**Overview and Intended Use**

GCRI partner organizations within each grantee site will collaborate to understand their collective starting points in the work, which includes undertaking an intensive diagnostic assessment of their current career preparation system to identify strengths and gaps. This involves examining existing policies and practices across the full range of partners and gathering input from key stakeholders on how well those policies and practices are working.

To help grantees effectively undertake this analysis, the national project partners – Education Strategy Group (ESG) and Advance CTE – have developed this self-assessment tool that unpacks model practices associated with GCRI priorities: high-quality career pathways, real-world work experiences, seamless transitions to postsecondary education, and closing equity gaps. The success of reaching each depends on the strength of each site’s cross-sector partnership to carry out the work, which is why such partnership is referred to in this instrument as a foundational priority. The self-assessment instrument should be used by grantees in two ways: 1) as a tool to support and guide a comprehensive, cross-sector process that examines, analyzes, and draws initial conclusions about grantees’ current policies and practices at local and state levels in GCRI priority areas; and 2) as a road map of best practices that grantees can consult throughout the five-year initiative when making decisions about ways to strengthen their systems of career preparation.

**Expectations for GCRI Partnerships**

The self-assessment process within this instrument should be supported by additional review of relevant policies and practices. As team members of each partnership collaboratively consider and respond to the statements in this instrument, they should take into consideration information from other sources that can shed light on their responses, such as the findings of the GCRI secondary and postsecondary equity analyses and stakeholder surveys. They might also analyze a range of labor market information to understand the extent to which their pathways are demand driven. Coaches assigned to each partnership will support and help focus the work of the self-assessment to help the partnership paint a clear, reliable picture of the strengths and gaps of its shared career preparation system.

**Organization of this Self-Assessment Instrument**

Each GCRI priority has been unpacked on the following pages into target outcomes that each partnership will work to reach across the grant. Those outcomes are further defined through “supporting criteria” that will help partnerships assess the current state of their policies and practices and think more clearly and specifically about what they seek to accomplish through the work ahead.

For each of the supporting criteria, partnering organizations will collaboratively assess their current work (through the process described above) using a 1-4 rating scale:

* **1 = Limited Progress**: This is not yet a priority for the partnership. There is very little activity and no significant effort to address this criterion yet.
* **2 = Emerging Practice**: This is becoming a priority for the partnership. Early work has been done to lay a foundation to reach this criterion.
* **3 =Established Practice**: This is a priority for the partnership. Policies have been adopted and work is being implemented that can be strengthened and scaled.
* **4 =Sustained Practice**: The partnership has met this criterion. Policies have taken root; programs have been scaled; systems are sustainable; no major work is needed.

Below the rating scale of each section, space is provided for partnerships to briefly describe their greatest strengths, key challenges, and top priorities for the work across the next four years that will be prioritized in action plans. Partnerships can add more pages if helpful to expand upon the information they provide in those categories.

