-secondary plans
- Enroll in classes for next year that earn early college credits (AP, Dual Credit, Articulated Credit)
- Visit colleges of interest

### Middle School Students

**Fall (August - December)**
- Hear from community leaders about attending college and how attending may be necessary to acquire livable wage jobs

**Spring (January - May)**
- Participate in a career exploration day with a parent or family member
- Visit workplaces aligned with career interests
- Participate in career pathway oriented visit days (e.g. manufacturing day)

**Summer (June - August)**
- Attend summer or Saturday program at a local college
- Attend summer school for remediation or acceleration opportunities

### Elementary School Students

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in discussions about why people go to college
- Hear from alumni about the college experience in different career clusters
- Participate in school activities to promote college-going (e.g. faculty alma maters, local sports heroes

**Spring (January - May)**
- Attend activities in which college representatives talk about the difference college can make in your life and how to prepare
- Hear from upperclassmen about the connection between student interests and high school activities

**Summer (June - August)**
- Attend summer or Saturday programs at a local college
- Attend summer school for acceleration or remediation

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**On PaCE to Thrive**
Cultivating Community Action for College and Career Readiness

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Guiding Questions – Financial Aid and Literacy

Consider these questions to identify unmet needs and additional opportunities

Late High School Students (11-12)

What opportunities do students have in school and in the community to develop adult financial literacy?

How are students and families, including ELL and first generation, supported to complete their financial planning for the chosen post-secondary option?

• Estimate costs of postsecondary attendance
• Determine the financial “return on investment” of specific postsecondary options
• Understand financial aid options
• Apply for financial aid/scholarships/grants
• Evaluate financial aid offers

• Determine the role of debt in their post-secondary goal attainment.

What supports are there for undocumented students to navigate the financial aid application and decision making process?

Early High School Students (9-10)

What opportunities do students have in school and in the community to develop age-appropriate financial literacy?

How are students and families assisted in completing a financial aid assessment?

How are students and families informed about the general cost ranges of various postsecondary options and completing “return on investment” analyses?

In what ways are families who are unfamiliar with postsecondary financial aid options, expectations and outcomes supported to think through and fully understand their options?

Middle School Students

What opportunities do students have in school and in the community to develop age-appropriate financial literacy?

How can families of ELL or first generation students receive support in planning for their child’s postsecondary goals?

Where can families go for assistance to better understand the financial “return on investment” of different post-secondary options?

Elementary School Students

What opportunities do families have in the community to learn about planning for and financing a child’s postsecondary goals?

What additional supports are in place for the families of ELL or first generation students?

What opportunities do families of special needs students have to discuss and prepare for the financial future of their children?

Additional Possible Activities

• Parent University for parents of ELL/first generation students to orient them to the process and experience of attending a postsecondary institution
• Host recent alumni visit days for current students to talk with alumni at each level about what the next level is like
• Distribute “class of” onesies to local hospitals to be given to babies born during the year

Resources

Achieve – http://achieve.org/postsecondary-readiness
Complete College America - http://completecollege.org/
Illinois Pathways - https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways/Pages/default.aspx
Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) - https://www.isac.org/
LEAP Liberal Education & America’s Promise (AAC&U) - https://www.aacu.org/leap
O*Net – https://www.onetonline.org
### Late High School Students (11-12)

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in FAFSA Completion Month (October) activities including:
  - FAFSA Completion Workshops (stand alone or during school open house/parent-teacher conferences)
  - Affording College/Financial Aid Workshops
  - During a football or basketball game at the high school
  - At a local eatery with computers, a support person, and activities for younger children and receive a free burger or scoop of ice cream for completing the FAFSA

Receive and read communications on why completing the FAFSA is important

Participate in Scholarship Application Month activities including workshops on how to find, apply for, and evaluate scholarships and other types of financial aid

**Spring (January - May)**
- Participate in workshops for tax filing assistance for families
- Complete paperwork for assistance with fees for applications.
- Participate in Award Letter Comparison Month (March) activities

