

# CALIFORNIA GOLDEN STATE PATHWAYS FRAMEWORK

## What Are Golden State Pathways?

The Golden State Pathways Program provides funding to seamlessly link K–12 education, postsecondary education, and careers in high-wage, high-skill, high-growth industry sectors.

To qualify for funding under the Act, pathways must offer the following elements for all students:

- An integrated sequence of rigorous coursework that includes the full A-G course sequence, at least 12 postsecondary credits, career technical education (CTE) coursework, and an additional element of California's College/Career Indicator (CCI);
- Work-based learning, with an emphasis on internships and apprenticeships; and
- Comprehensive student supports.

Additionally, LEAs must meet the following pathways-level requirements. All pathways must:

- Align to high-wage, high-skill, or high-growth (HWSG) jobs in their regional economy or the state economy;
- Provide articulated pathways from high school to postsecondary education and training that are aligned with the workforce development needs of their regional economy;
- Collaborate with other LEAs, institutions of higher education, local and regional employers, and other relevant community interest holders; and
- Leverage available resources or in-kind contributions from public, private, and philanthropic sources to sustain their ongoing operation.

### High-quality Pathways Incorporate the Following Key Components:

1. Integrated Program of Study
2. Work-based Learning
3. Integrated Student Supports
4. Regional Ecosystem
5. Coherence & Sustainability

# Golden State Pathways Program Framework

## Executive Summary

The Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) was established to promote pathways in technology, health care, education (including early education and child development), and climate-related fields, among other high-wage, high-skill, or high-growth fields that allow pupils to advance seamlessly from high school to college and career, and provide the workforce needed for economic growth. The program encourages collaboration between local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education, local and regional employers, and other relevant community interest holders to develop, or expand the availability of, innovative college and career pathways that simultaneously align with an LEA's local or regional labor market needs.

The GSPP will enable more pupils to access postsecondary education and workforce training opportunities, or to obtain gainful employment in an industry that simultaneously aligns with local, regional, or state labor market needs. Finally, the GSPP will support the continued development of a skilled and educated workforce, with an emphasis on addressing areas of acute statewide need, such as developing a diverse workforce to meet the need for professional and learning support positions in childcare settings, preschools, and schools maintaining prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any of grades one to twelve.

LEAs will utilize this framework as guidance to develop sustainable new pathways or expand current pathways. The GSPP Framework is based on the key components that will deliver the guidance necessary to develop or expand sustainable academic and career-based pathways. Pathways are designed using regional labor market information to identify growing industries and occupations, as well as the skills and credentials needed for a career in targeted sectors, and reverse mapped from industry and postsecondary education to K–12 education to ensure that students develop the skills and competencies they need to succeed in careers. The framework is designed to provide seamless guidance that will assist them with exploration and selection within an enhanced system directing them to a plan that will accelerate their academic (secondary and postsecondary) and career focus.

The sustainability of the new or expanded pathways is dependent on the support services provided to the students to keep them engaged in their academic and career-focused work. The Integrated Student Supports key component ensures students' academic success through the development and coordination of supportive services—ranging from mentoring and tutoring to housing and health care—that address academic and non-academic barriers to achievement. These services can be provided by interest holders within the regional labor market, including secondary and postsecondary instructors, employers and labor unions, workforce board members, and intermediaries that assist with the development of the pathways at their respective local and regional school sites.

This framework is geared to provide the guidance necessary for the creation of sustainable pathways that will prepare students for their future in postsecondary education or a high-skilled and high-wage occupation.

## Funding Allocations and Priorities

The GSPP Act allocates funding as follows:

- Implementation Grants – 85 percent (\$425M)
- Consortium Development & Planning Grants – 10 percent (\$50M)
- Regional Technical Assistance Centers Grants – 5 percent (\$25M)

The Act prioritizes LEAs for funding if they have higher-than-state-average rates of dropout, suspension and expulsion, child homelessness, foster youth, justice-involved youth, students not completing the full A-G course requirement, lower than average graduation rates, or at least 50 percent of students are unduplicated.<sup>1</sup>

The GSPP Act prioritizes access to pathways in industries that offer high-wage, high-skill, or high-growth (HWSG) jobs in their regional economy or the state economy. Such priority industries include, but are not limited to:

- Education, including early education and child development;
- Computer science;
- Health care; and
- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathways that also focus on climate resilience.

LEAs are the only eligible direct recipients of all three grant types under the GSPP Program. Grant amounts will be based on:

- The number of students in the LEA overall and in the relevant pathways;
- The number of pathways proposed and the number of school sites; and
- The number of partners collaborating with the applicant.