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| **Foundational Priority: Cross-Sector Partnerships**Establish committed, robust partnerships between local school systems, postsecondary education institutions, intermediary organizations, employers, and state education and workforce development agencies to increase student completion of high-quality career pathways through local innovation and practice change as well as state-level policy to promote economic mobility for populations of underrepresented students.  |
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| **Target Outcomes** | **Supporting Criteria** | **Current Status** |
| FP1. **Shared Vision of Success:** GCRI cross-sector partners have a shared vision of designing, building, and supporting a career preparation system that is tightly aligned with current and projected labor market needs within the region’s in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage industry sectors. | **Target outcome FP1: Establishing a shared vision of success** |  |
| 1. GCRI partner organizations have collaboratively defined a shared vision for their work, including specific goals and objectives and a common understanding of what success will look like at the conclusion of the 5-year grant period. The shared vision, goals, objectives and definition of success encompasses demand-driven career pathways that begin in high school, continue into and through postsecondary education, include industry-aligned work-based learning experiences and early postsecondary opportunities, culminate in the opportunity to earn a high-value credential, and equitably prepare students for continued education and training.
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| **1 = Limited Progress** |
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| 1. That shared vision of success is intentionally aligned with economic recovery strategies and other major priorities of each partnering organization, such as helping more students graduate high school ready for career and college and increasing postsecondary retention and credential attainment.
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| 1. Leaders of GCRI partner organizations regularly highlight and promote the GCRI shared vision as a top priority for their work.
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| FP2. **Shared accountability for results:** GCRI cross-sector partners have defined and accepted shared accountability for the effectiveness of their career preparation system across grades 9-16. | **Target outcome FP2: Developing shared accountability for results** |  |
| 1. GCRI partners have collaboratively determined specific ways in which they will share accountability for the results of their shared work to prepare students for in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage career opportunities in the post-COVID economy (e.g. data dashboard, common metrics, annual report).
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| 1. Cross-sector partners disaggregate and analyze mutually agreed-upon outcome data related to career pathways to determine the effectiveness of their partnership.
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| FP3. **Enabled collaboration**: Mechanisms for the collaboration needed to reach the shared vision of success are established and in place across partnering organizations. | **Target Outcome FP3: Ensuring mechanisms for collaboration are established** |  |
| 1. GCRI partner organizations have established processes and routines that are prioritized and utilized effectively to support and monitor progress toward the shared vision of success, including executing shared strategies, monitoring progress toward target outcomes, and identifying needed course corrections.
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| 1. The GCRI lead partner is established as the overall project manager; it communicates information and expectations clearly across partners; ensures partners are making progress toward established goals and objectives; and aligns the overall project with target outcomes.
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| 1. Each GCRI partner organization has clearly established roles and responsibilities and an understanding of how their work fits with and aligns with the work of other partners in support of progress toward the shared vision of success.
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| 1. The GCRI lead partner has created and/or supports mechanisms that enable collaboration between sub-groups of the GCRI partnership, including between all local-level partners; between local and state partners; and between public sector and private sector partners.
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| **Greatest Strengths within Cross-Sector Partnerships** | **Key Challenges within Cross-Sector Partnerships** | **Top Priorities for Cross-Sector Partnerships** |

