

## Career-Focused Indicator Profile: Progress towards a Post-High School Credential

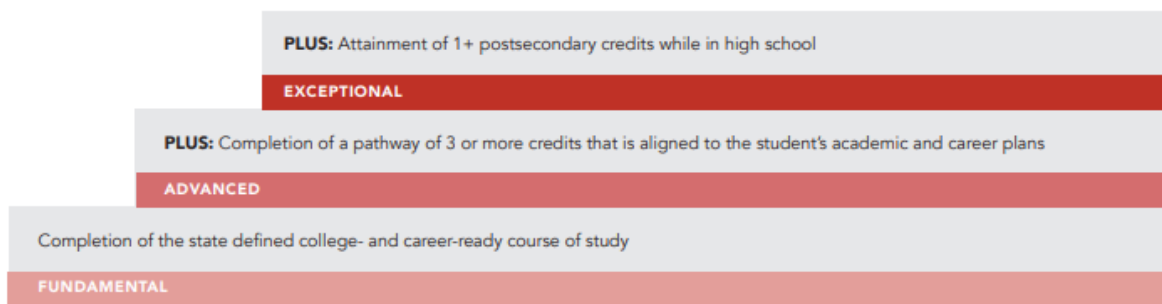
Thirty-five states included at least one career-focused indicator in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) accountability systems.<sup>i</sup> Now, states are in the midst of putting finishing touches on their business rules,<sup>ii</sup> guidance to local districts, data collection efforts and report cards.

To help states design and implement the most meaningful career-focused indicators, Advance CTE, Education Strategy Group and the Council of Chief State School Officers have developed a series of indicator profiles, organized around the four types of measures recommended in *Destination Known: Valuing College AND Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems*:

- Progress toward Post-High School Credential
- Co-curricular Learning and Leadership Experiences
- Assessment of Readiness
- Transitions beyond High School<sup>iii</sup>

These profiles provide detailed information about how leading states are designing their career-focused accountability indicators to ensure they are based on quality, validated data, are inclusive of all students, and are aligned with meaningful outcomes for students. They should serve as a resource and inspiration for states working on similar indicators.

**Progress Towards a Post-High School Credential:** *Student demonstration of successful progress toward credentials of value beyond high school. At a minimum that means completion of a validated college- and career-ready course of study. It should also include whether students completed a rigorous Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway and earned postsecondary credit while in high school. Rather than focus solely on whether a student graduates, this is a critical measure of whether a student is graduating prepared for the next step.*



### State Example: Delaware

Delaware is revising its *College and/or Career Preparedness (CCP)* measure, defined as “the percent of students who have demonstrated readiness for postsecondary education and a career after high school through success in one or more of the identified CCP indicators.”

On the “career” side, students may demonstrate readiness through postsecondary credential attainment, which includes dual enrollment and other advanced college coursework in technical subject areas that are approved as part of a CTE program of study. Beyond just passing the course, students must earn a letter grade of B (or equivalent percentile grade) in a technical course for the purpose of reporting.

$$\frac{\text{Number of 12}^{\text{th}} \text{ grade students meeting one or more of the CCP options}}{\text{Number of 12}^{\text{th}} \text{ grade students}}$$

For some context, Delaware develops statewide CTE programs of study as well as approves locally developed programs of study, using consistently rigorous criteria, including evidence of labor market demand, involvement of industry partners, and “value add” opportunities, such as industry certification and early college credit opportunities.<sup>iv</sup>

The state is able to collect and validate the information from districts because all dual enrollment courses offered as part of CTE programs of study have state-level course codes, which identify the CTE subject area and the fact that it is dual enrollment. The state develops or facilitates the development of dual enrollment courses or approves local options as part of a CTE program of study. This approach provides flexibility for districts to offer the most appropriate dual enrollment options, including statewide articulated courses or dual enrollment offered through an individual institution.

Importantly, the CCP measure – as exemplified by the way the dual enrollment, work-based learning and industry-recognized credential metrics are constructed – is designed to drive the implementation of high-quality CTE programs of study at the district level. These metrics were included in the accountability model to reinforce the key elements of a high-quality CTE program of study. As such, a student in a state-approved program of study will have multiple options to meet one or more of the CCP options because they are embedded directly in that program.

### State Example: West Virginia

West Virginia’s *Postsecondary Achievement* indicator measures the percent students that acquire credentials toward college and career readiness during their high school careers. One way in which students may meet this indicator is through the completion of the four required courses in a state-approved CTE program of study.

$$\frac{\text{Number of 9}^{\text{th}}, 10^{\text{th}} \text{ and } 12^{\text{th}} \text{ grade students earning one or more of the college/career credentials}}{\text{Number of 12}^{\text{th}} \text{ grade students}}$$

The state defines such a CTE program of study as “an approved sequence of four CTE courses that align to a CTE cluster and pathway, impacts state economic labor market needs as verified by workforce data, and leads to an industry-recognized credential, certificate or opportunity for continuing into postsecondary level education.”<sup>v</sup>

The West Virginia Department of Education supports the maintenance of educational records in its West Virginia Education Information System, the state longitudinal data system. The education records are entered and updated annually by school and district staff to comply with federal and state law and policies, including CTE enrollment. Within the system are the state-approved CTE courses,

which align with the 16 Career Clusters and the state-defined programs of study. Each Cluster, program of study and course has its own code in the system.

Due to the fact that finalized data for CTE program of study completion are not available until the fall, after students graduate, the measures will be lagged so that totals can capture all credits earned, including through the summer of each school year. This means, for example, that the 2017-2018 school year score will be calculated using finalized data from the 2016-2017 school year.

### What Stands Out

While Delaware and West Virginia took different approaches, both states are designing their accountability systems to incentivize the offering and completion of state-defined CTE programs of study at the district level. They are both using accountability to identify key components of that program of study; in the case of West Virginia, this was simply the approved course sequence, while for Delaware, this includes early postsecondary opportunities, industry credentials and work-based learning.

While *Destination Known* recommended the use of 9th grade cohort as the denominator, which allows the fullest picture of students engaged in high school to be included in the measure, Delaware and West Virginia are both using all 12th graders as their denominator. While this does exclude high school students who might not make it through to their senior year, both states are using that indicator consistently across their college- and career-ready indicators.

These Career-Ready Indicator Profiles are part of a broader effort to analyze states' approaches to measuring career readiness and continue to push the field forward by designing and implementing effective and meaningful indicators.

All of these issues will be explored in *Making Career Readiness Count: A 2018 Update*, which will be released later in 2018 by Advance CTE, Achieve, Education Strategy Group and the Council of Chief State School Officers as part of the New Skills for Youth Initiative, supported by JP Morgan Chase & Co.

<sup>i</sup> Advance CTE & Education Strategy Group (2018). *Mapping Career Readiness in the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Retrieved <https://careertech.org/resource/mapping-career-readiness-essa-full>

<sup>ii</sup> Business rules typically describe the procedures used to produce outcome data. This may include identifying the data elements that should be sourced to populate analysis databases, the programming codes used to formulate inquiries and the years of data to respond to a given indicator.

<sup>iii</sup> Education Strategy Group and Council of Chief State School Officers (2017). *Destination Known: Valuing College AND Career Readiness in State Accountability Systems*. Retrieved <https://careertech.org/resource/destination-known>

<sup>iv</sup> Advance CTE (2017). *Raising the Bar: State Strategies for Developing and Approving High-quality Career Pathways*. Retrieved <https://careertech.org/resource/raising-the-bar>

<sup>v</sup> West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Programs of Study/Standards for Career and Technical Education (Policy 2520.13). Retrieved <http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=49938&Format=PDF>