LEAs may apply for both Implementation Grants and Consortium Development & Planning Grants concurrently. Applicants seeking both grants will be required to submit, and receive approval of, a supplemental report to the California Department of Education detailing the implementation plan developed using the resources received from their planning grant before expending their implementation grant resources.

### **Regional Technical Assistance Centers**

The GSPP Act funds up to 10 LEAs to serve as Regional Technical Assistance Centers (RTACs). One of these LEAs will serve as the lead technical assistance grantee and work with the California Department of Education to provide leadership and direction to the other RTACs, who will provide technical

---

<sup>1</sup> Unduplicated count of pupils who (1) are English learners, (2) meet income or categorical eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program, or (3) are foster youth. “Unduplicated count” means that each pupil is counted only once even if the pupil meets more than one of these criteria (EC sections 2574(b)(2) and 42238.02(b)(1)).

assistance to GSPP grantees in their respective regions. The Act specifies that the TA lead provider should have demonstrated expertise in the design and implementation of college and career pathways.

RTACs will:

- Support LEAs with the continuous improvement of their Golden State Pathways.
- Leverage evidence-based frameworks, such as the Linked Learning framework, to provide assistance to grantees.
- Support prospective applicants and grantees with feedback regarding the development of their planned application, implementation, and continuous improvement of their Golden State Pathways Program. This support extends to other CTE programs, courses, and pathways that have been integrated with, or that have been aligned with, the GSPP.
- Create a community of practice network that enables grantees to share best practices with other grantees and other interested LEAs.
- Assist grant recipients with data collection and reporting.

## **Data and Reporting**

LEAs should use student data to drive decision-making and the continuous improvement of their pathways. LEA leaders are encouraged to convene interest holders on a regular basis to review pathways data and make programmatic decisions.

LEAs receiving GSPP funds must submit the following metrics annually to the California Department of Education:

- Perkins V CTE indicators: quality indicators described in the California State Plan for Career Technical Education required by the federal Strengthening CTE for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V).
- CTE completers & concentrators: the number of students completing CTE coursework and the number of students completing a CTE pathway consisting of a sequence of two or more CTE courses in the same subject matter discipline.
- Academic performance: student academic performance indicators, including information disaggregated by student subgroups.
- Graduation: the number and rate of school or program graduates by student subgroups.
- A-G completion: the rate of students completing the courses to meet the A–G course requirements needed to be eligible for admission to the University of California or the California State University at the participating school site, disaggregated by participants and non-participants in the Pathway.
- Credits & courses: the number of postsecondary credits earned, internships and apprenticeships completed, and career technical education courses completed.

- Credentials & degrees: attainment of certificates, credentials, and degrees.
- Postsecondary enrollment: postsecondary enrollment, or students who meet the requirements to be considered a pupil who successfully transferred to a four-year university for purposes of Education Code Section 84750.4.
- Employment: transitions to employment, apprenticeships, or job training in the industry sector educational pathway program offered by the participating local educational agency.

## Guiding Principles

### College *and* career

High quality pathways should prepare students for success in college *and* career. The Pathways Program concept rejects the false choice of preparing students for “college *or* career.” Instead, pathways embrace college and career. This is important for a few reasons:

First, career preparation benefits *all* students, regardless of their chosen pathway. All students benefit from exploring potential careers, learning specific content knowledge, building technical skills, understanding the real-world relevance of concepts from school, and applying those skills in a work-based learning experiences. This is just as true for students in pathways that require a Ph.D. as for those in pathways that require an associate’s degree.

Second, all students need to be prepared for a career that pays a family-sustaining wage, which increasingly means students need a postsecondary degree, certification, or credential. The GSPP Act prioritizes training students for high-wage, high-skill, high-growth jobs. Most of these family sustaining jobs require postsecondary training, either directly after high school or at various points along the career development continuum (or both).<sup>2</sup> Thus, California’s education system cannot prepare students for *career* success if it does not also prepare students for *college* success. College and career preparation are inextricably linked.

### Integration and Coherence

Pathways should not be considered a separate or discrete program that stands apart from academics or other student experiences in high schools. Rather, pathways are an educational approach to better connect and align all aspects of instruction to support a unified strategy for preparing students for college and career success. This creates an academic experience for all students that is a “whole greater than the sum of its parts.” LEAs should strive for integration and coherence in all aspects of their pathways operation, from funding to programming to goals.