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| **Priority 1: Rigor and Quality in Career Pathways for ALL Students**Strengthen the quality and rigor of career pathways - including scaling down or phasing out those that don’t lead to credentials with labor market value - and ensure those pathways are widely available to and accessed by all students in comprehensive and technical high schools and in colleges, especially by underrepresented populations.  |
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| **Target Outcomes** | **Supporting Criteria** | **Current Status** |
| 1a. **Alignment of pathways and associated credentials with high-value opportunities:** Data-driven and employer-validated processes are in place to determine in-demand, high-skill, high-wage industry sectors with which career pathways and their associated credentials must be aligned, particularly in the post-COVID-19 economy | **Target outcome 1a: Alignment of pathways with labor market need**1. State K-12 and higher education agencies collaboratively set rigorous thresholds for classifying in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage industry sectors and occupations and differentiate those thresholds according to regional economies within the state.
2. State K-12 and higher education agencies collaboratively analyze labor market information at least every other year – and more frequently in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19 - to identify in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage industry sectors and occupations at state and regional levels.
3. State K-12 and higher education agencies collaboratively analyze real-time labor market information at least every other year – and more frequently in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19 - to identify credentials that are essential to those in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage sectors and occupations.
4. State K-12 and higher education agencies collaboratively and regularly engage industry leaders to validate the high-priority sectors, occupations, and credentials identified through data analysis.
5. School districts and postsecondary education institutions independently and systematically verify the industry sectors and associated credentials identified by the state as priority for their communities through regular labor market data analyses and industry leader engagement.
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| 1b. **Dynamic review process:** Create and support a cross-sector process and feedback loop to review the alignment and impact of career pathways to inform their continuous improvement | **Target outcome 1b: Dynamic pathways review process**1. School districts and postsecondary education institutions conduct gap analyses at least every other year – and more frequently following COVID-19 - to determine the extent to which their career pathways and associated credentials are aligned with sectors identified as in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage.
2. School districts and postsecondary education institutions use the results of the gap analyses to identify new pathways that must be built and current pathways that can be transformed to be aligned more tightly with in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage sectors.
3. School districts and postsecondary education institutions use the results of the gap analyses to design and operationalize a process to retire low-quality, unaligned career pathways and/or those pathways with poor outcomes.
4. As part of the review process, school districts and postsecondary education institutions ensure that priority credentials valued by the recovering economy are embedded into career pathways.
5. School districts and postsecondary education institutions leverage secondary and postsecondary program approval criteria to establish and maintain career pathway quality, instructional rigor, and connection with priority industry needs.
6. State and local funding and program approval processes are used to scale up pathways in priority sectors.
7. State and local funding and program approval processes are used to scale down or phase out pathways that don’t lead to credentials of value in the recovering economy.
8. In the past three years, the state and/or community has discontinued career pathways that fail to meet minimum standards for quality and rigor or that do not demonstrate a connection to priority industry needs.
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| 1c. **Quality and rigor in pathways:** Career pathways approved by state and/or local agencies develop the core academic knowledge, technical skills, and professional skills through intentional course sequences that students need to be successful in college and the work place. | **Target outcome 1c: Quality and rigor in pathways**1. All local career pathways begin broadly, initially focusing on career awareness and exposure and progress to more occupationally-specific courses.
2. The sequence of courses within local career pathways is designed to develop academic, technical, and employability knowledge and skills.
3. Local career pathways offer multiple entry and exit points to enable students to change paths as their interests and goals evolve.
4. State policies and incentives help districts and schools recruit industry professionals with sought-after technical knowledge and skills and demonstrated teaching ability, and the state removes policy barriers and streamlines certification procedures to make teaching more attractive and accessible to such candidates.
5. State and local professional development opportunities and incentives enable core academic and career-technical teachers to earn credentials in high-skill, in-demand fields and strengthen their instructional practices in related pathways.
6. There is adequate capacity within the districts’ and/or higher education institutions’ current and/or projected workforce to effectively deliver instruction across pathways courses to reach intended student learning outcomes.
7. School districts and higher education institutions have adequate access to industry expertise across pathways whether they’re providing that expertise through a full-time teacher or leveraging an industry advisor to augment classroom instruction.
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| 1d. **Equity and access in rigorous pathways:** Policy and strategy levers to expand and equalize access to and success in high-quality career pathways for **each** student are in place and fully utilized. | **Target outcome 1d: Equity and access in pathways**1. State and local policies and strategies are in place to ensure that access to pathways is equitable across student subpopulations by gender, race/ethnicity, poverty, and geographic area.
2. Pathways aligned with priority sectors are offered equally at high-performing and low-performing schools – both comprehensive high schools and technology centers - within the district.
3. There is a well-coordinated strategy across the district and postsecondary partners that enables students to access pathways at any school or institution within the region or community.
4. Common barriers to pathways enrollment, persistence, and completion – such as transportation and admission criteria – have been identified and removed.
5. A range of effective instructional delivery models – including virtual models - are offered throughout the state so that high-quality, rigorous pathways are widely available to each student in all secondary and higher education settings.
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| **Greatest Strengths for Career Pathways** | **Key Challenges for Career Pathways** | **Top Priorities for Career Pathways** |

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| **Priority 2: Real-World Work Experiences**Design a continuum of work-based learning (WBL) experiences as an integral component of career pathways to allow all students to apply the content they have learned in the classroom to a real-world work setting while developing essential technical skills and professional readiness needed to be successful in the workplace. |

