Academic and Career Planning
Pilot Year Evaluation

July 2016

Robin Worth, PhD
University of Wisconsin - Madison
robin.worth@wisc.edu

Grant Sim
University of Wisconsin - Madison
grant.sim@wisc.edu

Wisconsin Center for Education Research
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Contents

Executive Summary

Academic and Career Planning (ACP) is a process intended to provide academic and career planning services to students in grades 6-12 in public schools across the state. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) contracted with the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) to conduct a three-year evaluation of the pilot and roll-out of ACP. This report contains the findings from the 2015-16 pilot year evaluation and WEC's recommendations based on those findings.

The evaluation included three major components of data collection and analysis: telephone interviews with pilot team coordinators, surveys of all pilot team members, and mini-case studies of four pilot districts.

The evaluation addressed the following over-arching questions:

How have pilot districts engaged in ACP pilot activities? The majority of pilot districts engaged in ACP pilot activities in many ways including forming ACP leadership teams that meet regularly, implementing a tool for documenting ACP completion standards, and conducting gap analyses. Many pilot districts also developed an ACP implementation plan, modified the schedule to include dedicated time for ACP, and established a system for transitioning student's ACPs from middle school to high school.

How have pilot districts and participating schools prepared stakeholders for initial ACP implementation? Nearly all districts reported providing training to their staff on ACP implementation. Pilot districts also either continued their partnerships with business and community stakeholders or made further progress in developing these relationships over the course of the year.

What successes and challenges have characterized pilot district implementation efforts? Major successes of pilot districts in ACP implementation included increasing buy-in among administration and staff, getting school board support, and increased ACP collaboration and communication. Major challenges of pilot districts in ACP implementation included finding sufficient time for implementation, ACP software, and gathering ACP buy-in.

Based on pilot district experiences, what forms of support will districts and their educators need going forward? Pilot districts identified many distinct areas of support necessary going forward. These included sufficient implementation time and training; administration support and buy-in; communication and collaboration among staff and with other districts; and continued provision of resources, materials, examples, and templates from DPI and other districts.

The key recommendations from the evaluation are as follows:

- Success in planning and implementing a comprehensive ACP process is dependent upon having a strong ACP team with wide representation and members who can reach consensus.

- Conducting a gap analysis or needs assessment to catalogue ACP work already being done in a school/district was highly valued by all pilot district teams.
- Buy-in among all stakeholders is vital for successful planning and implementation of ACP, but may be more difficult and/or take longer to obtain among some stakeholders.
- Communication and stakeholder engagement efforts around ACP need to begin early, and be continuous, credible, and strategic.
- The most effective way to deliver comprehensive, systematic ACP services to all students is to have regularly occurring ACP time dedicated in the school schedule at every grade level.
- High quality ACP implementation requires a slow and deliberate process.

Introduction

The following is the final report for the Year 1 (pilot year) Evaluation of Academic and Career Planning (ACP) conducted by evaluators at the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC), Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Purpose of the Evaluation

In February 2016, DPI engaged the services of researchers at the WCER to provide support and technical assistance for three years (March 2016 to August 2018) for the ACP pilot and statewide implementation process. These services include two main aspects: technical support on work including communications, professional development and training, led by personnel in WCER's Center for Education and Work (CEW), and formative feedback via an evaluation led by evaluators at WEC. This partnership between DPI's ACP team and WCER stemmed from the ACP Needs Assessment conducted by WCER personnel on behalf of DPI in the spring of 2015, the results of which informed the planning of DPI's ACP pilot activities. The activities conducted during the initial phase of the evaluation focused on the ACP Pilot conducted in 25 school districts across Wisconsin during the 2015-2016 school year. Years 2 and 3 will focus on further preparation for and the roll-out of statewide implementation.

Results of the pilot year evaluation seek to inform DPI's ongoing work towards statewide implementation of ACP by learning from and leveraging the experiences of the pilot districts. Additionally, findings specific to professional development efforts around ACP, including feedback on processes and specific materials aim to inform the work of DPI and CEW on refining plans and materials for professional development going forward, and were shared with these partners via a preliminary report. Finally, the pilot evaluation findings are also intended to inform the design of the subsequent phases of the evaluation. The key findings and recommendations found at the end of this report focus primarily on the first objective, but specific findings regarding professional development materials and processes are reported throughout.

Evaluation Questions

The over-arching evaluation questions for the pilot evaluation are the following:

1. How have pilot districts engaged in ACP pilot activities?
2. How have pilot districts and participating schools prepared stakeholders for initial ACP implementation?
3. What successes and challenges have characterized pilot district implementation efforts?
4. Based on pilot district experiences, what forms of support will districts and their educators need going forward?

To address these questions, WEC evaluators designed a study that was comprised of three parts: a telephone interview component, a survey component and a mini-case study component. The remainder of this report is divided into sections describing the three components, each of which details methods for data collection, data analysis, and resultant findings. The report concludes with a discussion of the key findings of the overall pilot evaluation and the evaluation team's recommendations to DPI.

Findings from ACP Pilot District Coordinator Interviews

As part of DPI's ACP pilot evaluation, WCER evaluators conducted a series of interviews with personnel from the pilot district ACP teams. The purpose of the interviews was to capture the progress that teams made, their successes and challenges, what forms of support were needed, and what would be needed in the future, to conduct ACP planning and implementation.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed (Appendix A), and telephone interviews with ACP pilot district leads were conducted in late April, 2016. All 25 pilot district leads were invited by email to participate in half-hour interviews, with follow-up email requests sent to those who did not respond. Ultimately 22 of the 25 invitees were interviewed, and they represented all the various configurations of district types and sizes: 7 small rural, 6 medium rural, 2 medium suburban, 3 large suburban, and 4 large urban districts. In most cases, the interviewer spoke with the district's pilot coordinator, but in a few cases, evaluators were referred by a pilot coordinator to another pilot team member.

Given that the contexts for each district varied, and that districts were working from a range of starting points, it was necessary to customize the interview protocols for each pilot district. In order to understand the context of each district, and to keep the interviews as short and efficient as possible, a variety of documents were reviewed prior to conducting interviews. Documents included districts' pilot applications, initial planning documents and goals, and any other supporting documentation that districts had uploaded to the DPI's shared folders. In addition, when scheduling interviews, WCER interviewers requested any progress reports or updates to the initial planning documents that reflected work the district had done during the pilot year. In most cases, districts sent some additional documentation that allowed interviewers to customize the basic interview protocol (see Appendix A) to each district's specific situations.

With interviewees' permission interviews were audio-recorded to supplement the note-taking process. Following the interview, evaluators used the recordings when reviewing and refining the interview notes to make sure nothing substantive was omitted or incorrectly noted.

Interview notes were then coded and analyzed in order to compile responses in aggregate as well as to pull out individual responses of note, to look for common patterns and variety in responses, and to help both relate both the more typical or shared experiences as well as to tell unique stories.

Interview Findings

The following sections report findings according to the order of the interview questions.

Pilot Activities around District Infrastructure and Readiness – Planning and Infrastructure

Interviewers asked participants about and confirmed their understanding of pilot districts' activities around district planning and infrastructure. Interviewers noted whether planned goals had subsequently been accomplished, delayed or altered.

Forming a district/school ACP leadership team that meets regularly

Twenty-one of the 22 districts planned to form a team, and all succeeded in doing so. Meeting frequencies ranged from 3 times per year to biweekly. Table 1 reports districts' meeting schedules; not all specified this information. As shown, among districts that reported this information, monthly meetings were the most common in terms of frequency.

Table 1: Frequency of ACP team meetings

Frequency	# of districts
Monthly	7
4 times/year	3
3 times/year	2
"Regularly" (unspecified)	2
Regularly first semester, individual members met with coordination in second semester	1
Biweekly	1

Conducting a gap analysis or needs assessment

Nineteen districts reported that their teams had planned a gap analysis or needs assessment to determine what ACP activities were being conducted in their pilot schools and to determine where gaps existed. Eighteen teams accomplished this goal, and one team decided to push this element back until the following year. Means by which teams conducted gaps analyses are reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Means for conducting gap analyses

Means of gap analysis	# of districts
DPI tool/rubric/template	8
Survey	6
"informally"	2

Developing a written ACP implementation plan

Nineteen teams planned to create a written ACP implementation plan, but only 11 teams reported having accomplished this goal. The remaining 8 reported that they pushed this goal back, needed more time, and/or were still working on it.

Adapting or creating an ACP curriculum scope and sequence

Of the 18 teams that planned to create a scope and sequence, 10 districts reported having met this goal. The remaining 8 indicated that they were still working on it. Of those, 3 districts said that they had completed the middle school scope and sequence but were still working on the high school version.

Adopting, creating or adapting a tool for documenting students' ACP completion standards

All thirteen districts that planned this goal were able to accomplish it. The tools used are listed in Table 3. Among teams that had not identified this activity as a goal, 3 reported waiting to see what the state-

selected vendor for the ACP software, Career Cruising, would feature, and 3 reported that they were already using Career Cruising.

Table 3: ACP documentation tools

Documentation Tool	# of districts
Career Cruising	8
Google docs	2
Wisc Careers	1

Establishing a system for transitioning/transmitting students' ACP from middle to high school

Eight of the 9 districts planning this goal were able to accomplish it. Five districts reported they would do so via a software system. Four additional districts reported that they were one-building districts and thus the issue was not applicable to them. Five districts reported having a system already in place.

Providing staff with access to ACP software?

Although Career Cruising was only beginning the onboarding process for districts in the spring of 2016, six districts identified this process as one of their team goals, and all were able to accomplish it, usually as early adopters of Career Cruising. Twelve additional districts mentioned that they would do so once Career Cruising was in place.

Modifying school schedule to include dedicated time for ACP

Seventeen districts planned to make modifications to school schedules, and 12 met that goal. The remaining 5 districts reported that they were still working on this goal. Two additional districts reported that this was an issue or problem that would need to be addressed next year. Types of scheduling periods and other solutions for delivering ACP services are reported in Table 4. In some cases, a combination of strategies was used.

Table 4: Courses and time periods used for delivering ACP services

Courses/time periods	# of districts
Advisory period	7
Homeroom	4
"Resource" or "Enrichment" time	3
Career courses	3
English courses	2
1-on-1 monthly meetings between high school students and a staff member	1

One interviewee noted the importance of dedicated time in school schedules for ACP:

> "You can't do this without modifying the schedule, using advisory periods and flex periods. [In our district] all staff are required to take an advisory period, so that they can understand the culture change and what the kids are learning. Class, Careers and Communication are implemented in 7th grade and students are required to take the Career class. Sixth grade is an introduction to ACP and the terminology. Districts without this type of class will struggle. In 8th

– 12th they go back to the foundation they had in 6th and 7th, we're always going back and revising the scope and sequence." – *Administrator in a large suburban district*

Creating formal or informal partnerships with or initial outreach to organizations

A number of districts set the establishment of partnerships with business/employers and/or postsecondary education institutions as a goal. Other districts already reported having such partnerships in place. Table 5 reports the number of districts setting and meeting this goal, as well as districts reporting having these elements in place.

Table 5: Partnerships with and/or outreach to businesses, colleges and universities, and technical colleges, by number of districts

Type of Partnership	Planned goal	Accomplished goal	Already have in place
Businesses and employers	8	7	13
Colleges and universities	6	4	13
Technical colleges	4	2	14

Pilot Activities around District Infrastructure and Readiness – Professional Development and Staff Training

Of the 22 pilot districts that participated in the interview process, 21 planned to train staff on ACP implementation, and 21 were able to meet this goal to some extent. The remaining district reported that this goal was not applicable to them, as they had been implementing ACP for some time, and staff were already trained. In most cases, training was delivered to all staff in the district, or in the pilot schools. In 4 districts, respondents did not specify exactly who was being trained, and in 1 district, training was given only to CTE and counseling staff. In most cases, training was done by the pilot team, a subset of the pilot team, or the lead person. In two cases, the team trained school teams or assistant principals who in turn trained all staff within their schools. A variety of DPI-provided training materials were used and/or adapted. Districts also found training materials from other sources. Some of the most commonly used DPI training materials were "ACP 101," "Your Academic and Career Journey," "ACP Is Not/Is," "Bake a Cake" and "Significant Adults." Several interviewees also reported that the DPI ACP website and blog were very helpful.

Respondents who mentioned using DPI lessons and activities were asked if they would be willing to have a follow-up conversation with personnel from the Center for Education and Work to help inform their refinements to professional development materials.

However, general themes pertaining to the DPI professional development resources were that activities should be downloadable and customizable, and brief. As one interviewee reported, "I wanted shorter, 10-minute things in order not to overwhelm staff, and make them think that ACP is huge." Another interviewee suggested that "some of the persona need to be not so stereotypical" but that otherwise, the material was "very useful and well-paced." Another noted that "some were too 'elementary' for high school teachers. They would roll their eyes if we did it, but they would be fine for elementary or middle school teachers." Another district modified the "ACP is not/is" activity and made it an interactive competition for staff. Yet another reported that the "most successful thing was a timeline where staff related 'my journey', how people helped you out. It made staff members think about all the turns they took."

Regarding staff development, several district leads reported that staff tended to understand the "why" of ACP but still did not grasp their role in it. As one counselor reported, "ownership still seems to lie with the counselor as opposed to everyone." To help with buy-in and participation, several interviewees recommended that activities in the curriculum be easy for teachers to use. One respondent described a google calendar that she created:

> "Every day on the calendar I have a daily link to [the teachers'] lesson. It's pretty much as easy to deliver as possible. It doesn't require prep time on their part, which I think is really important – they can look at it and deliver it even if they don't have time to prep it. (…) They seem to appreciate that this requires very little effort on their part (except for the 'having the meaningful conversations' piece). (…) I've discovered a little bit that [teachers] aren't as versed as I thought they were, so the more simple you can make it and the less time-consuming the better." – *School counselor in a small rural district*

Training on elements of ACP other than general awareness and basic implementation were less common. Seven districts reported providing staff training on their scope and sequence, although many times this appeared to be done via a survey of existing practices and activities, so it is unclear whether this activity extended beyond a gap analysis to professional development.

Six districts reported providing professional development on ACP for special populations (for example, special education, at risk students, ELLs, etc.). Five districts provided training on their counseling model, 2 districts trained staff on communicating with parents and families, and 1 district provided training to staff on using Career Cruising.