The core of each pathway is an integrated program of study which includes college preparatory academic coursework, opportunity for postsecondary credits, and CTE. In an integrated program of study, core academic and CTE courses—though they may be taught as separate courses—are intentionally connected and integrated, so that their content is mutually-reinforcing. This coursework should, in turn, be integrated with work-based learning outside of the classroom, which allows students to apply and develop the coursework content and skills in a real-world setting. Throughout this experience,

---

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). Raise the Bar: Unlocking Career Success. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved March 6, 2023, from <https://www.ed.gov/pathways-to-success>

students receive guidance in navigating and understanding these connections through comprehensive support services. Planning for, funding, and executing these strategies in coherent, interconnected ways creates engaging and relevant learning experiences that keep students connected, increase attendance rates and ultimately change academic outcomes.

Integration also extends to goals. Most LEA goals relating to college and career readiness, social-emotional learning, workforce development, and, ultimately, economic justice can be addressed more effectively when integrated under a united pathways framework. To support and sustain these goals, the various discrete college and career readiness and workforce development funding sources can also be braided coherently to allow for greater—and more sustainable—financial support for pathways.

## **Key Component: Integrated Program of Study**

### **What It Is**

- Pathways should include rigorous academics, early college coursework, and career technical education (CTE). GSPP requires that all pathways offer the following elements to all students in an integrated program of study:
  - Full A-G course sequence
  - 12 postsecondary credits
  - Career technical education (CTE) coursework
  - An additional College/Career Indicator (CCI)
- Pathways are designed using regional labor market information to identify growing industries and occupations, as well as the skills and credentials needed for a career in targeted sectors, and reverse mapped from industry to postsecondary to K–12 to ensure that students develop the skills and competencies they need to succeed in careers.
- Pathways increase postsecondary attainment by bringing opportunities to earn rigorous postsecondary credit and credentials into secondary education.
- High school and postsecondary curricula are aligned and educators plan for articulated pathways and transferability to UC and CSU institutions.
- Pathways provide preparation for college and careers that is applicable to all students' educational and career interests and plans.
- Students in pathways apply classroom learning in real-world settings, including workplaces, while enrolled in advanced academic programs, including dual enrollment, early college, middle college, AP, IB, and CTE.
- Pathways build a skilled talent pipeline for employers by equipping students for jobs in high-wage, high-skill, high-growth industries with career advancement opportunities.

### **Why It Matters**

- Students often find the transitions from secondary to postsecondary education challenging or unclear, leading to low postsecondary enrollment and completion rates—even though the majority of jobs in California require postsecondary credentials and degrees.

- Pathways expand students' college and career options by preparing students for a range of postsecondary education options—including associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and stackable, industry-recognized credentials—while simultaneously providing students with opportunities to learn about careers and build skills relevant to their career goals.
- Research shows that students who complete advanced academic programs are more likely to enroll and be successful in college. All students in pathway programs should be prepared for both college and career success.
- Pathways address the growing affordability challenge in postsecondary education by allowing students to earn postsecondary credits and credentials at little or no cost.
- Students who are unable to transfer credits between educational institutions are at increased risk of failing to complete postsecondary credentials.
- Pathways aligned with labor market demand meet workforce needs, leading to state and regional economic growth, while ensuring that students in pathways gain skills and credentials that lead to family-sustaining careers.

## What It Looks Like

- Student progress through seamlessly connected secondary and postsecondary programs of study and degree plans.
- The design of pathways incorporates crosswalks that provide a road map for how students will progress through courses and pathways that lead to a range of postsecondary options, including associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and stackable, industry-recognized credentials.
- Pathways programs of study and graduation plans at the high school level include all of the courses to meet A-G requirements, opportunities to earn at least 12 postsecondary credits, and multiple advanced academic course options that are accessible to all students.
- **Additional CCI:** The GSPP Act requires pathways to prepare students for at least one additional College and Career Ready Indicator, beyond those listed above. The eligible indicators<sup>3</sup> are:
  - CTE Pathway Completion
  - Leadership/Military Science
  - Pre-Apprenticeships
  - College-Ready Score on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in English Language Arts/Literacy and mathematics (Grade 11)
  - State and Federal Job Programs

---

<sup>3</sup> Some College/Career Indicators cannot be considered "additional," since they are already listed as requirements of pathways. Those CCI indicators that are ineligible for this pathways requirement for this reason are: A-G completion, Advanced Placement exams, College Credit Course / Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate Exams, and Transition Classroom and Work-Based Learning Experiences.