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| **Target Outcomes** | **Supporting Criteria** | **Current Status** |
| **2a. Expand pathways-aligned work-based learning (WBL):** A continuum of demand-driven WBL is an integral component of career pathways that connects classroom learning with the world of work. | **Target outcome 2a: Expand co-curricular, industry-aligned work-based learning experiences** 1. The state has designed a P-20 continuum of WBL experiences that progresses from awareness and exploration to preparation and training to give students insight into the range of careers available and associated entry requirements to help them make informed choices about long-term goals.
2. There is a range of WBL experiences embedded within local pathways for **all** students that are co-curricular and are aligned with priority sector needs.
3. More “advanced” WBL experiences – like internships and youth apprenticeships - further develop students’ content knowledge, technical skill, and professional readiness; as such, they count for course credit.
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| **2b. Ensure WBL is high-quality:** Mechanisms have been designed and deployed to provide WBL experiences that focus on technical and professional skill attainment and growth of student readiness. | **Target outcome 2b: Design and offer WBL experiences that are high-quality for students and employers**1. The state has developed criteria for high-quality WBL experiences spanning career awareness, exploration, preparation, and training; and has developed well-utilized supports, template, guides, and other resources to drive quality and consistency.
2. The state and/or local district and postsecondary education partners have developed a diagnostic tool to set student learning outcome targets for WBL experiences in a way that will develop students’ technical and professional skills needed for success in the workplace.
3. District, school and/or institution staff work with the supervising employers to build a personalized training plan tied to student learning outcome targets identified by the diagnostic tool.
4. Local WBL experiences have been redesigned in response to COVID-19 to help employers provide high-quality, more efficient student experiences by utilizing innovative strategies like virtual mentoring networks, platforms to facilitate student engagement, group-based internships, etc.
5. Employers monitor student progress throughout WBL, provide meaningful feedback, and assess student learning.
6. Teachers/faculty and supervising employers jointly evaluate the extent to which students meet the goals outlined in the training plan.
7. Districts and postsecondary education institutions collect, analyze, and use WBL-related data to understand which students are participating in WBL, what skills they’re acquiring, and how improvements can be made to WBL experiences.
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| **2c. Provide equitable access to WBL to all students:** Policies and strategies are established and leveraged to enable **each** pathways student to participate in industry-aligned WBL that is connected with classroom learning. | **Target outcome 2c: Ensure that all students enrolled in pathways have access to industry-aligned, co-curricular WBL experiences**1. There is a well-coordinated strategy across the district and its postsecondary partners that takes into account the need for more virtual WBL to expand student access to high-quality experiences for all secondary and postsecondary students.
2. The state and/or local district and postsecondary education partners have developed resources and distributed them to families and students – especially those underrepresented in high-quality WBL - to raise their awareness and understanding of the value of WBL experiences.
3. Low income and students of color have the same opportunity to participate in internships and/or youth apprenticeships as their peers.
4. Common barriers to student participation/success in WBL –including lack of student transportation and/or preparation – have been identified and removed.
5. Low income and students of color participate in internships and/or youth apprenticeships at similar rates to those of their peers.
6. Low income and students of color demonstrate similar rates of skill attainment through internships and/or youth apprenticeships as their peers.
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| **2d. Systematically scale industry-aligned WBL experiences:** Infrastructure and policies are in place to efficiently connect employers and educators to launch, grow, and maintain WBL programs at scale, especially those at the higher end of the continuum, such as internships and youth apprenticeships. | **Target outcome 2d: Build capacity to coordinate and scale WBL experiences that connect educators, employers, and students**1. District and postsecondary education partners have designed and built internal capacity to offer WBL experiences, especially internships and/or youth apprenticeships, at scale in a way that offers focused, high-quality student experiences.
2. District and postsecondary education partners have designed, built, and/or are partnering with a WBL intermediary organization to provide services to employers, districts, and students to efficiently and effectively offer internships and/or youth apprenticeships at scale.
3. A clear strategy is in place to recruit and train employers to ensure there is a sufficient number of high-quality WBL opportunities for students.
4. Employers have a single point of contact in the district and postsecondary education institution to consult about providing WBL opportunities.
5. There is an established technology platform or other mechanism that matches students and schools with employers for career exploration activities, internships, and/or youth apprenticeships.
6. There is a central coordinating entity, like an intermediary, that serves as the employer of record for the district and postsecondary education institutions, providing services such as liability coverage for students in the workplace, conducting background checks and drug tests, and managing payroll services.
7. The central coordinating entity utilizes a strategy to effectively prepare high school and postsecondary students for the expectations of internships and/or youth apprenticeships.
8. The central coordinating entity works with employers to design appropriate projects/responsibilities and map those against curriculum and industry standards
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| **Greatest Strengths for WBL** | **Key Challenges for WBL** | **Top Priorities for WBL** |

