

**College and Career Pathway Endorsements and State Honors:**  
**Recognizing Readiness for College & Careers in Illinois' Future Economy**

**I. Overview**

Students will be able to receive two levels of recognition on high school diplomas:

- **College & Career Pathway Endorsements** available in broad career areas aligned to the Illinois Career Cluster framework, as determined jointly by the IPIC agencies in collaboration with stakeholders (see Attachment 1 for an example framework for endorsement areas). In addition, a Multidisciplinary Endorsement is available for students changing pathways while in high school.
- **State Honors** available where a statewide public-private steering committee including business, secondary, and postsecondary representatives has defined competencies aligned to economic development and workforce needs.

For example, a student could attain a STEAM Endorsement with Manufacturing State Honors. State agencies and business-led sector-based partnerships will designate various career-oriented instructional programs (e.g., Project Lead the Way, FFA, etc.) that meet some or all of the criteria for Endorsements and State Honors.

**II. College & Career Pathway Endorsements**

For any College & Career Pathway Endorsement, the student must complete all of the following:

- **Individual Plan:** Have an individualized plan for college, career, and financial aid that is updated annually during high school; a resume; and a personal statement.
- **Career-Oriented Course Sequence:** Complete at least three courses within the endorsement area, with at least one AP course or course taken for dual credit. ISBE will define the course codes that are within each endorsement area. The district and a local community college must certify to ISBE and ICCB that the course sequence is articulated to a postsecondary credential or degree program.
- **Professional Learning:** Complete:
  - i. at least two workplace learning experiences (other than an internship).
  - ii. at least two team-based challenges or projects relating to the endorsement area with professional mentoring.
  - iii. at least one paid or for-credit internship relating to the endorsement area, with an employer assessment of foundational professional skills. The internship must be at least 80 hours.
- **Academic Readiness:** Must demonstrate readiness for non-remedial coursework in ELA and Math by high school graduation through criteria certified by the school district and a local community college to ISBE and ICCB. This may be demonstrated through various methods, including assessment scores, GPA, course completions, or other locally-adopted criteria.

### **III. State Honors**

Periodically as part of federal and state economic development planning processes, the IPIC Agencies will designate state sectors/occupational areas in which State Honors will be available based on projected state economic development and workforce needs. Within each area, a public-private steering committee designated by the IPIC agencies and involving business-led, sector-based partnership(s) will identify a sequence of career competencies that students should attain by high school graduation in a demanding technical course of instruction. Regional modifications to these competencies may be allowed, provided any regional modifications must be approved by the state steering committee.

Students can receive State Honors within a sector/occupational area if:

- i. the student meets the requirements for the applicable College & Career Pathway Endorsement, except that the internship must be 120 hours (the NAFTrack standard);
- ii. the student demonstrates mastery of the identified career competencies;
- iii. the student attains at least six hours of early college credit (either AP or dual credit) within the career area; and
- iv. the district offers a “State Honors Qualifying Program” meeting the below requirements.

To receive designation as a State Honors Qualifying Program, the school district, a local community college, and LWIB must certify to ISBE, ICCB, and DCEO that the program:

- i. addresses a priority industry sector for regional economic development;
- ii. involves at least 3 employer partners in its ongoing administration; and
- iii. has been jointly developed with at least one local community college and the LWIB, and culminates in a postsecondary credential with labor market value that has opportunities for ongoing student advancement.

The IPIC Agencies, in collaboration with other public and private partners, will develop recognition and incentives for students completing a College and Career Pathway Endorsement with State Honors.

Examples of recognition and incentives include:

- Scholarships
- Priority for internship placements with business partners
- Recognition at statewide convenings
- Guaranteed transfer of credit into degree programs
- Targeted outreach and counseling supports for postsecondary education and career placement

#### **IV. Statewide Supports**

To support local establishment and administration of College and Career Pathway Endorsements and State Honors programs, the IPIC Agencies will:

- Periodically designate priority state-level sector and occupational areas as part of federal and state economic development planning processes, with annual reports on supply and demand forecasts within those areas
- Provide or designate one or more web-based tools to support college and career pathways, including:
  - web-based professional learning portfolio (districts may use existing systems, such as FFA or Career Cruising, for this documentation)
  - web-based employability assessment
  - web-based mentoring platform
- Provide a statewide insurance policy for work-based learning activities
- Coordinate with business-led sector-based partnerships to:
  - Provide employer input into the career competencies within their sector area, as adjusted periodically based on industry needs
  - Designate “out-of-the-box” curriculum that can meet the competency requirements, or curriculum that can meet the requirements with adjustments/supplements
  - Designate industry-based certifications that signify mastery of particular competencies
  - Deliver or support sector-oriented professional development, industry-related challenges, and other career education and work-based learning resources

To support articulation of College and Career Pathway Endorsements and State Honors programs into higher education, by the 18-19 SY, Illinois public universities and community colleges will define first year course schedules and degree programs that align to the Endorsement and State Honors framework.

#### **V. Timeline**

- 16-17 SY:
  - IPIC Agencies, in consultation with stakeholders, define endorsement framework; sector-based stakeholder committees define State Honors requirements
  - Agencies and sector-based partnerships build out supports, recognition programs, and incentives
- 17-18 SY:
  - School districts, community colleges, and LWIBs certify to ISBE, ICCB, and DCEO intent to offer Endorsements and State Honors programs
  - Continued development of state supports, recognition and incentives
- 18-19 SY:
  - Districts can begin awarding endorsements and State Honors to graduating seniors
  - Availability of supports, recognition, and incentives
  - Public postsecondary institutions define first-year course schedules and degree programs that align to the endorsement framework

**Attachment 1**

**Example Organization of Career Areas, Career Clusters, and State Honors Areas**

<b>Endorsement Area</b>	<b>Career Clusters</b>	<b>State Honors</b>
STEAM	Manufacturing	Initial Priority
	Energy	Initial Priority
	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (R&D)	Initial Priority
	Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	Potentially
	Architecture & Construction	Potentially
	Humanities & Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	Potentially
Agricultural, Food & Natural Resources	Same as Endorsement Area	Initial Priority
Health Sciences	Same as Endorsement Area	Initial Priority
Information Technology	Same as Endorsement Area	Initial Priority
Business	Finance	Initial Priority
	Business Management & Administration	Potentially
	Marketing	Potentially
	Hospitality & Tourism	Potentially
Social Science & Public Services	Government & Public Administration	Potentially
	Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	Potentially
	Education & Training	Potentially
	Human Services	Potentially
	Social Science R&D	Potentially
Multidisciplinary	Available for students that do not meet the course sequence requirements for another College & Career Pathway Endorsement, but have taken at least 3 courses coded for any of the other Endorsement Areas	