- Bridging programs, such as dual enrollment agreements and integrated support services, provide structures that enable students to navigate transitions between institutions.
- Students earn postsecondary credits that are recognized for transfer at both two- and four-year institutions.
- Developmental education and acceleration strategies support students and increase postsecondary credit attainment.
- Pathways are supported by structures and processes—such as integrated projects and curriculum units, project-based learning, team teaching, common planning time for teachers, and lessons that embed CTE content in academic courses—that enable educators to integrate core academics and career-focused learning.
- Students are exposed to and build familiarity with industry standards and practices through both classroom learning and participation in activities and opportunities outside the classroom, including out-of-school time programs, internships, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships.
- Teachers and counselors increase their knowledge of industry standards and practices through participation in externship programs.

Implementation Strategies that are commonly used to enact these integrated approaches include a **Graduate Profile** through which LEAs define the set of knowledge and skills (e.g., critical thinking, communication) that graduates should master, and incorporate intentional opportunities for students to learn and practice those skills through their school experience. Graduate Profiles or other college and career readiness road maps can serve as that grounding principle to which these efforts are connected.

Integration can be achieved through the **design of coursework**. Academic, CTE, and postsecondary courses can be integrated to create coherent instructional design that supports student academic development that adheres to the goals in the graduate profile. Core academic classes include career-themed content, and CTE classes should include core academic content. The pathway is designed to have interdisciplinary learning opportunities, including work-based learning that help students make connections and see the real-world applications of their learning.

Integration can also be supported through the **organization of student cohorts**: Students in the pathway are often organized into cohorts that have common courses, teachers, and curricular experiences. These common courses ideally constitute at least half of students' schedules. This cohort-based approach allows educators to design and connect collaborative and integrated projects and deeply connect work-based learning experiences to classroom instruction. Creating such cohorts also facilitates common planning time for pathway teachers. Evidence suggests that, in the absence of intentionally designated common planning time, pathway teachers struggle to create connections across the academic and technical curricula within the pathway course of study, making this an important strategy for students and educators alike.

Finally, integration can be pursued through an approach to **assessment** that uses holistic, performance-based assessments in courses and graduation capstone projects that combine academic, CTE, and social-emotional skills.

## Interest Holder Roles

- **Secondary and postsecondary educators** collaborate on the design of aligned programs of study and degree plans that are aligned to labor market demand and support integration of A-G, dual enrollment, early and middle college, AP, IB, CTE.



- **Employers** provide input on the competencies, skills, and credentials required to meet their talent needs.
- **Workforce boards** provide labor market information and analysis.
- **Intermediaries** facilitate collaboration among educators and employers and support the development of a process that engages educators and employers in keeping pathways updated to meet the needs of evolving regional labor markets.
- **Community coalitions** include regional industry partners, civic leaders, and local postsecondary institutions engaged to develop industry partnerships, supporting work-based learning, smoothing transitions to postsecondary education, and sustaining Golden State Pathways programs.

## Key Component: Work-Based Learning Experiences

### What It Is

- Work-based learning is an educational approach or instructional methodology that uses the workplace or real work to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills that will help them connect school experiences to real-life work activities and future career opportunities. When feasible, work-based learning should be an integral part of a more comprehensive program that integrates academic courses and career technical education.
- Work-based learning provides opportunities for students to apply academic and technical knowledge and skills learned in the classroom in a realistic setting, engage with business and industry professionals, explore and experience potential career options, and develop and practice essential employability skills.
- Work-based learning experiences integrate career awareness and career exposure activities.

### Why It Matters

- Students gain real-world work experience and valuable technical and employability skills while learning about career options.
- Work-based learning drives equity by providing students from all backgrounds with opportunities to build professional networks and social capital, gain insight into workplace dynamics and how to navigate them and earn income while developing skills aligned to a career of interest.
- Employers build a talent pipeline, and many report that they benefit from students' knowledge of technology, creativity, and innovative ideas.

### What It Looks Like

All students in the pathway participate in a structured, sequenced continuum of work-based learning experiences aligned with the industry focus of the pathway.

- Students gain technical and employability skills through work-based learning experiences that are aligned with classroom learning.
- Logistics related to work-based learning may be managed by an intermediary organization.

- Students have opportunities to participate in paid internships, pre-apprenticeships, or apprenticeships that offer opportunities to learn technical and professional skills and to earn industry-recognized credentials. These experiences provide an opportunity for students to learn and practice technical and professional skills, including receiving input and feedback from professionals in their field of interest.
- Students participating in an internship or similar experience have a plan in place that outlines the knowledge, skills, or experiences the student is expected to acquire and/or demonstrate during the WBL engagement, as well as information about how the student will be evaluated. This plan is integrated with students' academic and CTE coursework, and students should be jointly evaluated by both employers and educators to assess skill development and mastery.
- Students participate in work-based learning experiences in partnership with regional businesses and industries, state and local governmental entities, and nonprofit and community-based organizations.
- Students have opportunities to develop social and professional networks that will better enable them to launch their careers.