Changes made to districts' initial plans

When asked whether pilot teams had to adjust their initial plans during the pilot year, 18 interviewees reported that they did, while only 4 reported that their plans did not require adjusting. The types of modifications made fell into a number of common categories, many of which were inter-related, so that there was often more than one category of change. General categories identified are as follows:

- Changing timelines to be less aggressive, delaying certain activities or deadlines, or otherwise slowing the plan down in general (11 mentions)
- Making goals more specific or realistic (6 mentions)
- Requiring more time to obtain buy-in from staff and other stakeholders (4 mentions)
- Adjusting team membership (3 mentions)
- Requiring more time to develop and/or approve policy (2 mentions)

The common theme in all these categories is that districts over-estimated the amount of work that they could accomplish in the pilot year, and had to slow their timelines. A common theme throughout the interviews was that obtaining staff buy-in took longer than anticipated, and subsequently districts were forced or chose to delay activities until greater buy-in was obtained. These districts often reported that they deemed it important to establish a solid foundation before moving forward. For example, one respondent reported that,

> "the whole implementation phase and staff training which we had intended to do throughout the school year this year we've pushed back (…) and slowed the process of incorporating this into our advisories. We really want to make sure that we just aren't throwing this on the plate of our students and staff and having them view it negatively and look at it as, 'this is something we

have to do, but it'll go away just like other things have gone away.' We've really backtracked and looked at how we can phase this into our advisory and make it relevant and make it important so it's not viewed in that way. That discussion has led us to look at trying to build it at the end of the school year, talk about the some of the things that are going to come about, then do the training over the summer with the staff, and really hit the ground running next fall. And then we'll be able to start the school year with it infused into advisory and make it important and meaningful at the start of the year as opposed to trying to incorporate it right now (…) That's probably the biggest change with our plan." – *High school counselor in a medium-sized rural district.*

Additionally, some teams realized that their goals needed to be more specific. As one respondent reported, "Our goals were kind of global, we needed to get to know more about what our obstacles are—we ran into some."

Support needed to accomplish infrastructure, planning and training

A variety of types of support were cited as necessary for accomplishing districts' planned activities. Most frequently mentioned were support from administration, teacher buy-in, sharing success stories with other districts, DPI's lessons and support, community and parental support, and time. In response to this question, interviewees also tended to mention supports they wish they had had. These included software support, a model for ACP policy, an accountability system or guidelines, funding and more curriculum from DPI.

Two respondents also offered feedback on DPI's pilot webinars, one saying that they were not frequent enough, and that this district's team would have liked more face-to-face time with similar districts. Another interviewee felt the webinars were not helpful because,

"no one wanted to sound like they were doing things when maybe they weren't. Further along people made the further behind people feel bad, like a failure. Maybe there could be a different way, face-to-face quarterly, or phone calls with just other coordinators, etc." – *School counselor in a medium-sized rural district.*

This same interviewee noted, however, that the "meeting in Madison was helpful" and suggested that "a couple a year would help keep people on track and excited—very valuable." The majority of interviewees who mentioned the face-to-face meetings viewed them as very valuable. However, a counselor from a small rural district expressed feelings of intimidation in group meetings among pilot districts. She reported that when she and another school counselor participated in "global meetings", they "felt at a disadvantage because we have a very small district. It seemed like there were so many schools that had these huge teams, created webpages, did all this elaborate stuff. We didn't know how they came up with the time to do that. We felt bad that we didn't do as much as other schools, but we didn't have the manpower to do it. So that was hard for us."

In future stages of ACP roll-out, DPI may want to consider how to best leverage inter-district sharing and collaboration, which was repeatedly mentioned as very helpful and important, while addressing the concerns that may arise among some from comparing their district's capacity to that of others.

Pilot Activities around Service Delivery, Implementation & Engagement

Implementation and Service Delivery

Respondents reported a variety of service delivery and implementation activities, but it was not always clear if these activities were new during the pilot year, or were pre-existing practices. At least 5 districts clearly stated that they did not do any implementation during the pilot year. Many district leads reported that they were implementing activities (whether new or pre-existing) but that activities were not yet systematic or part of a comprehensive ACP implementation plan.

Activities reported to be occurring included the following:

- Conferences (5 mentions)
- Career days/panels/fairs (4 mentions)
- 8th grade plans for high school study (2 mentions)
- Employer visits (2 mentions)
- Career interest inventories (2 mentions)
- Community outreach
- 8th grade portfolios
- College visits
- Individual learning plans
- Employer visit to the school to teach employability skills to all 8-12 graders

This list is clearly not exhaustive of all the work that districts are doing, but instead reflects activities that interviewees mentioned as notable.

Communication Efforts to Families and Community

Although we did not directly ask about communication efforts to families and community, information about such practices surfaced during the interviews. Interviewees reported a wide range of communication activities that included the following:

- Adding ACP information to the district website
- Publishing district/school newsletter articles explaining ACP
- Sending handouts, one-pagers, mailers and letters to parents
- Creating Google forms to share with parents to document ACP process
- Instituting conferences, including student led parent-teacher conferences using ACPs
- Making 8th and 12th grade portfolio presentations to families and communities, in some cases to a community panel.
- Initiating phone calls to parents
- Providing grade-level parent meetings with a set sequence of topics
- Delivering information at Financial aid night
- Placing a booth outside the counselor's office explaining ACP during parent-teacher conferences
- Including letters about ACP with report cards
- Making presentations at open houses
- Piggybacking 30-minute presentations to parents before other well-attended events such as basketball games, plays, etc.

- Informing the mayor and chamber of commerce directly
- Hosting a breakfast for local businesses to talk to them about ACP
- Inviting local financial advisors to appear at middle school conferences to provide information to parents about post-secondary financial planning
- Providing news releases to local National Public Radio affiliate While most communication activities appeared to be staff-led, one district coordinator described a tactic that involved students:

> "Last fall, we went through a branding process. We had a committee of students help us design an ACP poster, we put it in our ACP guide, and we've had it hanging up around the school, so students see it and recognize it. We simply started referring to [things we were already doing] as 'Academic and Career Planning,' trying to get the concept of ACP and that information and language out to our students." – *School counselor in a medium-sized rural district*

While attention to buy-in mostly focused on leaders and teachers, this district underscored the importance of student buy-in, and developed a means to help obtain it.

Successes, Challenges and Needed Support

The final set of questions were more open-ended and asked interviewees to identify their team's most notable success and the support needed to accomplish it, the challenges and barriers encountered, and what forms of support districts and educators will need in the ACP implementation process.

Pilot teams' biggest or most notable successes

There were several predominant themes identified in the responses to this question, as well as a number of less common answers (see Table 6). Six district leads reported that their biggest success was related to gaining buy-in from staff. Five respondents reported that their biggest success involved establishing some form of infrastructure, whether it was putting the framework in place, improving the use of time by adding more structure to the resource period that would be used for ACP service delivery or adding ACP time to an existing curriculum in such a period, or establishing a system for storing and organizing ACPs. Four interviewees reported that their biggest success was increased teamwork/collaboration/communication. Similarly, 4 district leads reported that they successfully collected and/or reported everything currently being done in their districts related to ACP, in order to inform their scope and sequence. These various themes, which all relate to infrastructure and planning—the focus of most pilot districts—allude to the considerable time it takes to build a foundation for ACP services. However, several interviewees reported unanticipated benefits that they attributed to the work they were doing, such as better collaboration between staff and counselors, or among staff. One district coordinator, who reported that their biggest success involved adding more structure to the school's schedule segment known as resource time, noted that

> "We compared our attendance from last year to this year, and for last year's 8-11th graders, absences decreased by 40 percent, tardies decreased by 18 percent, and the only thing that changed was our resource time. So we attribute it to that (ACP activities). I shared with staff that this is working." – *High school counselor in a small rural district.*

As noted earlier, many districts altered their initial pilot plans to slow down implementation. Respondents reiterated the change in implementation tempo as they discussed their goal accomplishments and challenges.

While most pilot teams were engaged in infrastructure and planning, on the other end of the continuum, one district coordinator, a school counselor, reported that her team's biggest success was "full implementation:"

> "Every student in grades 7-12 has an electronic ACP. (…) Our students are talking about it several times per week. Students are emailing me, and all students have shared ACPs with me (…) The culture piece has been a big success. I think we're having more meaningful conversations, and we just know more about our kids. Conversations we maybe weren't having before, we're having now, and I think that's a huge success. (…) It gave us more insight on the students as people – it's given us a much better whole-student approach." *- 4K-8 school counselor in a small rural district.*

Table 6 includes categories of the biggest or most notable successes, by number of districts.

Table 6: Teams' biggest or most notable successes

Success	# of districts
Gaining buy-in from staff (in 5 cases staff/teachers, in 1 case teachers & admin)	6
Element of infrastructure in place	5
Teamwork/collaboration/communication	4
Gap analysis leading to scope and sequence	4
Full implementation	1
Student focus	1
Students & teachers understanding multiple pathways	1
Staff excitement in seeing how much (ACP) they're already doing	1
ACP process approved by school board	1
Partnerships with businesses established	1

Support needed for successes

Respondents highlighted a number of supports that helped districts achieve their successes. Many districts identified more than one form of support that they believed were essential to their success. Most commonly identified supports were "communication/collaboration/teamwork" and "building administrator support" (5 mentions each). "District support" and "teacher support" were both mentioned 4 times. These themes again attest to the importance of buy-in and cooperation from all levels. Other forms of essential support mentioned included "DPI support and training" (3 mentions), "Other districts' examples/ideas/networking" (2 mentions), "Career Cruising for providing structure" and "time" (1 mention each). The notion of time as a necessary support was also frequently mentioned in the general question about what forms of support will be needed for other districts to do this work (see below), but it is interesting that one district named it as the factor leading to their biggest success (in this case, taking stock of what they were currently doing in terms of ACP and then identifying areas they needed to improve on).

Challenges and barriers

Although posed as two separate questions, challenges and barriers encountered by districts were similarly reported (see Table 7). It might be that respondents did not distinguish between these two terms, or perhaps some viewed common responses such as "time" and "staff buy-in" as either

surmountable (a challenge) or not (a barrier). Consequently, the responses to these questions are reported separately, but should probably be considered in tandem to gain a more complete picture of the difficulties that districts faced, and will potentially face, in planning and implementing ACP.

As mentioned above, the most commonly identified challenges had to do with time and buy-in. These two were often related, with interviewees stating that they had not anticipated the amount of time necessary to obtain buy-in from staff. For example, one interviewee noted,

> "The thing I look at is it takes time to get people on board. They see it as something the state put out as a law, but other things they think take precedence. We're in a better position as a district than we were at beginning of the year. I'm very encouraged now." *- School counselor in a small rural district.*

Related to buy-in was the idea that teachers may be supportive of the idea of ACP, but not as willing to participate. One interviewee saw a challenge in "getting mentoring time at the high school—I'm not sure teachers will embrace that. We haven't faced it yet, but I anticipate pushback down the road." Similarly, another interviewee reported that what was needed was both "time and staff support. (…) It's one thing to agree with the process, another to participate."

Funding was also seen as a challenge. An administrator in a large suburban district reported that,

> "for robust ACP, the state needs to robustly fund CTE. We can't do post-secondary alignment without more money. We are trying (to do alignment) and it's not sustainable because of funding. There is not state level support for this work, this is a mandate and a tool, and a commitment from a very small DPI team, but there is just this assumption that everyone is going to be able to figure out how to fund this initiative, but it's not going to happen."

Table 7 reports all the challenges identified by interviewees.

Table 7: Challenges that pilot teams encountered

Challenge	Number of mentions
Time	9
Buy-in from staff; the time it takes to obtain buy-in	7
Software, training on Career Cruising	3
Community, business support	3
Student buy-in	2
Administrator buy-in, support from the top	2
Lack of funding	2
Equitable access	2
Staff turn-over	2
Envisioning the whole ACP process	1
Small technical issues with google	1
Developing policy	1
Getting mentors at high school	1

As noted previously, barriers and challenges revealed considerable overlap in responses, but it is not clear whether this is due to conflating the terms or viewing the various issues with differing levels of

severity. As before, the most commonly cited barriers were "time" (8 mentions) and "staff support/buy-in" (4 mentions). One interviewee mentioned the barrier presented by "school schedule" and the difficulty in changing it to accommodate the delivery of ACP services. Another interviewee named the barrier of staff resistance, particularly by a small but vocal minority, but also described an outcome in her district that helped to reduce the barrier:

> "You'll always have those couple of people who maybe aren't as on board as everyone else, or as much as they should be. As we got into it, they were able to see, we had a constantly struggling student who's now a senior. He was actually showcased in the video and telling how things he did were helping him as a student, and that convinced some people." - *School counselor in a small rural district.*

One interviewee mentioned a very different sort of barrier that was not mentioned by other respondents:

> "Differentiating for students with different interest levels has been a barrier. We are wondering about resources for best practices in providing lessons at different developmental levels, but are also worried about tracking at the same time. We are also worried about activities meeting students' social-emotional level." – *High school counselor in a medium-sized suburban district.*

The idea that ACP creates a system of tracking is one of the common misconceptions surrounding ACP services identified by DPI and addressed in its messaging. However, if a high school counselor, who is also the ACP pilot coordinator for her district, fears that the ACP process could turn into a system of tracking, this likely indicates that continued messaging is necessary to address this concern.

Forms of support needed going forward

In response to the question, "Based on your district's experiences this year, what forms of support will districts and their educators need going forward?", interviewees offered substantial feedback. While there were certain common and recurrent themes, there was also a breadth of suggestions. Table 8 reports the responses by category.