- Determine the cost of attendance
- Make sense of financial aid award letters

**Summer (June - August)**
- Meet with mentor to review the financial aspects of postsecondary choices
- Tuition bills and required deposits
- Identifying and budgeting for non-tuition expenses

### Early High School Students (9-10)

**Fall (August - December)**
- Complete a financial aid assessment with a family member
- Attend a workshop about financial planning for various postsecondary options with a family member,

### Middle School Students

**Fall (August - December)**
- Participate in a parent-to-parent session on affording college with parents; college financial aid staff may be on hand as a resource
- Engage in activities to develop competencies in financial literacy related to earning income; buying goods and services; saving; using credit; financial investing; and protecting and insuring

**Spring (January - May)**
- Participate in the Stock Market Game™ with students in elementary and high school

**Summer (June - August)**
- Participate in a family-based community challenge that requires the demonstration of financial literacy competencies

### Elementary School Students

**Fall (August - December)**
- Learn about the importance of earning an income
- Understand how money is required to buy goods and services and practice making choices about how to spend your money by participating in the Reality Store event offered by ILASFAA
- Learn about why people save and some guidelines for determining how much to save for future goals
- Open community supported college savings accounts for each student

**Spring (January - May)**
- Learn about using credit
- Participate in the Stock Market Game™ with students in middle and high school

**Summer (June - August)**
- Attend a financial literacy workshop for families
- Identify one or more financial goals for your family together
**Action Plan Template**

Plan to take action on unmet needs or newfound opportunities

Community Partner(s)/Champion ________________________________________________________________

Goal (What are you trying to accomplish?) ______________________________________________________

Rationale (Why are you trying to accomplish this goal?): _________________________________________

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<tr>
<td>What are you trying to accomplish?</td>
<td>Relationships, Methods, Activities</td>
<td>Person Responsible</td>
<td>Implementation Timeline</td>
<td>What would we need in order to be able to afford it?</td>
<td>Where are we in the process?</td>
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Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations

A student should have an individualized learning plan to help them make career and college decisions, plan a course of study, and make financial aid assessments with family members.

By the end of 12th grade:
- Complete 3 or more admission application to PS institutions
- Met with a school counselor to ensure all steps in the PS admission process are complete
- Take at least 3 PS admission assessment with a family member
- Take at least 1 college readiness exam required for postsecondary admission
- Attend a college affordability workshop with a family member
- Develop a college affordability plan
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college options
- Develop a career interest aligning to career interests
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 11th grade:
- Complete a career cluster survey
- Attend a career exploration day
- Complete a unit on education planning
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a career interest
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 10th grade:
- Revisit the career survey
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Complete a unit on education planning
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a career interest
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 9th grade:
- Complete a career cluster survey
- Attend a career exploration day
- Complete a unit on education planning
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a career interest
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 8th grade:
- Career Exploration and Development
- College Exploration, Preparation, and Selection
- Financial Aid and Literacy

By the end of 12th grade:
- Complete 3 or more admission application to PS institutions
- Met with a school counselor to ensure all steps in the PS admission process are complete
- Take at least 3 PS admission assessment with a family member
- Take at least 1 college readiness exam required for postsecondary admission
- Attend a college affordability workshop with a family member
- Develop a college affordability plan
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college options
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 11th grade:
- Complete a career cluster survey
- Attend a career exploration day
- Complete a unit on education planning
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a career interest
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 10th grade:
- Revisit the career survey
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Complete a unit on education planning
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a career interest
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 9th grade:
- Complete a career cluster survey
- Attend a career exploration day
- Complete a unit on education planning
- Be exposed to a variety of financial literacy units in a course or workshop
- Participate in a mock job interview
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss college plans
- Develop a plan for completion of career cluster
- Complete a career interest
- Complete a high school graduation

By the end of 8th grade:
- Career Exploration and Development
- College Exploration, Preparation, and Selection
- Financial Aid and Literacy
Endnotes


16 LD Online. College Planning for Students with Disabilities.


Questions?
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