### Interest Holder Roles

- **Secondary and postsecondary educators, employers, and intermediaries** collaboratively design work-based learning experiences.
- **Secondary and postsecondary educators** prepare students to participate in work-based learning and connect it to classroom learning.
- **Employers** provide opportunities for young people to enter workplaces and work with industry professionals and provide feedback on students' performance.
- **Intermediaries, including workforce boards and community-based organizations**, manage all logistics, including brokering and aggregating work-based learning opportunities across the region, developing job descriptions, managing student placement, supporting employers in addressing questions related to legal and liability concerns, executing agreements between employers and schools, and developing curricula and assessments in partnership with educators.

## Key Component: Integrated Student Supports

### What It Is

- Integrated student supports offer a whole-child approach to ensuring that students' academic, physical, and social-emotional needs are met. Students in pathways are known and supported by caring adults both within their schools and in their work-based learning settings through pathways' community partners (including local colleges, employers, and community-based organizations).
- Integrated student supports ensure students' academic success through the development and coordination of supportive services—ranging from mentoring and tutoring to housing and health care—that address academic and non-academic barriers to achievement.
- Pathways identify potential academic and nonacademic challenges for all students and address their social, emotional, and academic needs.

- Integrated student supports ensure all students have the opportunities, information, and individualized support needed to fully participate and succeed in dual enrollment, AP, IB, and other opportunities for advanced coursework.
- Integrated student supports ensure all students have the opportunities, information, and individualized support needed to fully participate and succeed in a continuum of work-based learning experiences.
- Students learn about a range of college and career options—and the education requirements linked to careers of interest—through a sequence of developmentally appropriate activities.
- This continuum begins with career awareness and exploration in elementary school and progresses to comprehensive postsecondary and career advising in middle school, high school, and college.
- Career navigation systems and career development activities incorporate work-based learning.

## Why It Matters

- Students thrive when provided with “a strong web of relationships” of peers and caring adults to support their development, and pathways build communities that facilitate such relationships.<sup>4</sup>
- Adolescence is a time when students’ brain development leads them to seek deeper relationships, more complex thinking, and self-reflection; pathways should incorporate that understanding to nurture and guide students in their growth.<sup>5</sup> This requires both community structures and individualized supports on the transition to college and career, social-emotional skills, and professional skills. The benefits of these integrated supports are particularly significant for students who attend schools in historically under-resourced communities.
- Integrated student supports bolster student outcomes and success in pathways.
- Integrated student supports address social determinants of educational success by ensuring all learners have access to academic supports that are personalized and differentiated based on academic need, as well as to other supports that meet social, emotional, and academic individual needs.
- Integrated student supports improve the responsiveness of schools to students’ needs, strengthen learning environments, and bolster collaboration across schools, families, and communities.
- The growing importance of postsecondary education and the increasing importance of connecting education and careers make advising and counseling essential for supporting students as they navigate college and careers. Students need access to information about all of their education and career options in order to make informed choices about their futures.
- A developmental approach to advising helps students make more informed, financially sound, and sustainable education and career choices by helping students understand what they are

---

<sup>4</sup> Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children. (2021). Design principles for schools: Putting the science of learning and development into action.

<sup>5</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education. (2018). Science of Adolescent Learning: How Body and Brain Development Affect Student Learning.

interested in and why, what career opportunities are available in their region, and what skills, education, and training are required to pursue careers of interest to them.

A well-designed pathway ensures equity of student *access* to the program and provides tailored supports for equity of student *outcomes* in the program.