Table 8: Supports needed for future ACP implementation

Type of support	Number of mentions
Collaboration with other districts	9
Resources, materials, examples of important components, templates	6
Administration support	5
Teacher support and buy-in	4
Sample scope and sequence	3
Statewide ACP conferences, or sections on ACP at existing statewide conferences	3
Software training	3
Time	3
Ideas for envisioning the process without a template	2
Strong district team, consensus	2
Parental support	2
Good communication	2

Area technical college collaboration	1
Well-connected, supportive local business leader	1
Group or committee to brainstorm school schedule possibilities	1
Community support	1
Sample policy	1
Funding	1

This question in particular elicited a considerable amount of rich feedback along several themes. Support and buy-in from stakeholders was positioned as indispensable. As one interviewee advised,

> "Administrative support, community support, helping community see the benefit, support from the teachers within, get buy-in early and get the teachers invested and help them see how their classes can help their students. Help them connect their content to the students' futures." – *CTE teacher in a small rural district*

Support from administrators in particular was seen as especially crucial. One interviewee explained,

> "[Administrators] lead the building climate – when the building climate is good, it's much easier to phase all of this information in and get staff to buy in; because the administration feels it's important, you can in turn get staff to feel that it's important (...). If it's not supported by the administration, it's not going to be supported by the staff ultimately." – *School counselor in a medium-sized rural district*

In a similar vein, another interviewee suggested an approach for helping build administrator buy-in and participation:

> "We would like more dialog for the upper administration levels done through CESAs [Cooperative Educational Service Agencies]. It would be great if there could be a training specifically for this purpose to get more buy-in from superintendents, assistant superintendents, and curriculum and instruction. We think that DPI could assist in continuing to build and expand on a digital platform that schools could access to find tools that are already in use. Finally, providing continuing opportunities to network and talk with other districts would be helpful." – *School counselor in a medium-sized suburban district*

Very common were specific requests and suggestions regarding templates, examples, materials and other resources to support ACP. A representative selection of comments related to this theme are reported here:

> "People want practical examples. Give examples of a scope and sequence, school schedules, bring an example of career cruising, timelines, tangible examples, ACP websites, how to establish business partnerships." – *Administrator in a large urban district.*

> "I know districts want a template, a how-to, but it's not that easy. What DPI is doing with lessons to introduce to districts is good, something tangible. Because we had to invent all of our stuff. ACP is so individual, but support and materials will still be needed." - *School counselor in a small rural district*

"The ACP conference in Stevens Point was wonderful, but [districts] really need concrete ideas to get this stuff into the classroom. How to use the software, time with the software. Because counselors are guiding this, there's the assumption that counselors know how to do this, but the reality is that if this is going to become part of kids' lives, and if this is going to be more than just something that kids look at when they have that once-per-year meeting with the counselor, we need staff to be working with it. We need to learn the tool and we need to learn the support. The sectionals at the conference were very vague and broad; need to pull teachers in and make it accessible for teachers. That message coming from DPI would be very helpful. (…) [At other conferences], there should be a sectional on ACP; how to integrate it into the curriculum, how to use the software, how the career plans are developed. That's where it's going to take hold." – *Administrator in a large suburban school*

"If DPI could provide some guidance on what they are looking for, it would be helpful. I'm hoping that when they release this that they can provide a general framework of what it looks like, or a minimum of what you need to offer to be acceptable in meeting ACP. Then the districts have to enrich the process off of this template or framework. Having a vision from DPI that then districts can use to make it a reality." – *Administrator in a large urban district*

"Provide a menu of items, because there isn't one thing that fits for every classroom but there will be things that are required. Provide examples of plans/templates, so that they aren't working from scratch." – *Administrator in a large urban district*

"If there was a group that got together and looked at variations in the school schedule, who could brainstorm different ways of incorporating the activities into the school day. I wish we could have figured out a way at the beginning for this, and then fill it in." – *School counselor in a medium-sized rural district*

The most common theme was the importance of collaboration and sharing with other districts. Nearly every interviewee reiterated this point during the interview. The following representative quotes provide some suggestions for facilitating collaboration:

"Having time to collaborate with other districts, finding out what worked well (and didn't), so monthly cohort calls through DPI were very helpful. CESAs and their training. Sharing across districts at CESAs, talking to other districts, collaboration." – *School counselor in a small rural district*

"What CESA 1 is doing next Tuesday – an ACP workshop – who has worked on it and can share information – not what is ACP but what are you doing, what worked and what didn't work, sharing curriculum, knowledge, resources. There is no way to build it from the ground up on your own." – *Administrator in a large urban district*

"It was great to allow the pilot districts to talk to one another. We got a lot out of working with (another district), since they have a department dedicated to this. (…) It was helpful for various pilots of various sizes to talk to one another, especially rurals who are one-man shows versus those that have departments focused solely on ACP. (...) Continue to design materials because those were great. More lesson plans, a sample scope and sequence, a sample policy would be great. The blog is helpful because I can look at what has been posted; it's nice to be able to go back, because everything is saved historically, and see in the community what everyone is doing,

or go back and get an example of something I remember seeing." – *School counselor in a small rural district*

As a pilot district, we were happy with the monthly check-in with our cohort groups. If this could continue to occur as the roll-out moves forward, it would be beneficial to continue to connect with other districts and DPI resources. It would be good to have collaboration within a cohort group for new schools joining the process with some possible structure for this provided by DPI. The ACP conference was also a huge success, to these continue would be invaluable for districts. – *School counselor in a medium rural district*

Summary and Limitations

The findings from these interviews include several common, and perhaps not surprising, themes: the need for buy-in from stakeholders, the value of collaborating with other districts, and the need to allot adequate time to do foundational planning and get the necessary elements of infrastructure in place. Although interviewees represented a number of different district roles, each represented their district as the ACP pilot coordinator, or, in a few cases, that person's proxy. Consequently, there are many voices in the complex structure of a district or school that are not represented in these data. This series of interviews raised a number of important issues, but represents only the first step in the pilot year evaluation process. The survey phase will attempt to reach all pilot team members, and should provide a somewhat more diverse set of perspectives. Similarly, the planned case studies will allow for a depth of perspectives among different school district personnel about ACP. While the perspectives of these participants are very informative for moving forward in the ACP roll-out process, perspectives, beliefs and attitudes among educators statewide will likely be different than that of pilot volunteers, who can be assumed to be more enthusiastic about the ACP process than those who, for whatever reasons, did not apply to be part of the pilot. Consequently, while informative, the experiences of pilot districts may not accurately predict what statewide roll-out will entail.

Findings from ACP Pilot District Survey

As part of DPI's ACP pilot evaluation, WCER evaluators fielded a survey distributed to pilot district participants. The purpose of this survey was to gather information related to pilot district perceptions of their progress toward raising ACP buy-in among staff, their views on useful professional development for ACP, their progress in providing ACP services to students, their pilot year successes and challenges, and their thoughts on full ACP implementation.

WCER opened the survey on May 23, 2016 and sent the survey to all 220 pilot ACP team members and school coordinators from each of the 25 pilot districts, as identified in the original pilot application documents and updated team rosters. The survey closed on June 3, 2016. Of the 220 invited survey participants, 126 fully completed the survey, for a response rate of 57 percent. All but one of the 25 pilot districts had at least one member from their team respond to the survey. Appendix B contains a copy of the survey.

Respondent Demographics

This section of the report details the characteristics of survey respondents in order to gain further insight into their background knowledge. Table 10 shows respondent roles within their school or district. The two roles with the majority of responses were teachers and school counselors, making up 67 percent of all respondents collectively. School administrators also had their voice, representing 21 percent of all respondents.

Table 10: Respondent role in school/district

Role	Percent of Respondents
Teacher	37%
School counselor	30%
School administrator	21%
CTE coordinator	6%
District administrator	6%
School Board member	1%
Other	8%

Note: Respondents were able to indicate more than one role; consequently, the total may be greater than 100%.

Respondents to the survey also had various levels of experience as measured by the number of years in their current position. Many respondents were either starting out in their position, with two to five years of experience or had been there for quite a while with 11 to 20 years in their position. Table 11 shows the years in position and the percent of respondents in each category.

Table 11: Respondent years in position

Years in Position	Percent of Respondents
1 year	8%
2-5 years	34%
6-10 years	16%
11-20 years	29%
21+ years	13%

As an additional indicator of experience, this time directly related to ACP work in their district, the survey asked respondents if they participated in their district's ACP leadership team. The vast majority, 91 percent, responded that they did participate. Of those that participated, Table 12 shows the frequency of their participation in the ACP leadership team meetings. As this table shows, a plurality of respondents reported meeting monthly.

Table 12: Frequency of participation in ACP leadership team meetings

Frequency	Percent of Respondents
Weekly or Bi-weekly	10%
Monthly	48%
4 times/year	27%
3 times/year	8%
2 times/year	3%
Less frequently	4%

Survey Findings

ACP Buy-In

This section of the report details the findings from a series of questions that sought to gain respondent perceptions of the level of buy-in and engagement among three different types of staff in their district: teachers, counselors, and administrators. The first of these questions inquired as to the level of ACP awareness among these staff. Figure 1 shows the percent of respondents indicating the awareness level of teaching staff, counseling staff, and administrators. As seen, the majority of respondents thought that counselors and administrators have very high awareness of ACP, while a majority of respondents thought that teachers have either a somewhat high or a moderate level of ACP awareness. This suggests a further need on the part of district and school ACP leaders to disseminate further information regarding ACP and its implementation to teachers.

Figure 1: Perception of ACP awareness among staff
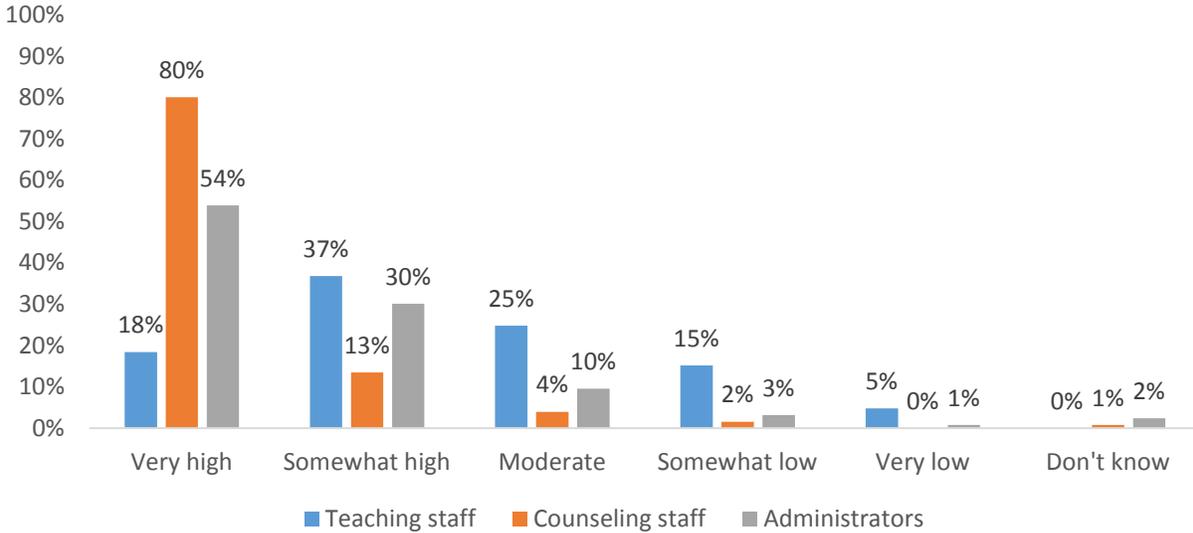
Figure 2 shows the results from a question seeking respondent perceptions of the knowledge that teachers, counselors, and administrators have of their role in ACP implementation. A majority of respondents thought that counselors know their role within ACP implementation extremely well and that administrators know their role extremely well or very well. Again, teachers might require further professional development in this area, as a majority of respondents reported that teachers know their role in ACP implementation only moderately or slightly well.

Figure 2: Perception of staff knowledge of role in ACP implementation
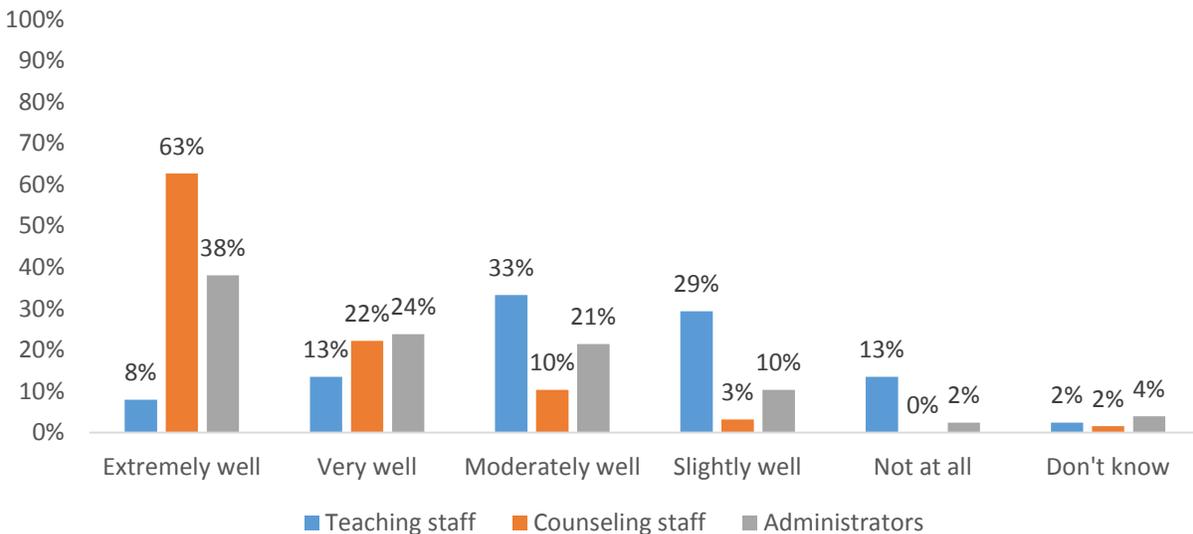
Similarly, a majority of respondents also thought that counselors and administrators believe that ACP has very high value, as shown in Figure 3. Again, perceptions of respondents were that teachers believe that ACP has value, but less value in comparison to the perceptions regarding counselors and administrators. These results, along with the results from the previous questions, suggest that overall

buy-in of counselors and administrators is high among pilot districts, while more work needs to be done to gain the buy-in of teaching staff.