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| **Priority 3: Seamless Transitions to Support Postsecondary Success**Build systems and deepen partnerships to align pathways between K-12 and higher education; prepare students enrolled in pathways for credit-bearing college coursework; facilitate seamless student transitions from high school to college pathways; and increase postsecondary credential attainment through pathways. |
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| **Target Outcomes** | **Supporting Criteria** | **Current Status** |
| 3a. **Seamless pathways:** Pathways begin in high school and culminate in a postsecondary credential or degree that opens doors to the workforce. | **Target outcome 3a: Seamless pathways ensure smooth transitions and transfer of credit**1. Opportunities are provided in every pathway to enable high school students to earn college credit toward degrees with labor market value, especially within technical course-taking (i.e. beyond general education); this may be achieved through concurrent enrollment, dual credit, early college models, and/or attainment of high-value industry-recognized credentials that count for college credit.
2. Systemic state and/or local articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions are in place to award credit to high school students who complete postsecondary coursework in priority sectors.
3. Articulation, transfer, and/or credit for prior learning opportunities are established within every pathway to related programs at two- and four-year institutions of higher education.
4. Those articulation, transfer, and/or credit for prior learning opportunities are leveraged across postsecondary partners to shorten students’ time to degree/credential completion.
5. K-12 and postsecondary standards are linked so that the knowledge and skills expected of high school pathway completers is aligned with expectations for entry into postsecondary credit-bearing coursework within a related degree program.
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| 3b. **Postsecondary success strategies designed jointly by K-12 and postsecondary:** Strategic policies and practices are established to build the readiness of pathways students for postsecondary expectations and support them in successfully making the transition. | **Target outcome 3b: Postsecondary success strategies designed jointly by K-12 and postsecondary**1. Processes are in place to identify students enrolled in pathways who are off track in demonstrating postsecondary readiness while in high school.
2. Bridge courses in English language arts and mathematics are offered in the senior year to students enrolled in pathways scoring below the college and career readiness threshold to remediate them and prepare them to enter credit-bearing postsecondary coursework at a two- or four-year institution.
3. Strategies and supports are in place to ensure students enrolled in pathways complete the FAFSA as a step towards accessing financial aid opportunities.
4. Postsecondary partners use co-requisite remediation for students enrolled in pathways with demonstrated need to provide just-in-time developmental education alongside a credit-bearing course so they can begin accumulating credits toward a degree.
5. High school students who complete pathways are positioned to earn postsecondary credentials, including industry-recognized credentials, that are “stackable” and articulate to progressively higher-level credentials, certifications, and/or degrees.
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| 3c. **Navigation supports designed jointly:** Advising practices and related interventions are established and leveraged to guide students into and through postsecondary education. | **Targeted outcome 3c: Navigation supports designed jointly by K-12 and postsecondary**1. The state, district, and postsecondary education partners promote a framework for college and career readiness that supports student exploration of high-value postsecondary opportunities and identifies activities that will prepare students for postsecondary success, starting well before 12th grade.
2. The state, district, and postsecondary education partners work together to bridge K-12 and postsecondary advising systems so that pathways students have a seamless experience to and through postsecondary education and training.
3. The district and postsecondary partners help students identify target postsecondary institutions and apply to them in part using indicators like pathways and programs offered, associated employment and wages, and program completion rates .
4. The state, district, and postsecondary education partners clearly identify and explain the postsecondary programs associated with secondary pathways to help students understand how to prepare for postsecondary education and training in their field of study and provide targeted supports to help them achieve that.
5. Postsecondary partners provide “intrusive” or “proactive” advisors to high school pathways students to anticipate and address barriers that could interfere with their ability to persist through and complete a related postsecondary degree program.
6. Processes are in place to identify pathways students who are off track to on time graduation in college
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| **Greatest Strengths for Postsecondary Transitions** | **Key Challenges for Postsecondary Transitions** | **Top Priorities for Postsecondary Transitions** |