## What It Looks Like

- Pathways include plans for supports for academic, nonacademic, and career-related courses and activities that incorporate evidence-based strategies and consider the supports offered by other programs. Plans explicitly include supports for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and first-generation college students.
- **College and career counseling:** LEAs support students' transition to postsecondary education by exposing students to a variety of high-quality postsecondary and career options. Counselors and advisors build, maintain, and support students' success in the postsecondary pathway of their choice.
- **Postsecondary transition support:** LEAs help students with the steps involved in the postsecondary transition (e.g., support with entrance exams, college applications, FAFSA and financial aid applications).
- **Social-emotional development:** LEAs build students' social-emotional skills, including social awareness, self-management, and growth mindset. This development is best facilitated by caring adults who know individual students well and have built strong, protective relationships over time.
- **Supportive community structures:** LEAs organize structures that support the development of sustained and secure relationships between and among students and caring adults, such as advisory systems that create family units within schools, offer personalized supports, and connect students to useful resources and opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Educators have access to resources and professional development opportunities that enable them to effectively advise students.
- **Individualized interventions:** LEAs develop a system to track students' progress, both individually and by student subpopulations. Struggling students are provided targeted interventions to ensure success. This may be part of larger school support systems (e.g. Multi-Tiered System of Support, Response to Intervention, Individualized Education Plans, comprehensive school counseling).
- **Admissions policies:** The pathway has an open admissions policy. The pathway reflects the diversity of the community it serves. This includes diversity defined by race, income, English language learner status, disability status, and prior academic performance. LEAs use disaggregated data to evaluate whether access and outcomes in the program is equitable and adjusts policies or supports to address any gaps.
- Courses and activities that incorporate evidence-based strategies and consider the supports offered by other programs. Plans explicitly include supports for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and first-generation college students.

---

<sup>6</sup> Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children. (2021). Design principles for schools: Putting the science of learning and development into action.

- Pathways include a comprehensive plan for ongoing academic and non-academic support so that all students have the opportunity to earn at least 12 college credits and complete A-G requirements while in high school.
- An outline of potential academic supports, such as tutoring, peer mentoring, or career coaching is provided to students.
- Students and families have access to and information about nonacademic supports, including health care, housing, nutrition assistance, transportation, and child care.
- Educational institutions, local CBOs, and other providers collaborate to leverage and braid programs and funding that deliver needed academic, social, and emotional supports.
- Pathways incorporate course delivery models that provide flexible schedules and formats to meet the needs of all learner populations.
- Appropriate safety procedures for students related to workplace or postsecondary activities are addressed.

## Interest Holder Roles

- **Secondary and postsecondary educators, including counselors and advisors**, develop and implement a college and career advising continuum, identify student milestones along the continuum and assess students' progress, and support students in achieving their education and career goals. They are proactive in connecting students and their families with appropriate supports and ensure that students and their families have information about and access to needed supports.
- **The California Career Resource Network (CalCRN)** (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/cc/>) program provides career development resources, and training materials to middle school and high school students, counselors, educators, and administrators.
- **Employers** advise on the design of and participate in career awareness and exploration activities such as career fairs and mock interviews. They may also contribute to professional development for educators through the development of externship programs.
- **Intermediaries** support coordination and collaboration among educators and employers.
- **Workforce development boards** provide educators with labor market information and support them in developing strategies for sharing that information with students.
- **Parents and students** access college and career information and advising and use what they learn to make informed choices about students' education and career plans.

## Key Component: Regional Ecosystem

### What It Is

- State and regional collaboration across sectors is critical to building effective pathways that incorporate all key components and propel students to success. Partners in a regional pathways' ecosystem must include, at a minimum, secondary and postsecondary education, employers, and workforce development. They may also include local government, economic development,

Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, labor unions, and community-based organizations.

- Partners from across the regional ecosystem are engaged in the design and implementation of local pathways to ensure that they successfully bridge K–12, higher education, and the labor market.
- Pathways are designed using regional labor market information and employer input to identify growing industries and occupations, as well as the skills and credentials needed for a career in targeted industry sectors.
- Pathways are reverse mapped from industry to postsecondary to K–12 to ensure that students develop the skills and competencies they need to succeed in careers.
- Pathways build a skilled talent pipeline for employers by equipping students for jobs in high-wage, in-demand industries with career advancement opportunities.

### **Why It Matters**

- High-quality implementation of the components of pathways requires engagement and support from all partners in a regional ecosystem.
- To effectively meet the needs and goals of interest holders representing multiple sectors, leaders from those sectors must actively contribute their expertise and perspectives to the pathways design process.
- The engagement of cross-sector partners ensures that pathways leverage—rather than duplicate—existing efforts and partnerships, such as collective impact initiatives and education-business partnerships led by Chambers of Commerce and workforce boards.
- Employer-led partnerships are critical to the development of pathways that meet employers' talent needs and therefore support students in launching careers and achieving economic mobility.
- Business and industry leaders are facing a talent shortage. Pathways aligned with labor market demand meet workforce needs, leading to state and regional economic growth.
- Alignment with labor market demand ensures that students in pathways gain skills, credentials, certifications and degrees that lead to life-sustaining high skill and high wage jobs.