Figure 3: Perception of value in ACP
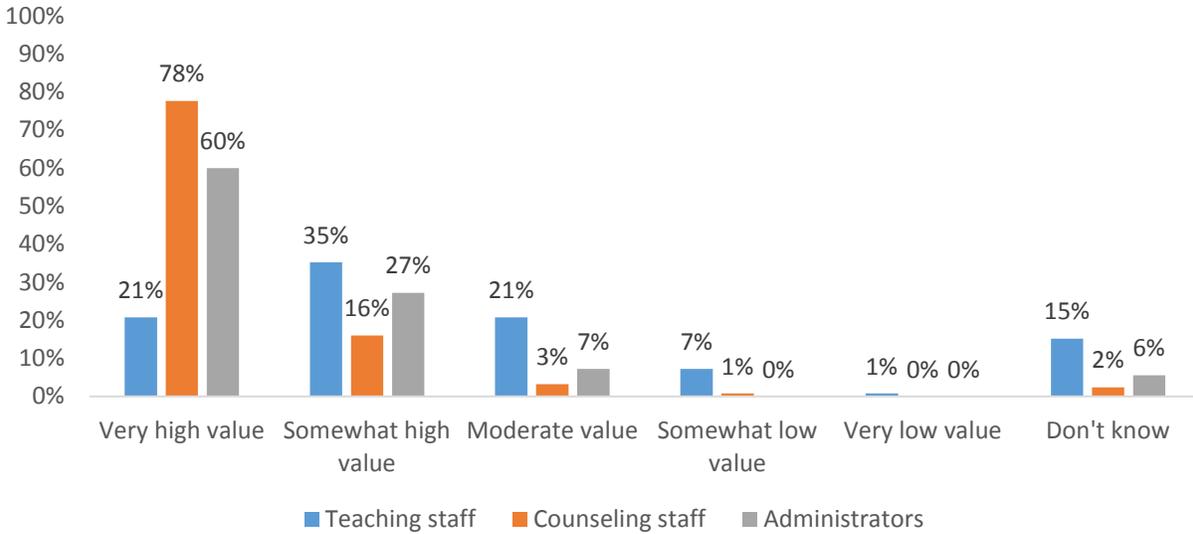
ACP Professional Development

Another area of interest was the use of and further need for ACP professional development. Figure 4 shows the proportion of respondents indicating the percentage of staff engaged in ACP-related training during the pilot year broken down by teaching staff, counseling staff, and administrators. The vast majority of respondents indicated that 75 to 100 percent of counseling staff received training during the pilot year. A majority of respondents also indicated that over half of administrators received some form of ACP-related training. Respondents indicated that teachers received the least training during the pilot year with a third answering that 75 to 100 percent of teachers had ACP professional development and just over a third answering that 1 to 25 percent of teachers had ACP professional development.

Figure 4: Perception of the proportion of staff engaged in ACP related training
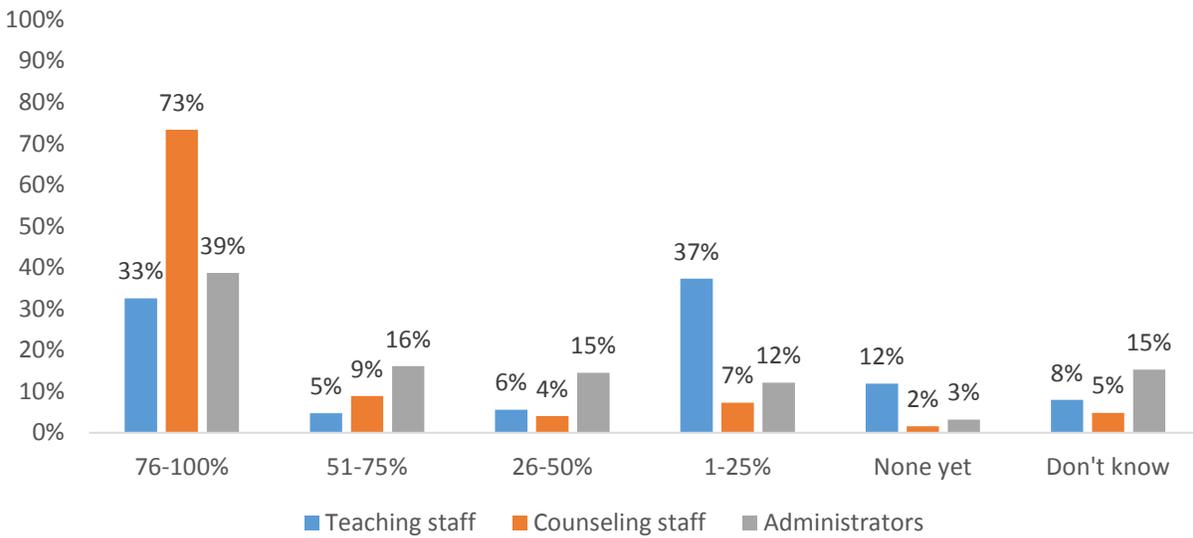
Table 13 shows how respondents indicated their districts provided professional development for ACP. Results indicate that most of the professional development occurred through staff meetings and in-service training days, while some districts also provided training through grade or team level meetings and online materials.

Table 13: Mode of ACP professional development delivery

Mode of delivery	Percent of Respondents
Staff meetings	79%
In-service days	74%
Grade/team level meetings	43%
Online materials	29%
CESA workshops	19%
Other	11%
Did not deliver ACP professional development	4%

Note: Respondents were able to indicate more than one role; consequently, the total may be greater than 100%.

This survey also sought the opinion of ACP leadership team members on the efficacy of DPI ACP resources. Table 14 displays the results from this question. While many of the respondents indicated a lack of sufficient knowledge on these resources, presumably because they did not use them in their professional development, the remaining respondents found most of the DPI resources to be at least moderately useful. The resources that respondents indicated were most useful were in-person meetings, the self-assessments, the planning template, and DPI's website. The resources that respondents indicated were least useful were the ACP blog and the ACP twitter.

Table 14: Usefulness of ACP resources provided by DPI

Resource	% Extremely useful	% Very useful	% Moderately useful	% Slightly useful	% Not at all useful	% Don't know
DPI website	11%	32%	27%	6%	1%	23%
Google+ community	6%	18%	22%	10%	2%	40%
ACP blog	3%	11%	19%	11%	7%	48%
ACP twitter	2%	7%	14%	15%	9%	54%
Planning template	15%	33%	21%	6%	2%	24%
Infrastructure self-assessment	14%	34%	20%	5%	1%	26%
Know-Explore-Plan-Go self-assessment	14%	38%	16%	3%	2%	26%
Pilot webinars	9%	21%	20%	10%	1%	40%
In-person meetings	25%	33%	11%	6%	1%	25%

To gain further understanding of how to assist pilot districts and non-pilot districts as they move toward full ACP implementation, the survey asked a series of questions designed to provide insight into the length and subjects of ACP professional development activities that districts would find most beneficial. Table 15 shows the responses to a question that inquired into the best length of time for ACP professional development activities. Results from this question indicate that nearly half of respondents thought that these activities should be between 20 and 40 minutes. Close to a third thought these professional development activities should be even shorter, between 10 and 20 minutes.

Table 15: Best length of time for ACP professional development activities

Length of time	Percent of Respondents
Less than 10 minutes	3%
10-20 minutes	29%
20-40 minutes	49%
40-60 minutes	16%
More than 60 minutes	2%

Table 16 displays how important respondents thought various professional development topics pertaining to ACP overview and buy-in are to implementing ACP. While respondents rated nearly all of these topics as important, a large majority of respondents indicated that they believe understanding ACP, ACP framework planning, blending ACP with other initiatives, and how to articulate ACP are very important topics for professional development.

Table 16: Importance of overview and buy-in professional development topics

Topic	% Very important	% Somewhat important	% Not important	% Don't know
ACP planning template	73%	18%	3%	6%
Understanding ACP 101	80%	17%	1%	2%
District infrastructure self-assessment	64%	28%	2%	6%
ACP research	40%	49%	6%	6%
How to articulate ACP purpose	75%	17%	3%	5%
Blending ACP with other initiatives	76%	17%	2%	4%
ACP Framework planning	77%	16%	4%	3%
Identifying ACP services	65%	27%	2%	6%
Understanding IEPs, PTPs, and ACPs	53%	34%	6%	6%
Leading and managing change	51%	32%	8%	9%
Selecting a leader/forming a team	52%	31%	9%	8%
What is CCR (College & Career Ready)	62%	31%	4%	2%

Table 17 shows respondents' beliefs on the importance of professional development topics related to mentoring or working with students. Again, a majority of respondents felt that all of these topics were important. The topics rated as the most important include identifying student strengths and skills; determining key knowledge, skills and habits for graduates; and mapping student ACP journeys.

Table 17: Importance of professional development topics related to mentoring/working with students

Topic	% Very important	% Somewhat important	% Not important	% Don't know
Determine key knowledge, skills, and habits for graduates	78%	18%	3%	0%
Mapping your ACP journey	74%	22%	2%	1%
Exploring labor market information	66%	30%	3%	0%
Using the software tool	61%	33%	2%	4%
How to mentor/coach	53%	35%	10%	2%
Listening and motivational skills	50%	39%	10%	2%
Goal setting and creative ways to reach goals	66%	30%	2%	1%
Understanding career clusters	62%	34%	4%	0%
Building a POS (program of study)	53%	37%	6%	5%
Creating a financial plan	67%	30%	1%	2%
Postsecondary education participation challenges	67%	26%	4%	2%
Identifying your strengths and skills	82%	15%	2%	0%
Networking skills	52%	40%	5%	3%
Building self-advocacy skills	72%	22%	4%	2%
How to use career assessments	64%	32%	3%	1%

The large majority of respondents indicated that community engagement topics were very important for professional development, as seen in Table 18. Of these topics, 86 percent of respondents indicated that they believe the topic of engaging families to be very important.

Table 18: Importance of community engagement professional development topics

Topic	% Very important	% Somewhat important	% Not important	% Don't know
Finding community resources	75%	22%	2%	1%
Forming partnerships	78%	20%	2%	0%
How to engage families	86%	12%	2%	1%

Student Engagement with ACP

Findings from interviews with ACP leadership team coordinators illustrated that many of the pilot districts focused more on ACP infrastructure development than service delivery. Despite these findings, a majority of respondents to the survey indicated that a majority of the pilot high school students and a near majority of pilot middle school students in their district received some form of ACP services, as seen in Figure 5. Among pilot team members, there also seemed to be a gap in information about what services schools provided, given that a quarter of respondents did not have enough information to respond regarding their high school students and more than a third of respondents did not have enough information to respond regarding their middle school students. The lower level of reported ACP service delivery among middle school students is not surprising given that traditionally districts did not conduct many of these activities until students reached high school.

Figure 5: Perception of the proportion of students receiving ACP services
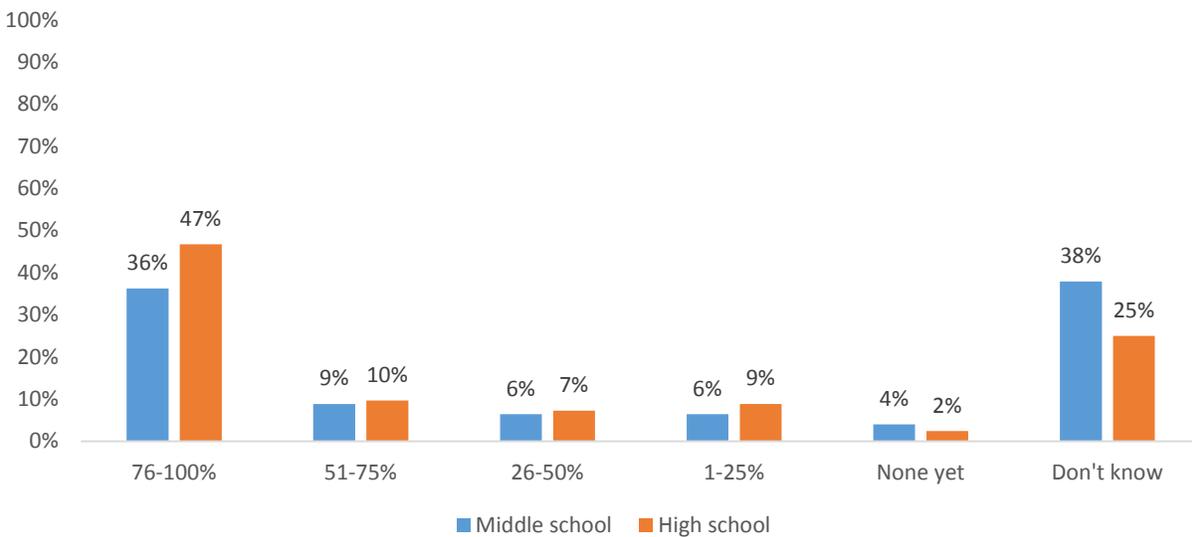
One area of importance related to ACP delivery is that all students receive services. To determine if there are currently any gaps in service delivery, the survey asked respondents about the proportion of students in specific subgroups receiving ACP services. These subgroups included at risk students, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, students with disabilities, and gifted and talented students. While there were more respondents without sufficient knowledge to answer these questions, the remaining respondents indicated that there seemed to be little evidence of any gaps in services for specific groups of students, though as indicated above, fewer middle school students than high school students received services. Specifically when reporting on middle school, just under 50

percent reported that they did not know about subgroup ACP services, and of those that did, the majority indicated that services occurred for 76 to 100 percent of these students. Specifically when reporting on high school, approximately 40 percent reported that they did not know about subgroup ACP services, and of those that did a larger majority indicated that services occurred for 76 to 100 percent of these students. This also suggests further familiarity among respondents to ACP services for specific subgroups of students in high school.

Pilot Successes and Challenges

Previous findings from the interviews with ACP coordinators also elucidated successes and challenges that districts faced during the pilot year. To gain further perspective, and validate these findings, the survey asked team members about their opinions of team successes and challenges during the pilot year. Table 19 shows a variety of possible successes and the proportion of respondents that thought each were successes for their team. As seen, ACP communication, ACP collaboration, and increasing administration buy-in were the most frequently reported successes, while ACP partnerships with businesses and ACP partnerships with post-secondary institutions were the least frequently reported successes.

Table 19: ACP pilot team successes

Successes	% Yes	% No	% Don't know
Increasing staff buy-in	70%	12%	18%
Increasing administration buy-in	82%	4%	14%
Increasing student buy-in	45%	16%	39%
Getting School Board support	73%	6%	21%
ACP integration into overall district strategic plan	63%	21%	15%
ACP infrastructure development	69%	15%	17%
ACP collaboration	82%	7%	11%
ACP communication	84%	9%	7%
Conducting ACP gap analysis	40%	24%	36%
Creating an ACP scope and sequence	67%	16%	17%
ACP activity implementation	66%	21%	13%
ACP partnerships with businesses	43%	33%	24%
ACP partnerships with post-secondary institutions	44%	28%	29%

Table 20 displays potential challenges that districts may have faced in the pilot year and the percent of respondents who thought each was a challenge for their team. A vast majority of respondents thought that sufficient time was a challenge during the pilot year. Conversely, only a few respondents saw administration buy-in and school board support as challenges.

