



Governor Playbook

Unlocking Career Success



This playbook provides ways in which Governors and teams can blur the lines between high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce. Governors play a significant role to Raise the Bar for student success by developing an education-to-workforce system that focuses on Unlocking Career Success.

Step 1

Establish
Unified Vision

Step 2

Create Management
Structure

Step 3

Link Goals
to Performance

Step 4

Align Policy
and Practice

Establish a unified vision for career-connected learning

The Governor's vision can serve as an animating force to bring together multiple partners and distinct priorities to improve the lives of youth. Several states and Governors have developed goals that link educators, employers, community-based organizations, and others as equal partners in achieving the Governor's vision. When establishing a unified vision for career-connected learning, consider how to:



Create a whole-of-government effort by bringing together state leadership from P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, and leveraging existing federal and state resources to create the foundation for both short- and long-term strategies that produce talent at scale and improve community and economic development.



Elevate employer engagement by ensuring that education and training programs reflect employer needs, supporting employers and industry in scaling work-based learning programs, and including employers in the development of pathway policies.



Commit to equity as a driving factor by expanding access to and support for career-connected learning opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds, especially those from underserved populations, supporting student transition across different types of education and training, and embedding student and community voice.

Tools to establish a unified vision for career-connected learning:

Statewide Initiatives and Interagency Taskforces

PrepareRI is a statewide initiative in Rhode Island that was created in response to the Governor's expectation that all students should be prepared for success in college and career. PrepareRI is run by an interagency taskforce that includes the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Governor's Workforce Board, and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner.

Postsecondary Attainment Goal and Committees

Through Executive Order 61, the Governor made a commitment to combine education and workforce efforts to prepare students for future careers. The EO established a joint agency steering committee to develop the Delaware Pathways Strategic Plan, which outlines the roles and responsibilities for state agencies and community partners in supporting Delaware Pathways.

Combined WIOA State Plans that Include Perkins V

Multiple states and governors have chosen to submit a Combined Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state plan that includes Perkins V. In doing so, states can establish a unified vision, link education and workforce goals and data systems, and coordinate programs and/or braid resources through these federal programs.

Amplification and State of the State Addresses

In 2023, the majority of governors focused on expanding and improving Career and Technical Education (CTE) and workforce development opportunities in their 2023 state of the state addresses. The Alabama Strong Start, Strong Finish plan was announced.



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Create a management structure and plan

Youth career pathway programs often span P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems, requiring coordination amongst state agencies and partnerships with employers and community facing organizations. Several states and Governors have developed strategic plans and cross-agency teams to manage implementation. When creating a management structure and plan, consider how to:



Link education and economic development by understanding and preparing for both the short- and long-term economic needs and developing career pathways that span P-12, registered apprenticeships, community and technical colleges, four-year institutions, the military, and workforce systems.



Codify roles and responsibilities that bring together different agencies and organizations as part of a cross-cutting management team, to ensure that each partner is responsible for leading specific actions and to create individual and shared accountability to support the success of the initiative.



Leverage community partners including community-based organizations, non-profits, and other intermediary organizations to support system innovation, build and scale relationships with the community and employers, and support braided funding models that better connect with private, philanthropic, and corporate funders.

Options to create a management structure that supports the vision:

Convene Councils

Governors have the power to convene councils and multiple states have launched K-16 or P-20 councils and state workforce development boards through executive order to help focus on career pathways and state agency and partner coordination. This was done in both Delaware and Maine.

Create Teams or Offices

Governors can create teams or offices to manage coordination of plans, like in Alabama where the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation was established to accomplish three major objectives: (1) braid Alabama's federal education and workforce development funding streams to support in-demand career pathways, (2) annually identify regional and statewide in-demand occupations, career pathways, and credentials of value, and (3) develop industry and registered apprenticeship programs, or in Indiana where the Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship was created by to implement statewide policies for registered apprenticeship and work-based learning.

Appointments

In many states, the Governor has the power to appoint individuals to boards and commissions that have oversight of education and employment. Youth can and should be considered for these official appointments.



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Link public goals and performance management

Top line outcomes and progress measurement can provide focus and to create momentum. They can also help to celebrate accomplishments and ensure that partners remain committed to the overarching vision. Several states and Governors have developed data models and performance routines that encourage collaboration and transparency. When linking public goals and performance management, consider how to:



Create cascading goals that include top line metrics to measure system performance, showcase accomplishments and gaps, and create opportunities for P-12, postsecondary, and workforce agencies and institutions to review and develop aligned goals within their organizations.



Model individual and shared accountability through the annual or more frequent measurement of the state's top line metrics as well as through the measurement of progress via annual or more frequent performance routines that reflect the management structure and plan, and partner specific roles and responsibilities.



Create public accountability by ensuring agency roles and responsibilities are visible, aligned to the Governor's vision, and embedded within other governing documents specific to that organization, like annual plans and reports, state education and workforce plans, or other public facing materials.

Ways to link public-facing goals and performance management structures:

Standardize Language

Efforts should be made to link public-facing goals and performance management structures for state agencies and partners. One way this can happen is through standardization of language, for example, in Illinois there is a Career Pathways Dictionary which includes common definitions for pathways terminology statewide, meaning that every state agency has shared language to discuss and implement the Governor's vision.

Data Visualizations and Statewide Systems

Another important aspect of performance management is consistent and transparent data, ideally through a statewide data system with data visualizations like Connecticut's P20 WIN system, Indiana's Graduates Prepared to Succeed (GPS) dashboard, or the Kentucky Center for Statistics, which includes an interactive dashboard on student outcomes by high school.



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Align policy and practice

States can establish policy through executive order, legislation, regulation, and state plans that are required for federal programs, as well as through administrative policy and procedures that are used to manage implementation of programs. Several states and Governors have developed model policies and infrastructure to manage implementation. When aligning policy and practice, consider how to:



Leverage federal programs, particularly those that require state plans and Governor approval, including ESSA, WIOA, and Perkins V, to align the vision and goals, support data collection and accountability, and establish policies that improve career-connected learning (Note: updates to Perkins V and WIOA state plans are due in FY24).



Create a fiscal strategy and braid financial resources to leverage existing federal and state funds across the P-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems to create and scale career pathways, provide wrap-around and transition services to youth, and to stage future budget requests and philanthropic or private sector grant development.



Lead by example through direct employer engagement and leadership of state agencies, which have hiring needs and can be leveraged to create innovative human resource policies, like skills-based hiring models, and to develop paid work-based learning opportunities, internships, and registered apprenticeships for youth.

Opportunities to align statewide policies with day-to-day practice:

Support Qualified Non-Degree Workers

Multiple states—including Alaska, Colorado, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota—have taken efforts to support qualified non-degree workers (often referred to as “STARS” - skilled through alternative routes) to access state employment opportunities and employ skills-based hiring via executive order, which can help to better connect youth with state service.

Leverage Enacted Budget Proposals

California’s Golden State Pathways Act is a program that promotes secondary to postsecondary pathways in high-wage, high-skill, high-growth areas, or Hawaii’s career development success program, that provides financial incentives to high schools for student attainment of industry-recognized credentials, to advance alignment between policy and practice.



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