### **What It Looks Like**

- Partners in a regional ecosystem work collaboratively to design pathways that are reverse mapped from the regional labor market and meet the needs of students.
- A cross-sector regional pathways leadership team meets regularly to plan and discuss the design and implementation of pathways.
- Cross-sector partners strategically align and leverage existing programs and initiatives.
- Partners develop formal agreements, including memoranda of understanding, and processes that bridge institutions and systems.

## Interest Holder Roles

- **Intermediaries** convene and connect regional teams of cross-sector interest holders to develop a shared vision and goals for pathways, plan for sustainability, and evaluate the success of pathways, and engage in continuous improvement. Intermediaries support the development of a process that engages educators and employers in keeping pathways updated to meet the needs of evolving regional labor markets.
- **K–16 Collaboratives** can serve as conveners or funders to support regional cross-sector alignment.
- **Regional Technical Assistance Centers (RTACs)** funded through the Golden State Pathways Program can also serve as conveners or provide technical assistance on issues of regional importance.
- **Employers** provide input on the competencies, skills, and credentials required to meet their talent needs.
- **Secondary and postsecondary educators** design programs of study aligned with labor market demand.
- **Workforce boards** provide labor market information and analysis.

## Key Component: Sustainability and Coherence

### What It Is

- The design of this system must keep sustainability and durability in mind to ensure college and career education remains nimble in the face of new economies and new challenges.
- Grantees should see career pathways sustained by firmly established collaborations among schools and districts, community colleges, and employers at both local and regional levels.
- Resources and staff necessary to sustain Golden State Pathways and cross-sector collaborations should move from special funding status to become an established part of LEAs budgets (LCFF, CTEIG, Perkins, etc.) and intermediary supports should be institutionalized.
- The grant funds will establish the necessary infrastructure for each of the pathways developed through the GSPP Framework to become permanent.
- Employers partner with each of their local pathways to establish the pipeline of employment for their students.
- A focus on creating a coherent program model, should guide the integration of funding from multiple sources and the orchestration of multiple partners so that students experience integrated educational experiences that are sustained and become part of the school's mission and identity.

### Why It Matters

- Developing strong relationships during the grant implementation process is a fundamental implementation task that leads to building coalitions to support sustainability.

- Successful coalitions that will include K–12 educators, community college administrators, and employers will draw together groups for collaboration to present clear and direct benefits of the sustainability of the pathways. Engagement and collaboration are key to coalition building and requires a special skill set. LEAs must be able to navigate the environment, build trust among and across interest holders.
- Successful pathway leaders establish trusting and productive relationships that will develop transformational cross-section connections that will also define an inclusive vision for the region and identify achievable objectives and assignments for interest holders.
- Developing cross-sector support requires leaders' active attention to cultivating reciprocally beneficial relationships among partners to provide the support for sustainability of the pathways.

## What It Looks Like

- **Creating coherence** in LEA's work requires thoughtfully integrating and connecting programs and strategies, including funding sources. While each funding source has different constraints in its possible uses, one funding source can generally pick up where another source leaves off. In this way, LEAs can generally pay for all components of their pathways programs when they consider their funding sources holistically. Technical assistance providers can provide more specific guidance on best practices. A coherent funding model for pathways may include the following funding sources:
  - Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP)
  - CTE Incentive Grants (CTEIG)
  - Strong Workforce Program
  - Dual enrollment funding
  - Career and College Access Pathways (CCAP) Grant
  - California Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP)
  - K-16 Collaborative funding
  - Private and philanthropic funding
  - Federal funding sources (e.g. Perkins and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)
  - Other funding sources
- **Planning for sustainability** requires intentionality to ensure that the program is implemented and funded in such a way that it can be continued over time.
  - The timeframe for a Pathway's costs should match the timeframe of its funding. Simply put, one-time funding should be prioritized for one-time costs (such as startup costs), and recurring funding should be used for recurring costs (such as operational costs).
  - LEAs that receive GSPP funds should note the funds are meant to support, not supplant any state, federal, public, or private sources of funding. This is both a legal requirement, and an important practical consideration for sustainability, since GSPP funds are non-recurring.
  - Sustainability of the pathways in the GSPP will require the guidance for implementation from the California State Plan for Career Technical Education at the local and regional level to better support pathways and the cross-sector collaboration.



- Key interest holders will need to incorporate a collective approach to pathway work, commit to a shared pathway agenda for youth in their region, and invest in systemic action to sustain it.