Table 20: ACP pilot team challenges

Challenges	% Yes	% No	% Don't know
Sufficient time	80%	19%	1%
Staff buy-in	44%	41%	15%
Administration buy-in	14%	76%	11%
School Board support	7%	74%	19%
Student buy-in	29%	46%	24%
ACP software	47%	35%	19%
Community support	19%	40%	41%
Funding	37%	31%	31%
Staff turn-over	19%	59%	22%
Equitable access	17%	52%	31%

Beyond the Pilot

The final portion of the survey investigated ACP pilot team thoughts on supports, advice, and outcomes as ACP moves beyond the pilot year into full statewide implementation in 2017-18. The first of these open-ended questions asked, "What supports are necessary to continue ACP implementation?" Table 21 shows the response categories to these questions and the number of respondents. The most frequently cited supports included time for professional development and training, time for implementation, and software support and training. Given that respondents saw sufficient time for ACP as a frequent challenge during the pilot year, it correlates that respondents believe that additional time is a necessary support to continue ACP implementation.

Table 21: Supports necessary to continue ACP implementation

Response category	Number of respondents
Sufficient PD time and training	15
Software and software training	13
Sufficient time for staff to manage and implement process	12
Administration support and buy-in	10
More commutation and a better understanding of the process, requirements, and rationale	9
Funding or financial resources	8
Implementation framework, plans, templates, and models	8
Supplied lessons, activities, or professional development	8
Buy-in, support, and partnership from community and parents	7
Continued DPI guidance	7
Increased or dedicated time for students to work on ACP	6
Solid planning or a strong team	6
Buy-in from whole district or all stakeholders	5
State-level engagement and a connection to other initiatives	5
Student buy-in and engagement	5
Enough computers for students to do ACP	2
Resources (non-specific)	2

Table 22 shows the results from the second question, which asked respondents for their advice for districts starting the ACP process. Many team members thought that starting slowly and building a solid foundation to get the process right was important for beginning to implement ACP. Another frequent area of advice was to take note of existing activities through a gap analysis and leverage those activities to begin implementing an ACP process.

Table 22: Advice for districts starting ACP process

Response category	Number of respondents
Start slow, get it right, and plan carefully	31
Start with or leverage existing activities then conduct a gap analysis	24
Get buy-in from teachers or staff	13
Have sufficient professional development, resources, and materials	10
Have a strong team with wide representation	8
Focus on the philosophy, rationale, and purpose	7
Communicate well and have strong communication materials	6
Learn from other districts and share ideas	6
Create dedicated time in school schedule for ACP	4
Obtain buy-in generally from all stakeholders	4
Utilize data and statistics	4
ACP is good for students	3
Ensure administrative support	3
Get community or parent buy-in and business and post-secondary partnerships	3
Have sufficient funding, substitute teachers, and other resources	2

The final question looking beyond the pilot year asked about predicted student outcomes after full ACP implementation. This question had the dual purpose of confirming the ACP theory of action as well as evidencing the general awareness and value of ACP, once fully realized. Table 23 displays the categories of responses to this question. Many of the reported outcomes dealt with further student awareness of their options, their strengths and weaknesses, and their goals and how this awareness influences course choices and post-secondary planning. The most frequently cited outcome, however, was better preparation for post-secondary life. These predicted outcomes tend to align with the overall mission of ACP, that is, to empower all students to travel the road to adulthood through education and training to careers.

Table 23: Predicted student outcomes resulting from full ACP implementation

Response category	Number of respondents
Better preparation for post-secondary life	32
More goal-oriented choices in course sequence and planning	29
Greater awareness of post-secondary options	21
Greater self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses	18
Real-life preparation and applications in courses	13
More engaged in school	6
Parental engagement	6
Students have mentors and collaboration with staff	4
Higher graduation rate or better post-secondary statistics	3

Findings from ACP Mini-Case Studies

As part of DPI's ACP pilot evaluation, WCER evaluators at UW-Madison conducted focus groups and individual interviews in four select pilot districts. The purpose of these mini-case studies was to gather more detailed information related to district efforts during the pilot, specifically in terms of planning, communications and stakeholder engagement, professional development activities, the role of Career and Technical Education (CTE), support from DPI, innovative examples of ACP implementation, and recommendations for other districts when they begin planning and implementing ACP.

Methods

The four districts were selected based on findings from both telephone interviews of the pilot district coordinators and the survey of pilot team members. Consideration was also given to representing districts of different sizes, geographical locations around the state, and levels of ACP implementation.

The focus groups and individual interviews were conducted within the districts during the month of June, 2016. In addition to the four district focus groups, an individual interview was conducted in two of the districts in order to include the perspectives of people not included in or available for the focus groups. These interviews were conducted with a parent and a CTE coordinator. Each focus group lasted between one and two hours and had from six to eight participants. Focus groups were conducted by a WCER interviewer who facilitated using a semi-structured protocol (Appendix C) and was accompanied by a second WCER interviewer who recorded notes and helped facilitate. All focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded to supplement note-taking and the audio recordings were later used to flesh out and verify the field notes. The cleaned notes were then coded and analyzed to look for any trends or patterns, as well as to highlight specific findings of interest.

Description of Participants

This section of the report describes both the pilot districts included in the mini-case studies as well as the make-up of the focus group participants. The four districts included a large urban, a large suburban, a small rural, and a medium rural district and were located in four different parts of the state: in Southern Wisconsin, Southeastern Wisconsin, Central Wisconsin and Northern Wisconsin. They were located within four different Wisconsin Technical College regions and had relationships with a variety of UW-System and two-year colleges. Their district percentages of students who were economically disadvantaged ranged from 25-77 percent.

Focus group and interview participants enjoyed a variety of roles within the districts. In each of the four districts, there were an assortment of counselors from high schools, middle schools and, in some cases, elementary schools. There were also teachers and school- and district-level administrators. Table 1 reflects the roles of all participants in the mini-case studies combined.

Table 24: Participant role in school/district

Role	Number of Participants
Teacher	6
School counselor	14
School administrator	2
CTE coordinator	3
District administrator	3
Parent	1
Other	1
Total	30

Focus Group Findings

Planning Efforts

While the pilot coordinators described district planning efforts during their phone interviews, the focus groups provided additional detail on some of the work, particularly in terms of changing school schedules to provide dedicated time for ACP work.

Schedule Changes

Because the pilot coordinators reported through their individual interviews that establishing dedicated time in the school schedule for delivering ACP services was crucial for a systematic and comprehensive approach, the focus group interviews probed into the experiences that schools and districts underwent to achieve this goal. Of the four focus districts, three were involved in school scheduling change efforts. The fourth district already had a homeroom period in middle school that it could use to deliver ACP services, and were investigating how to move toward a whole school advisory period at the high school level.

The large urban district was in the process of changing the school schedule at the high school level to add an additional advisory period to the school schedule each week (from one period to two per week) during which ACP services will be delivered. This change was made by administrators who "stole time from other classes." The team noted that changing the schedule at the high school level is complex and costly. This district's focus group members noted that the change necessitated a "community conversation" because high school scheduling affects many things both in and outside the schools. According to this district's respondents, scheduling changes are also expensive, not only in terms of staffing, but also in terms of costs associated with the time required to create student schedules. The focus group members reported that there was some resistance to schedule changes, but that this resistance was not directed toward ACP itself. On the middle school level, there was inconsistency across schools regarding advisory periods—some schools had them and others did not. In the summer of 2015, the district made the middle school schedules consistent so that all had daily advisory periods in which ACP and other initiatives and activities could be delivered. This change process was helped, in part, by an ACP pilot team member who was a "huge advocate for the change."

The large suburban district is in the process of changing the entire district from a semester schedule to trimesters. The high school principal and school cabinet are still discussing the details of how to include the dedicated ACP time in the high school schedule. ACP services will be delivered during the daily 30-minute advisory period, but the district is still determining how many of these periods per week will be

devoted to ACP, as they also serve as "PLC time" one day per week and "intervention time" three days per week. During intervention time, students can get help from teachers on coursework or finish tests, and there was some resistance to taking time from these activities. The focus group members from this district reported that scheduling changes to accommodate ACP necessitated "lots of education and communication with all the stakeholders" including department heads and teams and principals. In turn, principals talked with and educated teams of teachers. Teachers will again be consulted about how best to support the ACP process once the curriculum has been identified. On the middle school level, a district scheduling committee, which developed the new trimester system, simultaneously added ACP time to the schedule for these schools. This fortuitous coincidence in timing helped solve some scheduling issues, according to the respondents.

The medium-sized rural district is also moving to a trimester system beginning in the fall of 2016. The high school will then have a 30-minute homeroom/advisory period each day, with 2 days per month dedicated to ACP portfolio completion. The middle schools will then all have a daily advisory period, as previously there was not consistency across middle schools in the district. Additional programs delivered during these periods, in kindergarten through 12th grade, include a bullying prevention model, team or classroom meetings, and relationship building. Students will have the same advisory teacher for all four years of high school so that relationships can better be formed and maintained. The schedule change process from semesters to trimesters in this district took three years, during which district staff did research, gathered data, made visits to other districts using the trimester system, and collected feedback. Focus group members reported that their schedule change committee consulted the literature on "how kids learn best" and found evidence that "scores go up and attendance is better" with the trimester system. Respondents reported that they "look at the practices that the top 10 percent of districts do," research them, go out and observe them, and then decide if these practices are right for their own district. They reported making most decisions of this type by "consensus" and reported that if they present data that "a given practice helps make students do better, they don't get much push-back." For this reason, they reported that they did not experience resistance to the schedule change because "they invest a lot of money on research on best practices." One trade-off they reported, however, was that there will be some scheduling issues with the local technical college, with whom they partner extensively, because the college is on a semester system and students who study at both institutions will have high school schedules that change during the middle of a college semester. In addition, any transfer students from other districts who arrive between semesters from their former school will be joining this district mid-trimester.

Gap Analyses and Inventories of ACP Implementation Practices

As reported in the section on pilot coordinator interview findings, most districts undertook some sort of gap analysis or needs assessment, typically conducted by using the DPI self-assessment rubric or a survey administered to staff, to determine what ACP-related practices were already being implemented in their districts. Focus group discussions reiterated this finding and provided details about a number of additional benefits realized through this process. All four districts reported being encouraged by the results of inventorying their current ACP work, finding that there were more activities being done than assumed. This information helped to demonstrate to staff that implementing ACP would not involve as many new activities as feared, and thus contributed to staff buy-in for the ACP process. Another common finding, however, is that there were little or no systematic processes to tie these activities together, to follow up on activities, to track them and build on them over time, or to make sure ACP services were being delivered to all students. As intended by DPI, focus group respondents reported that these realizations were beneficial in informing subsequent ACP planning.

One district reported that financial literacy was an area requiring more attention and comprehensive delivery in its schools, particularly for students with special needs. A side benefit to this district's gap analysis was that it helped identify gaps beyond ACP programming with respect to both curriculum generally and for students with special needs.

Another district found through their needs assessment that the greatest gap was the lack of a conceptual understanding of how to systematically show students how to plan for a career in an identified area of interest. To address this gap, the district began developing documents which they later realized were programs of study, but for which they initially lacked the terminology. They reported it was "cool in hindsight to know that that was what they were looking at." This directly fed into developing a vision for ACP overall, with the newly-developed programs of study serving as a key component.

One district also included a student survey as part of their needs assessment. They reported being "pleasantly surprised by feedback from students"—that student familiarity with and understanding of various components of ACP was greater than anticipated. Focus group participants also reported that the survey helped expose students to the vocabulary of ACP, an important side benefit that initiated the awareness process of the new approach and its terminology.

In addition to surveys based on the DPI self-assessment rubric, one district led their curriculum directors through a brainstorming exercise about what ACP is, and then reviewed their curriculum at every grade level to identify ACP activities and gaps. This district felt it was "one of the best things they did" to identify their gaps as it helped both their curriculum directors and then their teachers focus on what they needed to incorporate in their courses.

Communication and Stakeholder Engagement with ACP

Each of the focus group districts were intentional about their communication efforts regarding ACP, and all began by communicating to staff, although their particular approaches varied. Some districts began with key players and spread the message slowly by word of mouth. Others began with all-staff meetings and professional development focused on awareness. The extent to which they communicated about and engaged other stakeholder groups in ACP and the means by which they did so was more varied, but all focus groups reported that building buy-in, particularly among staff, was a crucial part of their efforts.

Engagement with Staff

The medium-sized rural district began its communication efforts with a few key players from the pilot team (an English teacher and the CTE coordinator) and used word of mouth to build staff awareness. The district was an early adopter of Career Cruising and used a district-wide technology in-service day to roll out the platform, give all staff log-in information, and do some demonstrations. This encouraged a number of teachers, administrators, and counselors to team to create programs of study. In subsequent professional development sessions, all teachers were shown the initial programs of study organized around career clusters so that they could see how their particular course(s) fit into various programs of study and career paths. All of the programs of study will soon be available to the public on the district website.

The large urban district had the counselors meet with all staff in its buildings to educate them about ACP, using the DPI "What is ACP" lesson, which it tailored to its district needs. After exposing teachers to

the idea, the counselors then shared lessons that the team had developed, and followed up with one-on-one staff and counselor meetings to answer questions.

The small rural district had a three-pronged structure for communicating to their staff and building buy-in. The pilot team held initial meetings with staff to show what team members had been doing and working on, and stressed that this was "not going to be any more work for [teachers]." They assured their teachers that collectively, staff were already "doing 85 percent of the work" of ACP but that the various activities just needed a unifying structure to tie them all together. The team also emphasized to staff that ACP work was "good for kids." Finally, they provided initial lesson plans to all teachers to use with students.

One of the pilot goals in the large suburban district was a formal communication plan, which identified a timeline, clarified tasks, audience, message and responsible party. The team found this to be very helpful as it made their communication efforts intentional and trackable. They began their communications with "meaningful conversations" at all levels with all staff and progressed by showing DPI-supplied videos and following DPI's advice to include teachers who are not supportive on their ACP committee. This district surveyed teachers about existing ACP activities, and when they shared the results with teachers during a professional development day, the focus group members reported that teachers "started to make connections and some teachers even began making posters for their students about careers." This group also reported that they felt teacher buy-in was aided by informing teachers early in the school year, so that they felt included in the planning process. They also reported that it was important to get the teachers to understand that ACP is a "system" or "philosophy" for schools to deliver all their curricula, and not "another initiative."