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| **Priority 4: Closing Equity Gaps**Close equity gaps within career preparation systems by defining and incorporating a P-20 career development continuum into career advisement models; using data at school/institution, district, and state levels to identify and address gaps in access, participation, and outcomes; building cultural competency among leaders; and engaging students, families, and staff to identify barriers to and build equitable participation and achievement in high-quality pathways. |
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| **Target Outcomes** | **Supporting Criteria** | **Current Status** |
| 4a. **Defined P-20 career development continuum:** A career development continuum provides a framework and supports that help level the playing field for students underrepresented in in-demand, high-skill, family-sustaining wage jobs. | **Target outcome 4a: Defined P-20 career development continuum**1. The state has designed a P-20 career development continuum that progresses from career awareness and exploration in elementary and middle grades to preparation and training in high school and college to help students make informed choices about long-term professional goals.
2. Evidence-based, scalable career advisement models have taken root in regions across the state and within the GCRI community to help **each** student - beginning in middle school - make sound, well-informed decisions about course and pathway participation.
3. District and postsecondary education partners provide robust counseling/career advising services aligned with the post-COVID economy to fully meet the needs of each student.
4. All learners, with support from their schools and their families, develop and regularly update a robust individualized career and academic plan that begins in the middle grades and includes supports for decisions about course-taking, postsecondary options, credentials, WBL, and other key aspects of career pathways.
5. GCRI district and postsecondary education partners provide a full array of wraparound supports to fully meet the individualized needs of each student and support their success, including but not limited to academic counseling, transportation, child care, technology supports, and mental health services.
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| 4b. **Identifying and addressing equity gaps:** Data-informed strategies are used at all levels – state, district, school/institution - to identify and strategically address equity gaps in pathways access, participation, and outcomes.  | **Target outcome 4b: Process of identifying and addressing equity gaps (by outcomes)**1. State K-12 agency and higher education agency have an established annual process to review student-level career pathways participation and outcome data, disaggregated by special populations and subgroups, to identify any major gaps between student populations and/or between pathway content areas; conduct root cause analyses; and identify strategies and solutions for addressing those gaps.
2. State K-12 and higher education agencies collaboratively review the results of each other’s analyses to identify important understandings that can and should inform future efforts.
3. District and postsecondary education partners collaboratively review the results of each other’s analyses to identify important understandings that can and should inform future efforts.
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| **4c. Cultural competencies:** Leaders at all levels have the ability to understand, communicate with, and interact with every learner to effectively engage and welcome each into pathways. | **Target outcome 4c: Prioritization of cultural competencies**1. State, district, and postsecondary education leaders have identified equity and building cultural competencies as a high-level priority and actively work to create buy-in for this priority among their organizations, including for career pathways and related services.
2. The state, district, and postsecondary education partners regularly provide evidence-based professional development and technical assistance to all pathways teachers and instructors focused on building cultural competencies (e.g., addressing implicit biases, microaggressions, etc.)
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| **4d. Informed and targeted state and local policies:** Intentional policies and strategies identify and address barriers to equitable participation and success in pathways.  | **Target outcome 4d: Informed and targeted state and local policies**1. State, district, and postsecondary education leaders have identified key barriers to participation and completion of high-quality pathways, particularly among underrepresented populations (e.g., admissions requirements, lack of transportation, scheduling, insufficient recruitment strategies, etc.), with input from the broader community, including students, families, and community-based organizations.
2. State, district, and postsecondary education leaders have adopted and implemented policies and strategies to target the primary barriers to underrepresented students’ access to and participation and success in high-quality pathways.
3. The district and postsecondary partners engage students, families, counselors, teachers, and instructors/professors at least every other year to understand how students and families are learning about pathways, the conditions that support or hinder enrollment and completion of pathways, and barriers students face to successfully transitioning to and completing a postsecondary credential of value.
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| **4e. Distribution of Human Capital:** State and local policies and practicesintentionally consider the availability and distribution of high-quality teachers and instructors of pathways courses.  | **Target outcome 4e: Distribution of human capital**1. State and local funding and program approval and review processes take into account the quality and credentialing of educators.
2. Teachers/instructors of pathways courses who meet criteria of being qualified, in-field, and/or experienced are distributed equitably across schools.
3. Shortages among pathways teachers are equitable across all schools within the district(s) and campuses within the institution(s).
4. Pathway educators reflect the demographic makeup of students.
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| **Greatest Strengths for Equity** | **Key Challenges for Equity** | **Top Priorities for Equity** |