## Interest Holder Roles

- **Secondary and postsecondary educators, employers, and intermediaries** collaboratively design coalitions for networking and collaboration.
- **Secondary and postsecondary educators** prepare students to participate in work-based learning and connect it to classroom learning and the regional labor market.
- **Employers** provide opportunities for young people to enter workplaces and work with industry professionals to develop career readiness and network opportunities.
- **Intermediaries, including workforce boards and community-based organizations**, manage logistics, including brokering and aggregating work-based learning opportunities across the region, and developing coalitions to build out, networking and collaboration opportunities to support the sustainability of the pathways.

## Appendix 1: Useful Resources

### Enabling legislation

- Golden State Pathways Program (GSPP) Act (CA Education Code, Section 53020) ([https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&division=4.&title=2.&part=28.&chapter=16.1.&article=](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&division=4.&title=2.&part=28.&chapter=16.1.&article=))

### Key Research

- SRI International. Taking Stock of the California Linked Learning District Initiative. ([https://www.hsredesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/sri\\_year\\_7\\_linked\\_learning\\_evaluation\\_report\\_0.pdf](https://www.hsredesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/sri_year_7_linked_learning_evaluation_report_0.pdf))
- CTE Research Network. Resources. (<https://ctereseachnetwork.org/resources>)
- UC Davis. A Foot in the Door: Growth in Participation and Equity in Dual Enrollment in California. (<https://education.ucdavis.edu/leg-college-0>)

### Related initiatives

- US Department of Education. Unlocking Career Success Initiative. (<https://www.ed.gov/pathways-to-success>)
- Linked Learning Alliance. (<http://www.linkedlearning.org/>)

### A-G Courses

- University of California. A-G Course Requirements. (<https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/guide/>)
- UC Scout, a statewide portal for online A-G completion. (<https://www.ucscout.org/>)

### Dual enrollment

- Education Trust—West. Dual Enrollment Resources. (<https://west.edtrust.org/resource/jumpstart-setting-goals-to-drive-equitable-dual-enrollment-participation-in-californias-community-colleges/>)
- Career Ladders Project. Dual Enrollment. (<https://www.careerladdersproject.org/areas-of-focus/dualenrollment/>)
- College in High School Alliance. Digital Resource Center. (<https://collegeinhighschool.org/digital-resource-center/>)

### CTE

- CDE. CTE data collection. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/pk/ctedatacollection.asp>)

### College/Career Indicators (CCI)

- CDE. College/Career Indicators. (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/dashboardccr.asp>)

### **Potential funding sources**

- CDE. Career Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG).  
(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/ig/>)
- CCCCCO. Strong Workforce Program.  
(<https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Workforce-and-Economic-Development/Strong-Workforce-Program>)
- CDE. Community Schools Partnership Program (CCSPP).  
(<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gi/hs/ccspp.asp>)
- Community College program-based funding: Education Code Section 84750.4.  
([https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=84750.4.&lawCode=EDC](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=84750.4.&lawCode=EDC))
- Foundation for CA Community Colleges. Regional K-16 Collaboratives.  
(<https://k16collaborative.org/>)

## Appendix 2: Work-Based Learning Continuum

### California Work-Based Learning (WBL) Continuum

Guidance for work-based learning instructional strategies at each level of a Career Technical Education Pathway

#### Career Awareness and Exploration

##### *Learning about Work*

- Build awareness of career opportunities.
- Develop essential workplace skills in alignment with the *Standards for Career Ready Practice* (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/sf/documents/ctescrpflyer.pdf>).
- Explore career options based on interests, skills, and guided self-assessments.
- Examine options for careers and related post-secondary training.

#### Career Preparation

##### *Preparing for Work*

- Prepare for careers through occupation-specific classroom learning.
- Develop knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for success in careers.
- Build a resume inclusive of WBL experiences.
- Make informed decisions about careers and related post-secondary training.

#### Career Training

##### *Learning Through Work*

- Train for careers through occupation-specific work experience.
- Apply knowledge, skills, and competencies to occupation-specific projects.
- Build a professional portfolio inclusive of a resume and industry certifications.
- Interact professionally with industry experts, mentors, and employers.

#### Sample Introductory WBL Activities

- Career research
- Career interview
- Interest inventory
- Student leadership (Career Technical Student Organization)
- Guest speaker
- Career Fair

#### Sample Concentrator WBL Activities

- Interactive career panel
- Mock interview
- Job shadow
- Industry-led master class or workshop
- Industry-specific project-based learning
- Student-led enterprise\*

- Simulated WBL\*

**Sample Capstone WBL Activities**

- Career Planning
- Professional networking
- Mentorship and Internship\*
- Registered pre-apprenticeship\*
- Registered youth apprenticeship
- On-the-job training