Similarly, the small rural district reported that the ACP "philosophy really dovetails with [the district's] mission" which helped build teacher buy-in. Countering the belief that all students should go to a four-year college was noted as an important strategy, and showing data about student debt and the availability of careers that require credentials other than a bachelor's degree were compelling to teachers.

Conversely, the focus groups reported push-back by some staff for a variety of reasons which have already been identified by the coordinator interviews and the survey—issues relating to time, a heavier workload, and principals who want to protect their staff from increased burden. Resistance was also linked to the idea that ACP work is not specifically tied to the district report card, an idea that hadn't surfaced in the other forms of data collection. The small rural district reported already having a rubric in place to evaluate "work habits in the classroom" that can then be shared with potential employers, while two districts suggested ideas that might address questions about accountability. The medium rural district reported that its grading team was starting to look at incorporating some work skills into its student report card, such as soft skills and employability skills. They listed as examples punctuality, turning in assignments on time, respectful behavior, and being prepared, all of which they classified as being valuable in both the classroom and the workplace. The large urban district was considering the idea of granting one credit per year to students for completing all the ACP activities and lessons, yet they were grappling with the question of how to measure the conversations between students and mentors that were intended to occur during advisory periods, such as "What does it take to go to UW-Madison?" As one participant noted, "those conversations are just as valuable as the lesson."

Student engagement

As found by the other methods of data collection, delivery of ACP services to students varied among districts, with most districts delivering some scattered activities to high school students and others to middle school students, but in rare cases with any sort of comprehensive system. However, a number of districts were communicating with students about ACP in anticipation of future implementation, particularly to apply new terminology to existing practices ("ACP," "career plan," and so forth). The medium rural district described ACP work now being done beginning with elementary school students, an advantage of which they described as "[students will] come into the middle school front-loaded with [ACP] awareness." The focus group members from this district felt it was important that students have a systemic view of ACP, but that the most effective way to do so was through "full immersion" and not through "some publicity blitz." They reported that in their district, "kids are into it. [We're] seeing a big increase in students interested in work-based learning." Furthermore, they believe that kids will learn about ACP "by doing it. They will have a common terminology or language."

The small rural district, however, decided to involve students in their communication efforts. They began by inviting student council members to design a logo and posters. Pilot team members then adopted an idea from another district and changed their district scheduling handbook to an "Academic and Career Planning Guide," with the student-designed poster on the cover. The focus group members reported that students were "very favorable about the whole process" and that it helped to have students "see that they are part of the process."

Parent and family engagement

Engagement with parents in the ACP process has been mostly limited to conferencing. The large suburban district reported that conference attendance has risen from 60 percent to 80-85 percent among the parents of middle school and high school students since they have begun including discussions about career planning in the last few years. In this same district, focus group members report that they have 100 percent attendance by parents at elementary school conferences, and they have begun to explain ACP in conferences at that level in order to prepare parents for the process throughout their children's K-12 education. Districts also reported that they will begin more concerted awareness and engagement efforts with parents when they give them access to Career Cruising and/or students' electronic portfolios. The small rural district reported that in addition to explaining ACP in conferences, where they received "excellent feedback," they sent parents a letter about ACP and had "no negative feedback."

Business and community engagement

Building relationships with businesses and employers was cited most frequently as the means for engaging the community. Typically, especially in smaller communities, one person or a small group of people build these relationships. In the small rural district, it was the superintendent. In the medium-sized rural district, it was the CTE director. In smaller districts, this is not usually seen as an overwhelming challenge, because the community is small, people tend to know one another, and there is only one high school per district "competing" for employer attention. In the case of larger districts, focus group and interview participants described the considerable amount of time and effort necessary to build and maintain these relationships, and several respondents mentioned the need for a full-time, dedicated position that would do only this. In fact, the large urban district has such a position, a "career

advocate," funded by a private grant. In the words of its CTE teacher and youth apprenticeship coordinator, "every program needs to have a qualified body to plug into the community."

Other tactics used to build relationships with employers include leveraging community groups to help provide opportunities for students. The large suburban district works with the local Chamber of Commerce, the local community foundation, and others to form various advisory groups such as the "business education partnership." The medium-sized rural district created a business card that it hands out to help get businesses involved with its various work-to-learn programs. This district also envisions developing a county-level Inspire group, similar to Career Cruising's Inspire component, and a fair to help launch it. Similarly, the large urban district envisioned the advantages of a state-level Inspire program. Members of the focus groups from larger communities also reported that creating partnerships with businesses was important but that it was also necessary not to "exhaust" the businesses with too many requests, and that businesses would only be willing to "play ball" if they were given something in return. Again, district size and/or community size seems to be a factor in the creation and success of school/business partnerships.

Engagement with other groups

In terms of engaging other groups with ACP processes and messaging, two districts discussed their efforts at involving their school boards. The large urban district made a presentation to the school board about the overall goals and the mission of ACP. This focus group reported that it was a "mind shift" for people, and that it was met with mixed reception because some board members didn't understand the need ("why talk about careers with sixth graders?"). The large suburban also reported on its progress to its school board, using the PowerPoint presentation they developed as their pilot summary report.

ACP Professional Development Activities

Similar to the telephone interview and the survey data, the focus groups indicated that while most or all counselors had received considerable professional development on the specifics of ACP, teachers and other staff mostly received professional development that focused on awareness. Districts determined what professional development materials to use and how to deliver them. The small rural district, however, delivered to all staff the training their pilot team had received from DPI through the initial pilot session and subsequent conferences. Three of the four focus groups reported that their districts used at least some of the DPI training materials, but also reported that they tended to modify them to fit their own context and to make them shorter, or able to be delivered in smaller increments. This reiterates the findings from the telephone interviews and survey. The medium-sized rural district reported, however, that it created all their own professional development materials, except for the Career Cruising training.

In terms of professional development around software to support ACP, the large urban district was an early adopter of Career Cruising and had a Career Cruising trainer come into the district and train all high school staff. This district's counselors had already been trained the previous year. Similarly, the medium-sized rural district had a Career Cruising representative come to do a "train the trainer" format. The large suburban district has not yet determined which software they will use, but will have teachers pilot two different systems and then help decide which to adopt. The small rural district will train all staff on Career Cruising in the fall during their professional development days.

In addition, the small rural district compared professional development around ACP with that of Educator Effectiveness (EE), saying that in their district, each was undertaken in a slow, step-by-step way in order not to overwhelm staff. The small rural district also believed that ACP and EE can be integrated, for example by using skills and techniques described in EE rubrics for mentoring and communicating with students when mentoring and developing relationships with students in areas related to ACP. This district also believed that EE's "culture of growth mindset" dovetailed well with preparations for and implementation of ACP. As one focus group member stated, "ACP falls in line with what's good for kids, improving and growing them." The large suburban district also mentioned EE during the focus group: the school counselor described how talking about ACP in student-parent-teacher conferences helped focus conversations, which she believed helped her reach her EE goal of increasing parent engagement.

The Role of Career and Technical Education in ACP

In all four focus group districts, CTE staff and administrators had strong roles in both the ACP pilot teams and in the delivery of ACP services in their districts. These districts all had robust CTE programs, organizing or offering such activities and programs as Dual Enrollment, work-based learning, career fairs, Project Lead the Way, youth apprenticeships, as well as partnerships with technical colleges, workforce development groups, UW-System and two-year colleges, employers, and community organizations. In each district, CTE teachers and administrators were strong supporters of the ACP process, and had been instrumental in creating and maintaining partnerships with employers and other organizations for years. However, common themes arose through both the focus groups and individual interviews: that there were typically insufficient numbers of trained, qualified CTE teachers; that courses had often been cut in recent years due to budget and teacher shortages; and that existing CTE teachers feel greatly overworked. Many of these CTE staff reported "doing it all," from teaching classes and mentoring student, to forging partnerships with employers, serving on technical college advisory boards, and even taking students shopping for clothes to wear to interviews and then taking them to the interviews themselves. Although they all reported being very excited and positive about ACP, they tended to fear that with full ACP implementation, their workload will become even heavier than it currently is, which they felt was unsustainable. As one CTE teacher explained, "You need a dedicated full-time staff member who can do this, who can run around, speak everyone's language, meet with everyone, make these relationships and arrangements. And of course that takes money." As mentioned above, the large urban district employs a "career advocate" who, among other things, is charged with creating and maintaining relationships with area employers. Her position, however, is privately funded through a local foundation. One CTE teacher also worried about the assumptions made about parents and families and their ability and willingness to support students in pursuing job opportunities and other activities. He asked, "what are the assumptions on the state's end, about kids, their upbringing, their homes, and so forth when we're doing [ACP]? We assume that parents are engaged, supportive and present. There are a lot of assumptions that are just false. We're trying to do our best to break the cycle of poverty and do things that are never modeled for them at home. And those are very hard things to do."

Support from DPI

The focus groups also provided some feedback on the support they received from DPI during the pilot, many of which echo findings from the interviews and survey.

- Several districts mentioned that they used the "Fleming video" (Success in today's economy) and found it very useful, especially for fostering staff buy-in for ACP.
- The newly-redesigned DPI website (not just the ACP section) was mentioned as a positive. Respondents said the information and layout were much more user-friendly. In addition, they complimented the ACP-specific site for the information found there.

Participation in the pilot

- All the districts mentioned that they were very supportive of districts learning from each other.
- One team reported that they enjoyed being involved in the pilot and "watching the DPI concept be implemented, and how each school's struggles are different, based on their context."
- One district reported that they were hoping for more direction from DPI early on in the pilot but having gone through the process, they now understood DPI's approach. However, they reported that it would be helpful to provide a sample ACP, a checklist, an example of what goes into a career plan and other similar materials.
- The pilot face-to-face meetings were viewed as very helpful, and more than one district team recommended that it would be important to have similar opportunities during the statewide roll-out that teams of teachers could attend.

Innovative Examples of ACP Implementation

The mini-case study phase of the pilot evaluation was fruitful in collecting some examples of innovative implementation practices from pilot teams. In brief, here are some practices that were viewed by focus group participants as very successful in their districts' particular contexts:

Planning and infrastructure

- One district found that having advisory time first thing in the morning was not ideal because valuable time was lost to kids who arrived late or who were still eating breakfast. It was determined that a mid-day advisory would be preferable.
- One district is creating a number of Career Academies, including Healthcare; science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); and business. They believe that the existence of these academies helps with attendance and graduation rates and also helps make large buildings feel smaller.
- Creating a system to measure students' "soft skills and employability skills" helped one district facilitate work-to-learn partnerships with local employers.
- In the large suburban district, Career 101 has been incorporated into the curriculum of the alternative high school, and students must complete a resume and apply to a post-secondary school to graduate. Moreover, a retired teacher is going to follow up with all the students that graduated from this high school to see what they are doing after graduation, whether they are following up on their plans or what they are doing otherwise. This program was funded by a "generous person in the community."

- To alleviate parent concerns that ACP will lead to "tracking" students, one pilot district clarified with parents that every student will receive information about all of the career clusters, which is reinforced through the sixth grade student-parent-teacher conference.
- The activities around interest inventories, career exploration, portfolios, and other activities supported by the ACP software are implemented in high school English classes in one district, whose pilot team members believe that if they are incorporated well into the class so that they have purpose and meaning, and are not simply "more homework," students get excited about it.
- As described previously, involving students in the messaging of ACP helped build student buy-in, enthusiasm and a sense of ownership.
- In one district, the principal makes sure he is using ACP terminology "every time he gets up on the stage in front of kids and parents." Having leadership on board and having the ACP terminology and message delivered consistently at all events contributes greatly to acceptance and buy-in by staff, students and families, according to focus group members.
- Similarly, the renaming of a district's scheduling handbook to an "Academic and Career Planning Guide" helped position ACP as integrated with the district's strategic mission.
- Implementing ACP with a comprehensive framework was believed to help communicate and facilitate the process of creating partnerships with businesses and employers.

Recommendations from Pilot Districts to Other Districts Beginning to Plan and Implement ACP

Many of the recommendations voiced by focus group participants recall those found during the phone interview and survey phases, such as the value and importance of collaborating with other districts, securing administrative and teacher support and buy-in, collaborating with area technical colleges, building a strong ACP team that has wide representation and can reach consensus, and taking sufficient (read: considerable) time to plan for ACP work. In addition to these common themes, other recommendations were identified.

Planning and infrastructure

- Conduct a gap analysis or some similar measure to account for what ACP-related activities are already being done in a district, not only for planning purposes, but to increase teacher buy-in.
- Make connections with EE and other important initiatives so that it is all part of a district's strategic plan.
- Create a "big picture" for students in grades 6-12 identifying what each student needs to learn or do at every grade level. Then create a big picture or timeline across the school year for ACP identifying the learning target for each month, and make sure staff is all trained on it.
- Set the system up to be a student accountability system, but also create some way to monitor that teachers are presenting the lessons.

Communications

- One focus group participant stated, "Never begin messaging to staff with 'there's a new state law and here's what we have to do.' Instead, start by showing everything they already do, and then talk about ACP to introduce the terminology and the big picture. Oh, and by the way… (it's mandated)."

- Position ACP as giving students the opportunity to make informed decisions about class changes, program shifts, and other programming decisions and make this part of the culture that everyone in the school/district understands and participates in.
- A parent recommended that family engagement could be improved with more mailings or emails to increase communication. In her particular district, there were three ACP meetings among students, teachers and parents between grades 6 and 12, and this parent recommended that in such a situation, continued reminders or updates could be useful for making connections between the three meetings.

Training and professional development

- For those districts using Career Cruising, allot sufficient time for staff to get on Career Cruising and just play. One teacher felt that exploring its offerings, surveys, and activities was very beneficial and allowed her to recommend resources to other teachers for a variety of purposes. Moreover, make sure teachers learn how to monitor students' use of the resource.
- The DPI activity about one's own career path is very useful and helpful for teachers.
- Take teachers, not just counselors, to conferences and/or to other districts to see what others are doing for ACP.
- DPI or CESAs should develop an "ACP in the classroom" professional development event or conference workshop that teachers could attend.
- Spend time on lesson delivery, that is, how to present ACP lessons, as this is not something teachers will naturally know how to do.

Limitations of Case Study Findings

The focus groups and interviews that provided the majority of data for the mini-case studies represented only four of 25 pilot districts, and not all pilot team members from each of those four districts were able to participate. Consequently, although findings tended to mirror those of the other two means of data collection, caution should be used to generalize findings beyond those specific contexts. The experiences, lessons learned, cautions and recommendations described in this section of the report may or may not align to others' situations. Moreover, the importance of context was repeatedly mentioned by focus group members as they discussed their experiences, especially in relation to how they might resonate in other districts. That said, the ability to dig deeper into the experiences of pilot teams resulted in richer data than might typically be gathered from surveys and represented more perspectives than those of the pilot team coordinators.

WEC recommends that all examples of specific practices, lessons and opinions described in this report be considered with an eye to context if they are under consideration for adoption or adaptation by others.

Key Findings & Recommendations from the Pilot Evaluation

In this section, we synthesize and present the key findings from the three components of the data collection and analysis in order to make recommendations to inform the work going forward in the statewide ACP implementation process. There is some overlap in this section with the recommendations that focus group participants made for districts beginning to undertake ACP work which are described in the previous section, but certain recommendations recorded there may be highly context-specific and not necessarily relevant for all districts. Presented first are recommendations directed towards districts and schools, with indications for how DPI may facilitate and support them. Then follow recommendations directed specifically to DPI in terms of efforts they might undertake to help support the coming statewide roll-out.

Key Finding: *Success in planning and implementing a comprehensive ACP process is dependent upon having a strong ACP team with wide representation and members who can reach consensus.*

As discussed throughout this report, pilot districts found that the success of their ACP efforts depended on the effectiveness of their ACP team. Many teams found the collaborative nature and the opportunity to learn more about what other people in their district do to be one of greatest successes of their pilot efforts. Small teams, or teams dominated by one or a small number of people, tended to report that they were overwhelmed, or that if they were to leave, all the progress towards and knowledge about their ACP process would be lost. Small teams (typically made up of only counselors and the CTE teacher) also tended to report that they feared they would "have to do all the work" of ACP service delivery. Administrator support, both at the building- and district-level, was repeatedly identified as a necessary component. The inclusion of core content teachers was deemed important. Some districts advised including teacher leaders who could effectively persuade their colleagues of the value of ACP. Other teams took a different approach and made sure to include a "naysayer" in order not to ignore opposing interests, and typically found that person to become a "convert" to the value of ACP. In either case, core content teachers were found to be important members of ACP teams because those teams made up exclusively of counselors and CTE teachers usually found it more difficult to engage all staff and gain their buy-in. To include a wider range of perspectives, many districts included parents, community members, employer representatives, and even students in some cases.

Recommendation: Schools and districts should create strong ACP teams marked by diverse representation to plan and oversee the implementation of ACP processes. DPI can support these efforts by continuing to provide guidance on best practices regarding team composition. DPI should also continue to make available the planning forms, templates, readiness tool and other resources which pilot teams found valuable.

Key Finding*: Conducting a gap analysis or needs assessment to catalogue ACP work already being done in a school/district was highly valued by all pilot district teams.*

Gap analyses were frequently cited as very informative exercises for planning purposes, but also contributed greatly to building staff buy-in. By conducting these analyses and reporting the results to staff, pilot teams were able to help teachers see how much work was already being done in their schools/districts and were consequently able to demonstrate to teachers that implementing ACP would not be as much "additional work" as previously feared. This also helped counter staff wariness of "new initiatives," again by positioning ACP as work already being done, but now being undertaken in a more strategic and comprehensive way.

Recommendation: Schools should undertake the gap analysis exercise, preferably by letting all staff participate in it, and report the results to all in a way that leverages the amount of work already being done. DPI can support this by continuing to communicate the importance of this process and by promoting the availability of the documents and other materials that can support a gap analysis.

Key Finding: *Buy-in among all stakeholders is vital for successful planning and implementation of ACP, but may be more difficult and/or take longer to obtain among some stakeholders.*

Obtaining stakeholder buy-in was a goal for most of the pilot teams, but many of them reported that this goal took far longer and much more effort than anticipated. Some teams reported that reaching this goal ended up being their biggest accomplishment and their major source of pride. Several teams delayed other goals until later, even the following year, in order to accomplish this principal objective, deeming it necessary for any other work to be undertaken.

A common theme that arose was the importance of *administrator buy-in* and support for ACP work. Strong district and building leadership support was often characterized as a make-or-break factor in the successful planning and implementation of ACP. The planning and implementation of ACP among pilot districts often involved changes in scheduling, curriculum, uses of technology and other matters of infrastructure, and conversely, the absence of administrative support tended to inhibit or prohibit plans for changes of this nature.

School counselors and CTE teachers typically were the leaders in this work within pilot districts, and tended to be very positive and enthusiastic about the possibilities that ACP presents. Nonetheless, they often needed reassurances that they would not be solely responsible for delivering ACP services and content to students. Counselors and CTE teachers in schools/districts that were implementing ACP but did not involve all staff in the work tended to be less positive overall and felt overwhelmed. Consequently, to make ACP implementation sustainable, districts must find ways to spread the workload widely.

Teacher buy-in is indispensable and should not be assumed. Core content teachers typically need more information and reassurance to be sold on ACP than do counselors and CTE teachers who are already involved in this kind of work. A number of pilot districts described a two-pronged approach for getting teachers on board. Initially, teachers needed to be convinced that ACP is valuable for students, that is, that it is not a system of "tracking." Moreover, teachers may resist the mind-shift involved in promoting a variety of post-secondary outcomes, as opposed to viewing attendance at a four-year college as the only legitimate goal, because it is almost universally the route that teachers themselves followed. Yet even once convinced of the value of ACP, teachers may still be resistant to participating in the process, feeling that ACP mentoring or content delivery is not among their expertise, or that ACP will be "more work." Consequently, core content teachers should be represented in planning and decision-making processes to reduce the impression that ACP is something being "done to them." As mentioned above, a gap analysis can be used to demonstrate to teachers how much ACP work is already occurring. Teacher leaders can be used to help communicate about ACP to other teachers, both formally and informally. Efforts should be made to help all teachers understand the purpose and goals of ACP and how it fits into the mission of their district/school. Teachers also need to develop a familiarity with the related concepts and terminology of ACP, as many districts talked about the importance of "applying the new ACP terminology to existing practices." Teachers should be provided sufficient training and support on any software or other tools used to support ACP. Some pilot teams recommended provided conferences and

other resources to teachers (in addition to counselors and administration) to help them feel informed about and capable of doing ACP work, and lead to increased buy-in.

Related to this was buy-in on the part of local *school boards*. Infrastructure and other consequential changes need to be approved by the board in many districts, occasioning the need for support from this stakeholder group.

Similarly, *parents* are key stakeholders who need to be in support of ACP, especially given that in best-practice cases, they are involved in the ACP process. Parents, too, may be of the mindset that a four-year college is the only valid post-secondary option and/or they may feel ACP is a system of "tracking." Thus, they need to understand the purpose and goals of ACP, the terminology, the software if they are to be given access, and, in particular, how they can support their student in the ACP process.

Finally, *student buy-in* cannot be overlooked, especially if ACP is to be positioned as a culture shift. Several districts reported involving students in certain planning and communication efforts around ACP. Others felt that starting ACP work in early grades would allow students to arrive in middle school and high school armed with awareness, terminology, and concepts. However, student perspectives were not collected in this evaluation and all information about their attitudes toward ACP are second-hand. It will be important to collect and consider their feedback in the subsequent phases of the evaluation.

Recommendation: Districts should not underestimate the necessity of stakeholder buy-in nor the amount of time and effort required to build it. DPI can support these efforts by reinforcing this message in their communications, by continuing to provide materials, data, success stories, and other evidence of the value of ACP and best practices that districts can use in their communication efforts (see Key Finding & Recommendation #3).

Key Finding: *Communication and stakeholder engagement efforts around ACP need to begin early, and be continuous, credible, and strategic.*

As mentioned above, a strong ACP team with broad representation, but whose members could also come to consensus, was reported by pilot districts to be a key factor in successful efforts.

Related to this Recommendation, developing and implementing an effective communication plan around ACP was viewed as important for a number of reasons, particularly as a way to foster buy-in among all stakeholder groups. A theme reiterated by all pilot districts was the importance of not allowing ACP to be positioned as another "initiative." Some districts described providing teachers data about the benefits of ACP, positioning it as a "best practice." Other districts recommended that it be positioned as the philosophy for delivering all curriculum, or as a means to realize the district/school's strategic plan. Still other districts worked to integrate or align ACP with other district systems, such as EE or personalized learning, showing that all these together supported a unified culture shift. Another district recommended never coloring any communication about ACP with the fact that it is mandated by law.

Communication plans need to consider all stakeholder groups, both internal and external. Communications need to be through multiple channels to effectively reach different audiences. Many pilot districts leveraged their work in ACP in their communications to the community, area technical colleges, businesses, and employers to help create or further partnerships. Likewise, communicating about these partnerships to internal audiences helped create enthusiasm for ACP. Several districts

described graduation requirements that high school seniors present their ACP portfolios to community audiences and panels of local business and post-secondary representatives.

Recommendation: Districts/schools should develop and implement a strategic communication and stakeholder engagement plan for their ACP planning, roll-out, and implementation processes. Stakeholder engagement should begin immediately, starting with the formation of a district/school ACP team. DPI can support these efforts by providing templates, examples, talking points and other communication-related materials, as well as to facilitate cross-district collaboration to share lessons learned about effective strategic communication.

Key Finding: *The most effective way to deliver comprehensive, systematic ACP services to all students is to have regularly occurring ACP time dedicated in the school schedule at every grade level.*

Whether they are called homerooms, advisories, enrichment time, or something else, in order to deliver ACP services equitably and consistently to all students, pilot districts reported that school schedules must include time dedicated specifically to ACP activities, particularly in later grades when students no longer have identical programs of study. Some middle schools found they could deliver ACP through English courses, exploratory rotations, or other courses that all students were required to take. In most high schools, however, those opportunities lessen or are eliminated when school schedules do not include a period such as homeroom or advisory that is mandatory for all. Thus, the creation of some sort of mandatory school-wide period was typically seen by pilot districts as the solution. Moreover, a school-wide time period increases the involvement of all staff in ACP activities, as in many cases, all teachers are required to staff an advisory-type period, and consequently all are involved rather equally in service delivery. Several pilot districts were planning to or already assign students to the same teacher for all four years of high school, in order to help build more consistent and long-term student-adult relationships.

Districts who adjusted schedules to accommodate ACP reported that resistance tended to come from teachers who feared losing classroom minutes in their content courses, who did not feel prepared to deliver ACP services, and/or who resisted change in general. Involving staff in discussions around schedule changes was recommended by pilot districts, several of whom recommended presenting evidence of success in other districts, or data about effective practices. Some districts formed a "schedule change committee" that included a variety of stakeholders who researched options and made recommendations. Some challenges with schedule change were identified in terms of transportation schedules, and taking into consideration the schedules of external partners' such as technical colleges or other out-of-school activities. Because of the district-wide ramifications involved with schedule changes, administrator support is vital and school board approval is typically necessary. Particularly in small, rural districts, a change in school schedule was reported to "impact the entire town." Consequently, considerable time, planning and effort should be allocated to effect such a change.

In districts/schools that already had advisories or similar periods in their schedules, challenges were reported in some districts in adding ACP services to the menu of activities already taking place in these periods, such as Positive Behavior Intervention Support activities, intervention time, "PLC time" or other initiatives. Some districts who had advisory periods only 1-2 times per week increased the number of days that advisories met, often to 5 days per week, and would devote several of those days each week to ACP activities.

Even in districts who do not want to or cannot change school schedules, particular planning and attention should be paid to when ACP services will be delivered, and do so in such a way that equitable, comprehensive, and systematic delivery is effectuated.

Recommendation: Districts/schools should give special attention to where ACP fits into their schedules to ensure consistent, comprehensive and equitable delivery. DPI can support these efforts by providing a variety of examples of districts' solutions to scheduling challenges, and again, by facilitating collaboration between districts to share practices and lessons learned.

Key Finding: High quality ACP implementation requires through a slow and deliberate process.

Intertwined with many recommendations from districts on their process for implementation was the idea of undertaking ACP in a slow and deliberate manner. By carefully and purposefully thinking through many aspects of implementation mentioned above such as team composition, gap analysis, communication plans, and gathering buy-in, districts reported a greater degree of success in these activities. Districts often reported that they did not accomplish as much as they initially wanted, but once they realized that the process should be slow to make sure all of the stakeholders and processes align, they found this created a more solid infrastructure to build upon. As an additional benefit, teachers who notice their district/schools taking such an approach may be less likely to view ACP as "just another initiative," and take the process more seriously.

Recommendation: Districts/schools should take a slow and deliberate approach in planning and implementing ACP. Districts/schools should ensure a solid and well-supported ACP infrastructure before moving toward improvement of service delivery. DPI can support these efforts by continuing to provide guidance on best practices and resources for districts to self-assess their progress on implementation and ACP delivery.

Additional Recommendations for DPI

These recommendations are specific to the efforts that DPI will make in supporting the statewide roll-out of ACP. Many are practices that the DPI ACP team already engages in, but we reiterate them to lend further support to their use based on evaluation findings.

Facilitate Collaboration Between Districts. This recommendation was repeated loudly and often by pilot participants who felt the collaborative opportunities provided by the pilot meetings, as well as their own efforts to collaborate with other districts, were invaluable. Pilot participants not only expressed that opportunities similar to the pilot conferences should be continued, on statewide and regional levels, perhaps at CESAs, but that specific teacher-focused professional development and conferences would be valuable.

Bolster professional development activities that pilot districts found important. Those professional development materials and activities like "Understanding ACP 101," and others that pilot districts found most valuable (see Tables 16-18) should be refined to be shorter when possible, perhaps by dividing them into modules, and vigorously promoted. Pilot districts found a variety of DPI resources to be helpful, including the website, and DPI should continue to refine their array of valuable resources based on user feedback.

Help districts make connections between ACP and other state programs. One key way for districts to avoid "initiative fatigue" is to find ways that the various processes can be integrated and mutually

supportive. One district found that delivering ACP services helped teachers meet EE goals for increasing relationships with students. A number of districts found that making ACP the "philosophy" of delivering their curriculum helped with efforts for integration. Many districts talked about how it meshed with their districts' strategic priorities. WCER recommends that future evaluation efforts focus in part on investigating examples of such linkages.

Provide more examples and materials to districts embarking on the ACP process. While many pilot districts expressed frustration that they were not given more firm guidance and structure by DPI at the beginning of the pilot process, most realized later that this was both intentional and ultimately valuable. DPI should continue this practice to allow districts to develop their own systems while at the same time also allowing districts to have a sense of "self-ownership" in their ACP efforts. However, since some districts may not be as enthusiastic as pilot applicants were, it may be useful for DPI to provide more examples and materials to assist districts in "finding their own way." These may include data on best practices, experiences of districts undertaking the process, and refined resources.

Next Steps

Informed by the findings from the pilot evaluation, CEW and WEC personnel will continue to provide technical assistance and support to DPI around the statewide roll-out and implementation of ACP. In addition, the evaluation team at WEC, in collaboration with DPI, will develop evaluation plans for Years 2 and 3 in order to support DPI in its efforts to continuously refine ACP.

Appendix A: ACP Interview Protocol

1. Before scheduling and interviewing, review the district's pilot folder on the google drive to familiarize yourself with any documentation they may have uploaded, and eliminate any questions that are not relevant, confirm those that you appear to have answers for, etc. Look particularly at the district ACP plan for the pilot—it was required that they had one as of 12/1/15 so note whether they indeed had one, and whether they've made any edits or updates to it (check the google doc history of any modifications to help determine when/what). Also, review the team roster so you know the make-up of this district's team, their district role(s), etc. It may also be helpful to review information online or otherwise about district size, number of schools, demographics, etc. if you're not familiar with the district.

2. When scheduling the interview, ask if they have an updated plan that may not have been uploaded to google (or any plan at all if there's no plan on google in the first place). Their "homework" for the April 2016 Cohort Conference calls is to update the plan, save it to their folder, and be ready to talk about progress and changes made to the plan. Consequently, you should acknowledge that you're aware of that task, and ask if they have it ready, if they could share, etc. (We can't wait for the dates of the Cohort Conference calls to get this information). Ask them to send to you any updated info in advance of the phone interview so you can review it and look at what progress they've made, how they may have revised their plan, etc.

3. After reviewing existing and any new docs, tailor the protocol to the situation of the district in question so you can be most efficient in your question-asking. For questions that appear to be answered by documentation, you can simply ask them to confirm your understanding.

Introduction by interviewer

"Hello, this is _____ with the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative at UW-Madison calling for our discussion about the ACP pilot. Is this still a good time to talk?"

> *If not, ask if you can reschedule.*

> *If yes,* "Thank you again for taking the time to share your district's experiences with the Academic & Career Planning process pilot. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes and your responses will be kept confidential by the evaluation team.

> Also, I would like to record our conversation so that I do not miss anything you say. Would that be OK with you? Do you have any questions? Let's begin."

Turn recorder on, state date and time and interviewer name

I. Background Question

Have you been on your district's ACP team since the beginning of the pilot year? *you may be able to determine this from the old and new contact sheets.*

> If not, when did you join?

II. Pre-Pilot ACP readiness. *When tailoring this protocol, refer to their original plan (and application info) to determine their **readiness before this year**.* **Eliminate this question, if possible.**

1. Can you **briefly** describe to me what sorts of ACP activities were being done in your district **before** the ACP pilot? (*probe **BRIEFLY** for how pervasive, what grades, who was involved in these activities, was it optional or required for (all) students?*)

III. Pilot activities around district infrastructure and readiness. *Determine what the district team did according to their initial plan and any updates or progress reports you were able to obtain regarding infrastructure and readiness. Fill out the following chart before the interview to document. Then during the interview, first pose question #2, and check off what they say in the boxes. Only go down the list as a last resort, for example is there is no documentation and the respondent is not able to understand what district infrastructure is or recall what they have worked on.*

Important: Make sure to specifically inquire about PD (Section 2) whether or not they mention it.

2. What did your district team do during the pilot year to address district infrastructure? (*might be able to be more verification than a question.*

Activity	Planned it	Did it	Who was involved?	Notes
1. Planning & Infrastructure				
Formed a district/school ACP leadership team that meets regularly (*if not meeting regularly, how often havethey met?*)				
Conducted a gap analysis or needs assessment (*if yes, would they share their needs assessment tool and summary of findings?*)				
Developed a written ACP implementation plan				
Adopted or created an ACP curriculum scope and sequence?				
Adopted, created or adapted tool for documenting students' ACP completion standards? (personal, academic and career progress)				
Established a system for transitioning/transmitting students' ACP from middle to high school				
Provided staff with access to ACP software?				

Modifications to School schedule that includes dedicated time for ACP?				
Created formal or informal partnerships with, or initial outreach to:				
• Businesses				
• Colleges and universities				
• Career and technical education (CTE) colleges				

Activity	**Planned it**	**Did it**	**Details**		
2. PD, Staff Development: staff trained on…			**Who conducted the training?**	**If applicable, which DPI lessons/activities did you use?**	**(If applicable) Were DPI lessons/activities helpful? Why or why not?**
ACP implementation					
ACP counseling model					
ACP scope/sequence					
ACP services for special populations (like special ed, at risk, teen parents, ELLs, Gifted & Talented)					
ACP communication and partnership with families					

3. Did you have to adjust your initial plan during the pilot year?

   3a. If so, how was it modified? How did you know it needed modification?

4. What support did you need to accomplish these activities? (infrastructure, planning and training?)

Appendix B: ACP Pilot District Survey

As a part of the evaluation of the Academic and Career Planning (ACP) pilot year, the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is asking for your assistance in reporting your pilot school(s) and/or district's experiences this year. Specifically, we are interested in your thoughts on your ACP successes, challenges, professional development activities, staff engagement, and student engagement throughout the pilot year. The goal of this survey is to share feedback with DPI on how to improve efforts in the coming years as ACP implementation goes statewide. Please keep in mind that your individual responses will be kept confidential at all times. This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation in this important process.

Please answer the following questions based on your perceptions of staff at your pilot school(s) or in your district.

1. ACP awareness among the following staff at my pilot school(s) is:

	Very low	Somewhat low	Moderate	Somewhat high	Very high	Don't know
Teaching staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Counseling staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Administrators	○	○	○	○	○	○

2. The following staff in my pilot school(s) know their role in ACP implementation:

	Not at all	Slightly well	Moderately well	Very well	Extremely well	Don't know
Core content teaching staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Counseling staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Administrators	○	○	○	○	○	○

3. The following staff in my pilot school(s) believe ACP has:

	Very low value	Somewhat low value	Moderate value	Somewhat high value	Very high value	Don't know
Core content teaching staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Counseling staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Administrators	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions related to ACP professional development with respect to the ACP pilot school you work in or the ACP pilot school(s) in your district.

4. What percentage of the following staff in ACP pilot schools engaged in ACP related training through DPI, CESA, or your district during the pilot year?

	None yet	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Don't know
Teaching staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
Counseling staff	○	○	○	○	○	○
School administrators	○	○	○	○	○	○

5. How did your pilot school(s) deliver professional development for ACP? Select all that apply.

❑ In-service days
❑ Staff meetings
❑ CESA workshops
❑ Online materials for individual use
❑ Grade/team level meetings
❑ Other (please specify) _____
❑ We did not deliver any ACP professional development

6. What do you think is the best length for ACP professional development activities?

○ Less than 10 minutes
○ 10-20 minutes
○ 20-40 minutes
○ 40-60 minutes
○ More than 60 minutes

7. The following ACP resources provided by DPI were:

	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Don't know
DPI website	○	○	○	○	○	○
Google+ community	○	○	○	○	○	○
ACP blog	○	○	○	○	○	○
ACP twitter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Planning template	○	○	○	○	○	○
Infrastructure self-assessment	○	○	○	○	○	○
Know-Explore-Plan-Go self-assessment	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pilot webinars	○	○	○	○	○	○
In-person meetings	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. DPI is continuing to develop professional development lessons and activities for professional development. Please indicate how important you believe the following overview and buy-in topics would be to include:

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know
ACP planning template	○	○	○	○
Understanding ACP 101	○	○	○	○
District infrastructure self-assessment	○	○	○	○
ACP research	○	○	○	○
How to articulate ACP purpose	○	○	○	○
Blending ACP with other initiatives	○	○	○	○
ACP Framework planning	○	○	○	○
Identifying ACP services	○	○	○	○
Understanding IEPs, PTPs, and ACPs	○	○	○	○
Leading and managing change	○	○	○	○
Selecting a leader/forming a team	○	○	○	○
What is CCR (College & Career Ready)	○	○	○	○

9. DPI is continuing to develop professional development lessons and activities for professional development. Please indicate how important you believe the following mentoring/working with students topics would be to include:

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know
Determine key knowledge, skills, and habits for graduates	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mapping your ACP journey	❍	❍	❍	❍
Exploring labor market information	❍	❍	❍	❍
Using the software tool	❍	❍	❍	❍
How to mentor/coach	❍	❍	❍	❍
Listening and motivational skills	❍	❍	❍	❍
Goal setting and creative ways to reach goals	❍	❍	❍	❍
Understanding career clusters	❍	❍	❍	❍
Building a POS (program of study)	❍	❍	❍	❍
Creating a financial plan	❍	❍	❍	❍
Postsecondary education participation challenges	❍	❍	❍	❍
Identifying your strengths and skills	❍	❍	❍	❍
Networking skills	❍	❍	❍	❍
Building self-advocacy skills	❍	❍	❍	❍
How to use career assessments	❍	❍	❍	❍

10. DPI is continuing to develop professional development lessons and activities for professional development. Please indicate how important you believe the following community engagement topics would be to include:

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know
Finding community resources	○	○	○	○
Forming partnerships	○	○	○	○
How to engage families	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions related to student engagement with respect to the ACP school you work in or the ACP schools in your district. For purposes of these questions, "ACP services" for student engagement are defined as those activities, lessons, extracurriculars, and opportunities that are incorporated throughout grades 6-12 that support students to:

- Self-Explore their strengths, skills, and interests;
- Career Explore through research, software, CTE courses, and work-based learning; and
- Career Plan and Manage through goal setting, understanding labor market information, financial literacy, comparing post-secondary options, and deliberate course sequencing.

11. What percentage of students in ACP pilot schools received ACP services during the pilot year?

	None yet	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Don't know
Middle school	○	○	○	○	○	○
High school	○	○	○	○	○	○

12. What percentage of the following student populations in ACP pilot middle school grades received ACP services during the pilot year?

	None yet	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Don't know
At risk students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economically disadvantaged	○	○	○	○	○	○
English language learners	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students with disabilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gifted and talented	○	○	○	○	○	○

13. What percentage of the following student populations in ACP pilot high school grades received ACP services during the pilot year?

	None yet	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%	Don't know
At risk students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economically disadvantaged	○	○	○	○	○	○
English language learners	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students with disabilities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gifted and talented	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please answer the following questions related to the successes and challenges your pilot team experienced during the ACP pilot year.

14. Which of the following were successes for your team during the ACP pilot?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Increasing staff buy-in	○	○	○
Increasing administration buy-in	○	○	○
Increasing student buy-in	○	○	○
Getting School Board support	○	○	○
ACP integration into overall district strategic plan	○	○	○
ACP infrastructure development	○	○	○
ACP collaboration	○	○	○
ACP communication	○	○	○
Conducting ACP gap analysis	○	○	○
Creating an ACP scope and sequence	○	○	○
ACP activity implementation	○	○	○
ACP partnerships with businesses	○	○	○
ACP partnerships with post-secondary institutions	○	○	○

15. Which of the following were challenges for your team during the ACP pilot?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Sufficient time	○	○	○
Staff buy-in	○	○	○
Administration buy-in	○	○	○
School Board support	○	○	○
Student buy-in	○	○	○
ACP software	○	○	○
Community support	○	○	○
Funding	○	○	○
Staff turn-over	○	○	○
Equitable access	○	○	○

16. What supports are necessary to continue ACP implementation?

17. As the state moves into full ACP implementation, what advice do you have for districts starting the ACP process?

18. What outcome(s) do you foresee for students as a result of ACP being fully implemented?

Finally, please answer the following questions about you so that we may better understand your responses.

19. What is your role in the school/district? Select all that apply.

❑ District administrator
❑ School administrator
❑ School counselor
❑ Teacher
❑ CTE coordinator
❑ School Board member
❑ Other (Please specify) _____

20. How long have you been in your position?

○ 1 year
○ 2-5 years
○ 6-10 years
○ 11-20 years
○ 21+ years

21. Did you participate in your district's ACP leadership team?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know

22. How often did you participate in your district's ACP leadership team meetings?

○ Weekly or Bi-weekly
○ Monthly
○ 4 times/year
○ 3 times/year
○ 2 times/year
○ Less frequently
○ Never
○ Don't know

Appendix C: Focus Group Interview Protocol

Protocol to be customized for each district based on what we already know.

1. *Warm –up question:* If money was no object, what would you do during your summer break?

[explanation - purpose of focus group, ACP evaluation, etc., recording if no one objects, otherwise, just notetaker).

2. Your school/district did an ACP gap analysis by means of _____. What did you learn from that? (*how, who, tool to share if we don't already have it?*) Customize protocol around what we already know of their gap analysis.

3. What communication efforts around ACP did your school/district undertake this past year? (*probe for who, what messages, effectiveness of communication, reach, any documents/ examples that we don't already have*)

4. Who did you engage in ACP this past year? How did you engage/get buy-in from them? ***Customize***

(*Probe for who - staff, admin, students, families, communities, and to what extent – inform, communicate with further, train, gather feedback?*)

- How successful were your engagement /buy-in efforts?)

5. (*If relevant*) What was the process for changing the school schedule to find dedicated time for ACP activities? (*probe for difficulty, resistance, trade-offs, when it happened, how long it took, who was involved in decision-making process*, *when it was/will be implemented, any feedback on how it's being received?*)

6. What did your school/district do for PD around ACP?

- Who was trained? Why or why not were some groups included or not included? (*if applicable*)
- Who (by job title) is the person responsible for planning / delivering ACP PD?
- What activities not provided by DPI were used, if any?
- Were your training efforts effective in developing understanding and gaining buy-in?
- What type of training would you recommend to other districts?

7. How does Career and Tech Ed fit into your ACP service delivery program?

8. What do Career Pathways mean to you? Career Clusters?